



Information Seeking and Consumption Study Report



Published by Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers MA USA

The information, analysis, and opinions (the “Content”) contained herein are based on the qualitative and quantitative research methods of Outsell, Inc. and its staff’s extensive professional expertise in the industry. CCC did not have any influence on the outcome of the results.

A pioneer in voluntary collective licensing, CCC helps organizations integrate, access, and share information through licensing, content, software, and professional services. With expertise in copyright and information management, CCC and its subsidiary RightsDirect collaborate with stakeholders to design and deliver innovative information solutions that power decision-making by helping people integrate and navigate data sources and content assets. To learn more about CCC, visit copyright.com.

Outsell, Inc. is the leading research and advisory firm serving executives operating in the data, information and analytics economy. Our solutions leverage proprietary data, leading industry analysts, a partner network, thriving peer-to-peer communities, and world-class events. Through deep relationships, we ensure our clients make great decisions about their strategy, competition, markets, operating best practices, and M&A. We stand by our work 100%, guarantee results, and are fanatical about our clients’ success. outsellinc.com

© 2023 Outsell, Inc. and Copyright Clearance Center, Inc. All rights reserved. Except as permitted under applicable copyright laws, no part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

CCC Executive Summary

The use and sharing of published content is critical to accelerating knowledge and powering innovation at organizations around the world, yet the sharing of third-party published information without first obtaining the necessary permissions carries enormous potential risk.

Since 2007, CCC has partnered with Outsell to conduct independent, quantitative research and analysis into how copyrighted content is used in a variety of industries. Using the latest study data, CCC presents analysis and recommendations to organizations that depend on published third-party content.

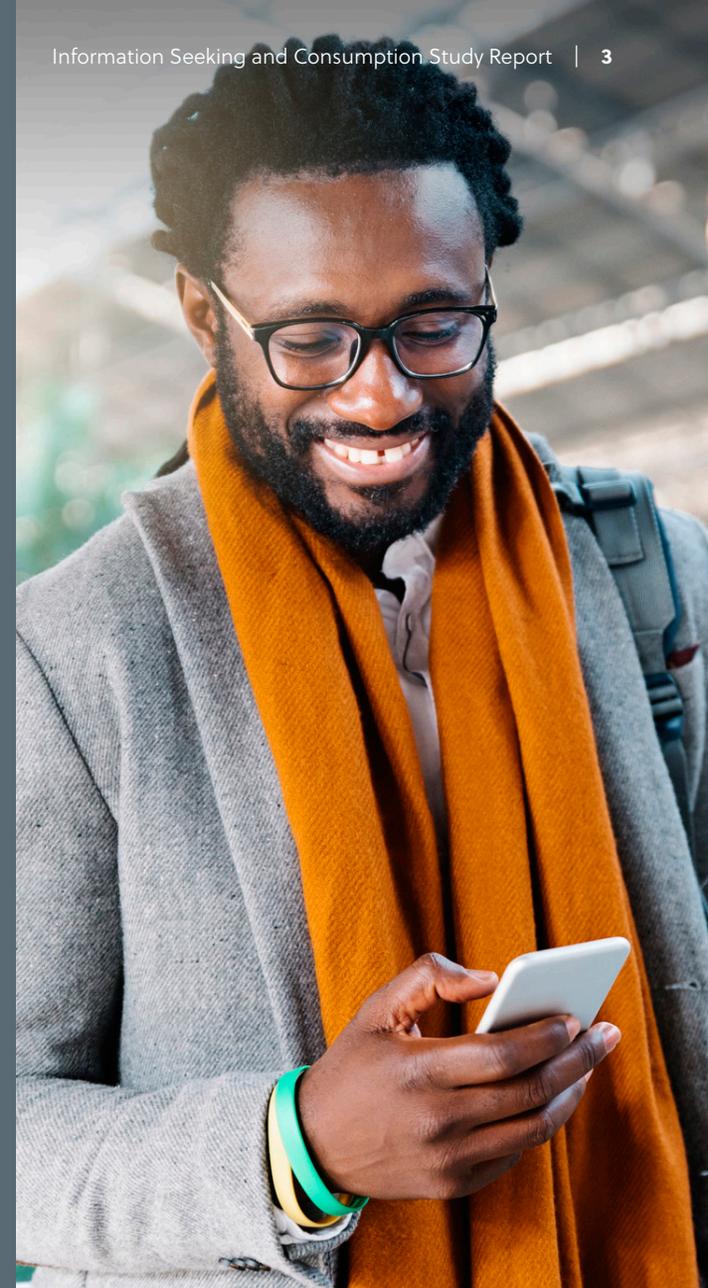
For many, the work environment has undergone a seismic shift since the last study in 2020, and the evolution is expected to continue. The transition to hybrid and remote work has created new dynamics for information sharing. The ways employees engage and collaborate with published content have evolved, with a corresponding shift in enterprise knowledge workers' behaviors and attitudes around published content use.

