



Complex Weavers Study Group Copyright Policy and Guidelines for Sharing

Adopted November 6, 2022 by vote of the CW Board of Directors

Complex Weavers Study Groups provide a way for members to share information and learn from each other. In the process of sharing information, it is important to respect the contributions made by all members of the group and treat them correctly.

This document outlines the policy of Complex Weavers (CW) with regard to copyright and use of materials created and shared by study group members. This document is not intended to encompass every question related to copyright and the usage of others' work, but to serve as a guide to respectful usage of work created by study group members. This is not a legal document, but it does reflect the ideas and spirit guiding how we share information and ideas within CW.

Copyright Law in the United States is established in Article I of the U.S. Constitution:

The Congress shall have Power ... To Promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries.
— United States Constitution, Article I, Section 8

For full information on copyrights and copyright law, consult the website of the U.S. Copyright Office (their FAQ page is a good place to start: www.copyright.gov/help/faq/faq-general.html)

Rights of Authors

Much of the policy of CW with regard to copyrights has to do with our publications and our Library. In this document, we'll describe the policy as it pertains to Study Groups and the work of the weavers in those Study Groups.

The policy is summarized in the points below, with definitions and more explanation to follow.

- 1) The Author of each document shared with a Study Group retains the copyright to what s/he created.
- 2) The copyright to a Collection of documents from a Study Group submitted to the CW Library is owned by CW. (See important notes in the expanded explanation below.)
- 3) Format and Editing copyrights belong to the person who did the formatting and editing.
- 4) Within their own individual contributions, Authors should respect copyright laws with regard to others' work.
- 5) Contributions submitted as physical materials may not be digitized or electronically distributed without the Author's permission.

Detailed Explanations

1. **Study Group Authors retain copyright to the content of their own Study Group contributions.**
The designation 'Author' includes an individual who shares an original design, photos, illustrations, text, WIF or research paper with the Study Group. It also includes a Study Group Leader who writes a newsletter or teaching section that is entirely her/his own work.

The Author is always free to use or re-use the text, graphics, photographs and designs contained in his/her own contributions to the group. The rights of the original Author abide. By the act of participating in a CW Study Group, the Author gives permission to the Study Group to distribute her/his contributions within the group.

For Study Group materials submitted to the CW Library, the Author also gives permission to CW to

retain up to three copies (including backups) of those materials. These copies are available to CW members for study purposes only. Changing the format of these copies from paper to electronic support requires the Author's permission, even if that change is intended solely to create a back-up library copy that will not circulate.

Note in particular: Any other use of the Author's work, particularly any use for profit (examples: teaching, re-publication, weaving to sell, entering a show, inclusion in a book, etc.) requires written permission from the Author.

2. ***The copyright to a Collection of documents from a Study Group submitted to the CW Library is owned by CW.***

(Examples of Collections: the study group newsletter, collected contributions presented in notebooks or digital folders, sets of physical sample exchanges and their documentation, sets of digital documents shared within the group).

The materials in a Collection are gathered as part of the formal activity of a CW Study Group, not as an independent venture by one or more individuals.

The CW Library operates under the umbrella of CW. Once materials from a Study Group have been submitted to the Library, the rights to the Collection belong to CW. The re-publication of a Collection outside the confines of the study group therefore requires express permission of CW.

A few times in the past, CW has granted permission to re-publish both partial and full Collections, under conditions set forth for each case by the CW Board. In each such case, the members whose submissions were part of that collection gave permission for their work to be included. Even when all members of a group have given blanket permission to the Study Group for their work to be used, published, or put on a group website (a common permission process within some study groups), formal permission from CW is still necessary for any re-publication of the Collection itself.

3. ***Format and Editing copyrights belong to the person who did the formatting and editing.***

The person who formats and/or edits the contribution (usually either the Author or the Study Group Leader) holds the copyright over the format and editing. One way to understand this is to think of formatting and editing as the 'container' that holds the content of the contribution ('content' meaning the text, diagrams, and photos created by the original Author). Rights to the 'container' belong to the person who created that 'container.' The Content copyright is still held by the Author, and the Collection copyright is still held by CW.

