



Intellectual
Property
Office

The background is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this are several large, stylized arrows and thick lines in various colors: pink, orange, green, and dark blue. A pink arrow points upwards from the bottom left, then turns right to form a horizontal bar behind the word 'Protecting'. An orange arrow points upwards from the bottom left, then turns right to form a horizontal bar behind the word 'Your'. A green arrow points upwards from the bottom left, then turns right to form a horizontal bar behind the word 'Creativity'. A dark blue arrow points upwards from the bottom left, then turns right to form a horizontal bar behind the text 'A guide for students'. The arrows and lines are thick and have a slight 3D effect with shadows.

Protecting

Your

Creativity

A guide for students

Contents

- Introduction.....4

About this guide 5

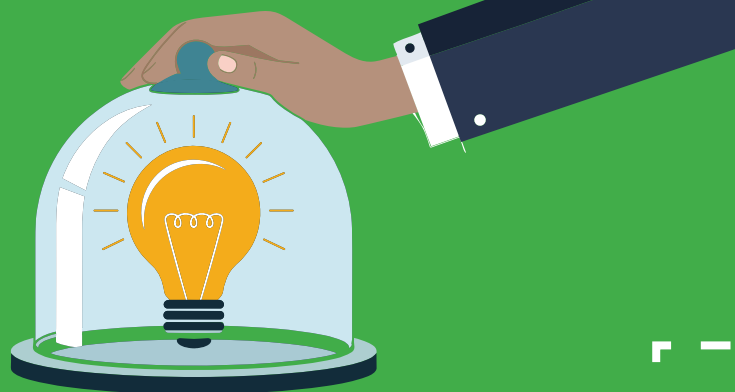
Who we are..... 6



→ What is IP?.....7

Intellectual property key points 8

IP rights and protection length 9



- → Copyright..... 10

Overview..... 10

Copyright ownership 10

Licensing copyright 11

Assign or transfer copyright 11

Copyright key points..... 12





– ▶ Patents 13 –

Overview.....	13
What you can and cannot register.....	13
Patents key points	15

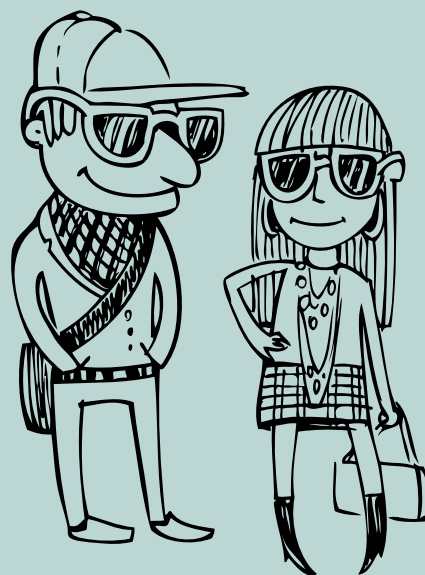


– ▶ Ruth's Story: –

From GCSE project to patent owner!.....	16
---	----

Trade mark 18

Overview.....	18
Unregistered vs registered	
Trade marks.....	18
Trade mark key points	20



▶ Design..... 22

Overview.....	23
Unregistered vs registered designs...	23
What you can and cannot register.....	23
Design key points	24

Trade secrets.....25◀

A closer look at IP..... 26

Why should you learn about Intellectual Property?	26
Steps to protect your work	26
Where to find more information	27



Glossary of terms



Introduction

As a student in today's digital world, and having grown up with the internet, you're already creating and sharing digital content more than any generation before. Whether you're creating digital artwork, capturing photographs, producing music, designing robots, or coding applications – you are generating valuable intellectual property!

Understanding intellectual property rights will help with your school projects now and support you when you're ready to launch your career, whether that's in engineering, product design, technology, music, or elsewhere! Intellectual property (IP) knowledge will help you:



protect your original work



use and reference others' IP legally and ethically



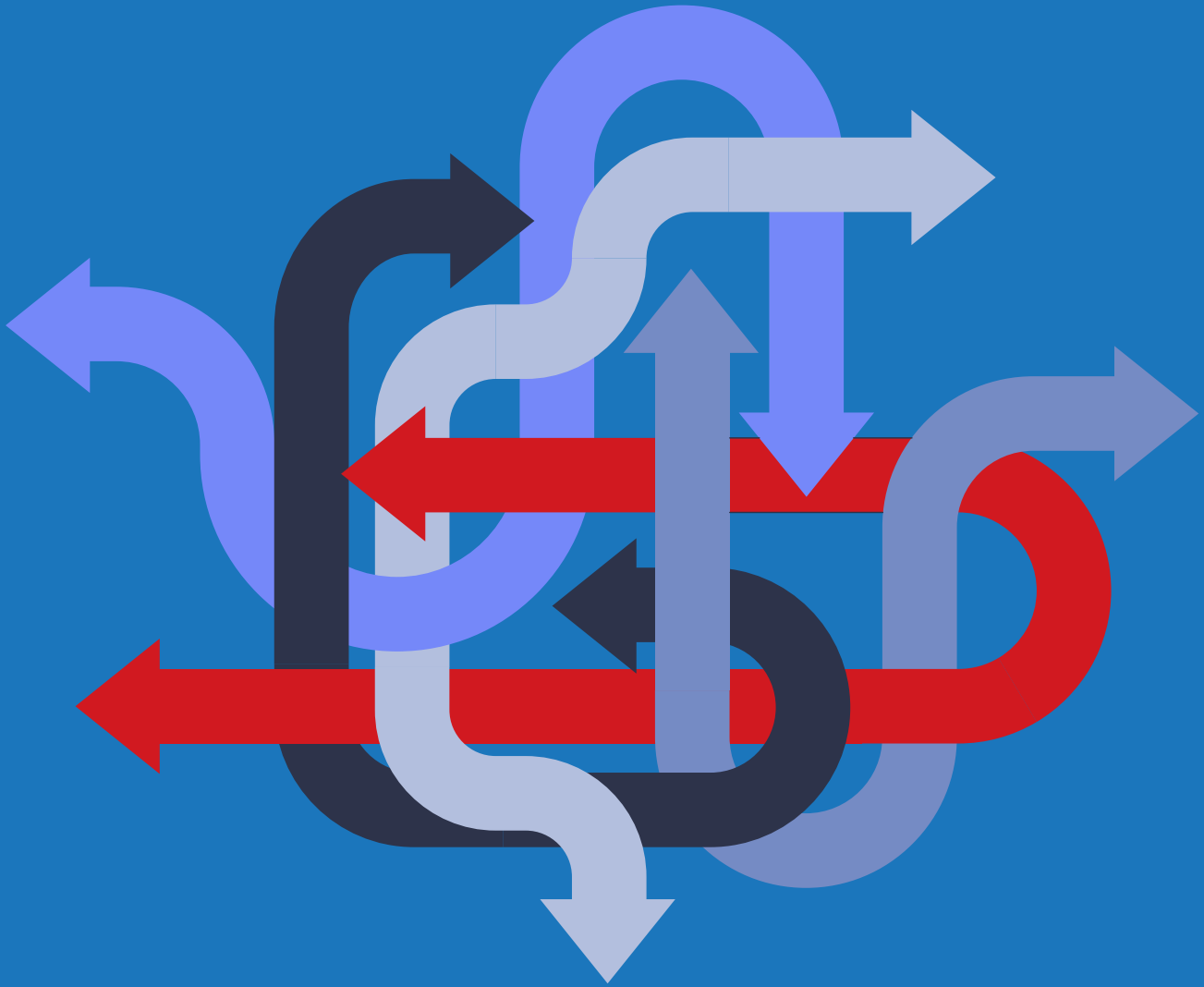
transform your creative talents into potential income



