

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PATENTS, TRADEMARKS & COPYRIGHTS



	<i>Patent</i>	<i>Trademark</i>	<i>Copyright</i>
<i>Coverage</i>	Machines, products, methods, and compositions of matter.	Words, designs, slogans, symbols, logos, and trade dress that identify the commercial source of a good or service.	Books, paintings, music, plays, movies, and software are examples of original, artistic expression embodied in a tangible medium.
<i>Protection Provided</i>	The patent holder has the right to prevent others from making, using, or selling the invention covered by the patent.	The trademark owner has the right to stop others from using another trademark that is “confusingly similar” to his/her trademark.	The owner of a copyright in a work has the exclusive right to make and distribute copies of the work, prepare derivative works, and perform or display the work.
<i>Approximate Cost and Time for Acquisition</i>	\$10,000 – This figure includes legal fees, drawing preparation, and U.S. Patent & Trademark Office fees. Two – Four Years	\$1000 - \$3000 – This figure includes legal fees and U.S. Patent & Trademark Office fees. One – Two Years	\$35 - \$220 – This figure includes U.S. Copyright Office fees only. Filing is relatively easy and can be done without an attorney. Four – Six Weeks
<i>Term of Protection</i>	Twenty years from the date the patent application is filed. Protection does not begin until the patent issues.	The trademark will last as long as the trademark is used in commerce and appropriate fees/paperwork are filed with the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office.	The copyright expires 70 years after the death of the author of the work. If the work was made for hire, the copyright expires the earlier of 95 years from publication or 120 years from creation.

This summary is simplified and provides a general comparison among patents, trademarks and copyrights.