Many companies are discussing their copyright policy more frequently with employees. This has resulted in heightened awareness of copyright considerations, yet **employees continue to report they're sharing copyrighted content in ways that may put organizations of all types and sizes at risk.** Ordinary content exchanges that come so naturally in the digital world may increase the risk of copyright infringement, leading to costly lawsuits or settlements, and they may also affect brand reputation.

Responses to the survey indicate that executives have the highest level of awareness about copyright policy compared to other job roles, but their actual behavior is not always aligned with their companies' policies. **Executives are sharing third-party content more often and with more people than middle management and individual contributors do.** Ironically, executives express concern about the implications of copyright infringement but are also most likely to share any and all relevant information to support their organization in a competitive situation.

The frequency of published content sharing may have decreased since the 2020 study, but the number of people with whom content is shared has increased across job roles and verticals surveyed, meaning that total sharing has increased. **On average, respondents are sharing work-related content 7.9 times per week with 15 people.** Considering that 49% of that content is sourced from external providers such as scientific journals, news sources, and other publications, there is the potential for nearly 57 instances of unlicensed sharing per employee, per week.

The latest *Information Seeking and Consumption Study* reaffirms the importance of having a solid copyright policy in place, taking steps to support employee education and communication about copyright, and deploying appropriate compliance solutions to support a streamlined content workflow. Altogether, it's about protecting the organization while empowering everyone who is a part of it to collaborate through sharing content. Read on for detailed data, insights, and information from the latest study as well as a list of suggested actions you can take to address content challenges and encourage copyright compliance.



The Newest Data is Here

Since 2007, CCC has partnered with Outsell, the voice of the data, information, and analytics economy, to conduct independent research and analysis into on content consumption in the workplace by professionals across industries. The 2023 *Information Seeking and Consumption Study* offers insights into how people think and behave in the context of copyrighted content consumption, use, and sharing, both within and outside the walls of their organizations, particularly in light of the economy-wide shift to much more remote and hybrid work.

Who Was Surveyed ?

To achieve a 95% confidence level in the study findings with a margin of error of plus or minus 3.9%, Outsell surveyed 630 professionals in 10 countries who:

- Are employed full-time by an organization with at least 1,000 employees (average # of employees: 51,284)
- Use externally published¹ content in the course of doing their jobs across various primary functions and job levels
- Are enterprise knowledge workers across 14 industries:
 - Finance/Insurance 13%
 - Life Sciences 6%²
 - Hospitals & Healthcare Providers 11%
 - Software & Systems 6%
 - Wholesale/Retail 10%
 - Law Firms 5%
 - Computers & Electronic Components 9%
 - Aerospace & Defense 4%
 - Transportation & Automotive 8%
 - Chemicals & Plastics 4%
 - Consulting & Professional Services 7%
 - Oil & Gas Extraction 4%
 - Food/Beverage & Agriculture 7%
 - Electric & Gas Utilities 6%

