

insights

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Blogs and other short online works now easier to register for copyrights

Writers of blogs and other short online works will be able to register their copyrights more easily in a new procedure approved by the U.S. Copyright Office.

It took two years of deliberation, and came more than 25 years after creation of the World Wide Web, but it will be a benefit to writers of blogs, public Facebook posts, short articles and even copyrightable tweets. They'll have the same ease of registering works in groups that photographers, for example, have had for years.

The change, which becomes effective on August 17, 2020, will allow applicants to register up to 50 copyrightable works with a single application and a standard fee (currently \$55). The resulting registration will cover each work as a separate work of authorship.

Various requirements will have to be met to qualify for the group registration. For example, each work must contain at least 50 but no more than 17,500 words, the works can't be wholly numbers or numerical symbols, each work must be created by the same individual or group and each work must be published within a three-calendar-month period.

Registration, of course, is only one part of the copyright process. Works are automatically copyrighted upon creation, but registration is an essential step for preserving full remedies and for bringing a lawsuit. And there are still requirements on what qualifies for copyright protection. The Copyright Office was careful to note that the lower word limit of 50 words applies only to the eligibility for the new group registration option; it doesn't mean that a 50-word article legally qualifies for copyright protection.

The process of developing the procedure involved a few contested issues. Due to the complex legal distinctions between published and unpublished works, the Copyright Alliance urged the Copyright Office to make this new registration available to all online works regardless of whether they had been published. Despite acknowledging that determining publication can be difficult, especially in the online context, the Copyright Office stressed that publication was legally required in these circumstances, so it limited the new procedure to works that have been published online.

More information on the new group registration for short online literary works [can be found here](#).

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