build a strong foundation for your future professional life



navigate digital content sharing responsibly



About this guide

Throughout this guide, you'll notice some words are followed by 'see glossary of terms'. These are important words that might need more explanation. You can find simple definitions for all these words in the glossary and more at the end of this guide (pages 30 to 31).

Important Note: This guide will help you understand why knowledge of intellectual property rights is beneficial to you as a student. However, it is not a definitive source on intellectual property law and should not be treated as legal or professional advice. This guide focuses on the UK's intellectual property (IP) Framework (see glossary of terms). Laws and regulations may vary significantly in other countries. For specific legal guidance, always consult with qualified IP professionals or legal experts.

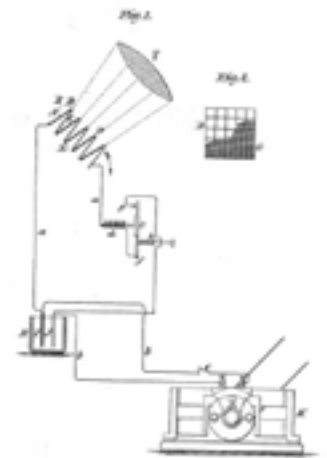
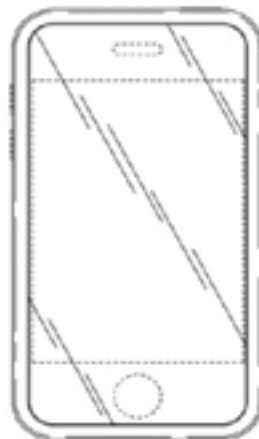
Who we are

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) is the official UK government body responsible for intellectual property (IP) rights including patents, designs, trade marks and copyright. We operate and maintain a clear and accessible intellectual property system in the UK, which encourages innovation and helps the economy and society to benefit from knowledge and ideas. We help people get the right type of protection for their creation or invention.

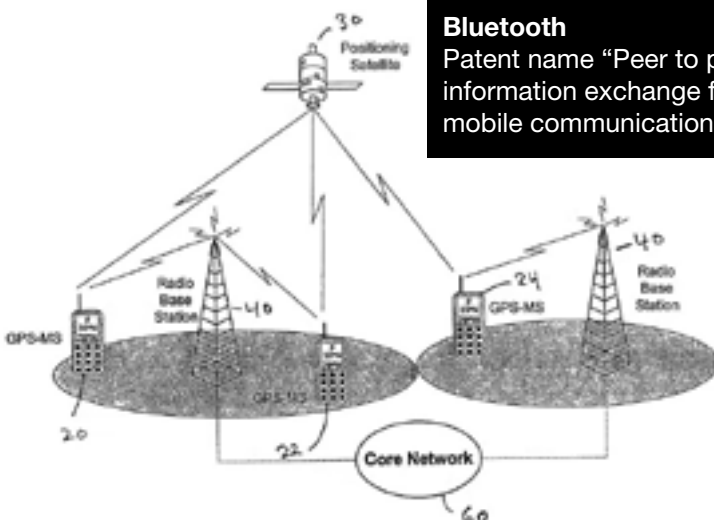
Find out more online at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/intellectual-property-office/about



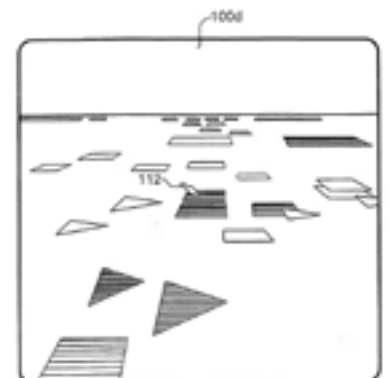
iPhone
Patent name “electronic device”



Solar Panel
Patent name “Apparatus for utilizing solar radiant energy”



Bluetooth
Patent name “Peer to peer information exchange for mobile communications devices”



Virtual Reality
Patent name “Virtual reality generator for displaying abstract information”

