

CRACKING IDEAS[®]

Get Cracking!

Owning ideas

We can all protect our ideas and make money from the things we create, thanks to intellectual property rights (IP). These rights make new inventions, designs and other creations a form of property, so that innovators can benefit from their work.

There are four main types of IP:

- **Copyright** – protects material such as literature, art, music, sound recordings, films and broadcasts

E.g. the works of J.K. Rowling (Harry Potter)

- **Designs** – protect the visual appearance or ‘eye appeal’ of products and processes

E.g. a Bratz™ doll

- **Patents** – protect the technical and functional aspects of products and processes; anything from a small detail in an electrical switch to a new form of transport

E.g. the first hovercraft

- **Trade marks** – protect signs that distinguish the goods and services of one trader from those of another. Shapes, sounds, colours, words, logos, slogans (and more) can all be trade marked.

E.g. the ‘golden arches’ of McDonalds®

Cashing in - and coughing up

If you don’t want to use your IP, you can sell it, or license it to make money. But if somebody uses your IP without permission, they infringe your IP rights and you can take legal action to stop them. If you win, they may have to pay you royalties for past sales.

Keeping things under your hat

If you reveal your idea or invention to even one other person, this can count as ‘prior publication’, which means the UK Intellectual Property Office cannot grant you a patent.

Please be aware then, that by entering the Cracking Ideas competition, you will be placing your ideas in the public arena. This means they cannot be patented - although you could walk away with some fantastic prizes for your students. For more information visit:

www.ipo.gov.uk