

Creative Commons - ‘Some Rights Reserved’

Founded by Stanford Law Professor Lawrence Lessig in 2001, Creative Commons (CC) is best known for a set of six copyright licenses. The goal of these licenses is to provide a "middle ground" that did not previously exist in most copyright regimes. On one side is the traditional "all rights reserved." At the other extreme is "public domain" – viewed by many as an anarchic free-for-all in which creators have no control over the use of their work. Creative Commons enables creators to opt for "some rights reserved".

Creative Commons licenses are not intended to replace traditional copyright licenses. Many creators will always choose to retain all rights to their works. However many others prefer to release their works under a more permissive license so that their works can be re-used, republished, remixed, or shared freely and broadly by a wider public. The CC license provides an internationally-recognized vehicle through which to do so.

Creative Commons defines the spectrum of possibilities between full copyright – *all rights reserved* – and the public domain – *no rights reserved*. CC licenses help creators keep their copyright while inviting certain uses of their work – a **“some rights reserved” copyright**. Creators can choose a set of conditions they wish to apply to their works. The following four conditions can be chosen in six different combinations:

- Ⓜ Attribution: You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform your copyrighted work – and derivative works based upon it: but only if they give credit the way you request.
- Ⓒ Noncommercial: You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform your work – and derivative works based upon it – but for noncommercial purposes only.
- Ⓓ No Derivative Works: You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform only verbatim copies of your work, not derivative works based upon it.
- Ⓔ Share Alike: You allow others to distribute derivative works only under a license identical to the license that governs your work.

Creative Commons licenses are not intended to compete with any other existing licensing schemes used in Hong Kong or elsewhere. Rather, they are intended as an extra option, in addition to existing licensing schemes. Used correctly, CC licenses will broaden the scope for legal usage of creative works in Hong Kong. Correct use of the license by Hong Kong creators will broaden the pool of creative works that can be legally shared. Meanwhile, knowledge about how to find and use Creative Commons-licensed works will provide legal alternatives for people who like to share and remix freely.

Educators in jurisdictions where CC licenses have already been localized report that students who learn about Creative Commons gain a greater awareness of copyright issues in general. Not only do they gain a better understanding of what is illegal under copyright law; they also gain awareness of alternative legal sources: CC-licensed music, photos, and other creative works which they are permitted to share legally, which can be found through the search engines on creativecommons.org and other online sources.

We now live in the copy-and-paste Internet age. Creative Commons is a copyright licensing option that promotes legal sharing of creative works, and whose use has been growing steadily worldwide since its launch in 2001. Its founders believed it necessary to create this option because of the impact that the Internet has had on public attitudes and approaches to intellectual property, and its use is made possible largely thanks to the Internet. If CC licenses are widely used and understood in Hong Kong, this will contribute to a reduction in copyright violations by Hong Kong’s young people, amateurs, and creative artists.

Creative Commons Hong Kong is currently a project under the University of Hong Kong’s Journalism and Media Studies Centre (JMSC). The JMSC and its community partners will launch the Creative Commons Hong Kong licenses on Oct 25th, 2008 at the LSK School of Creativity with special guest Prof Lawrence Lessig of Stanford University. Professor Lessig will also be delivering the inaugural Lee Shu Pui Leng Wai Hing Distinguished Lecture on Media hosted by the JMSC on Oct 24th. The title of his talk is, ‘Free Culture and Free Society: Can the West Love Both’.

Details and registration : <http://hk.creativecommons.org/events/oct24-lecture/>