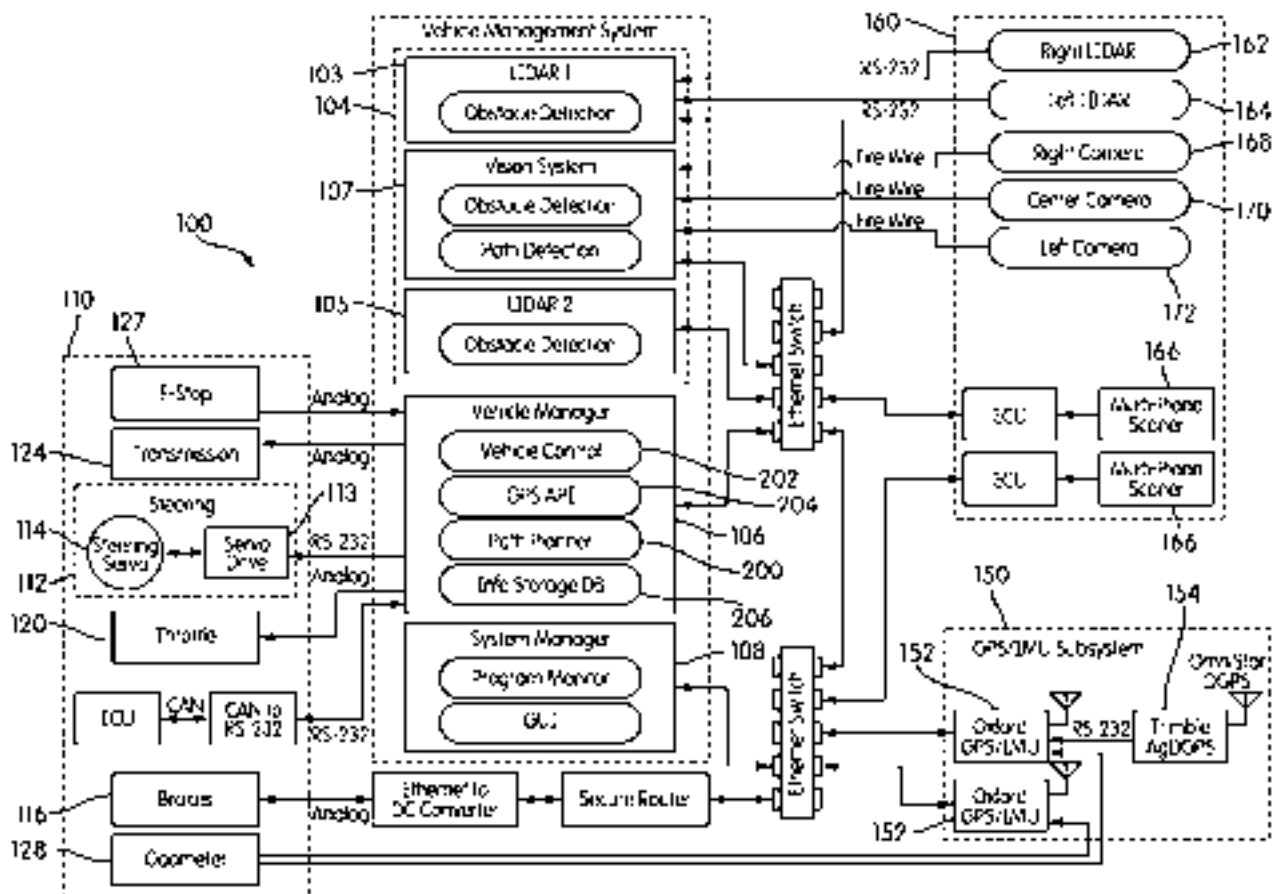
What is Intellectual Property (IP)?

Intellectual property (IP) is something that you create using your mind - for example, a story, an invention, an artistic work, or a logo. IP is something that you will create, handle, or manage every day. Having the right type of intellectual property protection helps you to stop people stealing or copying:

- the names of your products or brands
- your inventions
- the design or look of your product(s)
- things you write, make or produce

Copyright, patents, designs, and trade marks are all types of **intellectual property protection**. You get some types of protection automatically, others you have to apply for.

There are different types of intellectual property protection depending on what you've created.



Self-Driving Car
Patent name "Vision system for an autonomous vehicle"



Intellectual property key points

- Intellectual property (IP) is all around you. You probably create or use IP every day - from the photos you take to the books you read, and the essays you write
- just like putting your name on your work at school, registering your creations officially helps prove they belong to you
- want to share your idea with someone? You can protect it by getting them to sign an agreement promising to keep it private. These are commonly called non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) or confidentiality agreements (see glossary of terms)
- IP rights can be owned, sold (this is often called assignment), transferred, licensed or given away. Licensing and selling IP rights is often called commercialisation
- IP needs to be actively managed throughout its lifecycle, there may be actions required from you and ongoing fees that need to be paid to maintain the registered right


IP rights and protection length

Type of protection	Intellectual property it covers	Length of protection
Copyright protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including illustration and photography original non-literary written work, such as software, web content and databases sound and music recordings film and television recordings broadcasts layout of published editions of written, dramatic and musical works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> written, dramatic, musical and artistic work = owners' life + 70 years sound & music recordings = 70 years from when it's first published films = 70 years after the life of the director, screenplay author and composer broadcasts = 50 years from when it's first broadcast layout of published editions of written, dramatic or musical works = 25 years from when it's first published the length of copyright also depends on how long ago the work was created. For more guidance, check out the online guidance at http://www.gov.uk/copyright/how-long-copyright-lasts
Patent	Inventions and products, for example machines, medicines	A patent lasts 5 years . If you want it to stay in force after that, you must renew it every year, up to a maximum of 20 years.
Registered trade mark	A word, phrase or logo, and can even be a shape, colour, sound, smell (Olfactory Marks), aspect of packaging or any combination of these	A registered trade mark lasts 10 years . You must renew your trade mark every 10 years for it to stay in force.
Design registration	Appearance of a product, including its shape, packaging, patterns, decoration	A design registration lasts 5 years . You must renew your design registration every 5 years to keep it protected - up to a maximum of 25 years .
Unregistered designs	<p>There are different types of unregistered design protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unregistered Design Right (only applies to the shape and configuration) Supplementary Unregistered Design (The appearance of a product can be 2D & 3D and includes its shape, colours, texture, materials and ornamentation) 	<p>The UK Unregistered Design Right automatically protects your design for 10 years after it was first sold or 15 years after it was created, whichever is earliest.</p> <p>Supplementary Unregistered Design Right protects the appearance of a product in the UK for 3 years from the date you make your design public.</p>
Trade secret	A trade secret is valuable information (like a recipe or customer list) that a business keeps private.	There is no time limit to trade secret protection for as long as information remains secret and commercially valuable.

Copyright

Overview:

Copyright protects the expression of, but not the idea behind, a work. For example, the text in a manual is covered, but not the ideas conveyed in it. Copyright protection starts as soon as a work is created. Once your copyright has expired, anyone can use or copy your work. The term protection for copyright material depends on the work. Copyright prevents people from:

- 
- copying your work
 - distributing copies of it, whether free of charge or for sale
 - renting or lending copies of your work
 - performing, showing or playing your work in public
 - making an adaptation of your work
 - putting it on the internet

As there is no official copyright register in the UK, it can be useful for copyright owners to take steps to prove that they are the creator of their works in case this is ever called into question. Ways to do this include retaining any rough drafts, plans or notes of works produced.

Alongside this, some people choose to mark their work with the copyright symbol © and an accompanying statement. Although the addition of the symbol doesn't provide any additional legal protection in the UK, it can help to draw third parties' (see glossary of terms) attention to the fact that copyright is in force and that they need to seek permission if they want to use the work.

Copyright ownership

The person who creates the work will generally be the first owner of the copyright. However, there are various situations where this is not necessarily the case. For example:

- some universities and colleges may ask that the students assign their copyright over to the establishment when enrolling. Alternatively, the establishment might extract a royalty free licence for any works created as a condition of enrolment. In the absence of any such contract, the copyright would remain with the creator
- a work might have multiple rights owners if there was more than one creator. An example might be a cartoon or illustration created by several visual artists, who then jointly licence use to a web owner

The creator or creators of a work may choose to allow a person or company to license the work on their behalf, licence the right directly themselves, or 'assign' (transfer) the right to another person.



