1. Introduction to copyright

This introductory chapter provides an overview of copyright protection. It discusses how United Kingdom copyright law has developed from the mid-16th century onward. The purpose of giving this account is to highlight two recurring themes: firstly, the law's struggle to keep up with changing technology; and, secondly, the effect of external influences on domestic law. The chapter then looks at the theoretical justifications for copyright and the extent to which they accord with the current law, and the principal characteristics of copyright, including the crucial difference between protecting an idea and protecting the expression of that idea. There are a number of aspects of copyright that do not apply to other intellectual property rights like patents and trade marks. Understanding these differences will help one in distinguishing between the different types of intellectual property right.
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