

Copyrights and Wrongs Impact the Community

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Copyrights and wrongs are something that I work with my learners and staff on all the time. It is something that is very important, usually misunderstood, and frankly a minefield. The only part of copyrights that really drive me crazy is when people get litigious and confrontational over honest mistakes. Part of citizenship is respecting our rights and responsibilities while at the same time working with each other to build up our community (Ribble, 2015).

Copyrights and trademarks are usually protected by a company, individual, or group that wishes to provide a specific experience for its intended audience. I have done a lot of work with Apple over the years. They have very specific guidelines on using their name, logos, and product names (Apple, 2019). At first, I thought it was overkill. As I looked at it deeper, I realized that they wish to provide a specific experience for their users. I saw this first had working at ISTE with Apple Education in 2017. The employees working in the room were determined that every workshop provided the exact same experience and level of energy. They wanted to last workshop at the end of the conference to be indistinguishable from the first one. It might be a bit much, but that is the image they want to project. To that end, they are very particular about how people use their logos, even the Apple Teacher signature. Interestingly enough, I have never seen them sue anyone over using the Apple Teacher signature incorrectly unless it was damaging to the Apple brand. That concept builds a community.

As I work with my learners, we talk a lot about plagiarism and copyright infringement. I like the article from Bailey (2013). It puts it together very nicely. I have my learners create a lot of content over the course of the year. We discuss the fact that they now have a copyright to that work. That gives them certain rights. At the same time, they have certain responsibilities as

well. They need to make sure that they are respecting the copyrights of those who they are learning from and using as inspiration. It's tough for high school students to work through.

As I went through this week, I was reminded of a workshop I was fortunate to be able to attend a couple of years ago. The US Patent and Trademark Office put on a week-long workshop covering all aspects of copyrights, trademarks, and patents. It was a very engaging hands-on experience where we got to participate in the process. I was a part of a team that started down the road of filing our own patent. It is fun to see it still showing up when I periodically search my name online. I really wish that schools would provide this kind of experience to all of their teachers and students. It would be most valuable.

Copyrights are very involved and necessary part of our lives and society. It gives us a way to honor each other and encourage risk taking. It is a shame to see people who abuse the system. This abuse happens on both sides of the copyright. In either case, it makes it harder for people to work through their issues and build a stronger community that is enriched by works created.

## References

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