Commons:Reusing content outside Wikimedia

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How to comply with a file's license requirements

Clicking on an image or media file on Wikimedia Commons[1] will take you to the information page for that file. This will list information supplied by the uploader, including the copyright status, the copyright owner, and the license conditions.

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   - If the file is available under multiple licenses, you can use any of them. If none of the licenses suits you, you can try to contact the creator and negotiate a special arrangement. Otherwise, you'll have to use a different file.
   - Verify licensing and facts. While the copyright and licensing information supplied for each image is believed to be accurate, the Wikimedia Foundation *does not provide any warranty regarding the copyright status* or correctness of licensing terms. If you decide to reuse files from Commons, you should verify the copyright status of each image just as you would when obtaining images from other sources.
     - Note: it is common for publishers to take public domain works and republish them under their own copyright. This may be legal, but it does not affect the public domain status of the original work. If you tag the work with its origin (where you got it and where it came from originally) and the name of the creator, this can help us if a dispute with such a publisher arises later.
2. **Consider non-copyright restrictions**: in some countries non-copyright restrictions (inalienable moral rights and other restrictions) may apply to the file for some uses. For example, commercial use of images of people may require the explicit agreement of the subject, and not just the agreement of the image creator (see Commons:Photographs of identifiable people#Country-specific consent requirements and Commons on personality rights).
3. **Use it**: Download or hotlink the file, and use it. (See Commons:Reusing content outside Wikimedia/technical.)
4. **Attribution**: If attribution is required, provide attribution.
   - If the copyright holder (usually the content creator[2]) has specified how, be sure to follow this. If the copyright holder has not specified how to attribute, but the license requires attribution, see

Commons:Credit line for a guide on how to do it.
- Note: The person who uploaded the work to Wikimedia Commons may be the original content creator **or they may not** (they may have uploaded free content from elsewhere). In either case, the original content creator is typically listed in the file summary section as author. If the uploader is not the content creator, it is the content creator who must be credited, not the uploader.

5. **Specify license details**: If the license requires you to link to or provide a copy of the license, do this.
6. **Licensing derivatives**: If you are creating a substantially new work using the file ("derivative work") and the file's license requires you to license derivatives in a certain way, be sure you comply with this.

Requirements of frequently-used licenses

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- **Text** on Wikimedia Commons is owned by the original writer and licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 license and the GNU Free Documentation License.[3]
- **Images and other media** on Wikimedia Commons are almost all under some kind of free license (usually CC-BY, CC-BY-SA, or GFDL; see Commons:Licensing) or in the public domain. Each media file has its licensing specified on its file description page.
  - The exception is some content consisting of or containing Wikimedia Foundation logos. Such content will be identified with a relevant notice.[4]

Commons:Reusing content outside Wikimedia/licenses provides some guidance on the requirements of the frequently-used licenses

- CC-BY
- CC-BY-SA
- GFDL
- GPL/LGPL

How to use a file

Once you've determined how to comply with a file's licensing requirements, you can access the file for use, by either downloading the file, or by linking to it directly.

Downloading

- Basic method: On each image's file description page, there is a link to the `full resolution` version. Right-click this link and choose "Save as..." to download the full resolution file. (If you use a Macintosh computer, hold down the "control" key while clicking the link with the mouse, then choose "Save as....")

Reuse assistance tool

A tool is available to help you reuse files outside Wikimedia Commons, including downloading and creating attribution statements (credit lines). The tool requires

- a browser other than Internet Explorer (eg Firefox, Chrome, Opera)
- Javascript enabled
- If you're logged in, Vector or Monobook skin enabled in your Wikimedia Commons user preferences. (Vector is the standard skin - if you've not changed this, your skin is Vector.)

The tool creates buttons above an image (if you're logged in), or to the top right (if not). For details see Help:Gadget-Stockphoto.

Hotlinking or InstantCommons

It is possible to use files directly on Commons within another website, by setting up a MediaWiki wiki with InstantCommons, so that Commons files can be used as easily as they can on Wikipedia. Directly using a Commons file via embedding its URL ("hotlinking") is also possible, but is not recommended. See Commons:Reusing content outside Wikimedia/technical. Additionally you should always check if the needs of the license used by the file are fulfilled if you use a file from Commons, since e.g. the CC-BY-SA 3.0 license requires that you attribute the author and licensor of a work in "reasonable to the medium or means" [1] (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode).

