Intellectual Property Rights
The U.S. Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. §§ 101 - 810, is Federal legislation enacted by Congress under its Constitutional grant of authority to protect the writings of authors. See U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8.

A copyright gives the owner the exclusive right to reproduce, distribute, perform, display, or license his work. The owner also receives the exclusive right to produce or license derivatives of his or her work. Limited exceptions to this exclusivity exist for types of "fair use", such as book reviews. To be covered by copyright a work must be original and in a concrete "medium of expression."

Changing technology has led to an ever expanding understanding of the word "writings". The Copyright Act now reaches architectural design, software, the graphic arts, motion pictures, and sound recordings.
Secures Creative Effort

- Copyright law secures for the creator of a creative effort the exclusive right to control who can make copies, or make works derived from the original work.
What is “Creative Work?”

The first big issue involves defining what it is to make a creative work. The law requires that it exist in some tangible form -- it can't just be in your head or sailing through the ether, it has to be on disk, paper, carved in stone (sculpture) or the like. It has to be creative (that's a tough one for lawyers to define) and that means it can't just be factual data. But just about anything you write in English (or C++) is going to be a creative work, anything you photograph or sculpt or draw or record.
There's a pretty simple rule when it comes to the Net. If you didn't write it, and you want to reproduce it, ask the creator.

In The Public Domain
10 Big Myths About Copyright Explained

An attempt to answer common myths about copyright seen on the net and cover issues related to copyright and USENET/Internet publication.

- by Brad Templeton

http://www.templetons.com/brad/copymyths.html
On Copyrights – True or False?

1. "If it doesn't have a copyright notice, it's not copyrighted."
2. "If I don't charge for it, it's not a violation."
3. "If it's posted on the Internet it's in the public domain." 
4. "My posting was just fair use!"
5. "If you don't defend your copyright you lose it." -- "Somebody has that name copyrighted!"
More On Copyrights – True or False?

6. "If I make up my own stories, but base them on another work, my new work belongs to me."

7. "They can't get me, defendants in court have powerful rights!"

8. “Copyright violation isn't a crime or anything?"

9. "It doesn't hurt anybody -- in fact it's free advertising."

10. "They e-mailed me a copy, so I can post it."
1. These days, almost all things are copyrighted the moment they are written, and no copyright notice is required.

2. Copyright is still violated whether you charged money or not, only damages are affected by that.

3. Postings to the net are not granted to the public domain, and don't grant you any permission to do further copying except perhaps the sort of copying the poster might have expected in the ordinary flow of the net.

4. Fair use is a complex doctrine meant to allow certain valuable social purposes. i.e. commentary, news reporting, research and education
5. Copyright is not lost because you don't defend it; that's a concept from trademark law. The ownership of names is also from trademark law, so don't say somebody has a name copyrighted.

6. Fan fiction and other work derived from copyrighted works is a copyright violation.

7. Copyright law is mostly civil law where the special rights of criminal defendants you hear so much about don't apply.

8. New laws are moving copyright violation into the criminal realm.

9. Don't rationalize that you are helping the copyright holder; often it's not that hard to ask permission.
10. Posting E-mail is technically a violation, but revealing facts from E-mail you got isn't, and for almost all typical E-mail, nobody could wring any damages from you for posting it. The law doesn't do much to protect works with no commercial value.
Creative Commons
Another Approach to Copyright

- Creative Commons offers a flexible range of protections and freedoms for authors and artists. We have built upon the "all rights reserved" of traditional copyright to create a voluntary "some rights reserved" copyright. We're a nonprofit. All of our tools are free.

- Learn more
What Are Patents, Trademarks, Servicemarks, and Copyrights?

- Although there may be some similarities among these kinds of intellectual property protection, they are different and serve different purposes.
  - A **patent** for an invention is the grant of a property right to the inventor, issued by the Patent and Trademark Office.
  - A **trademark** is a word, name, symbol or device which is used in trade with goods to indicate the source of the goods and to distinguish them from the goods of others.
  - A **servicemark** is the same as a trademark except that it identifies and distinguishes the source of a service rather than a product.
  - A **copyright** is a form of protection provided to the authors of “original works of authorship” including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, and certain other intellectual works, both published and unpublished.
Privacy

1. **Information Privacy**: involves the establishment of rules governing the collection and handling of personal data such as credit information, and medical and government records.