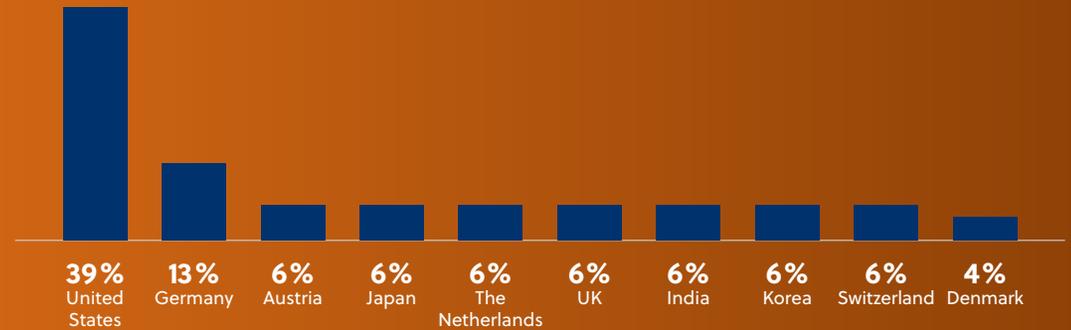
¹ Externally published content refers to third-party content such as news publications, scholarly journals, trade and business publications, etc.

² For the purpose of this report, Life Sciences refers to pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, medical devices, and scientific equipment.

SQ3. Which of the following describes your organization's primary line of business?

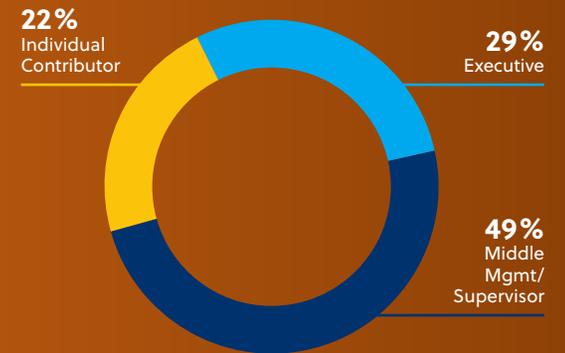
SQ4: Approximately how many people work at your entire company?

Respondent Location



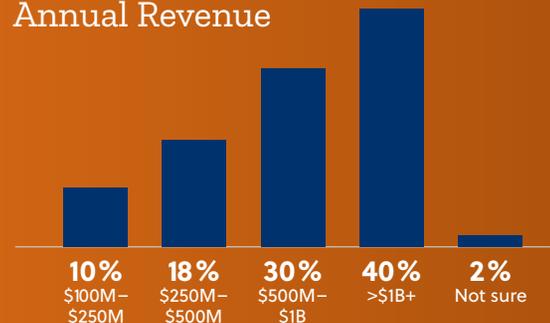
SQ1. In which country or region do you currently reside?

Job Level



Q2. Please indicate the level of your job.

Annual Revenue



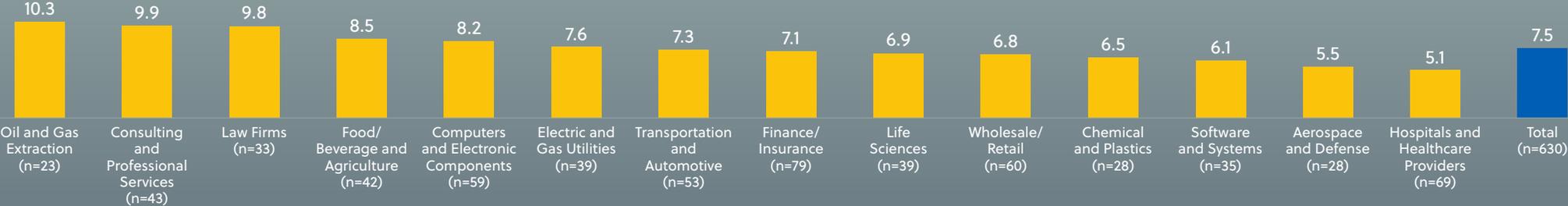
Q3. What was your organization's approximate annual revenue last year?

Importance of Content

Published content is at the heart of innovation. **The ease with which teams can access and share information, such as news, feature articles, research reports, and more, can influence the pace at which organizations and their teams drive innovation and deliver products and services to the market.** Executives report that they depend on an average of 9.4 critical-to-job print or digital publications; middle managers (7.1) and individual contributors (4.5) rely on fewer. Of the publications accessed, executives report using 12 publications per week compared with middle managers (9) and individual contributors (5).

Across the 14 verticals surveyed, employees at all job levels rely on an average of 7.5 print or digital publications they deem critical to their innovative research and work. At the high end, employees in Oil and Gas Extraction (10.3), Consulting and Professional Services (9.9), Law Firms (9.8), Food, Beverage, and Agriculture (8.5), and Computers and Electronics (8.2) rely on even more.

