

AMA resources

Copyright © and the Press
— what you need to know



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Getting press coverage for a show, an exhibition, a tour, one-off event, special announcement or the launch of a new product is an achievement that you want to celebrate and share.

However, copying or linking to a press article on social media, in an email, blog, or other marketing channels — even if the article is about your organisation — could cost you an expensive fine or distribution licensing fee.

Before you click send to an email or publish a Tweet, Facebook or Instagram post it's important to double-check that your link isn't infringing copyright and licensing laws.

This simple guide aims to highlight the key points that you need to be aware of in relation to sharing press coverage with your audiences.

The law

UK copyright is currently covered by the **Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988**. This law gives authors of original work — including journalists and published editions such as newspapers and magazines — the rights to control the ways in which their work may be used. And this includes the right to control how their work is reproduced and to charge for permission to reproduce that content.

The law covers both print and online published content. If your organisation copies or reproduces original content without permission it is a civil offence. Your organisation will need a licence or permission in order to reproduce an article.

This includes:

- republishing an article on your organisation's website or social media platforms, or
- sharing articles electronically on your organisation's intranet, or
- circulating to staff via email, or
- photocopying or digitally copying (scanning) a print publication and distributing it amongst staff.

Note: in addition to the published content of a newspaper or magazine article, the article's headline and typographical arrangement — the design, layout, style and appearance of the article — are also covered by copyright law. Again, this includes both print and online content.

Emails, website and social media

Published content is free to share for private individuals but for 'commercial' organisations including those with a charitable or not-for-profit status — such as arts, heritage and cultural organisations — copyright laws apply.

The two key questions to consider are:

- How can you share press coverage about your organisation on your social media platforms, emails, blogs and website without infringing copyright and licensing laws?
- What can I share without having to pay for a distribution licence or seeking permission from a publication?

Sharing externally — reproducing articles on your organisation's website

If you want to reproduce an article about your organisation on your organisation's website you will need permission or a licence to do so.

However, you can link to the original article without a licence or seeking permission as long as you **don't include the headline or text from the original article**. You can include a summary of the article in your own words but you can't use any quotes, sentences or phrases from the article in case you infringe copyright.

If the article is written by one of your colleagues on behalf of the newspaper or magazine it is worth double-checking permission and copyright before you reproduce the article.

Sharing internally — reproducing articles on your organisation's intranet

If you want to reproduce an article about your organisation on your organisation's intranet you will need permission or a licence to do so. You can post a link to the original article on your organisation's intranet as long as you **don't include the headline or text from the original**

article. However, if one of your colleagues prints the article or saves it to their computer then it'll be an infringement of copyright as a 'copy' of the original article has been made.

As with your organisation's website, you can summarise the article in your own words as long as you avoid using text from the original article.

Sharing links in emails and social media platforms

The key to sharing press or magazine articles via emails or social media platforms without infringing copyright laws is not to make a '**copy**' of the original article — a simple and direct link to that article is acceptable as it's not breaching copyright laws as nothing has been 'copied'.

What constitutes a 'copy'?

A 'copy' of an article could include:

- a screenshot or screengrab of the article
- a photograph or scanned image of the article
- the article's headline or typographical arrangement
- text from the original article
- a print out, photocopy or saved to computer file of the article.

What about retweeting?

Using your organisation's Twitter account to retweet an article that a journalist or publication has tweeted is acceptable as long as you don't 'copy' any of its content in your retweet's comment if you include one within the retweet. A simple retweet is 'sharing' the content rather than 'copying' the content.

Remember: Twitter users and accounts can be liable if they retweet defamatory content or content that's infringed copyright. In other words, if the original tweet that you retweet contains defamatory comments or infringes copyright (e.g. includes an image used without permission), then your retweet can be liable for the same infringement under defamatory and copyright laws.

NLA Media Access

(Newspaper Licensing Association)

It is important to be aware of NLA Media Access and the publications — newspaper, magazine and website titles — that they represent.

In 1996 eight major newspaper groups in the UK — Associated Newspapers, Financial Times, Guardian



Media Group, Independent News and Media, Northern and Shell, News International, Daily Telegraph and Trinity Mirror — established the Newspaper Licensing Association (NLA), which became NLA Media Access Ltd in 2013 when its remit extended to include magazine publications.

The NLA aims to protect the copyright of its members — newspapers and magazines — as a “collective licensing scheme”. It provides licences to allow ‘commercial’ organisations including those with charitable or not-for-profit status — such as arts, heritage and cultural organisations — to reproduce and copy content that was produced by NLA members, and it collects royalty payments on behalf of its members.

The NLA also monitors infringements of copyright — when an article has been reproduced or copied without the correct licence and / or permission. Part of its role is to monitor compliance and it issues penalties when an infringement has taken place — when copyright has been breached.

More information about NLA Media Access including the licence service they provide, and the publications that they represent can be found on

their website. See **Useful links** at the end of this guide for details.

Press cuttings and media services

If your organisation monitors press coverage in relation to your organisation and the wider arts, cultural and heritage sector then you should be mindful of how you share those 'cuttings' with your stakeholders.

Regardless of whether you've used a media monitoring agency or monitor press coverage inhouse, you will not be able to share — forward, print, scan or photocopy — press or media cuttings either in print or digital format with colleagues without an appropriate licence, otherwise you'll potentially be in breach of copyright.

The same principle applies to news alert services such as **Google** and **Yahoo!**. It is okay for you to receive these alerts as an individual but if you forward, copy, save or share these alerts with either colleagues or stakeholders outside your organisation then you will need, depending upon the publication, permission from the publishers or a NLA media access licence.

Press coverage and marketing

It is important to be mindful of 'commercial use' in relation to using any press or magazine coverage within your marketing.

Commercial use is content that is being used for the purposes of 'selling', marketing or promoting a product such as a show, exhibition, book or tour. If your organisation is likely to make money from the use of this 'sales' content — whether directly or indirectly — then the content is being used for commercial reasons and must adhere to copyright law.

Freelancers

Freelancers need to be aware of the issues outlined in this guide in relation to how they share press stories on their own social media channels and platforms; or if they're managing content on behalf of a client.

Remember: published content is free to share for private individuals but for 'commercial' organisations copyright laws apply. Is your social media channel yours as a private individual or is it supporting your commercial activity?

This guide has aimed to highlight the key points that you need to be aware of in relation to sharing press coverage with your audiences.

The following links have been included to signpost more detailed information for you to explore.

Remember: to avoid breaching copyright laws you should seek professional legal advice if you have a specific query in relation to any copyright issue that you may have.

Useful links

- [Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988](#)
- [Copyright Notice: digital images, photographs and the internet](#)
(Intellectual Property Office, Nov 2015)
- [Creative Commons](#)
- [Guidance: Exceptions to copyright](#)
- [NLA Media Access Limited business license](#)
- [NLA Media Access](#)
(Newspaper Licensing Association)
- [Guide to Copyright and Permissions](#)
(The Society of Authors)
- [The UK Copyright Service](#)
- [What is copyright?](#)
(BBC website)

