

Copyright Professional Development

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Author Note

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SHOWING FILMS IN OUR LIBRARIES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO AVOID COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT WHILE ENTERTAINING THE COMMUNITY

What is copyright?

According to the U.S. Copyright Office, “Copyright is a type of intellectual property that protects original works of authorship as soon as an author fixes the work in a tangible form of expression ... Works are original when they are independently created by a human author and have a minimal degree of creativity.”

Learn more: [U.S. Copyright Office](#)

What can be shown in our libraries?

The Queens Public Library is able to show copyrighted films and other moving images with a license from a streaming service or a company. Movies and videos in the public domain and Creative Commons (CC) may be freely shown, though some CC content may have terms to be adhered to.



The Library’s streaming service subscriptions--Hoopla and Kanopy--have titles with Public Performance Rights (PPR) available. To find PPR titles on Kanopy, go to the search filters and toggle “Public Performance Rights available” on or look for a PPR icon in the content’s description; on Hoopla, browse movies by genre/collection and find the “Public Performance Rights Included” collection to view titles.

The Library also licenses movies for public showing through Swank Motion Pictures, though films indicated with “Single Event License” are not included in the Library’s Annual Public Performance Site License. Swank is not a streaming site, so copies of the movies will need to be acquired.

Learn more: [Swank: Annual Public Performance Site Licensing](#)

[Swank: Single Event License](#)

[Public Domain](#)

[Creative Commons Licenses](#)

Where can public domain films be found?

- [The Internet Archive](#)
- [The Public Domain Review](#)
- [Library of Congress](#)

What about YouTube videos?

Generally, YouTube creators own the copyright to their original uploaded content. Unless a Creative Commons license is specified in a video’s description, written consent from a creator is needed to show a video publicly. Free movies on YouTube may not be shown without license.