Number of Publications Critical to Job



Q4. Thinking about the information that you rely on in performing your job responsibilities, how many different print or digital publications do you consider critical to your job function?

Q5: How many print or digital publications do you typically access in a given week?

The Velocity of Content is Shifting

The velocity of content is a measure of how quickly externally published information flows inside and outside of an organization. It is calculated by multiplying the data points in this survey for the frequency of sharing, the number of people with whom information is shared, and the percentage of that information that comes from external sources.



7.9 times per week with
15 people
(2023)



16.5 times per week with
9 people
(2020)

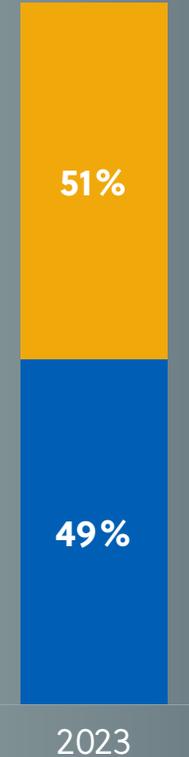
In 2023, the average number of potential instances of unlicensed sharing per employee, per week is **56.9**.

The velocity of content remains high. Since the 2020 survey, there is a notable **increase in the number of people with whom published content is shared per week in all verticals**. On average, employees reported that 49% of the information they shared is from externally published sources and 51% is internal to their organization.

Q6. What percentage of the information you share is published internally versus content published by third parties?

Q7. How many times during an average day do you share work-related information such as news articles, journal articles, book excerpts, blog posts, and other content from digital or print sources to with colleagues?

Q8. When you share work-related information via email, collaboration tools or hard copy print-out/photocopy, how many people do you typically share it with?



Internal
Externally Published

Q6. What percentage of the information you share is published internally versus content published by third parties?

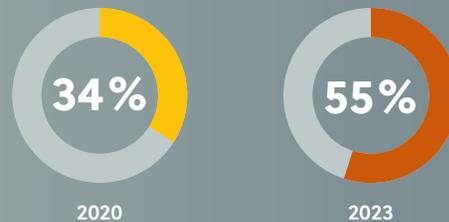
Changing Work Environments

The transition to hybrid and remote work in many industries has created new dynamics for information sharing. On average, **23% of employees surveyed reported a fully remote work environment and 41% reported a hybrid environment.** As more employees return to the office and the workplace model continues to evolve, information sharing behavior will also shift.

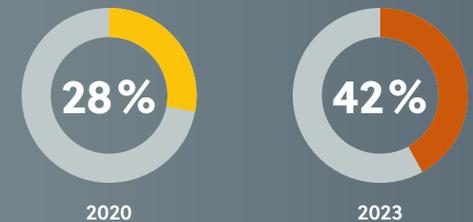


Remote workers information sharing trends

Sharing more often



Sharing with more people



Q11: What is your current work situation?

Q11a: Has working remotely had an impact on your information sharing activities?

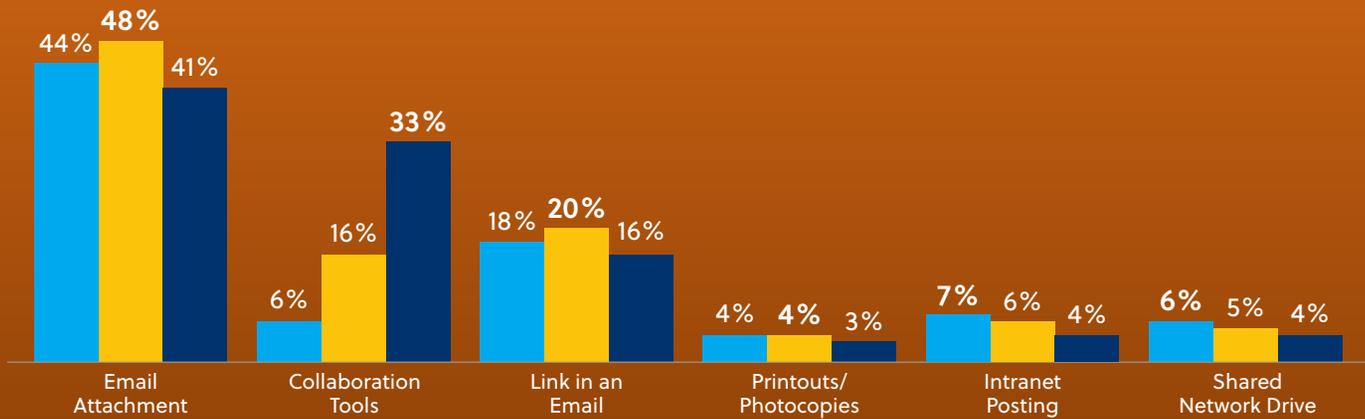
Methods for Sharing Content are Shifting

