

Computing and Measuring Devices

Devices and similar articles designed for computing and measuring cannot be copyrighted. Common examples of uncopyrightable computing and measuring works include slide rulers, wheel dials, and perpetual calendar designs.

Ideas, methods, systems, mathematical principles, formulas, and equations are not copyrightable, and the same is true of devices based on them. Printed material on a device — for example, lines, numbers, symbols, and calibrations, as well as their arrangement — is likewise not copyrightable, because such material is necessarily dictated by an uncopyrightable idea, principle, formula, or standard of measurement.

To be copyrightable, a work must contain a certain minimum amount of creative authorship in the form of original literary, artistic, or musical expression. A computing or measuring device as such ordinarily contains no copyrightable expression. It does not communicate facts or ideas but, instead, is a means for arriving at an almost unlimited number of readings or results. To the extent that the contents of a device are predetermined by its function, they lack creative authorship.

For Further Information

By Internet

Circulars, announcements, regulations, application forms, and other related materials are available from the Copyright Office website at www.copyright.gov. Claims to copyright can also be registered online at this address.

By Telephone

For general information about copyright, call the Copyright Public Information Office at (202) 707-3000 or 1-877-476-0778 (toll free). Staff members are on duty from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, eastern time, except federal holidays. Recorded information is available 24 hours a day. To request paper application forms or circulars, call (202) 707-9100 or 1-877-476-0778 and leave a recorded message.

By Regular Mail

Write to:

*Library of Congress
Copyright Office—COPUBS
101 Independence Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20559*

