Can I Copy That? Learn About Copyright at Dalhousie

The Copyright Office, based out of the Dalhousie University Libraries, provides non-legal advice and expertise on matters related to copyright, especially regarding the key areas of: fair dealing, library licenses, alternatives to traditional copyright, and author rights/open access.

Fair Dealing
At Dalhousie, fair dealing, which is the right, within limits, to reproduce an amount of a copyrighted work without permission from, or payment to, the copyright owner is exercised – often for the purposes of research and education. Assessing fair dealing should be done in accordance with the Dalhousie University Fair Dealing Guidelines (http://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office/guidelines/fair-dealing-guidelines.html). More information can be found on the Copyright office website (https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office.html) and the Copyright Office regularly fields questions from all members of the Dalhousie community.

Exemptions in the Copyright Act
In addition to Fair Dealing, the Copyright Act contains several exemptions which may be of use to you in teaching. Section 29.5(d) of the Act, allows you, for educational purposes to show an audio-visual work or sound-recording to a class. The screening must meet several features: It must take place on campus, be before an audience of primarily students, the copy shown must be a legal copy, and no admission is charged. As well, Section 30.04 of the Act allows you to copy works from the open web (i.e., that aren’t posted behind password protected walls), provided that it is for educational use, that you cite the material, and that you have no reason to believe the copy online is an infringing copy. Other exemptions exist, and the Copyright Office is happy to help address whether an exemption in the Act may be relevant to your situation.

Library licenses
The library negotiates a substantial number of agreements with various vendors for access to databases of significant amounts of scholarly material and other resources that are essential for research and teaching at Dalhousie. As part of these agreements, libraries, and the users of these databases (i.e. faculty and students) are limited to using articles and other resources found in these databases for particular purposes. For example, instructors may be prohibited from using one article from one particular database as part of a course pack, whereas that usage may be an acceptable use if the article was from another database. Abiding by the terms of these licenses is important, as misuse of these databases can result in the university losing access to the database. The Copyright Office advises on these matters and also provides a more user-friendly resource to help faculty navigate this issue by providing a clear description of some of the common use cases (putting material on e-reserve, using as part of a course pack, linking) for each database that the Dalhousie Libraries. The license information database can be found at licences.library.dal.ca
Alternatives to Copyrighted materials
The Copyright Office advises on matters related to alternatives to traditionally copyrighted materials, such as materials that are in the public domain (works whose copyright term has expired), materials that are licensed with alternative licenses such as Creative Commons licenses, or other non-traditional copyright arrangements. Copyright and intellectual property can be difficult areas to navigate, especially in a complicated online environment, and the Copyright Office is happy to provide expertise and advice on these matters.

Author rights and Open Access
As part of publishing, researchers are often faced with complex copyright arrangements presented to them by publishers, which may not necessarily allow them to share their work to the fullest extent possible, thus inhibiting the impact of their research. This is especially pressing with new grant funding requirements from the Tri-Council funding agencies requiring that research outputs be made Open Access. The Copyright Office answers inquiries and provides advice around options related to Open Access and the Copyright implications that many publishing contracts involve.

Copyright consultation for students, faculty, and staff
The Copyright Office welcomes inquiries on a wide array of copyright-related matters, including questions from students on matters related to the use of copyrighted material in theses, film screenings. For faculty and staff, this may include a wide-range of copyright services, including matters related to Copyright and the Learning Management System (Brightspace), as well as copyright concerns related to the Libraries Electronic Reserves Service (http://libraries.dal.ca/services/course-reserves.html).

Questions and contacts
The Copyright Office is happy to provide non-legal advice on copyright-related matters. Much information related to the matters above can be found on the Copyright Office Website: http://dal.ca/copyrightoffice

Any inquiries can be directed by e-mail to copyright.office@dal.ca or by phone at (902) 494-4346. In-person consultation is also available (contacting ahead to ensure available staff is advised). The Copyright Office also regularly gives presentations to academic departments and other campus units and is available to provide presentations upon request.

Copyright Office Contacts:
Lachlan MacLeod
Copyright Services Coordinator
lachlan.macleod@dal.ca | (902) 494-4346

Roger Gillis
Copyright & Digital Humanities Librarian
roger.gillis@dal.ca | (902) 494-2003