



**3 simple rules to protect your
intellectual property**



Introduction

Intellectual Property is key to the value of your organization

This whitepaper is about the protection of intellectual property (IP) content, namely:



Proprietary information such as training manuals, e-books, research reports.



Confidential company documents such as trade secrets, contracts, price lists, designs, and formulas.

In a digital-first world, intellectual property can be vulnerable to leaks, theft, and other threats. Imagine spending hours of work and thousands of dollars on your IP, only to have it copied, reproduced, and freely distributed. What happens then?

IP leaks are not uncommon occurrences. Having your IP leaked can snowball into far-reaching consequences. In some cases, it can result in lawsuits, loss of revenue, reputation losses, or even bad publicity.

Your IP represents your business' distinct competitive advantage. In fact, the value of your IP helps determine the true value of your business as a whole. Therefore, protecting your company's intellectual property should always be a priority.

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Rule 1: Identify what needs to be protected

You can't protect what you don't know needs securing. An internal audit can help you create an inventory list of your organization's existing and potentially long-term intellectual property assets. This will help clearly identify and determine the value of your IP. You can even consider investing in patents and trademarks for your most valuable IP upon conducting an internal audit.



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Rule 2: Plan how you want to protect your intellectual property

After you've made a list of content that needs protection, you should evaluate how you are going to protect them. This can involve a combination of legal, physical, and technical barriers. Not every method will be appropriate for the content you are trying to protect. Thus, it's important to evaluate the following and see what works for you.

Legal barriers



Copyright notice

As long as your content is original, your materials are copyrighted automatically upon creation. However, there are still advantages to using a copyright notice.

Firstly, it tells everyone who has access to your content that it is copyrighted. If the material carries proper notice, it would be hard for infringers to claim they were unaware of its protection and request for a reduction in damages.

Placing a notice for your works is incredibly simple. All you have to do is include the copyright symbol or the word "copyright", the name of the copyright holder, the year in which the work was copyrighted, and the words "all rights reserved". See the example below.

© 2021 Digify. All rights reserved.

Similar to placing a copyright notice, legal warnings can serve as additional protection for your IP. A lengthier notice can further support your case if you decide to take legal action for IP infringement. See the example template below.

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Unless otherwise indicated, this website and its content are our proprietary property. All source code, databases, functionality, software, website designs, audio, video, text, photographs, and graphics on the Site (collectively, the “Content”) and the trademarks, service marks, and logos contained therein (the “Marks”) are owned or controlled by us or licensed to us, and are protected by copyright and trademark laws and various other intellectual property rights and unfair competition laws of the United States, foreign jurisdictions and international conventions.



Legal agreements

You can have recipients agree to a legal agreement for accessing IP that is highly valuable to your company. Examples of such an agreement include a Non-disclosure Agreement (NDA) or an Intellectual Property License Agreement. This will put the recipient on notice that you are willing to take legal action to defend your rights if necessary.



Patents and trademarks

If your IP is crucial to your business, registering for patents and trademarks might be necessary. There are different conditions to fulfill before registering a patent or a trademark. You should always check the requirements needed, based on the jurisdiction you are in.

Physical barriers

There are certain physical hurdles you can put in place to protect your IP. If you have to handle sensitive hardcopy documents, mark them with a written or printed ‘CONFIDENTIAL’ label. You should always keep such files in a safe location that is locked after business hours.

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Technical barriers



Password protection

Restrict printing, editing, and copying of PDFs by password protecting confidential files. You can do so with Adobe Acrobat Reader DC or other online tools.

However, a password is not tied to the identity of the person viewing the file. There are still risks for your documents if your password gets leaked. It is also possible to crack files with a PDF password removal tool. If both password and file are out there, you are still not going to have control.



Dynamic Watermarking

Watermarks are used to protect content as well as to claim ownership of an asset. Without watermarks, your IP can be susceptible to theft and unauthorized use. It reminds recipients to handle your information with care.

A more advanced alternative would be to use Digify to automatically watermark files. With Digify's dynamic watermarking option, you can display recipients' email addresses and/or IP addresses on your documents automatically when they view them. Recipients would think twice before sharing your files without permission, as it can be traced back to them.



Digital Rights Management

Traditional Digital Rights Management (DRM) software can help restrict copying, printing, and editing of your files. Many companies avoid using traditional DRM due to its complexity and high prices. However, there are solutions available today that are completely web-based, easy to use, and affordable.

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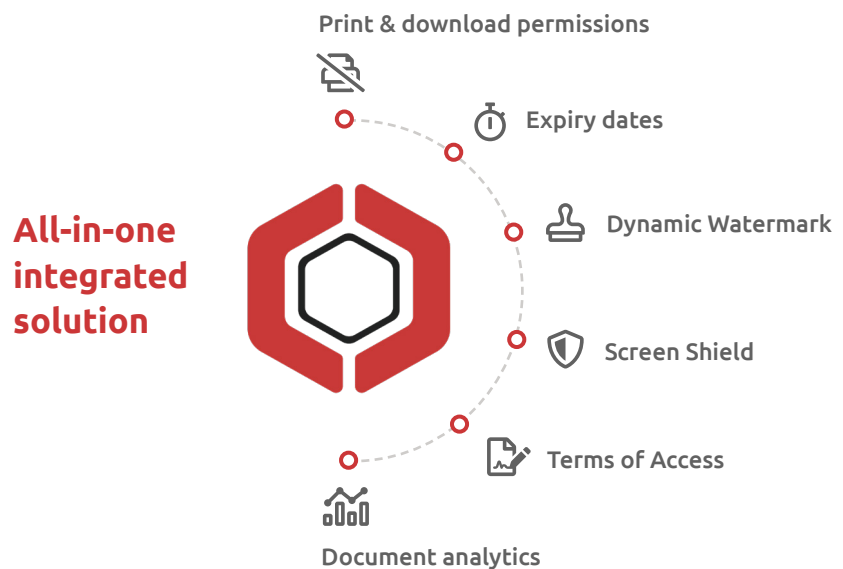
Rule 3: Actually execute your plan

After deciding how you want to protect your IP, carry out your plan immediately. It may seem tedious and costly to do so. However, the cost is well worth paying for compared to the risks of not staking your claim.

The protection of your intellectual property depends on the steps taken by you to keep it confidential. Otherwise, there may be less room for recourse legally if infringement occurs.

If you're looking for an affordable all-in-one Digital Rights Management solution, try Digify.

Digify's document security and data rooms are a key component of an integrated intellectual property protection strategy. Not only can it protect your IP, but it can also save you time and money.



Easily protect, track and control your content after hitting send. **Try it for yourself with a no-obligation free trial at digify.com/trial.html or visit digify.com for more information.**



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