

PRIVACY: Copyright Public Records

When you register a copyright claim with the Copyright Office, you create a public record of your claim. All information you provide on your copyright application will be available to the public, and some of it will be on the Internet.

Who may see my copyright registration records?

Anyone. The Copyright Office is required by law to make copyright registrations available for public inspection, including any personal information that is in an application for registration. Once a registration is completed and a claim has been cataloged, everything in it, including all personal information, is available for public inspection. Individuals have always been able to come to the Copyright Office to inspect its public records. Some personally identifying information in post-1978 registration records is also available on the Copyright Office's website. Personally identifying information includes all names and addresses and year of birth, if provided.

Will my registration records help provide contact information for someone interested in using my work?

Yes. Records of copyright registrations and recorded documents having to do with copyright can be used by the public to identify the author(s) and copyright owner(s) of a work. The public record may also provide information about an owner's agent who can be contacted to license the registered work and to grant permission to use it.

Can I remove information that I don't want publicized?

No. When you register a claim to copyright with the Copyright Office, you create a public record of your claim. Information cannot be removed from the public record once it has been submitted in an application for registration. All information you provide will be available to the public, and some of it will be on the Internet. You may wish to consider whether you want to include on your application a birth date, nickname, alias, or any other optional detail that you consider to be sensitive.

The screenshot shows a Netscape browser window displaying the U.S. Copyright Office website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://www.copyright.gov>. The website header includes the text "THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS" and "Copyright United States Copyright Office". A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "About", "News", "Publications", "Forms", "Law", "Licensing", "Registration", and "Search Records". A banner message reads "An important message about mail delivery". The main content area is divided into three columns: "Hot Topics" (listing Fee Changes, Webcasting Rates, Anticircumvention Rulemaking, and 2001 Annual Report), "About Copyright" (listing Copyright Basics, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), Current Fees, and Top Searches), and "How to Register a Work" (listing Literary Works, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Sound Recordings, and Serials/Periodicals). Below these are sections for "Search Copyright Records" (listing Registrations and Documents, and Notices of Intent to Enforce) and "How to Record a Document" (listing Record a Document).

Sample Catalog Records

The sample catalog records below show the information from copyright applications that is typically displayed in the Copyright Office online database. Highlighting is added to show certain personal information that may appear in the record.

Sample record

Public Catalog

Copyright Catalog (1978 to present)
Search Request: Left Anchored Copyright Number = VA0001626300
Search Results: Displaying 1 of 1 entries

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Labeled View

CROCODILE.

Type of Work: Visual Material
Registration Number / Date: VA0001626300 / 2008-02-12
Application Title: CROCODILE.
Title: CROCODILE.
Description: Electronic file (eService)
Copyright Claimant: SC & HD, INC., Address: 3281 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, CA, 90007
Date of Creation: 2007
Date of Publication: 2007-03-14
Nation of First Publication: United States
Authorship on Application: SC & HD, INC., employer for hire; Citizenship: United States. Authorship: 2-D artwork.
Rights and Permissions: Kc Cha, KC & HC, INC., 3281 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, CA, 90007, (323) 555-4400, chachatapestry@yahoo.com
Names: SC & HD, INC.

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Sample record

Public Catalog

Copyright Catalog (1978 to present)
Search Request: Left Anchored Copyright Number = SR0100620956
Search Results: Displaying 1 of 1 entries

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Labeled View

Happy Some of the Time, et al.

Type of Work: Sound Recording and Music
Registration Number / Date: SR0100620956 / 2008-03-11
Application Title: Dips, Mids, and Highs.
Title: Happy Some of the Time, et al.
Description: Electronic file (eService)
Copyright Claimant: Whitson David Erickson, 1979- d.b.a. JoyfulSandbox Music. Address: 512 NE 4th St., Chisholm, MN 55719
Date of Creation: 2005
Date of Publication: September 28, 2005
Nation of First Publication: United States
Authorship on Application: Whitson David Erickson, 1979- d.b.a. JoyfulSandbox Music; Domicile: United States; Citizenship: United States. Authorship: sound recording, performance, production, Composition of Music and Lyrics.
Rights and Permissions: Whitson David Erickson, 512 NE 4th St., Chisholm, MN, 55719, United States, (612) 555-2352, (218) 555-3077, whit1124@vcu.edu
Contents: 1. Happy Some of the Time -- 2. Starlight -- 3. Rollercoaster Baby -- 4. Get Outta Here -- 5. 1 -- 6. Pick Up the Pieces -- 7. Will I? -- 8. Transient Thoughts from a Steady State Mind -- 9. Get to You -- 10. Star -- 11. The Storm -- 12. Don't Try and Tell Me -- 13. End Transmission -- 14. Broken Bones -- 15. Thank You.

How can I prevent personal information from being placed on the Copyright Office website?

All information provided on the application for registration will become a permanent part of the public record of the Copyright Office, and some of that information will be available online through the Office's website, including the name and address of the copyright claimant.

Information provided in the rights and permissions section of the application will also be made available online, but providing rights and permissions information is optional. Applicants who want to include rights and permissions information but do not want to provide personal details can use third-party agents, post office boxes, or designated email accounts.

If someone else submits an application on your behalf, it is still your responsibility to ensure that information that you want to keep out of the public record is omitted. Information provided in an application becomes part of the public record without regard to whether you or your authorized agent prepared and submitted the application, and the Office cannot alter or remove information at your request. In certain cases, it may be permissible to register a claim in a work either anonymously or pseudonymously (under a fictitious name).

Other categories of information in copyright applications that may be made available online include the following: type of work, registration number, title of the work, author, authorship, preexisting material, date of creation, and date of publication.

Why is my copyright registration information now appearing on search engines such as Google?

Because your copyright registration is a public record, others can access it and may create alternative means to make the information in it more widely available. The Copyright Office is not responsible for the form or the substance of third-party redistribution of Copyright Office records.