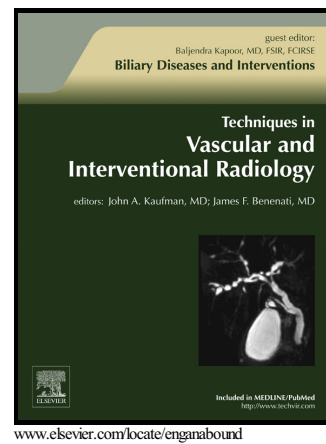


# Author's Accepted Manuscript

A Short Introduction to Intellectual Property Rights

Arvin S. Paranjpe, Travis G. Cook, Nicole D.W. Garrison



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## A Short Introduction to Intellectual Property Rights

Arvin S. Paranjpe, Travis G. Cook, Nicole D.W. Garrison, Trina Voss from Technology Transfer and Business Development, Oregon Health & Science University

**Abstract.** Intellectual property (IP) is a term that describes a number of distinct types of intangible assets. IP protection allows a rightsholder to exclude others from interfering with or using the property right in specified ways. The main forms of IP are patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets. Each type of IP protection is different, varying in the subject matter that can be covered, timeframe of protection, and total expense. While some inventions may be covered by multiple types of IP protection, it is important to consider a number of business and legal factors before selecting the best protection strategy. Some technologies require strong IP protection to commercialize, but unnecessary costs can derail bringing a product to market. IP departments of organizations weigh these various considerations and perform essential IP protection functions. This primer introduces researchers to the main forms of IP and their legal aspects.

### Keywords

Intellectual Property, Patent, Copyright, Trademark, Technology Transfer

### Introduction

Intellectual property (IP) is a term that describes a number of distinct types of intangible assets. Without a clear understanding of the different types of IP protection, it is easy to confuse them. Further, patents are often written in abstruse language, embedded with both complex scientific material and sophisticated terms with specific legal meaning. An entrepreneurial minded researcher can make costly mistakes when trying to obtain valuable patent protection. These mistakes not only result in the loss of IP rights, but also the loss of potential investors and business partners.

Fortunately, there is help. Most universities, non-profit research institutions and innovative companies have created IP departments to evaluate and protect new technologies. In academic and non-profit research organizations, these departments also license the technologies to companies and are commonly referred to as technology transfer offices (TTOs).

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