Lab 4 – I.P.R

Copyright is an unregistered right, meaning I don’t have to apply for copyright. It begins as soon as a work is created. This applies in all 151 countries part of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works. Copyright law protects the work for the life of the owner plus 50 years after death, 70 years in some countries. The EU Computer Programs Directive controls the legal protection of computer programs under copyright law in the EU.

I can prove ownership of my work by keeping copies of all software I make, including all documentation relating to the work.

Patents can also be used to protect my work. It is however much more complicated than copyright. A patent must be applied for in each country you would like the protection. A patented invention must be exposed to the public. The requirements of a patent application can be legally and technically complex and may require a legal experts assistance. Protection generally only lasts 20 years from the filing of the application.

I could apply for a patent for my FYP. To protect my work, I would have to be able to identify the core part of innovation in my FYP.

Confidential Information

If I have employees working for me I could as part of the contracts, they would have to sign a non-disclosure agreement. This would prevent them from discussing business secrets with people from outside the company. These secrets could include things such as computer code, specifications, flow charts, algorithms, user documentation etc. If they were to give away company secrets, they would be breaking the law. This would provide further protection to the business and its intellectual property.

Trade Marks

The name, logo or slogan of the software can be trademarked. This will prevent a competitor from applying a similar name to a similar type of service. Trademarks can be applied for at the European Union Intellectual Property Office(EUIPO). Once registered my name, logo and slogan would be protected under EU and Irish law.

Licences

A software licence is a legal instrument that governs the use and redistribution of software. There are multiple types of software license. Types of copyright license include:

* Proprietary license
* GNU General Public License
* End User License Agreement (EULA)
* Workstation licenses
* Concurrent use license
* Site licenses
* Perpetual licenses
* Non-perpetual licenses. etc.

I could also use an open source license such as Apache License 2.0 or MIT license. This allows the software to be freely used, modified, and shared.