

fiftyfive⁵

Part of **Accenture** Song

Copyright at Work

Understanding use and risk
in Canadian workplaces

2025



Copying, sharing and reusing published material is prevalent throughout Canadian organizations



91% of office workers access published content to help them do their job

What they're accessing



86%
websites



51%
newspaper
articles



42%
industry
reports



34%
books



33%
journal
articles



32%
magazine
articles



30%
research papers

Workers use published text and images at work for a variety of reasons



46%
Keeping up-to-date
with the latest
developments



44%
Knowledge
expansion



33%
Market and
competitor
intelligence (e.g.
gathering information
for work)



32%
Maintaining best
practices



30%
Marketing and
promotion



30%
For design inspiration
or use in a report,
etc.

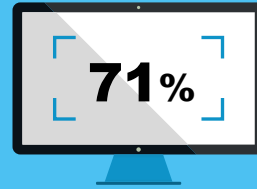
Research was conducted by Fiftyfive5, an independent market research agency, and consisted of a 15-minute online survey with 1,110 white-collar workers in Canada across a range of industries and business sizes, accompanied by 12 in-depth interviews with a mix of white-collar workers who are using and sharing text and images and those responsible for copyright compliance.

How is content used?

Employees are downloading or taking screenshots of content on a weekly basis



download articles or publications



take screenshots of text, charts, graphs or images

It's shared internally...



81%

via email or workplace platforms like Slack, Teams, etc.



77%

via shared drives and storage platforms (e.g. OneDrive, Google Drive, SharePoint)



63%

via printed copies in meetings, training sessions or presentations



64%

via email or file transfer to external stakeholders



55%

uploading to their organization's public website or social-media accounts

Employees insert published content into presentations and documents on a regular basis



