WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The free media repository

Share your photos, videos and audio recordings with Wikipedia and the world!

commons.wikimedia.org

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS – A WIKIMEDIA PROJECT

"Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing." (Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales)

Wikimedia Commons is a rapidly growing media collection of common and freely licensed media content – in the form of images, audio and video files – that everyone can participate in.

Today, **well over 36 million media files** are available for free use by everyone. Wikipedia, for example, gets its images, graphics and videos from the Commons media archive. The collection is compiled, prepared and made available jointly by volunteers and cultural institutions.

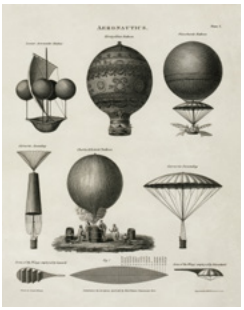
The various Wikimedia projects are run by the **Wikimedia Foundation** based in San Francisco, USA. Today, more than 110 Wikimedia organizations and groups are supporting the work and objectives of the Wikimedia Foundation. The strength of the Wikimedia projects lies in the voluntary efforts of people of all ages, from all continents and from different cultures. Millions of people benefit from their commitment every day.

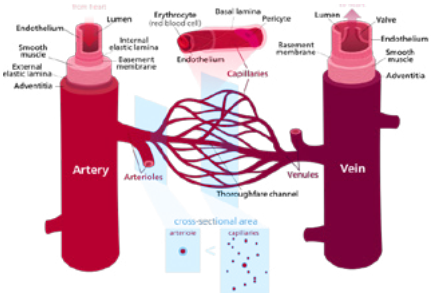
Join in and help make free access to knowledge something that's taken for granted all over the world!

The material in the archive is ordered into categories and presented in galleries – in fact, working with Wikimedia Commons is incredibly simple. Three categories of the media archive are particularly good examples of the outstanding quality of the collection and the high standards of its users: "Featured Pictures", "Quality Images" and "Valued Images". Since 2006 the Wikimedia Commons community also holds an annual Picture of the Year contest.

Cooperation with archives and other institutions is an important part of growing Wikimedia Commons. Back in December 2008, for example, the German Federal Archives made over 80,000 historical photographs available for the free media archive. The Dutch Rijksmuseum not only made its collections available online under a free license, but also collaborates with Wikimedia Neederlands to integrate the media files into Wikimedia Commons. Many other international archives are joining in step by step. In parallel, campaigns on specific topics and regions are held to support the work of the volunteers and the continuous expansion of the media archive. These include photo workshops and contests, e.g. on the documentation of monuments.

Take part yourself in creating the largest collection of free media files and share your photos, videos and audio recordings with Wikipedia and the world!

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Smooth muscle
External elastic lamina
Adventitia
Lumen
Internal elastic lamina
Basement membrane
Endothelium
Erythrocyte (red blood cell)
Basal lamina
Capillaries
Pericyte
Lumen
Valve
Endothelium
Smooth muscle
Adventitia
Artery
Arterioles
Venules
Vein
Thoroughfare channel
cross-sectional area
arteriole
capillaries

Search and find

Here's how to find files in Wikimedia Commons really quickly:

From Wikipedia, for example, you can get to the image integrated in an article quickly and simply by clicking on it (or on the file name for audio or video elements). A click on the link "description page there" then takes you to the media database. Another option is a direct keyword search on: **commons.wikimedia.org**. Or get inspired by clicking through the media archive's category system!