2. **Bodily Privacy**: concerns the protection of people's physical selves against invasive procedures such as genetic tests, drug testing and cavity searches.

3. **Privacy of Communications**: covers the security and privacy of mail, telephones, e-mail and other forms of communication.

4. **Territorial Privacy**: concerns the setting of limits on intrusion into the domestic and other environments such as the workplace or public space. This includes searches, video surveillance and ID checks.
Constitutional Right To Privacy?

- This question is still being litigated today and scholars are split on the issue.

- *Not once* is the word privacy mentioned in the Constitution.
Identity Theft Law


Many states have passed laws making identity theft a crime or providing help in recovery from identity theft; others are considering such legislation.
Netiquette

Ethical Use of the Internet
What is Netiquette?
Simply stated, it's network etiquette -- that is, the etiquette of cyberspace. And "etiquette" means "the forms required by good breeding or prescribed by authority to be required in social or official life." In other words, Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online.
The Core Rules of Netiquette are excerpted from the book *Netiquette* by Virginia Shea

http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.htm
Rule 1 -- Remember The Human

- When you communicate electronically, all you see is a computer screen. You don't have the opportunity to use facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice to communicate your meaning; words -- lonely written words -- are all you've got. And that goes for your correspondent as well.

- When you're holding a conversation online -- whether it's an email exchange or a response to a discussion group posting -- it's easy to misinterpret your correspondent's meaning. And it's frighteningly easy to forget that your correspondent is a person with feelings more or less like your own.

- *Would you say it to the person's face?*

- Any message you send could be saved or forwarded by its recipient. You have no control over where it goes.
Rule 2: Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life

- Perhaps because people sometimes forget that there's a human being on the other side of the computer, some people think that a lower standard of ethics or personal behavior is acceptable in cyberspace.

- ... *but these people are mistaken.*
Rule 3: Know where you are in cyberspace

- What's perfectly acceptable in one area may be dreadfully rude in another. For example, in most TV discussion groups, passing on idle gossip is perfectly permissible. But throwing around unsubstantiated rumors in a journalists' mailing list will make you very unpopular there.

- Lurk before you leap!
Rule 4: Respect other people's time and bandwidth

- When you send email or post to a discussion group, you're taking up other people's time (or hoping to). It's your responsibility to ensure that the time they spend reading your posting isn't wasted.

- When you accidentally post the same note to the same newsgroup five times, you are wasting both time (of the people who check all five copies of the posting) and bandwidth (by sending repetitive information over the wires and requiring it to be stored somewhere).

- You are not the center of cyberspace
Rule 5: Make yourself look good online

- You will be judged by the quality of your writing. For most people who choose to communicate online, this is an advantage; if they didn't enjoy using the written word, they wouldn't be there. So spelling and grammar do count.
Rule 6: Share expert knowledge

- Don't be afraid to share what you know.
- It's especially polite to share the results of your questions with others.
- Sharing your knowledge is fun. It's a long-time net tradition. And it makes the world a better place.
Rule 7: Help keep flame wars under control

- "Flaming" is what people do when they express a strongly held opinion without holding back any emotion.
- Netiquette does not forbid flaming but it does forbid the perpetuation of flame wars -- series of angry letters, most of them from two or three people directed toward each other, that can dominate the tone and destroy the camaraderie of a discussion group.
Rule 8: Respect other people's privacy

- Of course, you'd never dream of going through your colleagues' desk drawers. So naturally you wouldn't read their email either. Would you?
Rule 9: Don't abuse your power

- Knowing more than others, or having more power than they do, does not give you the right to take advantage of them. For example, sysadmins should never read private email.
Rule 10: Be forgiving of other people's mistakes

- whether it's a spelling error or a spelling flame, a stupid question or an unnecessarily long answer -- be kind about it. If it's a minor error, you may not need to say anything.

- If you do decide to inform someone of a mistake, point it out politely, and preferably by private email rather than in public.