62%

copy or take a screenshot of text



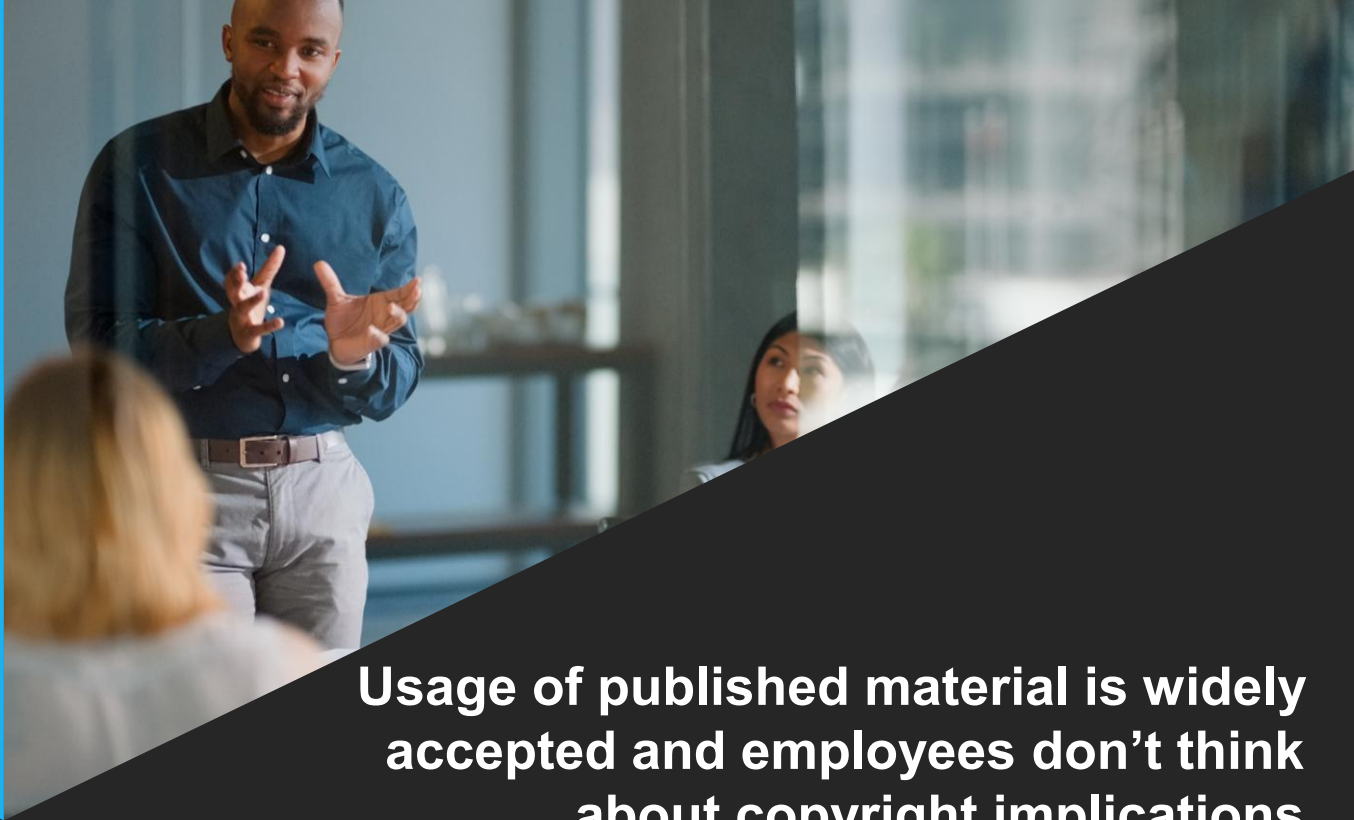
60%

copy or take a screenshot of charts or graphs



54%

copy or take a screenshot of images or photos (without explicit permission)



Usage of published material is widely accepted and employees don't think about copyright implications

There is very little **policing or oversight** on how content is used.

A lack of focus on copyright leads many to incorrectly believe their **content use is not infringing**.

With more stress and time pressures than ever before, workers **are focused on churning through work** and taking short cuts where they can.

Copyrighted material is seen as **fair game** to use for internal and external purposes.

"I feel like if I can access it easily, then it's not copyrighted that well or if it's accessible on the Internet it's free to use."

**Engineering (non-software),
Engineer**

"We were taught the Internet is your oyster, go search it and learn things. And then, here we are as working adults and it's like 'oh, there's copyright'. It's not how we were raised using this."

**Professional Service,
Customer / Account
Services**

"For the smaller businesses, thinking about copyright is just asking employees to take an extra step, which is a little unnecessary. We're more interested in time and the transfer of the communication versus 'okay, is this the right thing to send?'"

**Information Services,
Program / Project
Management**



Most businesses underestimate the risk and potential consequences of copyright infringement



Myth:

Copyright does not apply if I am only doing it for internal purposes.

Truth:

Copyright law does not distinguish between a copy being made and shared with colleagues or to external parties.

“We've taken information from the web, but I don't know if we've really worried about copyright.”



**Professional services,
Administrative**

Most businesses aren't protected against potential copyright infringement because of assumed coverage, low perceived risk and high perceived effort to get permission.

01

“I wasn't aware that we are doing anything wrong”

Low knowledge of copyright law and an assumption that citing the author 'has them covered' means most employees (and their employers) are unaware that their behaviour may be putting their organization at risk.

02

“It's not worth the time, effort or cost”

For businesses, the time or hassle to investigate rights outweighs the perceived risk.

03

“No one else is worrying about it so why should I?”

Copyright is not spoken about in the media or within organizations, and most have never had a conversation at work about it. Many assume illegal behaviour would be policed by the organization, particularly in compliance-focused organizations, but recall no training or communications on this topic.

04

“I won't get caught, and if I do the penalty is low”

Most underestimate the potential risk and consequences of infringement - especially for day-to-day behaviours.

05

“I want to do the right thing, but...”

