

Creative Commons makes sharing easy

# Six licenses for sharing your work




## What Is Creative Commons?

Creative Commons is a global nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting an open and accessible internet that is enriched with free knowledge and creative resources for people around the world to use, share, and cultivate.

Our easy-to-use licenses provide a simple, standardized way to give the public permission to share and use your creative work — on conditions of your choice. CC licenses let you change your copyright terms from the default of “all rights reserved” to “some rights reserved.”

Millions of people use CC licenses on some of the world’s most popular platforms for user-generated content. When you use a CC license to share your photos, videos, or blog, your creation joins a globally accessible pool of resources that includes the work of artists, educators, scientists, and governments.

 Creative Commons has waived all copyright and related or neighboring rights to this guide using the CC0 Public Domain Dedication.



The internet makes it easy for people to share and build on each other’s creations. But sometimes the law makes it hard.

Whenever you snap a photograph, record a song, publish an article, or put your original writing online, that work is automatically considered “all rights reserved” in the eyes of copyright law.

In many cases, that means that other people can’t reuse or remix your work without asking for your permission first.

But what if you *want* others to reuse your work?

If you want to give people the right to share, use, and even build upon a work you’ve created, consider publishing under a Creative Commons license.

A CC license lets you decide which rights you’d like to keep, and it clearly conveys to those using your work how they’re permitted to use it without asking you in advance.

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Creative Commons licenses are not an alternative to copyright. By default, copyright allows only limited reuses without your permission. CC licenses let you grant additional permissions to the public, allowing reuse on the terms best suited to your needs while reserving some rights for yourself.

We’ve collaborated with copyright experts around the world to ensure that our licenses work globally.

If you are looking for content that you can freely and legally use, there is a wealth of CC-licensed creativity available to you. There are hundreds of millions of works—from songs and videos to scientific and academic material—available to the public for free and legal use under the terms of our licenses, with more being contributed every day.

## Step 1: Choose License Features

**Publishing under a Creative Commons license is easy. First, choose the conditions that you want to apply to your work.**



### Attribution

All CC licenses require that others who use your work in any way must give you credit the way you request, but not in a way that suggests you endorse them or their use. If they want to use your work without giving you credit or for endorsement purposes, they must get your permission first.



### ShareAlike

You let others copy, distribute, display, perform, and modify your work, as long as they distribute any modified work on the same terms. If they want to distribute modified works under other terms, they must get your permission first.



### NoDerivs

You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform only original copies of your work. If they want to modify your work, they must get your permission first.



### NonCommercial

You let others copy, distribute, display, perform, and (unless you have chosen NoDerivs) modify and use your work for any purpose other than commercially unless they get your permission first.

## Step 2: Get a License

**Based on your choices, you will get a license that clearly indicates how other people may use your creative work.**



**Attribution**  
CC BY



**Attribution — ShareAlike**  
CC BY-SA



**Attribution — NoDerivs**  
CC BY-ND



**Attribution — NonCommercial**  
CC BY-NC



**Attribution — NonCommercial — ShareAlike**  
CC BY-NC-SA



**Attribution — NonCommercial — NoDerivs**  
CC BY-NC-ND

# Guide to using public domain tools




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 Creative Commons has waived all copyright and related or neighboring rights to this guide using the CC0 Public Domain Dedication.



Public domain works are valuable because anyone can freely build upon, enhance, and reuse them for any purposes without restriction under copyright or database law.

That’s why it’s important for creators to have a clear and legally robust way to place their works in the public domain as completely as possible, and it’s also important for publishers and archives to have a standardized way to identify works that are already in the public domain.

Creative Commons supports two distinct public domain tools, the **CC0 Public Domain Dedication** and the **Public Domain Mark**. Creative Commons copyright licenses help authors manage their copyright on terms they choose. Conversely, CC0 enables authors and copyright owners who want to dedicate their works to the worldwide public domain to do so, and PDM facilitates the labeling and discovery of works that are already free of known copyright restrictions.

### Where public domain tools fit in the copyright spectrum



## The CC0 Public Domain Dedication

**Use this universal tool if you are a holder of copyright or database rights, and wish to waive all your rights to the work worldwide.**



By using CC0, you waive all copyright and related rights together with all associated claims and causes of action with respect to this work to the extent possible under the law.

Applying CC0 to your work is easy. Simply visit the CC0 chooser (<http://creativecommons.org/choose/zero>) which will lead you through the process. When completed, you will be provided with HTML code that you can copy and paste into your website.

You let others copy, modify, distribute, and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, all without asking permission.

## What is the difference between CC0 and the Public Domain Mark?



CC0 (“CC Zero”) is intended for use only by authors or holders of copyright and related rights (including database rights), in connection with works that are still subject to those rights in one or more countries.

When CC0 is applied to a work, copyright and related rights are relinquished worldwide, making the work free from those restrictions to the greatest extent possible.



The Public Domain Mark (PDM) is used to label works that are already free of known copyright restrictions. Unlike CC0, PDM doesn’t change the copyright status of a work.

PDM can be used by anyone, and is intended for use with works that are already free of known copyright restrictions throughout the world.

## Public Domain Mark

**Use this tool if you have identified a work that is free of known copyright restrictions.**



Works marked with the Public Domain Mark have been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighboring rights. Anyone can copy, modify, distribute, and perform such works, even for commercial purposes, all without asking permission.

Applying the PDM to a work is easy. Simply visit the PDM chooser (<http://creativecommons.org/choose/mark>) which will lead you through the process. When completed, you will be provided with the HTML code that you can copy and paste into your website.

Creative Commons does not recommend this tool for works that are restricted by copyright laws in one or more jurisdictions. Consult with your legal advisor if you are unsure whether you should use the PDM for a certain work.