The ability to work on digital platforms is crucial to remote and hybrid environments. Email attachments remain the most popular way to share information with colleagues, but a rapidly increasing number of employees reported that their preferred method of sharing information is via collaboration tools. Employees reported slight decreases in documents shared via intranet postings and on shared network drives.

Notably, the use of collaboration tools, such as Microsoft Teams and Slack, as the preferred method of sharing work-related information has more than doubled since the last survey. **Downloading content through any tool makes a new copy of that content — and copying often requires permission.** With the rise in the use of collaboration tools, more people may be downloading content from those tools, creating new potential instances of unlicensed sharing.

Preferred Method of Sharing Work-Related Information

- 2016
- 2020
- 2023



Q9. When you share work-related information, how do you share it? (multiple responses allowed)
Q9a. Which method do you use most often?

The Paradox of Executive Behaviors

From research to medical communications to legal to marketing, sharing content with colleagues across job roles and departments is critical. Employees are sharing with more people in all job roles. Executives are sharing significantly more material and more often than colleagues in middle management and individual contributor roles.

According to the 2023 study, executives report the highest level of copyright awareness (91%) but are most likely to share in ways not allowed by their companies' own policies. Ninety-two percent of executives report considering copyright before forwarding information and 91% acknowledge awareness of "serious risks of copyright infringement" when they do. Yet, **90% of executives will share any and all relevant information** to help their organization in competitive, mission-critical, or time-critical situations.

	EXECUTIVE (n=183)	MIDDLE MANAGEMENT (n=295)	INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTOR (n=115)
Frequency of sharing per week (mean)	11.6	7.1	3.9
Number of people shared with (mean)	20.1	13.4	10.2
Percentage of information shared that is externally sourced (mean)	54%	49%	44%
Number of potential instances of unlicensed sharing per employee	125.9	46.6	17.5

Remote and hybrid work environments have changed executive information sharing activities. Seventy-nine percent of executives surveyed stated that they share more often than in the past, and 50% stated that they share with more people. These numbers are higher than the average survey results across all roles, which report that 55% of all employees are sharing more often and 42% are sharing with more people.

The number of people with whom content is shared increased – and executives are no exception. In fact, **executives are sharing with 71.8% more people in 2023, compared with 2020.**

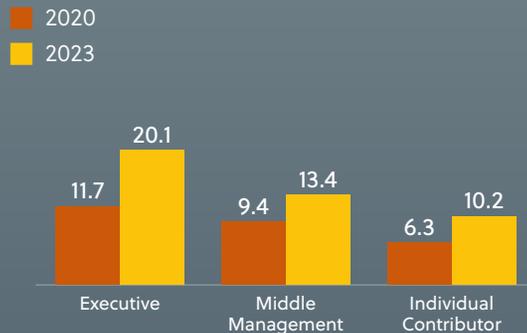
Q6. What percentage of the information you share is published internally versus content by third parties?

Q7. How many times during an average day do you share work-related information such as news articles, journal articles, book excerpts, blog posts, and other content from digital or print sources with colleagues?

Q8. When you share work-related information via email, collaboration tools, or hard copy print-out/photocopy, how many people do you typically share it with?

Q11a: Has working remotely had an impact on your information sharing activities?

Number of people with whom information is shared per week by job role



Content Access and Sharing by Industry

Content sharing is influenced by the nature of the industry in which professionals work and collaborate.

