Can I Use that Picture? The Terms, Laws, and Ethics for Using Copyrighted Images

As you create presentations and association newsletters keep it legal by understanding copyright laws. Just because it is on the internet does not make it free. Protect yourself, your business, and your bee association using images legally.

From the article, July 14, 2014 by Curtis Newbold, 108579 Views copyright, fair use, images, public domain, http://thevisualcommunicationguy.com/2014/07/14/can-i-use-that-picture/

“Need to use an image but not sure if you have the legal and ethical right to do so? Understanding the laws for using images can be a bit tricky, especially because there is wiggle room within the laws. And, with the mass distribution of images on the internet, it’s no wonder we’re all asking the the same question over and over again: can I use that picture?”

“Whether for your business presentation, your school project, or your organization’s brochure, you’ve likely placed in images to make your designs more visually appealing. But did you use the images according to legal and ethical standards?”

“I created the guide below to help sift through the complexity of it all. The reality is, though, as long as you become familiar with four terms–copyright, fair use, creative commons, and public domain–you’ll have a pretty good idea what you can and can’t do with images. If it’s all new to you, spend most of your time learning the fair use clauses. That’s where the ambiguity in copyright laws exist. As with most laws, the ambiguity is for our benefit, but it sure can make copyright laws fuzzy at times.”

“My rule above all else? Ask permission to use all images. If in doubt, don’t use the image! For a great resource that gives a more thorough explanation, I invite you to check out The Stinky Ink Shop’s Ultimate Guide to Using Images.”

“For a similar graphic on plagiarism violations, see the Did I Plagiarize?”
“Editor’s note: This chart has been designed to clarify the complexities of copyright laws for the basic and regular use of images in general publications and for personal use. However, this chart, in its simplicity, cannot and does not cover all the complex nuances of copyright laws. Those who use this chart are encouraged to do so only as a general guideline. When using images and other communication methods, communicators are responsible for understanding the ethics and legalities of copyright laws, fair use stipulations, creative commons licenses, what is and is not considered public domain, and the social and cultural understandings of plagiarism. Also, it should be noted that these guidelines reference laws and standards in the USA. Laws and guidelines differ, sometimes significantly, in other countries.”
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