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A **patent** is a form of intellectual property that gives the owner the legal right to exclude others from making, using, selling and importing an invention for a limited period of years, in exchange for publishing an enabling public disclosure of the invention. In most countries patent rights fall under civil law and the patent holder needs to sue someone infringing the patent in order to enforce his or her rights. In some industries patents are an essential form of competitive advantage; in others they are irrelevant

The procedure for granting patents, requirements placed on the patentee, and the extent of the exclusive rights vary widely between countries according to national laws and international agreements. Typically, however, a patent application must include one or more claims that define the invention. A patent may include many claims, each of which defines a specific property right. These claims must meet relevant patentability requirements, such as novelty, usefulness, and non-obviousness.

Copyright is the exclusive right given to the creator of a creative work to reproduce the work, usually for a limited time. The creative work may be in a literary, artistic, educational, or musical form. Copyright is intended to protect the original expression of an idea in the form of a creative work, but not the idea itself.^{[6][7][8]} A copyright is subject to limitations based on public interest considerations, such as the fair use doctrine in the United States. Some jurisdictions require "fixing" copyrighted works in a tangible form. It is often shared among multiple authors, each of whom holds a set of rights to use or license the work, and who are commonly referred to as rights holders. These rights frequently include reproduction, control over derivative works, distribution, public performance, and moral rights such as attribution

Copyrights can be granted by public law and are in that case considered "territorial rights". This means that copyrights granted by the law of a certain state, do not extend beyond the territory of that specific jurisdiction. Copyrights of this type vary by country; many countries, and sometimes a large group of countries, have made agreements with other countries on procedures applicable when works "cross" national borders or national rights are inconsistent

Typically, the public law duration of a copyright expires 50 to 100 years after the creator dies, depending on the jurisdiction. Some countries require certain copyright formalities to establishing copyright, others recognize copyright in any completed work, without formal registration.

A **trademark** (also written **trade mark** or **trade-mark**) is a type of intellectual property consisting of a recognizable sign, design, or expression which identifies products or services of a particular source from those of others,^{[2][3]} although trademarks used to identify services are usually called service marks.^{[4][5]} The trademark owner can be an individual, business organization, or any legal entity. A trademark may be located on a package, a label, a voucher, or on the product itself. For the sake of corporate identity, trademarks are often displayed on company buildings. It is legally recognized as a type of intellectual property. The 1938 Act, which served as a model for similar legislation elsewhere, contained other novel concepts such as "associated trademarks", a consent to use system, a defensive mark system, and non-claiming right system.

The symbols [™] (the trademark symbol) and ® (the registered trademark symbol) can be used to indicate trademarks; the latter is only for use by the owner of a trademark that has been registered.

Trade secrets are a type of intellectual property that comprise formulas, practices, processes, designs, instruments, patterns, or compilations of information that have inherent economic value because they are not generally known or readily ascertainable by others, and which the owner takes reasonable measures to keep secret. In some jurisdictions, such secrets are referred to as confidential information.