Copyright

Copyright law in Ireland is governed by the Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000. If you are intending to use the work of another person in any way, it is strongly recommended that you read the Act at http://www.irlgov.ie/bills28/acts/2000/a2800.pdf.
The following is a brief introduction to the more important features of the Act. Please note that while every effort had been made to ensure the accuracy of the data, it has not been collated by legal experts and is for information only.

What does “copyright” mean?

On the website "http://www.whatiscopyright.org", copyright is explained as "...a protection that covers published and unpublished literary, scientific and artistic works, whatever the form of expression, provided such works are fixed in a tangible or material form. This means that if you can see it, hear it and/or touch it - it may be protected."

Copyright applies to the following types of work:

Original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works (literary or artistic does not mean that the work has to have a literary or artistic value. Literary work also includes computer programs).
Sound recordings, films, broadcasts or cable programs.
The typographical arrangement of published editions.
Original databases.

How long does copyright last?

Seventy years after the death of an author in the case of a literary, dramatic, musical, artistic work or an original database. Seventy years in the case of a film after the death of the last of the principal director, screen play author, and music composer. Fifty years from the date of a sound recording, broadcast and typographical arrangement.

What must you consider?

When deciding what you should and shouldn't use there are four issues that must be considered:

The intended use, i.e. whether it is for profit or otherwise (e.g. non-profit educational purposes).
The nature of the copyrighted work (different mediums are treated differently).
The quality and the quantity (use only what is necessary).
The danger of financial damage to the copyright-holder.
What must you not do?

Prejudice the interests of the copyright-holder.
Make multiple copies.
Copy for another person where you believe that that person will make multiple copies of this material and make them available to more than one person at approximately the same time and for substantially the same purpose.

You may copy if:

You hold the copyright.
The copyright has expired.
You have permission from the copyright owner.
The copying falls within the concept of “fair dealing” and is for research or private study, criticism or review.

What is “fair dealing”?

You may copy under “fair dealing” in the interests of:

Research or private study.
Criticism or review (with acknowledgement).
Reporting current events (with acknowledgement).

Fair dealing applies to almost all works, including electronic resources. Photographs are excluded from the concept of fair dealing.

The following may be copied:

From a periodical - no more articles from a volume than the number of issues or 10% of a volume whichever is the greater.
From a book - a reasonable portion. "Reasonable" is not defined in the Act but copying is acceptable only if it is for a purpose and to an extent that will not unreasonably prejudice the interests of the owner of the copyright. The exemption of fair dealing will be dependent on the specific circumstances.

Collective licensing

The Copyright Act established the Irish Copyright Licensing Agency which is currently in negotiations with all third-level educational institutions to implement a collective licensing agreement.

Electronic resources

Copyright law applies equally to electronic resources, with the addition that licence agreements made with publishers or suppliers may impose further restrictions.