

# **Copyright and the Thesis -**

## **A Short Guide for Supervisors**

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# Today we will cover

- What is copyright?
- The law
- Text and images
- Ideas
- The Internet
- The HRD student as a user of copyright
- The HRD student as an owner of copyright

# What is copyright?

- The right to make a copy
- It's a property right that can be owned, sold, distributed under licence or given away
- Or stolen (which is illegal)
- It must relate to some sort of fixed expression – “literary, dramatic, musical, or artistic works”
- The work must be original
- Copyright initially belongs to the creator of the work but can be acquired by publishers or employers
- Copyright doesn't cover ideas or data, only specific expressions

# The law

- Copyright Act 1994
- Based on British/Commonwealth law
- Regulates “fair dealing” with copyrighted works
- Includes special provisions for research, study and educational use
- And for criticism, review and reporting

# Text and images

- All text is automatically covered by copyright – it doesn't have to be published or “claimed”
- Images are also copyright separately from text – this includes graphs and tables

# Ideas

- The idea, as opposed to its expression, is **not** covered by copyright
- It can still be considered intellectual property if it's original and non-obvious
- In which case it could be patented
- But you might need to keep quiet about it – once you've told someone an idea it's theirs as well

# What about plagiarism?

- To use someone's ideas without attribution is a breach of research ethics
- But not of copyright unless the actual words or images are also used

# The Internet

- Copyright applies by default to material on the Internet
- There doesn't have to be a copyright statement or any mark of ownership
- This also applies to images
- But you can often make use of Creative Commons licenses



# The HRD student as a user of copyright - the **good** news

- The Copyright Act allows unrestricted use of material for the purpose of examination, which includes the thesis
- So any use of text or images, including images, graphs and even whole articles or chapters is not an infringement
- But ...

# The HRD student as a user of copyright - the **bad** news

- As soon as the thesis appears online (in Massey Research Online) it becomes a publication and then quite restrictive rules apply
- So if the student wishes to use any material for which they do not own the copyright (which may include their own publications) they need to ask for permission
- **Early!!!**
- Or have two versions - dissemination and archival

This needs to be sorted out **at the time the decision to include the copyright material is made**

# The HRD student as a copyright owner

- The student owns the copyright to their thesis, but
- University regulations require that it be placed in Massey Research Online (MRO) unless an embargo is granted
- It may be necessary to remove sensitive material from the dissemination copy

# Further publications from the thesis

- It's risky to turn thesis chapters directly into articles
- If it is already in MRO this would count as double publishing or self plagiarism
- Ideally publish the chapters first, or
- Write articles that develop the ideas from the thesis
- Make sure the student gets good advice from experienced scholars on selecting journals to submit work to
- They can also check with the Library about journals to avoid, or
- <http://thinkchecksubmit.org/>
- If the student wants to publish the thesis as a book this needs to be discussed with the potential publisher as early as possible

Have a post thesis strategy  
worked out early on

Questions?

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