



PROFESSIONAL ISSUES



Adil Salamat 2019

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Introduction

For this report, I will be discussing legal issues that could arise when making a game similar to Pacman. This will cover a large variety of topics such as: Copyright, copyleft, trademarks, and finally, how this all differs from country to country.

Copyright

Copyright is the exclusive right given to the creator that stops others from using it without permission. That being said, copyright protects the original creation of an idea not the actual idea itself. What that means is the way a certain thing is created is protected not the final product. So far this means that creating Pacman for my project won't lead to any issues as long as the code I use is created by me and is not the same as the original source code. Copyright also works differently depending on the country it is registered to. For example, in the UK, copyright on original creations such as artistic work, software, sound or film recordings, automatically get copyright protection. In the UK there is no fee or need for registration, all that is required is to mark it with a copyright symbol.

Copyright protects content from others copying work, distributing copies of it, renting or lending copies, and putting it on the internet. International agreements such as the Berne Convention allows copyrighting content in other countries. In most countries, copyright lasts 50 to 100 years after the death of the owner.

Copyleft

Copyleft is essentially the opposite to copyright. Unlike open source code that can be used by anyone, and later modified to be copyrighted by the editor/new creator, copyleft ensures that if any changes are made, as long as the original code was used, that new code is also free for anyone to use.

What this means is that if any of the original Pacman game source code is protected by copyleft, I can then use that code for my project without risk of infringement. Unfortunately, the code used for the Pacman game is all copyrighted. What this means is that for my project, all the code needs to be original.

Trademark

Trademark relates to an intellectual property which could be a sign, logo or expression which protects the product from counterfeit goods and brand piracy. The purpose of a

Adil Salamat
100879914

trademark is to ensure that other companies/individuals can't use properties created by others to promote and sell their products, this creates unfair competition. The name "Pac-Man" is trademarked, which means that products that use that name can't without permission. Since Pacman is still under trademark, I can't call my game Pacman or make any references to it or any other trademarks by Bandai Namco Entertainment.

How do these laws affect the UK

Despite Bandai Namco Entertainment being based in Japan, they have registered copyrights and trademarks in the US, UK, and other countries around the world. Recently they have opened the rights to the original 80's Pacman game, however this is only currently in effect in Japan. What this means for my product is that I will have to make sure that the word Pacman is not used anywhere within my final game, the imagery used (include sprites) are not similar to Pacman, I also need to make sure that the code written is not similar to the source code for Pacman.

The concept itself for Pacman, creating a maze-based game where you need to clear the board, cannot be copyrighted or trademarked, so creating my game should not lead to any issues.

Conclusion

To conclude, we discussed copyright, copyleft, trademarks, and how all of this will affect the final product which is being made and distributed in the UK.

Bibliography

This source was used as it gave information on Pacman becoming open to other users in Japan

Anime News Network. (2019). *Bandai Namco Opens Rights to Pac-Man, '80s Game Properties*. [online] Available at: <https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2015-03-31/bandai-namco-opens-rights-to-pac-man-80s-game-properties/.86558> [Accessed 2 Dec. 2019].

This source gave details over the Pacman trademark

Shacknews. (2019). *Pac-Man Maker Trademark Sought By Bandai Namco*. [online] Available at: <https://www.shacknews.com/article/99750/pac-man-maker-trademark-sought-by-bandai-namco> [Accessed 2 Dec. 2019].

Adil Salamat
100879914

This source was used to gather a better understanding of what copy left is and if it effects my project

Gnu.org. (2019). *What is Copyleft? - GNU Project - Free Software Foundation*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gnu.org/licenses/copyleft.en.html> [Accessed 2 Dec. 2019].

This source was used for getting a better understanding of copyright, what it is, and how it will affect my plan/product going forward.

Copyright.gov. (2019). [online] Available at: <https://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ01.pdf> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2019].

This source was used to understand how the copyright laws work within the UK as well as how to apply for copyright

GOV.UK. (2019). *How copyright protects your work*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/copyright> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2019].