Anything you make with your own abilities: a drawing, painting, literary work, music or other creative form belongs to you. This means the right to reproduce it - the COPYRIGHT - is yours automatically. If you don’t give the copyright away, or sell it, then nobody else has the right to use your work in any way without your permission. Typically, it’s this specific permission that you are selling to clients and publishers, not the artwork itself.

If you create a piece of work while employed by someone else, the copyright for that work belongs to the employer. If you use someone else’s work in your creation such as an image or a character then another creator may have rights in that work and you will need permission.

As a creator you also have Moral Rights. These are:

- The Right of Paternity: the right to be identified as ‘the author’ where your work is published commercially, broadcast or included in a film, photograph or graphic work exhibited in public. You must assert this right.

- The Right of Integrity: the right to object to your work being altered, distorted or otherwise subjected to derogatory treatment. This right is yours automatically unless specifically waived.

The internet is made up of millions of images. Each one is made by a real person but we can access them as easily as air or water. Copying and using someone else’s images is so effortless it feels trivial. But unless the creator gives their permission for you to use their work, you are stealing their time, energy and creativity. Always ask first. If you want to make money from an image you must pay the person who made it. If they don’t want money you must still give credit to the person who made the image.

A short guide to COPYRIGHT and YOU

Produced by Woodrow Phoenix and Hannah Berry

The COMICS CREATORS NETWORK

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