



Digital watermarking is the process of embedding information into a digital signal. The signal may be audio, pictures or video, for example. If the signal is copied, then the information is also carried in the copy.

In visible watermarking, the information is visible in the picture or video. Typically, the information is text or a logo which identifies the owner of the media. When a television broadcaster adds its logo to the corner of transmitted video, this is also a visible watermark.

In invisible watermarking, information is added as digital data to audio, picture or video, but it cannot be perceived as such. An important application of invisible watermarking is to copyright protection systems, which are intended to prevent or deter unauthorized copying of digital media. Steganography is an application of digital watermarking, where two parties communicate a secret message embedded in the digital signal. Annotation of digital photographs with descriptive information is another application of invisible watermarking.

While some file formats for digital media can contain additional information called metadata, digital watermarking is distinct in that the data is carried in the signal itself.

The use of the word of watermarking is derived from the much older notion of placing a visible watermark on paper.

The watermark, more than a name, symbol or signature of the artist, is a process underlying copyright. With the mass proliferation of images over the internet (apparently in an uncontrollable unruly manner) the watermark seems to bring means to an artistic form of protection.

Apparently nothing can prevent the copying of images on the net.

Even protected software (such as Flash, which prevents copying) can always be bypassed with the print-screen of the page.

But the foundways to curb hacking (with blurred images and watermarks) only remove an essential component to the image: the authenticity. This brings to the images a second level: more than the status of works of art, watermarks brings virtuality to them.

The watermark explains that what you see is not genuine. And so no longer interesting.

But the watermark can be artistic. The UAVM Virtual Museum presents 11 works from 11 artists who have focused on this issue: Gianni Sutera (IT), Gruppo Sinestético (IT), Henry Gwiazda (USA), Ida Julsen (Norway), Joseph Jinson (India), Mike Davies (UK), Rui Fonseca (BR), Sarah Boothroyd (Canada), Sebastien Seifert (Spain), Silvio Cro (PT).