While some companies may be more reliant on third-party-created materials such as competitive intelligence, technical standards, and research, all companies in all industries need to monitor market conditions, changing regulations, and current events. In all cases, companies frequently share all of these materials.

Employees are accessing more publications than in 2020. In some industries, including **Computers and Electronics, Law Firms, and Life Sciences**, content access is significantly higher than the survey average.

The potential instances of unlicensed sharing per employee, per week is notable in some industries. **Law firms** led the way with 126.5 potential instances, followed by **Food, Beverage, and Agriculture** (81.3) and **Consulting and Professional Services** (77.4). Other industries coming in above the average number of potential instances of unlicensed sharing per employee per week (56.9) include Computers and Electronics, Oil and Gas Extraction, Transportation and Automotive, and Wholesale/Retail.

	TOTAL	AEROSPACE & DEFENSE	CHEMICALS & PLASTICS	COMPUTERS & ELECTRONIC	CONSULTING & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	ELECTRIC & GAS UTILITIES	FINANCE/ INSURANCE	FOOD & BEV	HOSPITALS & HC	LAW FIRMS	LIFE SCIENCES	OIL & GAS	SOFTWARE & SYSTEMS	TRANSPORTATION & AUTOMOTIVE	WHOLESALE/ RETAIL
Frequency of sharing per week (mean)	7.9	6.5	5.5	7.0	9.3	8.0	7.2	10.2	5.4	15.6	8.3	9.0	5.7	8.4	7.3
Number of people shared with (mean)	14.7	10.1	9.3	18.5	14.6	13.4	12.9	16.6	13.2	16.9	12.6	12.9	15.2	16.7	17.4
Percentage of information shared that is externally sourced (mean)	49%	37%	45%	44%	57%	50%	51%	48%	57%	48%	44%	54%	48%	46%	53%
Number of potential instances of unlicensed sharing per employee	56.9	24.3	23.0	57.0	77.4	53.6	47.4	81.3	40.6	126.5	46.0	62.7	41.6	64.5	67.3

Q5. How many print or digital publications do you typically access in a given week?

Q6. What percentage of the information you share is published internally versus content by third parties?

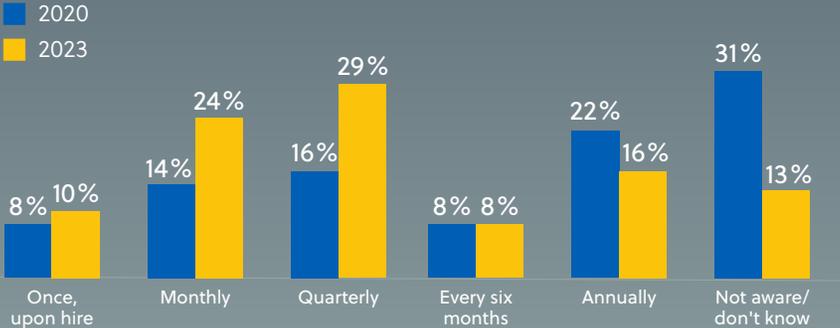
Q7. How many times during an average day do you share work-related information such as news articles, journal articles, book excerpts, blog posts and other content from digital or print sources with colleagues?

Q8. When you share work-related information via email, collaboration tools, or hard copy print-out/photocopy, how many people do you typically share it with?

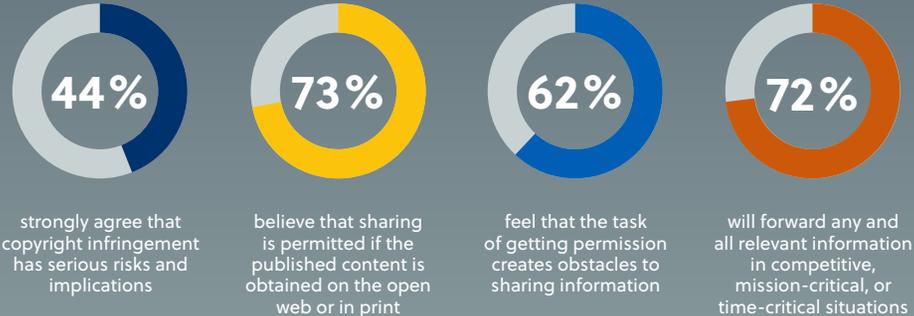
Copyright Awareness and Attitudes

Companies report an increased frequency of communicating copyright policy in the most recent survey compared to 2020. This increased sharing of the policy has likely led to 74% of employees stating that they are aware of their company’s copyright policy, up from 53% in 2020. However, **employee attitudes and behaviors about copyrighted content are often misaligned with policy expectations.**

Frequency of Communicating Copyright Policy



Attitudes About Copyright Awareness



Q10: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements pertaining to your organization
Q13: Does your organization have a copyright policy regarding the sharing of information?