Licensing copyright

The term 'licensing' means giving another person or organisation permission to use a work such as an image, often in return for payment and/or on certain conditions for a specific length of time. Think of licensing like rental agreements - you're letting someone use your work while you still own it. You can:

- ask for payment
- set rules about how they use it
- decide how long they can use it for

Assign or transfer copyright

Imagine your band creates an original song together. While everyone contributes different parts (like lyrics, melody, and instrumental sections), you might decide it's easier to have one person or organisation manage all the rights. This is called copyright transfer.

This transfer of rights (see glossary of terms) needs to be agreed upon by everyone involved and should be documented properly. It's similar to how professional music groups often transfer their rights to a record label, or how a team of app developers might give their rights to their startup company.

If you decide to sell or transfer your copyright there would need to be a written, signed contract stating a transfer has taken place. This is known as an assignment. Remember: Transferring copyright is a significant decision. Before agreeing to transfer your rights, it's important to understand exactly what you're giving up and what you'll get in return. You can discover more about licensing, selling or marketing your copyright material online at: www.gov.uk/guidance/license-sell-or-market-your-copyright-material





Copyright key points

- copyright protection happens automatically in the UK when you create something original - you don't need to register or apply for copyright
- it's good practice to mark your work with the copyright symbol ©, your name, and the year of creation (for example, © Insert Name 2024). Whether you mark the work or not, the level of protection you have is not affected
- when you buy something creative (like music, art, or games), you're buying the right to enjoy it personally - not the right to copy, share, or remake it. This protects creators, including young artists and content creators like yourself, ensuring they get credit and payment for their work
- always check the permissions or ask for consent before using someone else's creative work in your own projects
- you're responsible for defending your copyright material against infringement
- you can find out more about copyright online at www.gov.uk/copyright
- With certain copyright material even if you sell the copyright in the work, you may still have certain moral rights (see glossary of terms). For instance, you may have the right to be identified as the author (provided you have asserted that right previously) and the right to object to any derogatory treatment of your work (e.g. harmful changes that could damage your reputation). Moral rights in a work cannot be transferred or 'assigned' but you are entitled to waive those rights





Patents

Overview

A patent can protect innovations like machines, industrial processes, pharmaceuticals and their production methods, computer hardware, electrical appliances and biological products and processes. Think of a patent as a special agreement with the government - you share how to create or replicate your invention with the public, and in return, you get the exclusive right (see glossary of terms) to use, sell or share it for up to 20 years (provided renewal fees are paid each year). When your patent expires, other people can then make and sell your invention.

A UK patent protects your invention and lets you take legal action against anyone who makes, uses, sells or imports your invention without your permission. This could be really useful if you create something innovative in your science or design and technology projects, like a smart gadget or a new device.

Just like you might own a bike or a phone, you can own a patent and choose what to do with it - you could sell it, let others use it for a fee, or keep it all to yourself. However, you need to pay yearly fees to keep your patent active, a bit like a subscription.

Patents help encourage people to come up with innovative solutions by making sure they get recognised and rewarded for their creativity.

What you can and cannot register

For a patent to be granted in the UK it must meet all the following criteria:

- new - it must not have been made publicly available anywhere in the world, for example it must not be described in a publication
- inventive - for example, it cannot be an obvious change to something that already exists
- either something that can be made and used, a technical process, or a method of doing something

Things you cannot patent include:

- literary, dramatic, musical or artistic works
- a way of doing business, playing a game or thinking
- a method of medical treatment or diagnosis
- a discovery, scientific theory or mathematical method
- the way information is presented
- 'essentially biological' processes like cross-breeding animals or varieties of plants
- software that has a 'non-technical' purpose



TELEVISION IS HERE!

At last the greatest Radio achievement of the era—the Baird Televisor becomes a “home” proposition. Everyone has been eagerly awaiting the advent of this apparatus, at a reasonable price, and its coming heralds the commencement of the greatest radio boom in history.

The wonder of ordinary radio is now amplified by the additional wonder of the Baird Televisor. To SEE and HEAR is the expressed desire of everyone interested in radio, and only the Baird Televisor with its actual reproduction of every movement of living things can solve the problem. No laborious building up of “still” pictures can ever be more than experiment of limited interest. The Baird Televisor Home Reception Set alone can give permanent satisfaction.

Daily broadcasts both from the National and Regional Stations at Brookman's Park have been a feature since March 31st.

The Baird Television Company has given great thought and care in producing a Kit of Parts bearing the BAIRD brand. This will interest the Home Constructor and Experimenter, and will open up a new wonder to tax his ingenuity. Ample “Service” is arranged for.

Prices for the complete Receiver and Televisor, Televisor only, and Kit of Baird branded parts will be sent on application to:

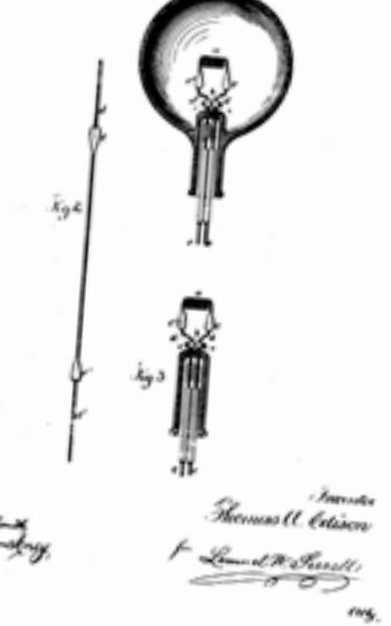
THE BAIRD TELEVISION DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LTD.
133, Long Acre, London, W.C.2



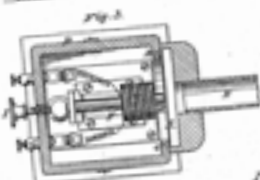
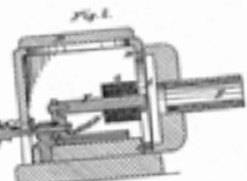
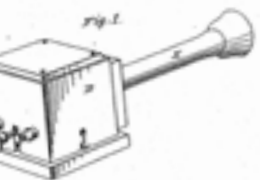
the birth of a wonderful radio era