Here's an example of how this affects what we do: if an Author wants to distribute her/his own contribution as it was formatted in the group's newsletter (for example, by posting the formatted newsletter as-is on the Author's website), that Author would need to seek the leader/editor's permission to do so. Conversely, because the Author retains rights to the content of the contribution, a Study Group Leader would need the Author's permission to distribute the newsletter beyond the confines of the study group (except as specified in item 2 above).

4. ***Within their own individual contributions, and whenever making reference to the work of others, Authors should respect copyright laws with regard to others' work.***

This is not just a question of law, it's one of courtesy and mutual respect. A CW member can quote small excerpts or sections of another person's work 'for study purposes,' but wholesale copying of another author's work (including information posted on others' websites) is not allowed without written permission of the original Author, for as long as that work is still protected by copyright. In any case, whenever another person's work is cited, credit should be given to the source.

5. ***Contributions submitted as physical materials may not be digitized or electronically distributed without the Author's permission.***

Some Study Groups require their members to give written permission to make digital copies of their work. Some Study Groups exchange information by digital means only, and group members give permission for their work to be shared digitally, within the group itself and through the CW Library.

A permission for digitally sharing contributions does not automatically apply retroactively. Contributions made before electronic permissions existed still need each Author's permission before the physical document may be converted to digital format (for example: early samples from a long-

running Study Group may not be scanned and saved in digital form without the original Authors' permissions). In a case where the original Author has died, permission should be sought from that person's heirs or remaining family members.

With regard to contributions or collections already in digital format when sent to the CW Library, these may legally be backed up on paper or copied electronically, and they may circulate (i.e., be checked out from the library) digitally. For library storage purposes, materials in electronic format are considered to be in an impermanent format, and a paper backup is both likely and strongly recommended.

Guidelines for Sharing

Up to this point, this document has discussed permissions and copyrights, and who retains which rights. This information is important, but it doesn't represent the full picture. In other words, the law is one thing; the actions and attitudes of people who live under that law are another.

Back at the beginning of our organization, one of the founding principles of Complex Weavers was that everyone would benefit when weavers could freely share their work, discoveries and enthusiasm. This can happen only when everyone agrees to be an active part of a respectful, considerate, supportive environment.

To supplement the relatively dry details of copyright and its legal protections, here are some guidelines for everyday sharing, to encourage the mutual respect we have all come to rely on.

1. ***Cite your sources and resources.***

In documenting your own work, list the publications, presentations or reference works that helped you along the way. This gives others in your group the chance to expand their own understanding of a structure or concept, and it can provide a context for your own explorations.

2. ***Respect the work of others.***

If the work you are presenting to the study group includes work that was previously published or presented by someone else, contact that person to let them know about your project, and request their permission if you plan to quote from their previous work, or to reproduce one of their diagrams. This not only keeps you within the legal boundaries of respecting someone else's copyright, it also is a thoughtful and considerate gesture.

You should, of course, never represent someone else's work as your own. The hard feelings that can result from such an action are often permanent.

3. ***Give credit where credit is due.***

If you quote a passage from a book, list the source.

If you are presenting a new design that used another design as a starting place, give credit to the person who created the original. For example, if you took a beautiful eight-shaft design woven by Jane Doe and expanded it into a 24-shaft artwork, mention Jane Doe and her lovely original.

4. ***Give credit for inspiration.***

Sources of inspiration are fascinating, and they can inspire others in turn. If your work was inspired by a painting or piece of music, say so. If it was inspired by a class or workshop, give credit to that class and its instructor. If you have admired the work of another weaver and used her/his colorways, structures and ideas as jumping-off points for your own work, be sure to give them a nod of credit. Inspiration is contagious, and your sharing will pass the spark on to other weavers.

5. ***Encourage others to join you in your explorations.***

You never know when exciting ideas will lead to truly inspired collaborations. And you never know where shared explorations might take you. We learn from each other, every day.

These policies will be reviewed and updated as our needs evolve.

- *Original policy document from CW archives, 2007.*
- *Revised, expanded and updated, November 2022.*