Creative Commons as a Resource: The Mechanics

Concept of Fair Use vs. CC Licensing

Before the Creative Commons, creators could either declare their work part of the public domain or retain the copyright. There really wasn’t an option for people who wanted to share their work without giving up all rights.

US Copyright Law provides for the fair use of copyrighted material for the purposes of education and research, news reporting, commentary or criticism. However, there are a number of factors involved and the line between infringement and fair use is a fine one.

Factors to consider:

Nature of the use

Nature of the work

Amount of the work used in relation to the whole

Effect of the use on the work’s potential market

Alternatively, ask for permission... but tracing the owner of a copyright can be problematic, contact information may be difficult to locate, and fees may be prohibitive.

Enter the Creative Commons. By using a combination of the licenses that CC makes available, creators retain the copyright to their work, and at the same time they can set limits that allow others to share it and build on it.
Using the Creative Commons Website (www.creativecommons.org)

The Creative Commons home page includes background information, news stories, blog and FAQ, interviews, and links to arms of the CC like the Science Commons and ccLearn. For the purposes of this workshop we will take a closer look at three areas: information about the four types of CC licenses, the Find link (which allows us to search for material licensed under the CC) and the License link (which allows you to license your own creative work).

Types of CC Licenses (http://creativecommons.org/about/licenses/)

There are four types of Creative Commons licenses:

**Attribution (abbreviated by):** you can share, display, and perform this work, and any derivatives of this work, as long as you give credit to the original creator.

**Share Alike (abbreviated sa):** you may alter or build on this work and share it, but only if you do so using the same kind of Creative Commons license that was applied to the original.

**Non-Commercial (abbreviated nc):** you’re allowed to share this work, and anything derived from it, as long as you’re not going to make a profit.

**Non-Derivative (abbreviated nd):** you can share exact copies of this work, but you’re not allowed to alter it in any way.

A CC licensed work should display a graphic with the symbols and abbreviations like the ones you see here, telling you exactly how you can and cannot use the material without violating the copyright holder’s rights. Licenses can be used in combination depending on how restrictive the creator wants to be. The Creative Commons lists every possible combination on this page, from the least restrictive to the most restrictive.
Locating CC Licensed Materials using the CC Search Page
(http://search.creativecommons.org/)

There are a number of websites that facilitate sharing using Creative Commons licenses, but the easiest place to start looking for material licensed under the Creative Commons may be right from the Creative Commons search page. The search page is accessed using the “Find” link on the Creative Commons home page.

Two cautions:

First, as per the disclaimer on this page, the Creative Commons doesn’t guarantee that everything found here is covered by a Creative Commons license. Always verify that a CC license exists.

Second, by following links from a licensed page, you may land on a page featuring works that are not licensed under the Creative Commons. Be aware when leaving one site for another.

Search tools: there is a search box at the top of the screen, as well as a set of tabs across the page that link to search pages of other Creative Commons-friendly sites. Search options are provided here for

Images (Google Images and Flicker)

Video (Blip and SpinXpress) Many independently produced videos are licensed under the creative commons; however, high-quality full-length educational videos are not typically available here. Visit the library to borrow or arrange purchase from distributors.

Music (Jamendo)

Text (Google Web, Yahoo)

When viewing results, look for the Creative Commons graphic and click it to view the license for that work.
Other resources for locating CC Licensed Works

Creative Commons Content Directories
(http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Content_Curators)

Creative Commons users help to maintain this directory of other websites that provide for the sharing of material licensed under the Creative Commons.

Foreign Language Materials

Many non-English works are licensed under the Creative Commons. Using an advanced search in Google (http://www.google.com/advanced_search?hl=en_) allows searchers to limit results to those available in a particular language. Next, expand the “date, usage rights, numeric range” portion of the search form and use the “usage rights” drop-down menu to specify the type of licensing desired.

Science Materials and a Brief Overview of the Science Commons
(http://sciencecommons.org/)

The Science Commons is an arm of the Creative Commons. The ultimate goal of the Science Commons is to accelerate and stimulate the research process by making scientific literature and research data available and reusable in an online environment. To this end, they’ve developed an Open Access Data Protocol, and encouraged the use of Creative Commons licensing in open-access publishing sites like the Public Library of Science and BioMed Central. Both are open-access scientific publishing sites.
Using correct attribution for CC licensed works

Attribution is the one thing that all Creative Commons licenses have in common, so it is important to be sure to attribute the original work properly.

Two scenarios:

The CC License for a work may include HTML language that can be cut and pasted to cite the work correctly in an online environment. Always check here first.

Attribution information is not included on the license page but may be somewhere in or near the original work. Read the fine print.

Licensing your own creative work (http://creativecommons.org/choose/)

Applying CC Licenses to your own work:

The Creative Commons makes licensing simple by providing this workform. Fill in the information about your work and the license and a choice of graphics are generated for you. HTML language that you can cut and paste to an appropriate online location is also generated. Additionally, you can email this information to yourself.

Placing your work in the Public Domain:

Use the Public Domain link on this page, then link to the CC0 license (http://creativecommons.org/choose/zero/). Before using this option be certain that you are the creator and sole owner of all content. In addition, be certain that you really wish to relinquish all rights to the work, as creative work surrendered to the public domain cannot be reclaimed later. A CC0 graphic and language for your use will be generated automatically once you have clicked the button waiving your rights.