**ELENDU JUSTICE CHIRINGO**

**17/ENG02/021**

**COMPUTER ENGINEERING**

**ENG 384 ASSIGNMENT**

Briefly discuss the following intellectual property protection methods.

1 Patent

2 Copyright

3 Trademark

4 Trade secret

**ANSWERS**

**Patent ®**

If you've invented a unique product, the machine or equipment, or chemical composition, you can also protect this IP by filing for a patent with the USPTO online. Patents carry legal protection that excludes others from making and distributing your invention unless you have given them the license. There are different types of the [patent process](https://www.uspto.gov/patents-getting-started/patent-process-overview#step4), and the conditions or requirements depend on the product or invention so you'll need to carefully identify which category the IP fits best.

Most IP patents are valid from 15 to 20 years after the filing date. After this has lapsed, your product will have a patent pending status unless you renew with the USPTO.

Take your time to clearly understand the [differences between copyrights, trademarks, and patents](https://www.copyrighted.com/blog/difference-copyright-patent-trademark) so you could make the right choice.

**Copyright ©**

Copyright applies to the protection of tangible and intangible creative works. You own the copyright the moment you create something if you did not register it. However, it will be easier to validate your ownership, especially in a legal dispute, if you take your time to [register your work](https://www.copyrighted.com/copyright-works).

Copyrights expire 70 years after the death of the creator but also can be longer depending on the nature of the IP.

**Trademark ™**

Businesses use symbols, designs, logos, and catchphrases as part of their marketing strategy and identity. It's these images and words that help a company connect to its customers; thus, these need to be protected from possible commercial saboteurs who might use or copy the designs for their own economic gain.

You may register your trademark online with the [U.S. Patent and Trademark Office](https://www.uspto.gov/trademarks-application-process/filing-online) (USPTO). The agency, however, advices hiring a trademark lawyer first to ensure that you won't miss out any steps or paperwork to this extensive process.

Trademarks do not carry an expiration date since you own the rights to your logos, symbols and other branding identities in perpetuity. However, as an added protection, trademark owners are encouraged by law to file for a Section 8 declaration to confirm that the IP is still actively used.

**Trade Secret**

Trade secrets are**proprietary procedures, systems, devices, formulas, strategies or other information that is confidential and exclusive to the company using them**. They act as competitive advantages for the business.

There actually isn’t a federally-regulated registration process for trade secrets. Instead, the onus is on the company in possession of the secret to take necessary precautions to maintain it as such. This is an ongoing, proactive process and can include clearly marking relevant documents as “Confidential,” implementing physical and data security measures, keeping logs of visitors and restricting access. The issuance of nondisclosure agreements or other documented assurances of secrecy can also be employed. One of the first defenses typically put up when you assert that someone misappropriated your trade secret is that you failed to adequately treat it as a trade secret. Though there are no official registration costs, there are costs associated with taking appropriate precautions and security measures. You must weigh the competitive significance of your secrets against the cost of protecting them.