

In theory, this is easy enough to do. Simply tell students that the law requires that they use images that are in the public domain or get permission to use copyrighted images. Unfortunately, it's not quite that easy in reality. It can be difficult to determine whether an image is copyrighted and, if it is, by whom. A quick check of search engines indicate that many (including www.ditto.com, www.altavista.com, and www.excite.com) do not carry obvious copyright notification, even after clicking thumbnails to access the site. Warnings such as "image may be scaled down and subject to copyright" (www.google.ca) or "you must obtain the



appropriate permissions to use this image from the owner(s) of the material. Below is the image displayed in its original context" (www.picsearch.com) or "this image may be subject to copyright" (www.yahoo.com) do not appear unless the user clicks on the image in the results list.

Teachers have so many things to cover during the school day that it may not seem worth it to follow the sometimes-lengthy, tedious protocol of obtaining permission to use images in assignments. Besides, many teachers see the school as an environment apart from "the real world" and, even if they are aware of copyright law, believe it doesn't apply as long as their purpose is educational. (These are often the same teachers photocopying entire teachers' guides rather than purchasing multiple copies for their divisions or departments.) This "ostrich" approach to obeying copyright laws is neither wise nor safe as legal sanctions are a very real possibility.

Copyright law is confusing, even for the experts, and can be very intimidating for teachers. However, this doesn't excuse teachers from the need to teach their students the basic concepts

of copyright law, nor does it excuse teachers and students from the need to obey the law.

The Role of the Teacher-Librarian: IMAGE

So, what are teacher-librarians to do? Banning the use of images from the Internet is neither desirable nor practical. Ignoring all notions of copyright for images is equally foolhardy as it neglects to teach students the rules and conduct they need to know beyond school and exposes teachers and students to legal sanctions for violation of copyright law. Teacher-librarians need to balance all of these concerns and realities. I.M.A.G.E. (the acronym is Diana's invention) can be a useful tool.

I = Inform Yourself and Others about Copyright Law

Knowledge is power. It's absolutely vital that teacher-librarians learn at least the basics of copyright law as it applies to K-12 education and share this information with teachers and administrators. Far too many teachers and administrators ignore copyright law completely. Of those who think they're obeying the law, far too many confuse American

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