Data itself cannot be copyrighted; however, it can be licensed. One may own intellectual property (IP) rights over the data's creative arrangement, annotation, compilation, or selection.

Patent law may apply if one's data collection leads to new and valuable inventions. Trade secrets may protect data if one's formula, process, design, or method offers a commercial advantage.

**What precautions should you take?**

- When acquiring data from a vendor, be clear about the licensing terms and conditions for reuse and sharing.
- Keep in mind that some contracts or grants come with non-disclosure agreements or other conditions requiring secrecy.
- The Fair Use provisions of the Copyright Act allow you to copy and use copyrighted material for specific purposes that serve the public interest such as teaching, scholarship, or research. Complete the UCSB Fair use checklist to determine whether your proposed use of a copyrighted work is fair use.

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**Is Data Copyrightable?**

- Data itself cannot be copyrighted; however, it can be licensed. One may own intellectual property (IP) rights over the data's creative arrangement, annotation, compilation, or selection.
- Patent law may apply if one's data collection leads to new and valuable inventions. Trade secrets may protect data if one's formula, process, design, or method offers a commercial advantage.

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**Understanding the Creative Commons Licensing Spectrum**

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**IP & Licensing Resources at UCSB:**

- UCSB Intellectual Property & Licensing
- UCSB Library’s Copyright Advisory Committee

Still in doubt, contact us: rds@library.ucsb.edu