

# Rise in internet usage amid pandemic may lead to amendments in the Copyright Act

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## Synopsis

**The government has reached out to the industry to elicit its views on the changes needed. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is also examining the Act to decriminalise certain provisions to improve business sentiment and unclog the legal processes.**

**New Delhi:** India is looking to amend the copyright act in line with increased use of internet and digitalisation amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The law protects the rights of creators in respect of their original literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works, cinematographic films and sound recording.

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The Act was last amended in 2012 when it aligned the Indian copyright law with the latest World Intellectual Property Organization Treaties—the WIPO Copyright Treaty and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty. They were aimed to facilitate international protection of domestic intellectual property rights (IPR) holders.

“This is part of our continuous process of reforms wherein we consult industry,” said an official in the know of the development. Industry experts said the law now needs lesser exceptions to copyright infringement in publishing, fashion and music.

“There is a need to overhaul the Copyright Act to respond to challenges

Presented by the changing dynamics of doing business in technology enabled environments,” said Ankit Sahni, intellectual property lawyer. As per Sahni, there are several issues, including those pertaining to intermediary liability, statutory damages, dynamic injunctions and multiple copyright societies for a single category of right that need to be relooked at.

“Sectors such as publishing seem to have been completely overlooked by lawmakers,” he said.

While pendency in examination of new copyright applications has been brought down to less than one month in March 2017 from around 13 months earlier, another expert said enforcement processes need to be revisited.

“Copyright issues go beyond industry. It protects our education system through various exemptions that are granted at present. The academic community needs to be consulted

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before any amendment as it impacts universalisation and inclusiveness of India’s education,” said Biswajit Dhar, professor at JNU.

In 2019-20, 21,905 copyright applications were filed in India and 16,048 were granted, an increase from 14,812 filings in FY16 and 4,505 granted.