

Good Copyright News for Social Media Influencers and, Potentially, for the Companies That Hire Them

Published in *CorporateLiveWire's Intellectual Property 2021 Expert Guide*

February 3, 2021

This article discusses a new "group registration" option for "short online literary works" that was established by the US Copyright Office and became effective on August 17, 2020. The group registration option will allow social media influencers and other online bloggers to protect their frequent, short posts and such works from copyright infringement, whereas previously the administrative burden and cost associated with copyright registration of single works prohibited such individuals from doing so. The author discusses the requirements, including the type of works and the length of time in which they are published, to qualify for the group registration option, as well as some of its disadvantages for social media influencers and bloggers, including that the group registration only covers text and not any video, photographs, or music that is combined with text in posts. Additionally, the article discusses the impact the group registration option can have on companies that engage with social media influencers or bloggers, including that a larger company with a popular brand could require influencers to grant all rights of copyright to the company or include "work-for-hire" language in its influencer agreements, which allows the company to be considered as the author of the works for copyright purposes. The author concludes that companies should consider revising their influencer agreements to require influencers and bloggers to apply for registration of their posts and assign their rights to the company.

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CONTACTS

For more information, contact your Katten attorney or any of the following attorneys.



David Halberstadter

+1.310.788.4408

david.halberstadter@katten.com

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