

2012

## Book Review of Copyright for Teachers & Librarians in the 21st Century

Benjamin J. Keele  
bkeele@iu.edu

---

### Repository Citation

Keele, Benjamin J., "Book Review of Copyright for Teachers & Librarians in the 21st Century" (2012). *Library Staff Publications*. 80.  
<https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/libpubs/80>

Copyright c 2012 by the authors. This article is brought to you by the William & Mary Law School Scholarship Repository.  
<https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/libpubs>

Dr. Butler's advice is clear and easily adopted, and she wisely rejects the two most extreme attitudes towards copyright in school: that no copying without paying license fees is permissible, and that anything can be copied freely if the copying supports education. In the gray area between these extremes, Dr. Butler's interpretation of copyright exceptions tends to be narrow. Many of the scenarios end with a recommendation to contact the copyright owner or clearinghouse to obtain permission. Obtaining permission is undoubtedly the surest way to avoid being sued for copyright infringement, but it requires time and money many teachers do not have. In cases where it is not completely clear that an exception applies, teachers may instead choose to avoid using copyright-protected materials when a more assertive (but still perfectly defensible) interpretation would have permitted potentially beneficial uses.

The book's discussion of fair use—certainly one of the most important copyright exceptions for educators—is notably thin and unlikely to empower teachers to rely on fair use. The flowcharts will help teachers consider the relevant questions when deciding how to use a copyright-protected work. Each of the questions asked by most of the flowcharts (Is the material in the public domain? Do you have permission in some form for your use? Does any statutory copyright exception apply to your use?) would need to be unpacked and considered in much more detail to be fully answered.

This book belongs in libraries supporting the training and professional development of teachers. Ideally, such collections would also contain other relevant works, such as Kenneth Crews's *Copyright Law for Librarians and Educators: Creative Strategies and Practical Solutions* (American Library Association, 2006, with a new edition forthcoming) and Patricia Aufderheide and Peter Jaszi's *Reclaiming Fair Use: How to Put Balance Back in Copyright* (University of Chicago Press, 2011).—**Benjamin J. Keele, Reference Librarian, Wolf Law Library, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA 23187, USA** <[bjkeele@wm.edu](mailto:bjkeele@wm.edu)>.

doi:[10.1016/j.acalib.2012.03.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2012.03.010)

---

**Copyright for Teachers & Librarians in the 21st Century**, by Rebecca P. Butler. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2011. 276 p. \$70.00. ISBN 978-1-55570-738-5.

Copyright is an important consideration for educators at all levels. *Copyright for Teachers & Librarians in the 21st Century* focuses on providing guidance for teachers in primary and secondary schools. It will fit best in teachers' professional development collections and in libraries supporting schools of education.

Discussions of copyright can easily become bogged down in technical legal theory. Dr. Butler avoids these esoteric discussions and sticks to applying copyright rules to scenarios teachers might face, such as playing a popular movie to students over recess, making extra copies of sheet music for the school orchestra, and adding images found online to a class presentation. Helpful information is given on obtaining permission to use copyright-protected works, whether by writing a permission letter or purchasing a license from a copyright clearinghouse. A quick comparison of *Copyright for Teachers & Librarians in the 21st Century* and Dr. Butler's 2004 *Copyright for Teachers and Librarians* reveals that while the overall structure of the earlier is maintained, discussion of social media and other new technologies has been added. Of the 82 flowcharts describing the thought process a teacher should apply when deciding how to use copyright-protected material, 19 are new to this edition.