

- **Trademarks** – these are words, designs, or a combination of them that you use to distinguish your wares and/or services from those of others. A trade-mark registration gives the owner the right to its exclusive use in Canada. Protection can be renewed for 15-year periods. If you're starting a business, you should ensure that no one else has registered, is awaiting registration, or is using a trade-mark or trade name similar to yours.
- **Industrial designs** – protection is for the visual features of shape, configuration, pattern, ornamentation, or a combination of these, of a finished manufactured product. Unless you have a registered industrial design, you cannot make a claim of ownership or protect the design against imitations. Registration gives you exclusive rights for up to 10 years.
- **Integrated circuit topographies** – protection is for the three-dimensional configuration of the electronic circuits used in microchips and semiconductor chips. Registration offers exclusive rights for up to 10 years on original circuit designs. Protection can extend to the layout design as well as to the finished product.

TIP

When you set up a Web site, you first have to register its URL (such as exportsource.ca) which you can do if nobody else has registered it. However, simply registering the URL doesn't necessarily give you secure ownership. To make sure your use of the URL isn't challenged by another party, the best thing to do is file for a trademark as soon as you've made your choice.

Online intellectual property information

In addition to CIPO, several Web sites offer information on intellectual property issues. Check the CIPO web site for links to other informative IP sites. Three of them are:

- the World Intellectual Property Organization at www.wipo.org;
- the Intellectual Property Institute of Canada at www.ipic.ca; and
- the World Trade Organization at www.wto.org.