

# Like, Comment, Share, and Protect the Copyright of Digital Content

## Intellectual Property Alert

08.07.2020

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Do you produce and share content through social media or a blog? You may be surprised to know that, until now, little copyright protection was available under U.S. law for digital works.

Especially considering the ability to release content frequently through online channels, current copyright law makes it burdensome for creators to protect this type of work. Protecting live tweets during a political debate or in a travel blog documenting a long trip has required a new registration application for every new post—until now, as a new procedure allows group registration for short online literary works.

The U.S. has adopted the international norm of automatic copyright existing for a work as soon as it is set in a medium, including online social media. This is only a baseline protection, however. Importantly, you may not file a copyright infringement lawsuit unless your copyright is registered. Therefore, the U.S. Copyright Office has made an effort to modernize its registration system by permitting group registration of up to 50 online literary works, known as the Group Registration for Short Online Literary Works (GRTX). This work can include poems, short stories, articles, essays, columns, blog entries, or social media posts published on online platforms. Podcasts and other types of non-literary works are excluded.

To be registered using the GRTX process, an eligible group of work must include no more than 50 separate online works that are each between 50 words and 17,500 words. Additionally, all the work must be written by the same person, or co-written by the same group of people, and must have been published online within a three-calendar-month period. Also, because this process seeks to benefit individual writers, registerable works may not be works made for hire (e.g., a work that you've hired an outside contractor to write). Other requirements and an explanation for the GRTX application are detailed in the new [Circular 67](#), and there is also a set of [frequently asked questions](#).

This new process indicates that the U.S. Copyright Office is very slowly adjusting to the use of online platforms as the go-to medium for content distribution. It should encourage online content producers to seek copyright registration for their work. This particular process provides social media users, blog authors, and other online content creators an easier and more efficient method to register their works.

More information regarding the GRTX process can be found on a [presentation](#) provided by the U.S. Copyright Office.

The lawyers of McCarter & English, LLP, are well versed in copyright and internet laws, and welcome comments and questions from readers.

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