

# What is Creative Commons?

## Non-profit Organisation

Creative Commons (short: CC) is a non-profit organisation, registered in the United States of America. CC stewards the Creative Commons licenses and helps and supports a global network and movement

## Set of Legal Tools

Creative Commons is a set of legal tools, widely known as the CC-Licenses. They are built on copyright and allow creators to specify which kinds of use they want to allow – and which they want to restrict.

## Global Network and Movement

Creative Commons is a global movement of activists, policy makers, and creators, however, most are not formally connected to the non-profit organisation. The CC Global Network is a network organisation with chapters in many countries.

Advent of the World Wide Web

Eldred vs. Ashcroft

1.6 billion works\* under a CC-license, globally

1990

1998

1999

2001

2002

2020

Copyright Term Extension Act

Foundation of the Creative Commons organisation

Launch of the first Creative Commons Licenses

With the World Wide Web becoming widely used and creators releasing and sharing their works as well as re-using and remixing others' works, a tension between copyright and the new technological possibilities arose.

In 1998, the copyright term in the US was extended by 20 years (to last until 70 years after a creator's death). This extension was also called the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act or "Mickey Mouse Act". With the CTEA, the copyright of all the works that would have fallen into the Public Domain in 1998 was extended to 2018.

In 1999, lawyer Lawrence Lessig challenged the constitutionality of the CTEA defending internet publisher Eric Eldred whose business was directly affected by the copyright extension. The court case eventually went before the U.S. Supreme Court. Eldred lost, but the case gave rise to a new movement

In 2001, the Creative Commons was founded by Lawrence Lessig, Eric Eldred and Hal Abelson as a non-profit organisation and the work towards CC-licenses began. CC-licenses are built on copyright – they help creators share their own work and build on others' work by specifying what is allowed and what isn't – in a standardised, easy to understand way.

In 2002, the first CC-licenses were launched. The licenses were released for free to the public. The licenses were partly inspired by the General Public License of the Free Software Foundation. Creators can choose the conditions under which they want their work to be released:

- Attribution
- Share Alike
- Noncommercial
- No derivative works

Today, 1.6 billion works globally are released under a CC-license – and the number is growing! CC-licenses are integrated into creator content platforms like Youtube and Flickr and are being adopted for scholarly publications and educational resources. The Creative Commons is a global movement of creators, activists, and policy makers – with a global network of individuals supporting the values and spirit of CC.

## Join the Global Community!

You can become part of the Creative Commons in many ways. By using the CC-licenses for your creative works and re-using others CC-licensed works, by joining a chapter of the global network organisation in your country – or by educating others about the Creative Commons.

**[creativecommons.org](https://creativecommons.org)**

\* <https://creativecommons.org/use-remix/> [accessed 2020-01-18]

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Citation: Infographic [What is Creative Commons?]. Annika Rockenberger, 2020, <https://github.com/arockenberger/cc-coursework/whatiscc-infographic.pdf>