



Cape Forestier and Mount Parsons from Sleepy Bay, Freycinet Peninsula, Tasmania, Australia. Photo by JJ Harrison. Released under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0.

Wikimedia Commons

Wikimedia Commons is an online media repository storing public domain and freely-licensed images, audio and video for free public consumption and use. It allows contributors to freely upload and share works that have educational value with the wider community.

Since it was founded in September, 2004, contributors have uploaded over 10 million files to Commons. These files, as is the project itself, are primarily intended to serve as a

source of educational media for use in the various Wikimedia Foundation projects, including Wikipedia, Wikispecies and Wikinews - but the media is not restricted to just the Foundation projects, and thus it can be employed in a number of different applications, from illustrating major news stories to providing colourful content in school projects.

As with Wikipedia, Commons is run by volunteers who donate their time

and expertise to engage in the project in a variety of ways. Although content creators are always welcome, Commons also needs people who can categorise the works, digitally improve images, help with descriptions and identification, and who can assist with copyright regulations and the identification of problematic content.

Commons can be found online at:

<http://commons.wikimedia.org/>

Reuse

Although the Wikimedia Foundation owns Commons, it does not own the media that has been uploaded to the project. Ownership remains with the creator. However, most of the media uploaded has been released under a

free content license, and therefore can be reused in projects without requiring individual permission.

In each case, the specific requirements for reuse are available in the licensing information included with the media's details. Depending on the license, you may be required to acknowledge the original creator, provide acknowledgement of the licensing terms, and, with derived works, you may need to release them under an identical license. However, outside of these constraints, you are generally permitted to use the media in both commercial and non-commercial applications, share and redistribute the works, and derive new works from the originals.

If you wish to use the work under different terms, or you need to verify the work's status, you may be able to contact the original contributor. Full details about this and other aspects of media reuse are available on the Commons website.

Licensing

Wikimedia Commons only accepts public domain or freely-licensed images. As such, contributors need to ensure that they release their works under a license that is compatible with the project's aims.

Recommended licenses include:

- Public Domain (PD)
- GNU Free Document License (GFDL)
- Creative Commons (CC)¹

Licenses which require permission to be sought from the creator, or licenses which do not permit commercial reuse, are not accepted on Commons.

Full information is available at:

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Choosing_a_license

¹ Note: Not all Creative Commons licenses are compatible with Wikimedia Commons' requirements.



1883 Brisbane flood, corner of Edward and Mary street. One of over 10,000 public domain images donated in 2010 to Wikimedia Commons by the State Library of Queensland. Photo by Paul C. Poulsen. Public domain.

Contributing

Anyone can contribute to Wikimedia Commons. In particular, Commons is always in need of photographers, illustrators and film and theatre artists and musicians, but there are such a wide range of tasks needing assistance that any and all help is appreciated.

Why Contribute?

By contributing to Commons you are helping to provide a freely available resource that isn't just valuable for projects such as Wikipedia, but is of value for projects around the world. Your work - your photos, illustrations, audio, video, or your efforts to make the works of others accessible - will be available for a wide variety of different applications and mediums. Amongst many other applications, contributors help illustrate textbooks, assist schoolchildren with their projects,

and provide a resource for journalists.

Accounts

You do not need an account to contribute to Commons, but you will need one to upload media.

Creating an account is free, and you will not need to reveal your offline identity in order to take part (although if you choose to employ a pseudonym, attribution will tend to be to your username rather than your real name).

Formats and Quality

Generally, the project needs the largest and highest quality files that are available. With images, Commons utilises software that automatically resizes images to suit requirements, and large images provide the most flexibility for reuse.

JPEGs are preferred for photographs - while PNG is possible, the file size tends to be higher. For animated images GIF is the preferred format, and SVG is considered the first choice for diagrams and other scalable line drawings. Audio needs to be uploaded as MIDI files or Ogg Vorbis (.ogg), while for video you should employ Ogg Theora. The maximum file size is 20 MB.

Subjects

Commons accepts a wide range of subjects, providing they have educational value and are legal in the state of Florida in the United States. For works which have artistic or personal value, but which are unlikely to have sufficient educational value, you may wish to

look at a photo-hosting service such as Flickr. Further information about the scope of Wikimedia Commons can be found at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Project_scope

Copyright

Commons accepts only free content - in other words, content that is free to be used anywhere, by anyone, and for any purpose. This excludes media licensed for non-commercial use only, works derived from non-free media and works claiming "fair use".

In the case of new works, this means that media must be released under a compatible license, as per "Licensing requirements" above. With public domain files, the media must be considered public domain both in the country of origin and the United States. For more information, see: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Licensing>

Uploading

Files can be uploaded through the Commons website - all you need is a free account, to be logged in, and to have access to a computer with a web browser.

When uploading your files, you will need to add categories to make them easier to find, write a description, and specify the license under which the work is to be released.



A Masked Lapwing (*Vanellus miles miles*) photographed near Cairns in Queensland. Photo by Toby Hudson. Released under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0.

Wikimedia Australia



Wikimedia Australia, Inc.® is an independent, not-for-profit organisation, whose primary aim is to promote equality of opportunity to access and participate in the collaborative creation of Free Cultural Works, especially educational works, and works about Australia, its culture, natural environment, and Australian news and media.

Wikimedia Australia is recognised by the Wikimedia Foundation as an official chapter and as such offers members an official voice in the global Wikimedia community, whose aim is to create the sum of all human knowledge, freely available in your own language.

Useful Links

Wikimedia Commons

Website

<http://commons.wikimedia.org/>

Contact Details

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Contact_us

Frequently Asked Questions

<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:FAQ>

Wikimedia Australia

Website

<http://wikimedia.org.au/>

Email

contact@wikimedia.org.au

Disclaimer and License

Wikimedia Australia (WMAU) provides this document as a guide only. For the latest information you are encouraged to check the Wikimedia Commons website at <http://commons.wikimedia.org/>

Although WMAU is affiliated with the Wikimedia Foundation, it exists as an independent body. This document is not an official publication of the Wikimedia Foundation, and does not necessarily express the Foundation's views.

This document is released under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 license.