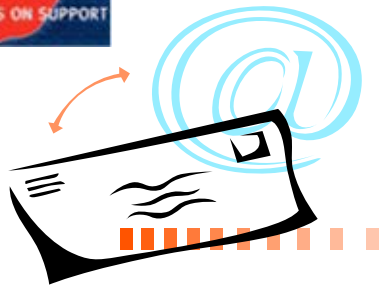




May 2008



ICT briefing note

Regarding: Copyright and school websites/VLEs

Following: BBC website article

There is a particular issue emerging with regard to the use of copyright protected photographs in school web pages, particularly now that robotic software exists that allows copyright holders to search for sites that are using their images. This BBC article dated 13th March 2008, highlights the issue clearly:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7283926.stm>

To quote this article directly:

"The problem schools have is that while a lot of images are OK for them to use under the 'education' umbrella, when they put those images on their websites or swap lesson plans with those images in, they are facilitating the free re-distribution of those images and that is where the problems are occurring.

Copyright lawyer Linda Macpherson said there is a fairly common misconception that material can be freely copied if this is for educational purposes."

In general, all material created by someone else, including graphic images, photographs and text, is subject to copyright legislation, unless the copyright owner chooses to waive their rights. Pupils' therefore own the copyright to any work that they produce and their permission should be obtained before publishing it on a website or VLE.

Where possible, materials for school websites and VLEs should be created internally, because then the school is the copyright holder and can use the materials as it sees fit.

Schools should ensure that staff and pupils are fully aware of the importance of copyright law and that there is the possibility of large financial penalties to the school and/or individual if this is breached. Copyright law should be mentioned in the appropriate school policy, eg. an Acceptable Use of the Internet policy or AUP. One possible statement is *"The use of internet derived materials by staff and by pupils must comply with copyright law."*

Some websites may offer material that is free to download for non-commercial purposes. One site providing images on this basis is <http://www.stockvault.net/>. Clipart and photographic collections that can be purchased on CD or DVD usually allow the purchaser to reuse the material on websites, although they may impose conditions in their licence terms.

The Becta website (link below) offers further guidance to schools on copyright and includes this quote, *"Unauthorised use [of copyright material] can be a criminal offence, equivalent to theft."* It also notes an interesting exemption for visually impaired students. *"To support visually impaired students, the [Copyright \(Visually Impaired Persons\) Act 2002](#) allows copying of hard copy and digital materials to create an accessible format. This might allow, for example, texts to be copied and enlarged for use with access devices in the classroom."*

http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=is&catcode=ss_to_es_pp_le_03&rid=9983