

Printify Helps T-Shirt Sellers Design With Confidence and Avoid Copyright Infringement

New guidance also tackles trademark look-alikes and marketplace takedowns—the two most common pitfalls for first-time sellers.



Wilmington, Delaware Dec 10, 2025 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Printify, a leading print-on-demand platform for custom apparel entrepreneurs, today released expanded education and in-platform resources to help US [t-shirt sellers prevent copyright and trademark infringement](#) while building original, scalable brands. The initiative pairs plain-English legal guidance with safer design workflows inside Printify's Product Creator, including licensing tools that reduce risk before a design hits a marketplace.

"Most new sellers aren't trying to copy anyone—they're trying to move fast," said Davis Sārmiņš, Director of Growth Marketing at Printify. "We built these resources so US creators can design boldly and still know their products are compliant, defensible, and ready to scale."

A growing risk for US t-shirt businesses

Copyright law protects original creative works once they're "fixed" in a tangible form - such as illustrations, photography, typography, layouts, and graphic compositions. Using a protected work without permission can trigger takedowns, lost revenue, and litigation. Under US law, statutory damages can range from **\$750 to \$30,000 per infringed work**, and can rise to **\$150,000 per work for willful infringement**, not including attorney fees.

At the same time, marketplaces have intensified enforcement. Etsy's 2024 Transparency Report shows the platform processed **85,591 alleged infringement reports** and removed **approximately 832,000**

listings tied to IP concerns in 2024 alone.

“Those numbers make one thing clear: enforcement is no longer occasional—it’s constant,” said Davis Sārmiņš. “Sellers need a repeatable compliance habit, not a lucky guess.”

What Printify is delivering for sellers

Printify’s updated IP support focuses on prevention, not panic. The rollout includes:

Clear policy and practical rules for what can be printed and sold through Printify, including how claims are handled and what content is restricted. Built-in design safety tips in Printify’s Product Creator to encourage original work, validate sources, and avoid risky brand references.

Shutterstock licensing integrated into Printify so sellers can access millions of commercial-use images, publish without upfront cost, and pay only after a sale—helping keep documentation clean and usage legal across connected sales channels.

“Printify is uniquely positioned to make compliance feel simple,” said Davis Sārmiņš. “When licensing and policy guidance live in the same place you create products, safety becomes part of the creative flow.”

Printify’s US-focused “dos and don’ts” for IP-safe t-shirt design

Printify advises sellers to use the following five-step standard for every design:

- Create from scratch whenever possible. Original graphics are the strongest defense and the best long-term brand asset.
- Use public-domain and clearly licensed content only. Public-domain works are safe, but derivative versions (like newer shows, remixes, or stylized adaptations) may still be protected.
- Treat memes, celebrity photos, and “internet images” as copyrighted by default. Viral does not mean free to commercialize.
- Avoid brand confusion. Even if you don’t copy a logo, using recognizable character likenesses, brand slogans, or signature fonts can trigger trademark or trade-dress claims.
- Document your sources. Keep proof of licenses, permissions, or public-domain status for every non-original element.

“Assume everything is protected unless you can verify otherwise,” said Davis Sārmiņš. “That mental shift alone prevents most takedowns we see in the wild.”

US case study examples

A Colorado-based Etsy seller launched a pop-culture-inspired t-shirt line and received two takedown notices within the first month after unknowingly using copyrighted visual elements. Switching to fully original illustrations and using Printify’s Shutterstock integration for properly licensed textures and supporting graphics, the seller rebuilt the collection without further enforcement actions and stabilized sales through the next peak season. “The lesson is simple: you can’t scale what keeps getting removed,” said Davis Sārmiņš. “Once the seller shifted to designs they owned or licensed, growth stopped resetting.”

A New York creator built a city-pride tee using a phrase and type style that closely resembled a major

sports brand identity. After reviewing Printify's IP guidance, the seller adjusted typography and messaging to remove brand-confusion risk. The product launched cleanly and became a top performer in a local pride collection. "Trademark enforcement often hits sellers who think they're 'just referencing' a vibe," said Davis Sārmiņš. "If a buyer could mistake it for official merch, it's too close."

A California designer built a space-themed apparel line using verified public-domain NASA imagery, paired with original layout work and copy. Produced through Printify, the collection scaled across multiple US channels with no IP complaints. "Public-domain design is a safe creativity multiplier—if you verify sources and avoid protected derivatives," said Davis Sārmiņš.

Printify's expanded IP education, design-safety guidance, and Shutterstock licensing integration are available now to all US sellers through Printify's platform.

About Printify

Printify is a print-on-demand platform that helps merchants design, produce, and sell custom products through a global network of vetted print partners. With powerful creation tools, transparent fulfillment, and built-in licensing options, Printify enables creators to launch and scale brands safely and efficiently.

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