

Creative Commons licences explained

for content creators

Creative Commons licences are designed to facilitate and encourage more versatility and flexibility in copyright. The scheme exists as a series of licences, available in three formats, that are customised to the specific needs a creator may have.

Creative Commons licences will help you tell the world that your copyrighted works are available for sharing, but only on certain terms. Creative Commons is an alternative layer of copyright and a store of material that can be accessed and understood by most anyone with a minimum of effort.

By using the Creative Commons licence chooser you can select a licence that is suited to your needs. Simply by answering the questions, the licence appropriate for your circumstances is automatically generated.

The basic types of licences are described to your right. These basic licences can be mixed and matched.

for example you may choose to licence a work under an Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike licence. This means that others will be permitted to copy, distribute, alter, transform and build upon your work so long as they give credit to the original author (you), do not use it for commercial purposes and they distribute any resulting works only under another ShareAlike Licence.

to select a licence for your work see <http://creativecommons.org/license> and follow the prompts

Each Creative Commons licence comes in three formats:

Human-Readable Commons Deed



Human Readable format Commons Deed

A simple, plain-language summary of the licence, complete with relevant icons to clearly indicate to other potential users of your work the conditions upon which you are licensing your work and what rights they have under the licence.

basic types of licences



attribution

others must give you credit as the original creator



non-commercial

others may not use your work for commercial purposes



no derivative works

others may not alter, transform, or build upon your work



share alike

others may alter, transform, or build upon your work, but they are encouraged to distribute the resulting work only under another Share Alike licence

more info

www.creativecommons.org/learnmore

Lawyer-Readable Legal Code



Lawyer-Readable format Legal Code

The fine print that you need to be sure the licence will stand up in court. It includes a comprehensive set of terms and conditions.

Machine-Readable Digital Code



Machine-Readable format Machine Code

A machine-readable translation of the licence that you can attach to digital works or digital copies of work. The code becomes embedded in the digital source, which

helps search engines and other applications identify your work by its terms of use.

using a Creative Commons licence

First, use the licence chooser to generate your licence. Then give notice of the licence, along with your copyright notice, on each item you wish the licence to apply to.

for example © John Citizen 2005
this work is licenced under a Creative Commons Attribution licence
full terms at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>

The URL listed points potential users of your work to the Commons Deed applicable to your licence.

for more information on using Creative Commons licences generally, see <http://creativecommons.org/learnmore>

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copyright holders and Creative Commons licences

The nature of the Creative Commons licence is that they place obligations on potential users of your work. As such, the conditions apply only to others who use your work, not to you (the copyright holder). For example: in relation to the non commercial clause, when other people use, trade or copy your work they cannot do so for "monetary compensation or financial gain", unless they get your permission.

Creative Commons encourages people to experiment with new ways to promote and market their work. Creators are encouraged to utilise the versatility and flexibility of the Creative Commons licences. In fact, the non-commercial licence option was designed to be a tool to help people make money from their work by allowing them to maximise the distribution of their works while keeping control of the commercial aspects of their copyright. Plus, you always have the right to negotiate arrangements outside of your Creative Commons licences, provided you are the sole copyright owner.

creators, authors + licensors

There are a range of reasons why Creative Commons licence holders opt to licence on top of copyright. Some people may be attracted by the notion of others building upon their work, or by the prospect of contributing to an intellectual commons. As the Creative Commons community grows, licensors will have the satisfaction of helping develop new ways to collaborate. Or you might licence your work purely out of self-interest:

- a scholar might want their writings to be copied and shared so that their ideas spread around the world
- a startup illustrator may want to encourage the unfettered dissemination of their sketches to build a reputation
- a musician might post samples to whet the public's appetite for their other, fully protected songs
- a political activist may want their message to reach the widest possible audience through unlimited copying

project leads

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