

Copyright, Copyleft and Creative Commons

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Figure 1: Image courtesy of <http://estrecho.indymedia.org/>

The legal grey area. In copyright law there is an area called Fair Dealing, which says that copyrighted

material can be used in a number of ways without infringing the copyright. Of particular interest here is the area of Research and Private Study:

"Fair dealing with a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work for the purposes of research for non-commercial purposes does not infringe any copyright in the work as long as an appropriate acknowledgement is also included." ([Copyright - An Overview](#))

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Copyright



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[JISC - Copyright - An Overview](#)
[Introducing Copyright - downloadable booklet](#)

Copyleft



The following definition of copyleft is taken from the [GNU Project](#). While it refers primarily to software, the concept is equally applicable to other media as well, such as images, audio, video and text.

"Copyleft is a general method for making a program (or other work) free, and requiring all modified and extended versions of the program to be free as well.

The simplest way to make a program free software is to put it in the [public domain](#), uncopyrighted. This allows people to share the program and their improvements, if they are so minded. But it also allows uncooperative people to convert the program into [proprietary software](#). They can make changes, many or few, and distribute the result as a proprietary product. People who receive the program in that modified form do not have the freedom that the original author gave them; the middleman has stripped it away.

In the [GNU project](#), our aim is to give *all* users the freedom to redistribute and change GNU software. If middlemen could strip off the freedom, we might have many users, but those users would not have freedom. So instead of putting GNU software in the public domain, we “copyleft” it. Copyleft says that anyone who redistributes the software, with or without changes, must pass along the freedom to further copy and change it. Copyleft guarantees that every user has freedom."

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Further Support

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