

Ecma text copyright policy

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Purpose

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Text copyright policy FAQ

Where do these copyright texts come from?

The Ecma default copyright notice is a typical copyright text that standardization organizations use, similar to those used by ISO, ITU, OASIS etc. When drafting this text it has been slightly adapted to Ecma's requirements. This copyright notice has been included into every new Ecma standard and Technical report since 2009. However, we have not retrospectively inserted this copyright notice in the older standards. But in practice the same principle also applies to them.

Standards produced by an Ecma Technical Committee also have the option to use the Ecma alternative text copyright notice and license, which is derived with modifications from the W3C Software and Document Notice and License.

How much income does Ecma generate from its copyrights?

Zero. Ecma International is a not-for-profit organization registered in Switzerland (since 1961). As such its income comes exclusively from membership fees. Also from the very beginning members have felt that the free of charge distribution of Ecma deliverables is an excellent promotion for its Standards and Technical Reports and allows better market penetration of its standards.

What is the main objective of the Ecma text copyright policy (and the copyright notice(s))?

Generally, it is important for Ecma that a standard has the option to remain stable, and to prevent forking of its content (i.e. changing it by a third party in a way that makes it believe that after the change it is still an Ecma standard). In this case, it would use the Ecma default copyright notice.

Ecma may also choose to publish standards under an alternative copyright notice and license where, for example, doing so would facilitate alignment with the policies governing related third-party standards.

Where can I get an Ecma Standard or Technical Report?

You can get them free of charge at the Ecma Website.

Can I republish the Ecma deliverables?

Yes, but for deliverables published under the Ecma default copyright notice it is required that they are published unchanged, and up to date. However, in practice Ecma prefers if the Ecma standards are downloaded, free of charge, from the Ecma website. That is always the authentic copy of the standard, and the download figures help Ecma to follow how many standards were downloaded and where from.

For deliverables published under the Ecma alternative copyright notice and license, any republication must comply with the terms and conditions as described in the alternative copyright notice and license.

Does Ecma store any information on those who download Ecma standards?

No. Privacy of the users of the Ecma standard is very important to Ecma. The only statistics we are getting – with the help of Google Analytics – are about how often a Standard or Technical Report has been downloaded and from which country or region. This allows Ecma to get a kind of feedback about how many Ecma standards are downloaded (so e.g. how popular they are) and where these requests come from.

Can I copy text from an Ecma International standard and put in as “comment” in my software implementation?

Yes, you can under the terms of for both Ecma default and alternative copyright text notices. Ecma regards this as “fair use”, though it understands that “fair use” might be understood differently in different countries. In such case you just insert the text unchanged and you reference the precise source (where this text has been taken from, e.g., Standard reference or number, version, URL.). Note that when appropriate, the copyright page of recent Ecma standards also includes a BSD software license that covers all parts of the standard that are software source code or pseudo-code. Those portions of such standards may be copied under the terms of that license, just like any other BSD licensed software.

Can I copy text from an Ecma International standard and put e.g. in a book on the history of a certain standardization?

Yes, you can under the terms of for both Ecma default and alternative copyright text notices. Ecma regards this also as a “fair use” case, though it understands that “fair use” might be understood differently in different countries. There might be many other “fair use” cases, not covered here. In case of doubt, it is best to ask the Ecma Secretariat.

Does Ecma International lose its copyrights on an Ecma Standard if it submits it to another SDO for approval (such as “fast-track to ISO/IEC JTC 1)?

No. In such a case Ecma does not lose its copyright while the other SDO establishes its copyright: the copyright is not transferred to the other SDO. In such a case Ecma keeps its own copyright, but permits the other SDO to establish its own copyright on the submitted and approved standard as well. In order to avoid any confusion in the market, when maintaining or further developing the standard, both standards (the Ecma one and the SDO one) have to be kept in synchronization. This is the general practice, and happens very frequently.

Does a contributor to an Ecma standard lose its copyrights if its contribution gets fully or partly incorporated into an Ecma Standard?

No. In such a case, in a manner similar to the case above, the contributor does not lose its copyright while Ecma establishes its own copyright: the copyright is not transferred to Ecma. In such a case the original contributor keeps its own copyright (and can do whatever else it wants to do with his contribution), but permits Ecma to use the contribution in the standardization process and eventually also in the approved standard, where Ecma establishes its own copyright to the Standard as a whole.

My question was not answered (fully or partly) by this FAQ. Where can I get more information?

It is best to contact the Ecma Secretariat:

Ecma International
Rue du Rhône 114
Ch-1204 Geneva
Switzerland
Email: helpdesk@ecma-international.org