Patents key points

- In the UK, a patent lasts five years. If you want it to stay in force after that, you must renew (see glossary of terms) every year, up to a maximum of 20 years
- you can apply for a UK patent with the UK's Intellectual Property Office. There is a specific format, process and associated fees that need to be carried out and paid for
- you may not be able to patent your invention if it becomes public knowledge. If you discuss your invention with anyone apart from a patent attorney, you may need a non-disclosure agreement
- the publishing of inventions (see glossary of terms) is designed to promote innovation – instead of trying to re-invent something you can search to see what inventions have been made public previously in patent documents, so you can spend your own creative energy and budget inventing something new or making improvements to known inventions
- you can find details of patents registered in the UK for free, using the IPO's 'One IPO Search tool' online at www.gov.uk/search-for-patent
- a granted (see glossary of terms) UK patent can stop others making, selling or using your invention in the UK, but has no influence elsewhere. If you plan to sell or license your invention abroad, you should consider protection abroad. If you don't, anyone can legally make, use or sell your invention overseas
- to have the best chance of getting a patent granted you will usually also need to pay a patent attorney for professional help and advice



A. S. BELL.
ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH.
Patented Jan. 30, 1877.



Inventor: Alexander Graham Bell

M. Stephens,
Umbrella.
Patented Nov. 23, 1870



Inventor: M. Stephens

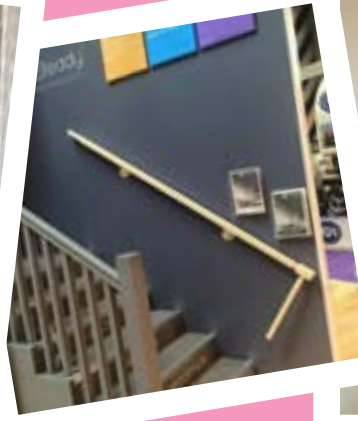
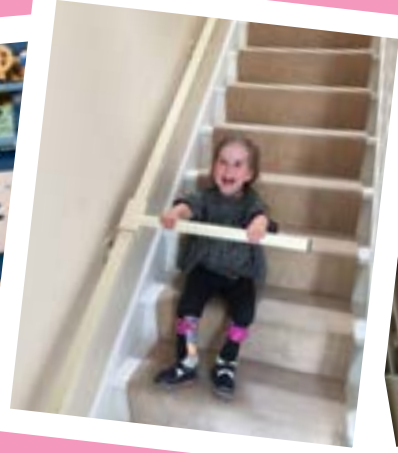
Ruth's story: From GCSE project to patent owner!



At 15, Ruth Amos didn't see engineering as her future career path. Everything changed when her Design and Technology teacher set her a GCSE challenge with a personal connection. He asked her to design something for his father who had suffered a stroke. Crucially, the teacher explained that his dad needed to stay active and couldn't have a stairlift installed. Rising to this challenge, Ruth created the StairSteady, an innovative sliding support handle that locks in place when weight is applied. This provided stability and confidence for users while encouraging continued mobility.

Understanding the value of her invention, Ruth took a crucial step that some inventors miss - she protected her intellectual property by filing for a patent. A UK patent gave her the legal foundation to take action if someone made or sold her invention without her permission in the UK. This protection covered the special way her StairSteady works.

Key IP lesson: Patents are like certificates that only you have for your invention. If someone tries to copy it without asking you first, you can use your patent to stop them.



After winning the Young Engineer for Britain award, Ruth decided to pursue an exciting opportunity. While university remained an option for the future, she chose to focus on bringing her invention to market first. With just £1,200, a laptop and determination, she transformed her parents' dining room into her first business headquarters.

By securing her intellectual property rights early, Ruth had something valuable to offer, not just an idea, but a protected invention with real business potential.

The StairSteady now helps thousands of people maintain their independence across many countries. Ruth's smart approach to her invention allowed her to:

- license her protected invention to partner companies in Canada, America and Australia
- generate revenue through licensing agreements with stronger legal protection and negotiating power
- earn money from these partnerships while helping more people benefit from her invention

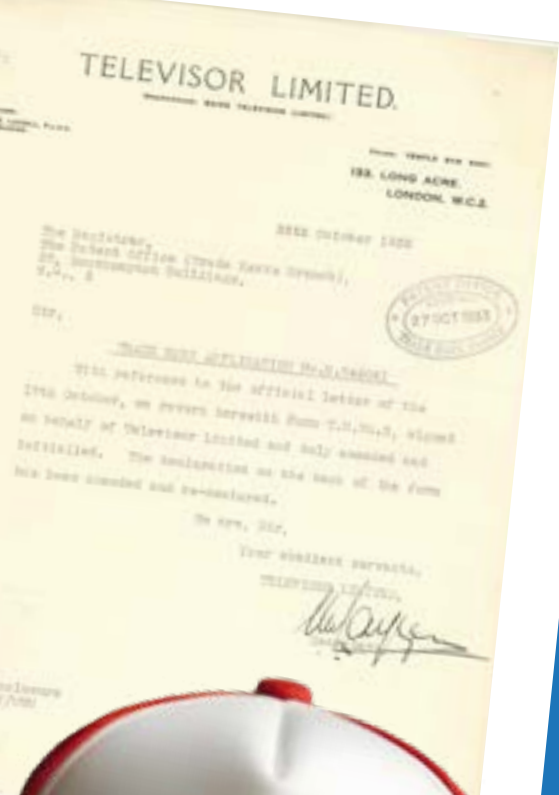
Key IP lesson: Licensing is like letting someone borrow your idea - but not giving it away. You still own it, and they pay you for permission to use it. This way, your invention can reach more people than you could manage on your own.

Ruth's journey didn't end with business success. Passionate about inspiring young people, she co-founded Kids Invent Stuff, a YouTube channel that brings young people's invention ideas to life. Partnering with fellow engineer Shawn (whom she met through the Young Engineers for Britain competition), Ruth created a platform where 5- to 11-year-olds can see their creative ideas become reality.

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) has partnered with Kids Invent Stuff to help showcase the incredible imagination of young inventors across the UK. From carrot cars to karaoke mops, walk-through showers to hair styling robots, Kids Invent Stuff has built a wide array of unique inventions dreamt up by young people.

Ruth's journey from young inventor to successful entrepreneur and YouTube educator shows how protecting your ideas can lead to amazing opportunities. Remember, anyone can be an inventor and understanding how to protect your ideas is the key to turning great ideas into successful innovations!

Activity: Visit the Kids Invent Stuff YouTube channel to see young people's invention ideas brought to life:
www.youtube.com/@KidsInventStuff



Trade mark

Overview

Think about brands like Nike, YouTube, and Coca-Cola - you can spot them almost anywhere in the world, right? While most people think a brand is just a logo, it's actually much more than that. A brand is like a promise to customers about what they can expect. When you see the Nike swoosh, you know you're getting sporty gear. When you click on a YouTube logo online, you know you will find videos.

