



CREATIVE COMMONS STRATEGY 2021-2025



FOREWORD

I am delighted to announce the launch of Creative Commons' new strategy for 2021-2025.

This strategy is the result of over three months of stakeholder engagement, dozens of consultations, and hundreds of conversations held among Creative Commons' multiple collaborators, including staff, funders, the CC Board of directors, as well as a wide range of individuals within the CC community, particularly members of the Creative Commons Global Network (CCGN). The strategy development process was designed to be inclusive and transparent with the aim of co-creating a strategy that is ambitious, nuanced, and that relates to the people that make up Creative Commons around the globe.

This strategy truly represents a fresh start for Creative Commons. It provides clarity on the values that define us as an organization: leadership, intention, inclusivity. It depicts our vision for the world we want to see: a world where equitable sharing of knowledge and culture purposefully serves the public interest. It also expresses our mission: to empower the people and communities that we serve by equipping them with legal, technical, and policy solutions that they require in order to address real challenges on the ground.

This strategy provides an exciting development for CC. It sharpens our focus on core goals that emphasise shared knowledge and culture; facts, ideas and dreams shared equitably, with long term impact and resilience. It emphasizes that our objective is not necessarily only to promote more sharing, but to foster better sharing of knowledge and culture. It builds upon our copyright licenses and tools, and I am thrilled for us to embrace a broad-based approach to open sharing.

Over the course of the next five years, Creative Commons will deliver on the strategy's three core goals by engaging in activities involving advocacy, infrastructure innovation, and capacity building.

Developing the strategy has been a joint effort and a true testament to the values of collaboration and inclusivity that we at CC hold dear. I want to thank all of those—you know who you are—who provided advice, guidance, and wisdom to help craft this document. I want to acknowledge my colleagues at Creative Commons who have shared their ideas and helped shape the strategy; their energy and commitment throughout the process were unflinching. In particular, I am immensely grateful to Sarah Pearson, Senior Counsel, and Brigitte Vézina, Policy Manager, who led the strategy development process with commendable dedication.

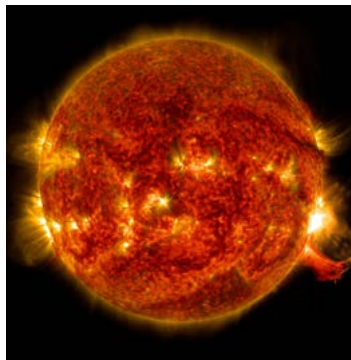
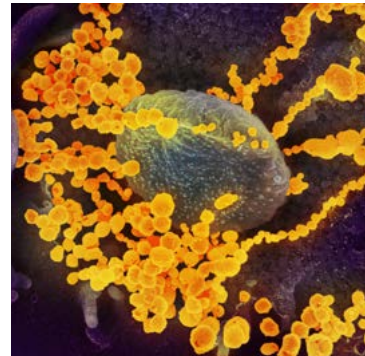
I look forward to embarking on this journey and working with all of CC's collaborators, supporters and partners in the open movement and beyond to secure a successful future.

Catherine Stihler

December 14, 2020

WHAT IS CREATIVE COMMONS?

Creative Commons (CC) is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to helping build and sustain a thriving commons of shared knowledge and culture. Together with an extensive member network and multiple partners, we build capacity, we develop practical solutions, and we advocate for *better* open sharing of knowledge and culture that serves the public interest.



BUILDING ON OUR 20-YEAR HISTORY TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

Twenty years ago, we set out to build a *commons* of “open” creative content free of most copyright restrictions. With the CC licenses and tools, we created a simple way for creators to opt in to a more permissive model of sharing. Over the past two decades, these legal tools have been applied to nearly 2 billion works, and they have become one part of a grand global open movement comprising open education, open science, open data, open culture, open access, and more. Each of these sectors is marked by unique features, owing to the varied incentives, benefits and values of the systems in which they operate. Yet all are underpinned by the same guiding beliefs in the benefits of open sharing:

- Open sharing advances universal access to knowledge and culture in furtherance of fundamental human rights;
- Open sharing fosters creativity, innovation and collaboration, thereby enabling progress in addressing global challenges, especially when it facilitates connections between people with diverse perspectives; and,
- Open sharing is inherently an act of social solidarity, reflecting a belief that we all have a stake in our collective body of creative and intellectual wealth.

**WITH THE CC LICENSES AND TOOLS, WE CREATED A
SIMPLE MEANS FOR CREATORS TO OPT IN TO A MORE
PERMISSIVE MODEL OF SHARING.**

Today, changed technological, social, cultural, political, legal and economic environments raise new challenges for the open movement. In order to protect what we have achieved so far and to create the world we want to see, we must expand our focus beyond copyright licensing, because content sharing cannot be decoupled from economic or ethical concerns. Indeed, the benefits of open sharing can be undermined by exploitative practices that threaten the financial sustainability of open endeavors, leading to economic hardship. Further, open sharing practices can also be marred by ethical concerns, such as the problematic use of open content to train potentially harmful artificial intelligence (AI) technologies or the use of open content in violation of non-copyright norms.

These challenges often disproportionately affect marginalized and under-resourced creators or communities who stand to lose the most. To ensure everyone can enjoy the benefits of the full open sharing cycle, we must embrace a multifrontal, coordinated, broad-based approach that transcends copyright.

OPEN SHARING CAN GIVE RISE TO LEGITIMATE CONCERNS ABOUT ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF CONTENT. THE CC TOOLS REMAIN ESSENTIAL BUT ARE NOT ENOUGH TO ADDRESS ALL BARRIERS TO OPEN SHARING.

We must pursue a commons of knowledge and culture that is inclusive, just, and which inspires reciprocity — a commons that serves the public interest. To that end, we must transition from promoting *more* sharing to fostering *better* sharing.

