

Pinterest and Copyright Issues

Pinterest is a GREAT resource for writers. I love my Pinterest boards and have no plans to stop using this site. But lately some concerns have surfaced regarding copyright issues. This short article will help you navigate the murky waters of what's legal to Pin and Post on the Internet.

- **Just Because It's Available on the Internet Does NOT Mean You Can Use It**—All graphics and images are covered by an automatic copyright—just like our words. The images doesn't have to have a copyright symbol (c) for it to be protected.
- **Free Images are NOT the Same as Copyright Free Images**—Again, be sure to check the guidelines on a website before *borrowing* an image. Some people are fine with this if you just give them credit, others are not.
- **Linking Back to the Original Site does NOT Give You Permission to Use It**—Many people believe that if they insert a link to the site where the image originated, it's okay to use it. This isn't true.

It's also important to note that if you violate a copyright with one of your Pinterest boards you, and you ONLY, are liable for any fines or charges. You agreed to this when you opened your Pinterest account and accepted their terms of use. If you want to read them again, here is the direct link: <http://pinterest.com/about/terms/>

Another Issue

I've also had friends who, in researching where an image originated, discovered that it was a cropped section of an image that was inappropriate in content. For me, this just reinforced the fact that I needed to be diligent in tracking down the source of what I'm promoting on the Internet.

Exceptions

There are a few exceptions to the copyright issue and those can be found mainly on Facebook and other networking sites. With Facebook, if you post an image, you are agreeing to its public use.

You still need to be careful, and make certain that the image you want to use wasn't posted illegally by someone else who didn't hold the original copyright. But, for example, if I posted a picture of Niagara Falls from my vacation on Facebook, you can legally use that picture without permission. By posting it on Facebook, I gave that permission away.

Bottom Line

It only takes a moment to send an email and ask if an image may be used. We would expect nothing less if someone wanted to use something we wrote. We also need to consider our reputation as Christian writers. I feel that if I use that designation, I must hold myself to a standard that Jesus would approve of. I often fall short, but I'm constantly striving to represent Him well.