That's where registered trade marks come in. They're the legal protection (see glossary of terms) for things like logos, names, and slogans that make one company different from another. You can register your UK trade mark with the UK's Intellectual Property Office. There is a specific format, process and fees needed to register a trade mark. When you register your trade mark, you'll be able to:

- take legal action against anyone who uses your brand without your permission, including copycats and counterfeiters
- put the ® symbol next to your brand - to show that it's yours and warn others against using it
- sell, license or even mortgage your trade mark

Unregistered vs registered trade marks

There are also unregistered trade marks. Even if you haven't officially registered your brand's logo for example, you still have some rights to protect it under something called the 'law of passing off'. The law of passing off helps protect your brand from people copying your brand. It could be harder to protect an unregistered trade mark because you need to prove people know it's your brand.

A registered trade mark is like having a passport for your brand - it's official proof that it belongs to you and can make it easier to protect because you have proof it's yours.

What you can and cannot register

A trade mark can be a word, phrase or logo, and can even be a shape, colour, sound, smell/scent, aspect of packaging or any combination of these.

Your trade mark cannot:

- be offensive, for example contain swear words
- describe the goods or services it will relate to, for example the word 'cotton' cannot be a trade mark for a cotton textile company
- be misleading, for example use the word 'organic' for goods that are not organic
- be too common and non-distinctive, for example a statement like 'we lead the way'
- be just a generic shape associated with your business, for example if you sell apples you cannot trade mark the shape of an apple
- make use of national flags you do not have permission to use
- make use of official emblems or hallmarks, for example coats of arms

You may not be able to register your trade mark if it's the same as, or similar to, a trade mark of another business that sells the same goods or services.





Trade mark key points

- a trade mark is a crucial part of your brand that helps customers recognise your goods or services - think of how you instantly know a Nike product from its 'swoosh' logo
- you can trade mark various brand elements including words, phrases, logos, shapes, colours, sounds, smells (called Olfactory Marks), packaging or any combination of these
- once registered with the UK Intellectual Property Office, you can use the ® symbol next to your brand and take legal action against copycats or counterfeiters (see glossary of terms)
- registered trade marks can be renewed every ten years and can be renewed indefinitely
- you cannot trade mark anything offensive, misleading, or too generic - for example, you couldn't trade mark the shape of an apple if selling apples
- you can't use national flags or official emblems without permission or register marks too similar to existing ones in your business area
- when applying, you must choose specific 'classes' and 'terms' (see glossary of terms) that describe your goods or services - like 'Class 25' for clothing, with specific terms like 'sportswear' or 'knitwear'. Your trade mark will only be protected in the classes and terms you select
- once registered, you can sell, license or even mortgage your trade mark - it becomes a valuable business asset
- the IPO's trade mark register contains thousands of brands, straplines and even sound marks that are protected in the UK – why not search for your favourite brands online at www.gov.uk/search-for-trademark



Design

Overview

Most of us will buy a product because we like the way it looks. Design refers to the appearance or 'look' of products and there are two types of protection in law:

- an **unregistered design right** is automatic (don't need to apply to protect it). It's free but can offer less protection.
- a **registered design** is where you apply for protection and your application is examined and, if the application meets the criteria, registered by the Intellectual Property Office in the UK or other international bodies.



Unregistered vs registered designs

Unregistered designs:

Automatic design rights exist in the UK to give the owner the right to prevent unauthorised copying of their design in the UK. There are different types of these automatic design rights:

- the UK **Unregistered Design Right** automatically protects your design for 10 years after it was first sold or 15 years after it was created, whichever is earliest. The right only applies to the shape and configuration (see glossary of terms) of objects.
- **Supplementary Unregistered Design Right** protects the appearance of a product in the UK for 3 years from the date you make your design public. The appearance of a product can be 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional and includes its shape, colours, texture, materials and ornamentation (see glossary of terms).

Find out more about unregistered designs online at www.gov.uk/unregistered-designs

You can register your design for a fee if you need to protect it for longer, provided it meets the eligibility criteria. The next section about Registered Designs explains this in more detail.

Registered designs:

Registering your design makes it easier to prove that the design is legally yours and when you created it, which will help if anyone tries to copy or use your design without your permission. Design registration protects the appearance or 'look' of the whole or part of a product.

What you can and cannot register

Before you apply to register your design, you can search the design registers to check if anyone else has registered your design. To register your design it must be new and can include one or more of the following:

1. physical shape
2. configuration (or how different parts of a design are arranged together)
3. decoration or colour
4. pattern

Discover more about the design registers online at www.gov.uk/register-a-design/before-you-apply

You cannot register:

- offensive material, for example swear words
- designs making use of national flags you do not have permission to use
- designs making use of official emblems or hallmarks, for example the Olympic rings
- the functionality of a design, for example a chair that folds down more quickly than others of the same kind



Design key points

- a design registration helps protect the appearance of a product such as its shape or pattern
- registering your design makes it easier to prove that the design is legally yours and when you created it
- a design registration initially lasts 5 years. You must renew your design registration every 5 years to keep it protected - up to a maximum of 25 years
- once your design is registered it will be published in the journal of registered designs. Anyone will be able to view your design
- you can display your registration number on your design
- you can license, sell or mortgage your design. Find out more online at www.gov.uk/guidance/license-mortgage-sell-change-ownership-and-market-your-design
- you cannot obtain a registered design right for an idea or concept, it's a 'what you see is what you get' right. So, it's vitally important that your application contains images of the product or the packaging you wish to protect. This must be identical to those you intend to actually place on the market



Trade secrets

Ever wondered why you can't find the exact recipe for Coca-Cola anywhere? That's because it's a trade secret. Trade secrets can be all sorts of things including secret recipes, customer lists, software algorithm, or even special ways of making products. Trade secrets are valuable information that companies keep top-secret to stay ahead of their competition.

Some companies might use trade secrets to protect their research findings, whilst tech companies might use them to protect their latest innovations. The interesting thing about trade secrets is that they can last forever, as long as they stay secret.

But keeping secrets in today's digital age isn't easy. Companies have to be careful about who they share their secrets with. They use legal agreements called Non-Disclosure Agreements (see glossary of terms). If someone breaks this promise by sharing the secret, whether through social media, emails, or just telling their friends, they can get into serious legal trouble.