With this strategy, we identify the work we will undertake over the next five years to help support open communities build an open ecosystem that promotes better sharing of knowledge and culture, i.e. sharing that is contextual, ethical, inclusive, sustainable, purposeful and prosocial. We do not want to promote sharing for the sake of sharing. We want to promote sharing that has a positive impact on people and their communities. Concretely, our strategy identifies a path forward along three core lines of action:

1

ADVOCACY

2

INNOVATION

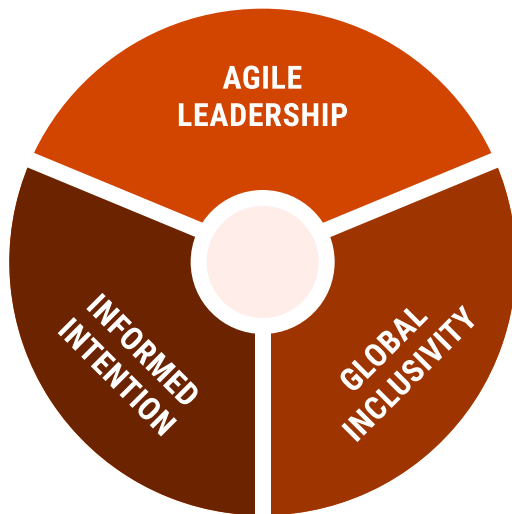
3

CAPACITY BUILDING

Ultimately, our strategy is about reinvesting in a public-interest approach to the full sharing cycle. Because open sharing matters now more than ever, we want to make sharing better. We know the open sharing ecosystem is broken. And we stand ready to fix it.

ULTIMATELY, OUR STRATEGY IS ABOUT MAKING OPEN SHARING BETTER.

OUR CORE VALUES



Agile Leadership

We know that the world is constantly evolving and that we must listen, learn, and adapt in order to lead at the forefront of the open movement toward positive, global change.

Global Inclusivity

The open movement is made up of a multitude of diverse communities and we strive to play our part in accessible, open-minded, collaborative and inclusive ways.

Informed Intention

We believe we must take care with the work that we do, and we strive to act with integrity, accountability, insight and humility.

OUR VISION

A world where knowledge and culture are equitably shared in ways that serve the public interest.

OUR MISSION

Creative Commons empowers individuals and communities around the world by equipping them with technical, legal and policy solutions to enable sharing of knowledge and culture in the public interest.



OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

ADVOCACY

GOAL 1

RESHAPE THE OPEN ECOSYSTEM

To support equitable and prosocial sharing in the public interest

INNOVATION

GOAL 2

ENHANCE THE OPEN INFRASTRUCTURE

To foster sustainable and ethical sharing in the public interest

CAPACITY BUILDING

GOAL 3

TRANSFORM INSTITUTIONS

To make knowledge and cultural heritage assets as openly accessible as possible

GOAL 1

RESHAPE THE OPEN ECOSYSTEM

To support equitable and prosocial sharing in the public interest

Together with the Creative Commons Global Network and Chapters, we seek to shape the laws, policies, norms and public opinion that affect the open ecosystem, in support of open sharing that is impactful, generative, equitable and resilient. We seek to mould the framework within which open sharing takes place to enhance its benefits and address the challenges it faces. Ultimately, we want the rules to make sharing better for all people involved.

What does success look like?

- We have developed an informed policy agenda based on thorough research, consultation, and analysis conducted in coordination with partner advocates.
- We have increased awareness and support for the open movement among the general public globally.
- We have contributed to creating a more equitable and diverse universe of creators, contributors, and other beneficiaries partaking in the open movement.
- We have increased community cohesion in the open movement and fostered connections, exchanges and collaboration among open advocates.
- We have amplified diverse voices in the open movement to influence positive change in social norms and public policy — especially copyright policy — to encourage sharing in the public interest.

GOAL 2

ENHANCE THE OPEN INFRASTRUCTURE

To foster sustainable and ethical sharing in the public interest

We seek to develop and steward legal, social, and technical infrastructure that supports open sharing that is impactful, generative, equitable and resilient. We want to develop innovative solutions that meet concrete ethical and economic challenges to make sharing better.

What does success look like?

- We have undertaken a comprehensive analysis of content sharing on a sector-by-sector basis in order to ensure we have a real-world understanding of the needs and aspirations of those involved with the open ecosystem.
- We have further invested in the comprehensive stewardship of our existing legal tools by providing clear and practical guidance around benefits and common challenges, enhancing explanatory resources and making them available in different languages, and reforming the tools themselves to make them as simple, useful, and intuitive as possible.
- We have engaged in strategic partnerships to develop legal, social, and/or technical solutions to help mitigate the economic and ethical challenges for creators and stewards of open content in various sectors.

GOAL 3

TRANSFORM INSTITUTIONS

To make knowledge and cultural heritage assets as openly accessible as possible

We seek to enable, support, and motivate public and private institutions in the cultural heritage, education, research and data, and government sectors to open their content in legally robust ways. We want to optimize institutions' potential to make sharing better. We will prioritize institutional partners and practitioners that represent and cater to underserved communities as part of our commitment to an open ecosystem that serves all.

What does success look like?

- We have advised and assisted institutions and organizations at scale in developing, adopting, and implementing their own institutional policies and practices, in furtherance of their mission of providing open access to knowledge and culture.
- We have published a wide diversity of case studies, best practices, and other localized documentation about institutional transitions to open that can enable and empower other institutions to follow their lead.
- We have empowered individual practitioners and advocates through in-depth capacity building activities to help them navigate the legal, technical, and practical aspects of opening up knowledge and culture.



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