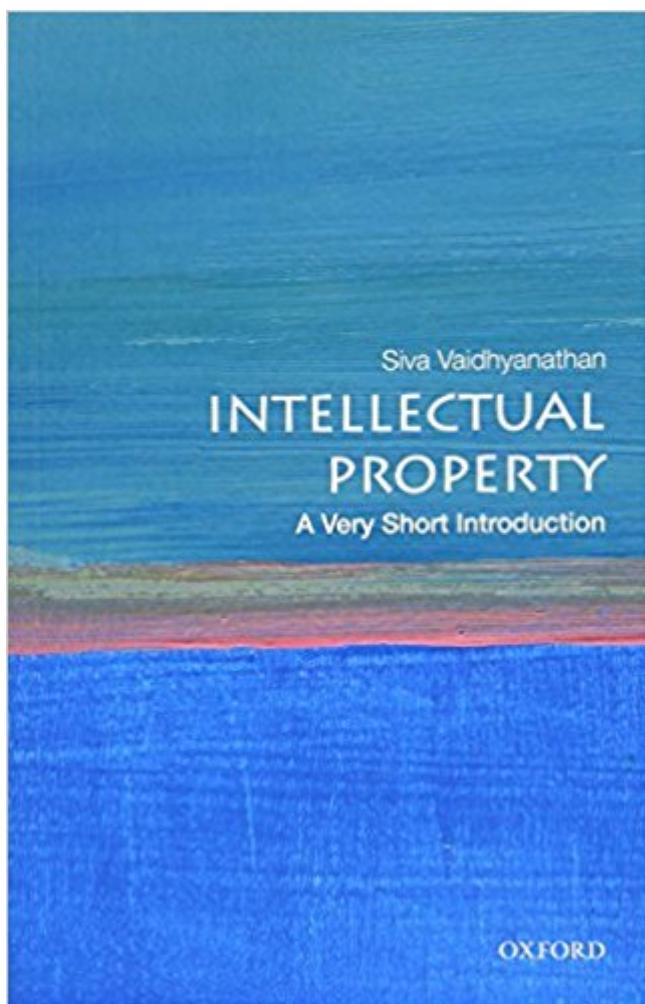


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# Intellectual Property: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)



## **Synopsis**

We all create intellectual property. We all use intellectual property. Intellectual property is the most pervasive yet least understood way we regulate expression. Despite its importance to so many aspects of the global economy and daily life, intellectual property policy remains a confusing and arcane subject. This engaging book clarifies both the basic terms and the major conflicts surrounding these fascinating areas of law, offering a layman's introduction to copyright, patents, trademarks, and other forms of knowledge falling under the purview of intellectual property rights. Using vivid examples, noted media expert Siva Vaidyanathan illustrates the powers and limits of intellectual property, distilling with grace and wit the complex tangle of laws, policies, and values governing the dissemination of ideas, expressions, inventions, creativity, and data collection in the modern world. Vaidyanathan explains that intellectual property exists as it does because powerful interests want it to exist. The strongest economies in the world have a keen interest in embedding rigid methods of control and enforcement over emerging economies to preserve the huge economic interests linked to their copyright industries—film, music, software, and publishing. For this reason, the fight over the global standardization of intellectual property has become one of the most important sites of tension in North-South global relations. Through compelling case studies, including those of Starbucks, Coca-Cola, Sony, , and Google Books, Vaidyanathan shows that the modern intellectual property systems reflect three centuries of changes in politics, economics, technologies, and social values. Although it emerged from a desire to foster creativity while simultaneously protecting it, intellectual property today has fundamentally shifted to a political dimension.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"In the course of a book tracing the legal paths by which ideas about intellectual property has traveled, Vaidhyanathan illuminates conflicting truths...In this smart, engaging book, surprisingly provocative for a short introduction, he won this reader." - Karin Wulf, The Scholarly Kitchen

Siva Vaidhyanathan is a Professor of Media Studies and Law at the University of Virginia. He is a frequent contributor on media and cultural issues for The Chronicle of Higher Education, New York Times Magazine, The Nation, MSNBC.com, and Salon.com. He is the author of several books, including *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property* and *The Anarchist in the Library: How the Clash Between Freedom and Control Is Hacking the Real World and Crashing the System*.

I am satisfied.

For anyone who needs to get caught up on IP, this is a good book. It is not encyclopedia-style; you could look up all of the relevant terms in Wikipedia or any of many sources, and get textbook-type definitions. This overview gives more. It illustrates how IP affects many things around us, such as the cachet of Starbucks and the complicated IP that gives us the world in a smartphone. Based on these charming examples, the book carries you through the next level of enlightenment - examining how various forces and ideals have shaped and continue to shape various types of IP. Here, there is a special focus on the international dimensions, and on the ways that these recognized cultural institutions may unfairly be swayed by large firms with larger commercial interests at heart, as opposed to this ideal of protecting and fostering intellectual creativity. So, this brief intro can serve as the introduction as you enter current controversies. A couple of U.S. court decisions, *Mayo vs. Prometheus* and *Association for Molecular Pathology v. Myriad*, regarding what natural-world knowledge might be patentable is perceived to have created a chilling effect in the world of genomic research, since the economic viability of this type of research may be greatly reduced, and, at a loss to humanity, may be pushing this research toward reaping economic benefit by the "trade secret" IP mechanism, versus the "patent" mechanism. Dr. Vaidhyanathan's intro to IP can help you follow

such developments. However, his strength is more along the lines of the privacy we, as individuals assuming a general right to privacy, may be ceding as the connected world monitors our online activity more and more.

Siva Vaidyanathan's work provides an excellent overview of all categories of intellectual property including trademark, copyright, patent, and trade secrets. The work also provides insights related to the tensions created by IP Laws in light of new technologies and media streams. Due to the depth (although part of the Very Short Series) and scope of the work, I will be using Siva Vaidyanathan's work in my IP course this summer.

A short but thorough overview of intellectual property and everything related. Compelling and useful, with an exhaustive bibliography.

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