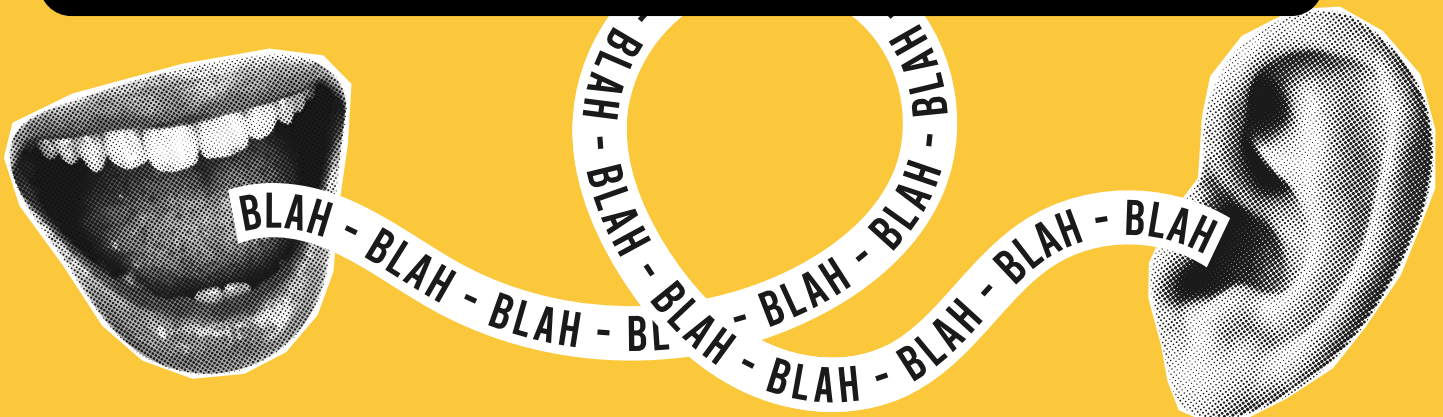
Trade secrets are protected in the UK through common law and other legislative provisions. What makes trade secrets particularly attractive for businesses is that you don't need to register them like patents, and you don't have to tell anyone what your secret is. However, there's one big catch - once a trade secret becomes public, it's game over. You can't make something secret again once it's out there, whether it's leaked through social media, or even a hacked email.



Famous trade secrets!

1. Coca-Cola's and Pepsi's drink recipe
2. Google's algorithm
3. Nike's shoe design process
4. KFC's chicken recipe (11 herbs and spices)
5. PlayStation and Xbox's upcoming gaming features before release

While many companies could probably figure out what's in their competitors' products through testing, the exact methods and proportions often remain secret - just like how you might know what ingredients are in your favourite cake, but not exactly how to make it taste the same!



A closer look at IP

Why should you learn about intellectual property?

Imagine creating an amazing piece of art, inventing a game-changing app, or writing the next viral song – that's your intellectual property. As a student, understanding IP isn't just about legal requirements, it's about protecting your creativity and making sure you get credit for your hard work. Whether you are participating in competitions, developing a science project, or sharing your artwork on social media, IP knowledge empowers you to maintain control of your creations.

Understanding IP provides you with valuable tools to:

- protect your creative work from unauthorised use
- make money from your ideas (even during your school years)
- help enhance your university applications and/or employment prospects
- transform your passion projects into viable career opportunities

In today's digital world where sharing content is as easy as clicking a button, understanding IP helps you respect others' work and avoid unlawfully using other people's intellectual property.

Whether you dream of becoming an engineer, a YouTuber, scientist, fashion designer, or tech entrepreneur, IP knowledge is a fundamental skill for your future success. The understanding you develop now about protecting your intellectual assets could position you as tomorrow's leading innovator or creative professional.

Steps to protect your work

1. **Document Your Work:** Keep detailed records of your work, including drafts, notes, and sketches, as evidence of your creation and its development over time. You could mark your work with your name and date of creation.
2. **Understand Your Rights:** Research the specific IP rights relevant to your project. Use resources like the UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO) website for additional guidance.
3. **Copyright protection:** Automatically applies to your work. You do not need to register it, but you can mark your work with the copyright symbol ©, your name and the year of creation. Whether you mark the work or not, it does not affect the level of protection you have.
4. **Check Your School or College's Policies:** Your school or college may have its own rules on the copyright of work created during your study. Ask your teacher for your school/ college policy.
5. **Your project might be a new invention:** Something that has never been seen or done before. The invention must be a secret and have not been disclosed.
6. **Seek Legal Advice:** If you are unsure about any aspect of protecting your work, speak to your educational organisation, legal guardian and consider consulting with an IP lawyer or expert.



Where to find more information

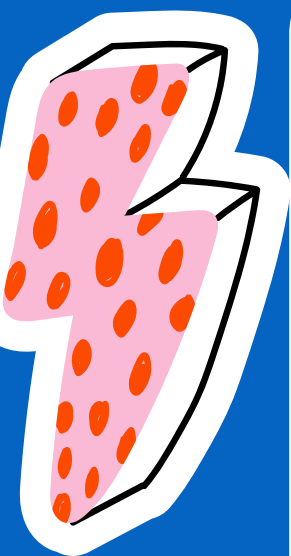
- once registered, educators (or students ages 18+) can access free intellectual property teaching resources, competitions and more online at www.ipo.gov.uk/ip-support/welcome
- the IPO's official guidance online at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/intellectual-property-office
- IPO Education Social Media: Follow us on Instagram (@ipo_education) and YouTube (@IPOTreasureIsland) for accessible, student-friendly IP content, updates on competitions, educational resources and engaging videos about intellectual property concepts. These channels provide regular tips and guidance specifically designed for students and educators
- many schools/colleges/universities provide resources and workshops on IP. Check with your teacher/lecturer to see what is available
- the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys (CIPA) provides free 30-minute clinics with Chartered Patent Attorneys. Visit them online at www.cipa.org.uk/ip-clinics/ for more details
- the Chartered Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (CITMA) offer 30 minutes' free advice on protecting your trade marks or avoiding infringement. The free advice clinics are with qualified legal professionals and members of CITMA and are available for members of the public and small business owners. Visit them online at www.citma.org.uk for more details
- if you are a designer, design maker or design innovator, Anti Copying in Design (ACID) offers practical advice and specialist support to help you understand and manage your intellectual property. Visit them online at www.acid.uk.com for more information



- the British Library's Business & IP Centre offers free IP guidance, workshops and database access. Visit www.bl.uk/bipc/ online for more information.
- check out books on IP law and protection in your local or school/college library.
- Music Copyright Explained: Check out this free guide at www.musiccopyrightexplained.com that breaks down how music copyright works in the UK. It shows you how copyright gives you control over your songs and recordings, explains different ways to make money from your music rights, and covers everything creators need to know about music licensing. The guide includes practical "top five" lists for both music creators and music users, with all the key points explained in simple language. Perfect for understanding how to protect and profit from your creative work!
- CopyrightUser.org: Visit this comprehensive website (www.copyrightuser.org) designed to make UK copyright law easy to understand for everyone - from musicians and

filmmakers to students and content creators. The site offers clear guidance on protecting your work, licensing your creations, and legally using others' content. It's created by leading copyright academics and includes an EU version (CopyrightUser.EU) for guidance on European copyright law. While not legal advice, it's an authoritative resource that explains complex copyright concepts in accessible language, helping you navigate the rules that protect creative work.