Even when the intent is there, there is a gap between intent and reality with very few actively paying or supporting creators.



Copyright misunderstanding puts organizations at risk

Misunderstanding of copyright law and using published material for work purposes is high among Canadian workers, putting organizations at risk

Myth:

If content is on the Internet, the material can be copied or used by anyone.

Truth:

Copyright applies even on the Internet. Most websites have a copyright notice or information about terms of use but even if they don't, it can still be infringement if you use the content.

Myth:

I paid for a copy or for access, so I am free to use it as I wish.

Truth:

Purchasing a copy of a publication or image does not mean that you have purchased the rights to reproduce or share the material.

Myth:

As long as I cite the creator, I'm copyright compliant.

Truth:

Citing the creator does not exempt you from needing permission if you are using it in marketing or business material or using a large or "substantial" part of the work.

"I just assume that once it's published, it's just there to get the information, and to use the information."

Professional services

"I don't think anyone worries about copyright and I don't know if what we're doing is right or wrong. We assume that if we bought the article, we can use it in-house however we need it."

**Pharmaceuticals,
Legal, Governance &
Compliance**



The research identified three mindsets when it comes to copyright compliance



CREATOR CHAMPIONS

SIZE

29%

WHO THEY ARE

People who want to **celebrate content creators** by ensuring that employees are accessing content legally and that creators are being paid if people copy and share their content.

WHAT THEY WANT

A solution that will allow them to **do the right thing**, protect their business' **reputation** and allow them to be seen to be upholding good values.



COMPLIANCE CHAMPIONS

32%

WHO THEY ARE

People who want to **protect themselves and other staff members** from legal, reputational and financial risks due to low copyright awareness and compliance.

WHAT THEY WANT

A solution that **protects their business** against current risk **without having to understand or investigate the complexity of copyright** or monitor compliance.



CONVENIENCE CHAMPIONS

39%

WHO THEY ARE

Keen to get on with their work, this group **believes all content available online should be readily usable for work purposes.**

WHAT THEY WANT

An **easy and cost-efficient solution** to allow them to just get on with their work.

WHICH ONE ARE YOU?

Workers want to see more done to reward content creators

Canadian office workers want to see content creators rewarded for their work and believe organizations should do more to be copyright compliant.



72%

believe their **organizations should do more** to be copyright compliant.



66%

believe that those who create digital content should be **paid** if people copy and share it.



63%

believe those who create hard copy content (e.g. printed newspapers, magazines) should be paid if people copy and share it.

"We want the content creators to get paid, but we just don't really know how to do that."

**Information Services,
Program / Project management**

"It's the right thing to do. You have to put a face to the work, these are actual creators making all this and it's their job."

**Engineering,
Program / Project management**

"I think it's good and fair to reward content creators. They need to make a living so it's equally fair for them to be paid for the content."

**Financial services,
Finance / Accounting**



What you need to know

01

Copyright law gives creators control over how their original work is used. This includes things like books, photos, magazine and newspaper articles, journals and research papers, websites and more.

02

Using a copyright-protected work requires permission from the copyright holder, more so than simply citing the source. This includes when your employees share critical content such as emailing a news clipping to a colleague, including a data table in a presentation or posting a research article to your company intranet or storage system.

03

Employees expect organizations to take responsibility when it comes to being copyright compliant so they can download, copy or save content to help them do their job.

04

This research has highlighted that usage and sharing of copyrighted material is widespread across organizations in Canada, often without awareness of when a licence may be required.

Find out more

This research was conducted by Fiftyfive5 on behalf of Access Copyright. For more information, contact info@accesscopyright.ca or visit <https://www.accesscopyright.ca>

Fiftyfive5, part of Accenture Song, is a customer insight-led strategy consultancy founded in 2010. It is one of APAC's fastest-growing consultancies and works extensively across the region, with five offices, and 200 of the industry's best market research talent.