

Title:

The Five Minute Guide to "What is in the Public Domain?"

Word Count:

852

Summary:

It is in some cases difficult to determine exactly what is in the public domain - this article makes it clear.

Keywords:

public domain, information product, public domain websites, public domain sources, understanding public domain, infopreneur, entrepreneur

Article Body:

Just how exactly do you determine what is in the public domain?

I have come across this useful acronym to describe whether a work is in the public domain

If it in the FRIDGE - its in the public domain.

F is Facts

R is Recipes

I is Ideas

D is Dedicated Works

G is Government Works (U.S)

E is Expired Works

FACTS:

Any fact whether historical or present, scientific or biographical are Public Domain. News reports and news broadcasts are sometimes copyrighted but not the news itself so you can rewrite a news article in your own works and you are not breaking any copyrights as facts just cannot be copyrighted.

Some Facts related Public Domain resources:

News:

<http://www.cnn.com/>

Biographies, Histotical facts, science and more:

<http://www.infoplease.com/world.html>

Selected historical transcripts, translations and facsimilies from Western Europe

http://eudocs.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main_Page

RECIPES:

Recipes actually come under facts. Same sort of thing though you will have to reorder the ingredients and rewrite the methods to avoid copyright complications. The annotations and pictures in a published cookbooks are copyrighted however the recipes themselves are not. Although not protected by copyright they can be protected to a certain degree by intellectual property laws so proceed with caution in you are unable to make recipe look like your own.

Here are some sites for food for thought:

Searches over 400,000 recipes by ingredient, recipe, dish, chef etc.

<http://www.foodieview.com/index.jsp> -

Recipes approved and provided by home cooks worldwide:

<http://allrecipes.com/>

Another searchable database:

<http://www.recipeland.com/>

IDEAS:

Ideas by themselves can not be copyrighted. If you apply an idea and can show something physical from it can be patented as long as they are novel or useful. But ideas themselves cannot be copyrighted so keep an eye out for an idea you like add a unique selling point of your own and copy away!

Some great idea sources are here:

A fantastic idea database

<http://www.springwise.com/>

Places to find ideas article (written with article writers in mind but applies to anything you want to get ideas about):

http://www.writersweekly.com/this_weeks_article/003318_03082006.html

DEDICATED

Sometimes you will still statements on websites saying work are dedicated to the public domain. Also ebooks that are freely distributed are in public domain (they have conditions that you cannot change the wording but they are in public domain all the same). Look out for websites and ebooks that have words to this effect in "I grant this to the public domain".

"I grant this to the public domain" sites:

<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/book-criteria.html> - lots to explore on this one some great finds to be discovered

<http://www.sxc.hu/> - copyright free photos

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page - "All of the information in Wikipedia is free for anyone to copy, modify for their own purposes, and redistribute or use as they see fit, as long as the new version grants the same freedoms to others and acknowledges the authors of the Wikipedia article used (a credit or backlink to the original article is sufficient for this)."

GOVERNMENT

In the U.S works published by officials of the government are public domain. However when private contractors write government publications, the copyright can be retained. The government website have a whole load of information and images. If you looking for images a good tip is to search your subject in Google Images and limit to .gov sites .

This is likely to be the largest source for public domain government content. Google has indexed loads so you can find it.

<http://www.google.com/unclesam>

All about the FBI!

<http://www.fbi.gov/>

Government resources made available to American public

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/databases.html>

EXPIRED

Works that have expired are ones that have reached and gone beyond the limit of their copyright protection. This is not always easy to determine. You can safely assume everything before 1923 is public domain unless someone has renewed it.

To find out if it has been renewed you can go to The Library of Congress

Copyright Office (<http://www.copyright.gov/>).

Or you can do a quick search on net to see what other people are doing with that particular work or search something along the lines of "Little Red Riding Hood + public domain". One of those should get you your answer.

Expired works can be found on these sites:

Project Gutenberg - probaly one of the more famous sources for public domain material

<http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/>

Fantastic selection of links to a a variety of speciality public domain books

<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/archives.html#specialty>

Incredible collection of public domain materials covering almost all religions

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/index.htm>

By reading through the above and taking a look at the resources given, you will be well on track to understanding how to determine what is in the public domain and hopefully be able to find a public domain works that you can republish, package and sell.