

## **Introduction: About this book**

### **What is this book?**

Although fair use is available to anyone, this book is written with educators (at all levels) and librarians in mind. That said, anyone who relies on fair use, or simply wants to understand it at a deeper level, will benefit from reading the book, so don't be deterred by the repeated references to the education environment.

This is not a general guide to fair use. Rather, this book presents ten (actually, eleven; I threw in a "bonus") points about fair use that I believe are necessary to grasp in order to have a robust understanding and mastery of fair use, but that are most often overlooked or misunderstood.

### **Why this title?**

By referring to "the secrets no one tells you," I do not mean to imply the existence of secret societies or nefarious activity. I do not mean to suggest that a movement is afoot proactively trying to hide truths or tidbits about fair use from the public or any given community.

I do, however, strongly believe that the truisms about fair use that I'm about to explain to you are either not widely recognized or not widely discussed. There are several possible reasons for this.

It may be simply that we, librarians and educators as a community, don't want to admit the truth of some of these "secrets." Fair use is an increasingly complex area of law, and, in the face of challenges that feel overwhelming, we humans sometimes prefer to let sleeping dogs lie.

Another possibility is that some of these "secrets" are merely taken for granted; few people bother to step back and think about them, let alone write or speak widely about them.

And some "secrets" may simply involve a new way of thinking that we are still struggling to get our minds around.

However, acknowledging the truth, engaging in broad conversations, and getting our minds around it are what we must do, if we are to continue to fulfill our missions as libraries and educational institutions, and to pursue our professions' values.

### **Why this book?**

As we move more and more fully into an electronic information environment, we – society as a whole, not only librarians and educators – must increasingly rely on fair use, because we so often have no specific law addressing the ever-changing situations we encounter on a daily basis. So the more you know about fair use, the better! The greater

your fair use skills are, the more likely you are to take advantage of this right that has been granted to you by copyright law, and the more your students and users will benefit from it, as the law itself intends.

So let's go!