

# Intellectual Property: Benefits for Creators & Consumers



The concept of “property” doesn’t just mean goods or land, but also extends to creations of the mind called “intellectual property” (or “IP” for short). IP includes inventions, literary and artistic works, as well as symbols and images used in commerce. So many of the things that we enjoy in the marketplace today, whether online or offline – books, art, music, your smartphone (and apps), movies, and the internet – rely on the protection of intellectual property for their existence and availability to consumers. Intellectual property rights give creators and innovators the incentive to create and invent new things, by ensuring they can benefit from the result of their efforts.

## What constitutes intellectual property?

A white icon of a document with a lock symbol, representing patents, set against a blue background.

### Patents

Gives inventors certain exclusive rights to exploit their inventions for a set period of time.

Without patents, there would be little incentive to invent, because anyone could copy that invention and benefit unfairly from another person’s work.

**Example: Patented AT&T Project AirGig™ technology**

A 3D rendering of a drone with a camera, flying over a green field. The drone is white and black, with a camera lens visible.

A white copyright symbol (©) icon, set against a blue background.

### Copyright

Gives creators certain exclusive rights to their literary and artistic creations (called “works”) such as books, video games, movies, software, art, or music.

Copyright only exists for a limited time. It does not protect mere ideas and facts, and there are no formalities required for copyright protection – it exists automatically upon creation of the work.

**Example: Copyrighted HBO Game of Thrones series**

A close-up image of a dragon's face from the Game of Thrones series, with the text "GOT" and "©2019 Home Box Office" overlaid.



## Trademarks

Distinctive signs (like logos and names) that identify a service or product, which helps consumers distinguish goods and services from each other.

They help ensure that consumers are getting the “real deal” when they shop or use a product, and they help trademark owners differentiate their products and services and build goodwill from the association of the trademark with the product or service.

**Example: Trademarked Warner Bros. Entertainment logo**



## Why is intellectual property important?

Intellectual property promotes innovation and supports progress in technology that gives consumers access to new goods. It's what puts a smartphone in your pocket rather than keeping that technology in a lab, and permits an open and free market for you to easily enjoy the video games and music of others. It supports millions of jobs in businesses large and small and millions of individuals who work with their minds and hands.



Protecting intellectual property is guaranteed in our Constitution, which gives Congress power “To promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to use their respective writings and discoveries.”<sup>1</sup> It's critical to preserve the spirit of innovation and imagination that has made America the world's leader in inventions, music, movies, discovery, and more.

1. U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8, Clause 8.