Fair Use

Understanding fair use of copyrighted material is tricky we must first dissect the definition of fair use. Fair use is actually a doctrine in the law of the United States that permits limited use of copyrighted material without having to ask permission from the holder of the copyright. The doctrine has brief excerpts that says, “copyright material may, under certain circumstances, be quoted verbatim for purposes such as criticism, news reporting, teaching, and research, without the need for permission from or payment to the copyright holder”. Some of this is tricky in that it’s up to the government to decide in some certain circumstances like this quote explains, “whether or not six seconds of the song in a user-generated video constitutes fair use is something for a court to decide”. Many people on social media and content creators on websites like YouTube have come into problems with what’s depicted in that quote. This also applies to companies and developers of computer products.

On the physical aspect of computer products, it’s important to protect the hardware created by or thought of by each company like Intel, AMD, NVIDIA, and many more. Unlike physical computer products, there is an exception to the fair use policy when it comes to computer programs. Economic rights relating to computer programs created by one or more employees or agents in the performance of their duties to the employer’s instructions are assigned to the employer. This ultimately means that if you create a program for a company that program sadly belongs to the rights of the company. One thing that can be done to help in this situation is that software can benefit from patent protection, if the application of the software has a technical effect. This is also true for slogans, logos, or product packaging. A big advantage of copyright protection is that it is automatic. Meaning, no investment is required to obtain it. Ultimately fair use of copyrighted material is great to protect authors and creators of software programs, slogans, logos, and many other things. It’s important to protect their rights because if this doctrine didn’t exist, people would be able to steal whatever they want and call it theirs without any repercussions.