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The ABC of authors' rights

copyright n. an author's legal right to reproduce, sell, publish, etc. a work of music, literature, etc.

ACCORDING to Professor Chaiyós Hemarajata of Chulalongkorn University's faculty of law, copyright protection is now extended to cover, in addition to written materials or publications: speech, pictures, musical notes, art works, and video and audio recordings. Exceptions include daily news, the Constitution and laws, government public announcements, court rulings and the translation of these materials.

□ To warrant protection under the copyright laws, a work must exist in a material form.

□ Copyright covers one group of "intellectual properties" that can be protected by law. Others include trademarks and inventions.

□ The copyright laws in Thailand offer protection for the creator's (or creators') lifetime plus 50 years. If there is more than one creator, the protection extends 50 years beyond the death of the longest-lived.

□ The latest copyright law in Thailand (1978) provides for both fines and imprisonment for violators.

□ There are two major conventions on copyright: the Berne Convention, with 76 members, which Thailand joined in 1908; and the Universal Copyright Convention, which the United States belongs to. Certain countries, among them Japan, belong to both conventions.