



WHAT IS CREATIVE COMMONS?

Creative Commons is a nonprofit organization that works to increase the amount of creativity (cultural, educational, and scientific content) available in “the commons”—the body of work that is available to the public for free and legal sharing, use, repurposing, and remixing.

HOW DOES CREATIVE COMMONS WORK?

Creative Commons provides free, easy-to-use legal tools that give everyone from individual “user generated content” creators to major companies and institutions a simple, standardized way to pre-clear usage rights to creative work to which they own the copyright. CC licenses let people easily change their copyright terms from the default of “all rights reserved” to “some rights reserved.”

Creative Commons licenses are not an alternative to copyright. They apply on top of copyright, so you can modify your copyright terms to best suit your needs. Creative Commons collaborated with copyright experts all around the world to ensure that their licenses work globally.

Getting a Creative Commons license is easy. Visit their website at creativecommons.org and click “License Your Work.” Based on your answers to a few quick questions, they’ll give you a license that clearly communicates to people what you will and will not allow them to do with your creativity. It only takes a few minutes, and it’s totally free. Their website also contains an FAQ that answers many of the most common questions about how CC licenses work.

WHAT CAN CREATIVE COMMONS DO FOR ME?

If you’ve created something and want people to know that you’re happy to have them share, use, and build upon your work, you should consider publishing under a Creative Commons license. CC’s legal infrastructure gives you flexibility (for example, you can choose to only pre-clear noncommercial uses) and protects the people who use your work (so that they don’t have to worry about copyright infringement, as long as they abide by the terms you have specified).

If you’re an artist, student, educator, scientist, or other creator looking for content that you can freely and legally use, there is a giant pool of CC-licensed creativity available to you. There are many millions of works—from songs and videos to scientific and academic content—that you can use under the terms of their copyright licenses.

WHO USES CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSES?

Major media and technology companies, leading universities, top scientists, and world-renowned artists all take advantage of the Creative Commons approach to copyright. Most importantly, there are millions of “regular” people around the world who use CC licenses to help increase the depth, breadth, and quality of creativity that is available to everyone for free and legal use.

WHY DOES MERLOT SUPPORT CREATIVE COMMONS?

MERLOT recognizes the effort and commitment of the many different kinds of MERLOT community members who participate in building and sustaining the repository and services that comprise MERLOT. MERLOT has adopted the intellectual property protection policies of Creative Commons to:

- Encourage creators of online materials to share their work with others who might wish to reuse the materials in creative ways; and
- Ensure that contributions of online materials by MERLOT members to the MERLOT community are protected from misuse and abuse.

MERLOT support includes:

- A detailed description of Creative Commons integration into the MERLOT Acceptable Use Policy (<http://taste.merlot.org/acceptableuserpolicy.html>);
- Incorporation of CC license metadata for all materials submitted to the MERLOT repository; and
- Invitations to all authors of materials in the repository to use CC licenses for all their creative online work.