

Copying and distributing books without permission

Question: This is question 29, the questioner asks: Is downloading books from the internet in order to benefit the people without returning to the owner for permission, considered copyright infringement? Keeping in mind that some books have written on them the phrase “All rights reserved” while they are on the internet?

Shaykh Ubayd al-Jaabari: The principle is that whatever is distributed on the internet to include books or tapes is the property of the distributor or the author. It is **not** permissible to publish or distribute them **except** if you receive their permission. **You must have prior permission directly from them.**

One way in which permission is granted is if it is written on the book “Copyright not reserved”.

This is to warn the Muslim men and the Muslim women from transgressing the publications of specific websites, or specific broadcast of the Muslims. This also applies to the non-Muslims. It is not permissible to transgress them by distributing their works.

It does not matter if it is sold or given away as a gift. It is only consider normal for the person to take what he needs for himself, not to sell and not to give away as a gift to others. It is only according to what he needs. This is normal as to what is allowable. As for exceeding this; then no, and a thousand times no, for indeed this is infringing on the rights of others.

Translated by Rasheed ibn Estes Barbee

Translator’s note: Shaykh Ubayd stated it is not permissible to distribute books that the author placed on the internet without his prior approval. So how about those who copy books that are not on the internet, place them on the internet and distribute them without prior permission?!