

## Open Source & Openly Licensed Materials

The purpose of this article is to discuss the open source and openly licensed content environment. It will discuss: What are open source and openly licensed resources; conditions when using open source and openly licensed content.

## Open Source

More content is being made publicly available for copying, reuse and even repurposing. The open movement seeks to make software, research, data, images and text available to a global audience. Open source content, computer software being the well-known example, is material that can be used by anyone for any purpose including a commercial one.

Organizations such as the Public Knowledge Project, instituted at the University of British Columbia in 1998, extend the open movement. Currently, the project runs a publishing program that includes the Open Journal Systems which is home to over 1000 titles.

Open data is another area that has greatly enhanced the ability of researchers to identify, reuse, and share data from both public sources and research institutes, universities and individual researchers. More information can be found in the open data handbook and at the website ['Open Knowledge'](#).

## Openly Licensed Content

At first glance there seems to be a contradiction between open and licensing, since the latter imposes restrictions on use. It's better to think of open licenses as permissive licenses. These licenses do not restrict use of the content covered by them. In fact, they explicitly encourage you to use the content. [Creative Commons](#), perhaps the most widely used of the permissive licences regimes, allows you to copy and present the material covered by the license in a number of ways. The license restrictions seek to ensure, among other things, that the creator is attributed in your work but may also seek to limit applications that try to commercialize or repurpose their work. These limitations are close to the copyright concept of moral rights: the right to be associated with one's creation and the right of integrity in the work.

Creative Commons employs a variety of license types. CC 4.0 is the current Creative Commons license scheme, but creators can mix and match elements of the licenses to suit their requirements. Attribution, for which the abbreviation is 'BY', is the base license statement. If you're using someone's work there must be acknowledgment of the creator. Each element of the CC scheme beyond attribution either limits or expands the types of uses that can be made. For example, the 'NC', or non-commercial designation, means that the work cannot be used for a commercial purpose. The 'ND', or no derivatives designation, means that the work can only be copied in whole and you cannot adapt or use parts of it. The 'SA', or share alike designation, means that where you have used a work, you must also designate your new work as share alike. There is also a CC 0 licence which opens the work to any possible uses without restriction – in essence, it renounces copyright by the creator.

Like all copyrighted material, obtaining permission from the copyright holder to do that which the permissive license does not permit is always available to you. As attribution is the major requirement of nearly all licensing schemes, it is important to identify the critical elements for appropriate attribution. These include: Title of Work, Creator, Source (usually a URL to source page) and CC license information (with URL link to CC documentation page). Including links to the source material and CC license is important because these links provide more information on the CC license limitations and a path to request permission to use the work.



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GitHub is a site that permits coders to upload shareable code into repositories and permits others to access, adapt, and otherwise use the content. Repository content can be loaded without the application of license requirements, but offers the option to apply licenses to the content. Like all other licensed content, these software licenses require their conditions be met by downstream users.

## Public Domain

The [Public Domain](#) is one of the first places to look for content to populate the OERR. The Public Domain consists of material that no longer enjoys copyright protection and is always free to use and adapt to your needs. In copyright, Public Domain refers to that intellectual content which does not enjoy any copyright protection. There are two conditions for this state: One, the content has passed the term of copyright protection. In Canada, this would be fifty years following the death of the creator; Two, the creator has declared the work is copyright free. In effect, the creator donates the work to the world. The Public Domain in a copyright context should not be confused with content that is accessible through the Internet or other communication platforms.

Some content becomes free because of legislative decisions; for example, all United States government published works enter the public domain upon their release. This is not true in Canada where the government exercises a copyright in works for a period of fifty years from the year of publication. Many Canadian government departments will allow you to reproduce content published by the Department without permissions provided the copy is accurate and properly attributed including the title and name of the organisation. Furthermore, the content should not be presented in a manner that suggests the copy is endorsed by the Government of Canada, and it can only be used for a non-commercial purpose.

## Useful Links

For more information please refer to the following Copyright at UBC website resources:

- [Copyright at UBC](#)
- [Creative Commons Guide](#)
- [Public Domain Guide](#)
- [Image Sources Guide](#)