Contacting the uploader or content creator

If you wish to use content under terms other than the license stated, or to absolutely verify copyright status if you feel you need to, the person who put it onto a Wikimedia server may be able to assist. The uploader is named on the "file history" portion of the file description page.

In some cases, you may be able to contact the uploader to find out more about an image's copyright status or for information on the original creator. The original creator of the image *may* be willing to grant additional permissions and may have access to higher resolution images than those present on the Wikimedia servers.

The Wikimedia Foundation generally *cannot* assist in locating users who have contributed material. You can try to contact contributors yourself in a number of ways:

1. Some have contact information, such as a name and address or phone number, on their user page.
2. Some can be contacted by email by clicking the "email this user" link in the toolbox on their user page.
3. You can leave a message on their talk page by clicking on the "discussion" tab at the top of the user page,

and then clicking the "Add topic" tab that appears next to the "edit" tab once the discussion page is visible. Enter your message and click "save." (Your message will be visible to the public.)
4. When free content is brought to Commons from elsewhere, a link to the source (e.g. a Flickr page) is often included in the file description on Commons. That source may have additional information for contacting the content creator.

Notes

1. Be sure that the content you wish to use is actually hosted on Commons, and not locally on another Wikimedia project (check that the URL says `commons.wikimedia.org`, and not something else). Other projects have other licensing policies, and some permit "fair use" of non-free content. Before reusing such non-free content yourself, you should check that your planned use of the material is consistent with the *fair use*, *fair dealing* or equivalent provisions of locally applicable copyright law or you obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. This is no different from grabbing an image from anywhere else on the web.
2. Absent some explicit transfer of ownership, the original creator is typically the owner of a copyrighted work. In situations where a free license requires attribution, the original content creator should receive credit.
   - **Text**: the writer of a piece of text will be the person who made the edit putting it in the page; see the "history" tab of the relevant page.
   - **Images and media**:
     - the uploader of an image or piece of media is the person who placed it on a Wikimedia server.
     - The uploader may be the original content creator **or they may not** (they may have uploaded free content here from elsewhere). In either case, the original content creator is typically listed in the file summary section as author.
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See also

- Commons:Reuse of PD-Art photographs (essay)
- Commons:Copyright tags
- Commons:Enforcing license terms
- Commons:Reusing content outside Wikimedia/technical
- Template:Published

v · t · e (https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=Template:Commons_policies_and_guidelines&action=edit) **Wikimedia Commons: policies and guidelines**

General disclaimer · Privacy policy · Project scope (Allowable file types ·

Policies	**Project**	Evidence · Neutral point of view · Precautionary principle · Pages, galleries and categories)
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	Behaviour	Blocking policy · Page protection · De-adminship · Paid contribution disclosure · Translation administrators · Signatures · Username policy
Guidelines	**Content**	What Commons is not · Non-copyright restrictions · Fan art · Nudity · Photographs of identifiable people · Derivative works · When to use the PD-scan tag · Galleries · Using ImageAnnotator · File renaming · Overwriting existing files · Grandfathered old files
	Behaviour	Assume good faith · Ownership of pages and files · Talk page guidelines · User-specific galleries, templates and categories policy · Vandalism · Rollback · Patrol
Licensing help	**Choosing a license**	Copyright rules · Copyright rules by subject matter · Copyright rules by territory · Copyright tags · PD files
	Copyright special cases	Derivative works · De minimis · Freedom of panorama · 2D copying · Threshold of originality
	Using files	Reusing content outside Wikimedia · Credit line · Reuse of PD-Art photographs
	How to detect copyright violations	License laundering · Problematic sources (Flickr · Picasa Web · Bad sources) · License review
Community portal · Help contents		

Help

Ways to get help

- Look at the Frequently Asked Questions.
- If you place `{{helpme}}` on your talk page, a volunteer will visit you there as soon as possible!
- Join the #wikimedia-commons (irc://irc.freenode.net/wikimedia-commons) IRC channel

for real-time chat. New to IRC? Click here to be connected instantly! (http://webchat.freenode.net/?
channels=wikimedia-commons)
- Go to the Commons Help Desk.

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Categories: Commons help │ Commons licensing help

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