Why This Matters

Simple content exchanges may actually increase risk

Rising Risk of Copyright Infringement

While the sharing of information with co-workers supports collaboration and drives innovation, **the sharing of third-party published information without first obtaining the necessary subscriptions, licenses or permissions also carries enormous potential risk.** Simple content exchanges to help further a discussion and keep business moving may actually create or increase the risk of copyright infringement, leading to costly lawsuits or settlements and affecting brand reputation.

In summary:

44%

percent of employees surveyed strongly agree that **copyright infringement has serious risks and implications.**

14.7

On average, the **number of people with whom work-related content is shared 7.9 times per week**, nearly half of which (49%) comes from external sources.

56.9

On average, the number of potential **instances of unlicensed sharing** per employee per week that may put organizations at risk.



What You Can Do

CCC presents the following recommendations and solutions

Protect Your Organization with Education and Solutions

It starts with education. In this case, what your employees don't know can hurt them — and the organization as a whole.

Ask Yourself

How would your organization fare if you audited your environment to uncover the rate of unauthorized information sharing? And how well would your existing compliance policies address the realities of what and how employees share, how often, and with whom?

Start by considering these questions:

- How many publications does your organization subscribe to?
- Who manages those subscriptions and how?
- Who maintains records for written permission releases?
- Do the systems your employees rely on to access and share content reflect your organization's IP protection and copyright compliance initiatives?
- Do your employees understand what materials can be shared with colleagues and external contacts, and what they cannot share?
- Do your employees understand what copyright infringement is and how to avoid it?
- Do you have a current copyright policy?
- Does your copyright policy address how different employees should handle different situations (e.g., the CEO who wants to share legal information with the board vs. an individual contributor who wants to share a journal article with colleagues)?
- How often do you communicate your copyright policy to employees and how (e.g., email, intranet, company-wide meetings)?
- How frequently does your organization provide copyright training sessions?
- Who is the designated copyright policy contact (or contacts) within your organization?
- Do your employees know where to find your copyright policy?

Steps to Success

- 1 First, if you don't have a copyright policy, **CREATE** one, and **UPDATE** your current one to reflect the way your organization works and shares information today — in person, fully remote, or hybrid. CCC provides [guidelines](#) for creating a policy as well as a [sample policy](#) to use as a model.
- 2 **PUBLISH** the policy in a central location, like your intranet, and make every employee aware of it and its details, including guidelines for using externally published materials.
- 3 **PROMOTE** awareness of the policy by sending periodic reminders about how employees can access it and why they should.
- 4 **EDUCATE** employees on copyright and information use with **resources, webcasts, certificate programs and more.**
- 5 **SECURE** needed permissions, annual licenses, and copyright-compliant content workflow software for easy compliance.



Learn more

For more information on how to enable collaboration, simplify copyright compliance, and streamline your content workflow contact us at:

 copyright.com

 licensing@copyright.com

By taking steps to balance employee reuse of published content with a strong compliance and licensing program, your company can leverage published content sharing to help support collaboration and drive innovation.

Certain publishers' enterprise subscriptions include the rights to reuse their content within your company. What is allowed in these agreements often varies by publisher and subscription. **Licensing solutions from CCC and RightsDirect** complement publisher agreements and subscriptions by providing you with a consistent set of reuse rights across all participating publishers.

Annual licenses enable teams to collaborate more easily using content from a wide range of sources, simplifying copyright compliance, driving innovation, and providing resources that educate employees about the importance of copyright compliance. For organizations that need content workflow management, our **RightFind Suite** is a solution that fuels research and simplifies copyright, anytime, anywhere.