- want to make money from your music? Get your data right! Whether you write or perform music, understanding metadata is essential for turning creativity into a career. The free Get Paid Guide (www.getpaidguide.co.uk) explains music metadata simply and clearly. Created by music industry experts and the IPO, this resource shows you exactly what information to include when registering your music (like song titles, songwriter credits, and industry identifiers such as ISRC, IPI and ISNI numbers). It breaks down writer shares, performer shares and mechanical royalties, and transforms



complex processes into straightforward steps with videos and checklists. Industry experts use it as a reference, and some leaders suggest it could double your income by ensuring you don't leave money on the table.

- **Creative Commons:** Learn how to legally share your creative work while maintaining some rights or use others' work through standardised licenses at <https://creativecommons.org>. These free licenses create a balance between traditional copyright and the public domain, helping students and creators specify exactly how their work can be used by others while promoting knowledge sharing and collaboration.
- **Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS):** For students interested in writing careers, www.alcs.co.uk/resources/ provides valuable insights

into how writers receive payment for secondary uses of their work (such as photocopies, digital reproductions, and educational recordings). This not-for-profit organisation represents over 120,000 writers and provides useful resources on copyright, writers' rights, and how collective licensing works in the publishing industry. Their website offers excellent further reading on the economics of writing and intellectual property in practice.

By understanding, protecting, and managing your IP, you ensure that your innovations and creative works are safeguarded, paving the way for recognition and success in your academic and professional journey!



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Assignment:** The act of selling or transferring your copyright. This must be done with a written, signed contract to be legally valid.
- **Brand:** A brand is much more than just a logo or name, it's the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, influence a person's choice of one product or service over another.
- **Breach of confidence:** Revealing secret information without permission.
- **Chartered Patent Attorney:** A qualified professional who specialises in patent law.
- **Chartered Trade Mark Attorney:** A qualified professional who specialises in trade mark law.
- **'Classes' and 'Terms':** When registering a trade mark, items are sorted into 45 different categories (called "classes") using a system called the Nice classification. Classes 1-34 are for physical products (like clothes, food, or electronics), while classes 35-45 are for services (like education, legal advice, or entertainment). Each class contains a list of specific items or services (called "terms") to help you identify exactly what your trade mark will protect.
- **Civil law:** Laws that deal with disputes between individuals or organisations.
- **Commercialisation:** The process of bringing a product or service to market.
- **Configuration:** The arrangement of parts or elements.
- **Confidentiality agreement:** also known as a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), is a legally binding contract that protects sensitive information.
- **Copyright:** Automatic protection for creative works like writing, music, or art.
- **CPD accredited:** Continuing Professional Development recognised for ongoing learning.
- **Counterfeiters:** someone who illegally copies or produces goods, services, or money to deceive others.
- **Design Registration:** Protection for the unique appearance of a product.
- **Due diligence:** Careful research before taking action.
- **Exclusive right:** The legal right to be the only one to make, use, sell or import something for a set period of time.
- **Granted:** Official approval or permission given by an authority (in IP context, usually means a patent or trade mark has been officially approved).

- **Infringement:** an action that breaks a rule, law, for example, copyright infringement.
- **Intellectual property (IP):** Intellectual property is something that you create using your mind - for example, a story, an invention, an artistic work or a symbol.
- **Intellectual property office (IPO):** The IPO is an operating name of the Patent Office. It is the government body responsible for intellectual property rights in the UK and is an executive agency of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- **Intellectual property rights:** the exclusive rights given to persons over the creations of their minds.
- **IP Framework:** The system of laws, rules, and procedures that the United Kingdom has in place to protect intellectual property.
- **Inventive:** Original and not obvious to experts in that field.
- **Legal Protection:** The rights and remedies provided by law to prevent others from copying, using or profiting from your intellectual property without permission
- **License:** Intellectual property can be bought, sold or licensed. A licence is an agreement between you as the IP right owner and another party. It grants them permission to do something that would be an infringement of the rights without the licence. Find out more online via www.gov.uk/guidance/licensing-intellectual-property
- **Moral Rights:** Special rights that belong to the creator of a work that cannot be sold or given away, even if they sell their copyright. These include the right to be named as the author and the right to prevent others from changing the work in ways that could damage the creator's reputation. However, creators can choose to give up these rights if they want to.
- **Non-disclosure agreement (NDA):** A legal contract to keep information secret.
- **Ornamentation:** Decorative elements added to something.
- **Patent:** Protection for new inventions or technological improvements.
- **Publishing of Inventions:** The public disclosure of an invention.
- **Renew:** To extend the period of protection for intellectual property rights by paying the required fees before expiry. Different IP rights have different renewal periods.
- **Third parties:** People or organisations other than the main parties/people involved in an agreement or transaction. In IP, these are usually people who aren't the IP owner or licensed user.
- **Trade Mark:** A sign (like a logo or name) that identifies a brand or company. For example, the Nike swoosh symbol or apple logo.
- **Trade Secret:** Confidential information that gives a business an advantage.
- **Transfer of rights:** The legal process of assigning or selling intellectual property rights from one party to another, usually through a written agreement.





Concept House
Cardiff Road
Newport
NP10 8QQ

Tel: 0300 300 2000
Email: information@ipo.gov.uk
Web: www.gov.uk/ipo

Main channels:

X: @The_IPO
Instagram: intellectualpropertyoffice
Facebook: Intellectual Property Office UK
YouTube: Intellectual Property Office UK
LinkedIn: Intellectual Property Office UK

Education channels:

X: IPOeducation
Instagram: ipo_education
Facebook: Cracking.Ideas
YouTube: @IPOTreasureIsland
LinkedIn: IPO Education - Cracking Ideas

Enforcement channels:

X: IPOEnforcement
Instagram: ipoenforcement
Facebook: IPOCounterInfringement
LinkedIn: IPO Counter-Infringement

For copies in alternative formats please
contact our Customer Support Centre.

When you no longer need this booklet, please recycle it.

© Crown copyright 2025

This document is free for re-use under the terms of the
Open Government Licence.

Some of the images within this document are licensed by Adobe Stock
under Editorial use (stock.adobe.com)
Ruth Amos (www.ruthamos.com)
Espacenet (www.worldwide.espacenet.com)

Published: September 2025
CP2502476



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE

