

## Web site Content Theft

For About.com

By Janice Byers

What should you do when you find out your material has been the victim of copyright infringement?

This is usually a personal choice but no matter what you do remember to project your professionalism and not let the culprit get the better of you.

The first thing you need to do is to investigate as deeply as possible and keep records of what you find. Keep a record of which pages you found your images on and take a screenshot or print the page, if possible. You may want to consider printing the HTML code as well. Call upon the trust of others and ask them to take a look at the offending pages and how it is a duplicate of yours and see if they agree with your perception of the situation.

Also, check throughout the web site to be sure that there isn't a reference somewhere about where the owner used the material from.

Then you need to find the owner of the site. Most web sites will have a contact page or will have contact information at the bottom of each page. Record this information for future reference as this will be the person you will contact to try and rectify the situation.

You can also find out who owns the web site by searching a WhoIs directory. All WhoIs search functions pull their information from a main database of all domain registrations. If you simply type 'whois' into Google's search engine, you will find a list of various WhoIs directories that you can try. Each will pull up the administrative and technical contact for the domain in question. The administrative contact is usually the owner of the web site. Again, record this information, including the date the domain was registered.

Be sure you can prove that your image(s) is original and that you have owned it for a longer period of time than the timeframe that the offending web site has been using it. You need to have undisputed evidence that the material is yours. If the images were taken from your web site visit <http://www.archive.org>, you can input your web site address and see the evolution of your site over many years and thus prove you have been the owner of material in question and the time period since you produced it.

Once you have the contact information, it is then recommended that you send a professional 'cease & desist' email to the owner. Be stern yet polite and point out where the copyright infringement can be found on their web site and how it duplicates your content. As mentioned above, show that you can prove ownership and ask the culprit to remove your image(s).

From my own personal experience, the above will generally work and the offending site owner will apologize for the unintentional (usually) plagiarism of your information. Most really didn't mean to blatantly steal your image(s).

For the complete article:

<http://www.sbinfocanada.about.com/cs/legalmatters/a/websitetheftjb.htm>

Janice Byer, CCVA, MVA, is the owner of [Docu-Type Administrative & Web Design Services](#) which specializes in Virtual Office Assistance and small business Website Design. Celebrating 5 years in business in 2003, she has recently launched an ebook filled with the over 1200 web site links that she has used to make her business the success it is today. This is a must for any small business owner. Visit her web site for more information.

