Click and Flick is a National Library of Australia initiative to open PictureAustralia to photographic contributions from the general public.

**OVERVIEW**

Click and Flick is a National Library of Australia (NLA) initiative to open their online pictorial gateway, PictureAustralia (www.pictureaustralia.gov.au), to contributions from the Australian public. Launched in January 2006 in collaboration with Yahoo7!’s Flickr (www.flickr.com) photo-sharing site, Click and Flick enables individuals to contribute their own images to two dedicated Flickr image pools: ‘PictureAustralia: Ourtown’ (www.flickr.com/groups/pa_ourtown) and ‘PictureAustralia: People, Places and Events’ (www.flickr.com/groups/PictureAustralia_ppe).

‘At PictureAustralia, we’ve approached the challenges of the digital age with a big vision – believing it should be possible to search a comprehensive pictorial record of Australian history and endeavour from one place. More than that, though, the vision is to invite all Australians to place their own image collections there too, so we all play a part in telling the full story.’ – Fiona Hooton, National Library of Australia (www.nla.gov.au/nla/staffpaper/2006/documents/Big-Vision.pdf)

PictureAustralia was launched in 2000, and aims to be the definitive pictorial website for and about Australians and Australia, providing one simple search for many collections. It began with a few thousand images from just seven organisations, and has since grown to include over 1.1 million images from the collections of 45 organisations and now individuals via Flickr. It is a portal
service, which allows anyone to search these image collections; clicking on a thumbnail of an image will take them to the host organisation’s collection, where they can see the image in full and order or request copies. Participating organisations include a range of local, state and federal government organisations and both large and small institutions from across the Australian cultural sector (i.e. galleries, museums, and libraries).


The Click and Flick project arose from a survey which found that people wanted more contemporary images to be available on the PictureAustralia service. Flickr was suggested as an easy way to let the public upload and provide metadata for their images, which the library could then harvest. This approach also ties in well with the NLA’s Strategic Directions, which includes the objectives to ‘ensure that Australians have access to vibrant and relevant information services’ and to ‘ensure our relevance in a rapidly changing world, participate in new online communities and enhance our visibility.’ While the NLA does mediate the collection, to guarantee the appropriateness of the photographs, they rarely need to censor the material.

**Licence Usage**

As part of this project, PictureAustralia encourages people to make their material available on the archive under the Creative Commons licences. The current Flickr group sites contain the following statement regarding Creative Commons licensing:
“While this is not a condition for contributing to this group, we suggest you consider licensing your images with a Creative Commons like “Attribution-NonCommercial”’. Picture Australia selects Creative Common licensed images when producing audio visual displays for National events and festivals e.g.: National Folk Festival or the upcoming 2008 National Photography Festival. Because of the amount of work involved in rights clearing, it is not feasible to use “all rights reserved” images for audio visual display purposes. You can find further details about the 6 Creative Commons licenses on the Flickr Creative Commons page.”

After positive experiences with voluntary Creative Commons licensing with the original PictureAustralia groups, ‘Australia Day’ and ‘People, Places and Events,’ when the NLA launched the new ‘Ourtown’ group in January 2007, they decided to experiment with making Creative Commons licensing compulsory. However, in August 2007 the NLA reversed this decision, reverting to optional licensing for its remaining Flickr groups (‘People, Places and Events’ and ‘Ourtown’). This change was made at the prompting of several members of the photography community, and was intended to ensure that photographers could retain maximum control over how they chose to license their work.

“The Flickr project is helping PictureAustralia to capture both past and present reflections of Australia and its people.”
– Fiona Hooton, National Library of Australia

Motivations

As the above Flickr group statement shows, the NLA adopts Creative Commons licensing in part because of the practical benefits it provides, by ensuring that the library has the rights it needs to harvest, maintain and promote the collection, while still allowing the individual to retain control over how their image is made available. In an interview published in the program
of the iCommons iSummit 2006, Fiona Hooton, manager of PictureAustralia, indicated that the Creative Commons licences were first suggested by PictureAustralia’s web manager for this reason.

However, the NLA also has philosophical motivations for promoting Creative Commons. As Ms Hooton puts it, Creative Commons licensing ‘encourages content contributors to think in terms of a librarian keeping in mind the public benefit of providing maximum access to content as part of Australia’s national collection’.

Ms Hooton has also indicated that the NLA’s decision to use Creative Commons licensing was in part motivated by the benefits open content licensing provides for the users of PictureAustralia. Because of the prohibitive cost of obtaining copyright clearances for such a large pool of material, most of the photographs available through PictureAustralia are listed as ‘all rights reserved’. Although a number of the participating institutions have general policies permitting ‘private and domestic’ use of their images, many pictures in the collection require permission to be sought from the owner institution for reproduction. By requiring creators who upload their own photographs through Flickr to open license their material from the outset, the NLA is hoping to ‘develop a pool of Creative Commons licensed images which can be generally used without needing to seek additional permission’.