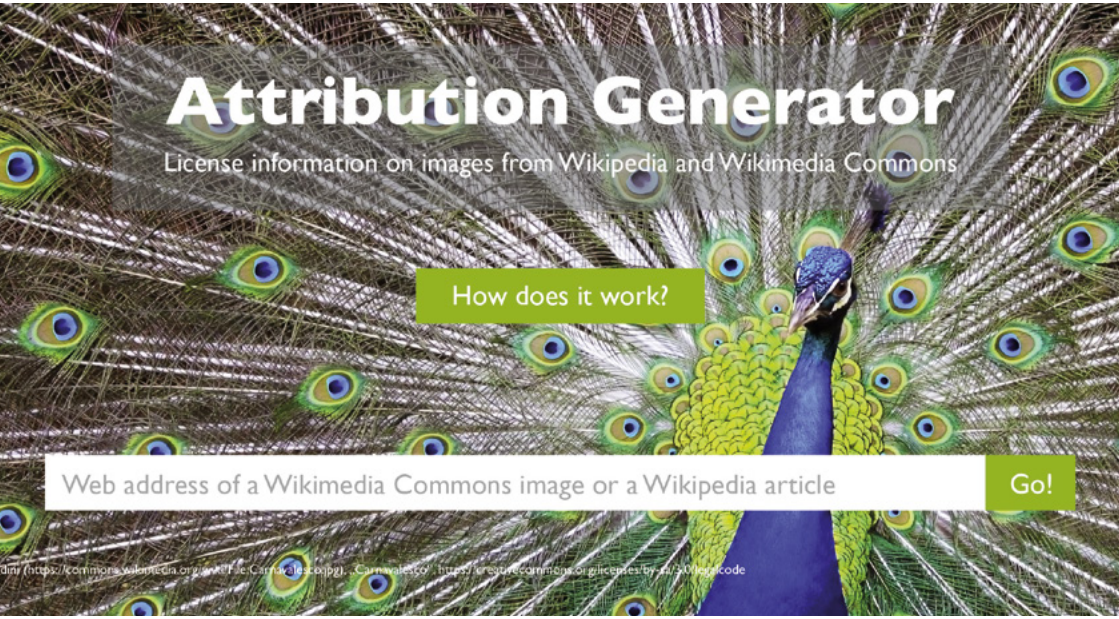
Copyright and use

> All files on Wikimedia Commons can be used, reproduced and disseminated free of charge in accordance with the terms of license – also for commercial purposes.

All files must therefore either be in the **public domain** or under a **free license**. In most countries, works enter the public domain after the 70th anniversary of the copyright holder's death at the latest. Some countries, however, do have special national terms of copyright.

Various kinds of free licenses are used in Wikimedia Commons. The most popular free license model is known under the abbreviation CC BY-SA and is provided by the non-profit organization **Creative Commons**. The copyright holder of a work has to be named (BY) and the file, in particular when it is edited, must be shared on the same terms (SA = share alike).

To meet the standards of the Wikimedia projects it is important in all cases to state the copyright holder and the license on the respective image description page of the medium.



You can create the necessary license notice in just a few steps with the "Attribution Generator". Just copy the internet address of the image (from Wikimedia Commons or Wikipedia) that you want to use. The application then guides you through a short dialog that asks you how you are going to use the image, e.g. online, in print, in original or in edited form. You then get the required license notice that you can use for your publication.

You can obtain the details you need to re-use individual media files with the Attribution Generator.*
www.lizenzhinweisgenerator.de/?lang=en

* Please note: The current English version of the Attribution Generator is based on a near-verbatim translation of the initial German text snippets, which were drafted with the copyright law of Germany in mind. Especially the parts explaining legal concepts might thus differ from the copyright law situation of other countries.

Register

If you want to upload your own files to Wikimedia Commons you have to register first. Click top right on “Create account”. You can then change the language settings.

Uploading files

By uploading files to Commons you are making your files available to the general public. Make sure that you meet the following requirements:

- you own the rights to the work or
- the work has already been published under a free license.

Click left in the navigation on “Upload file” and you will be guided step by step and very easily through the uploading procedure.

Further upload tools are available at:
commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Upload_tools

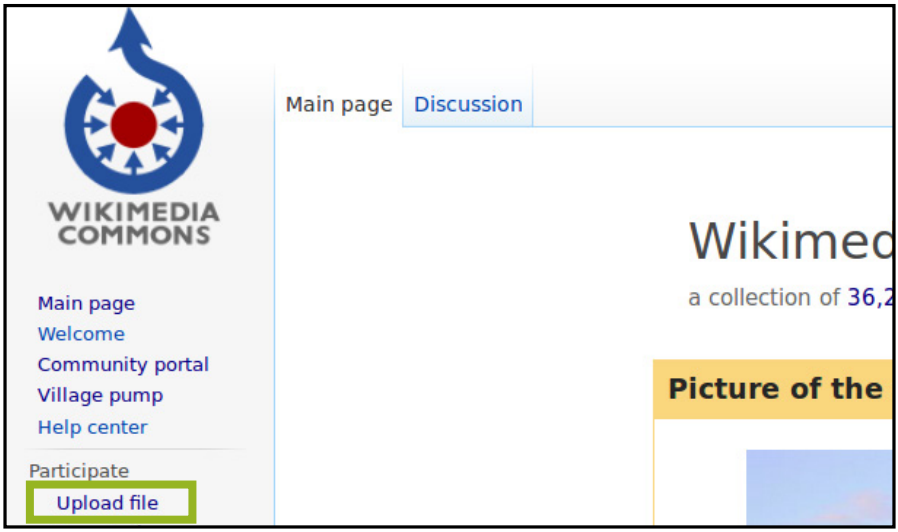


Photo contests

The Commons community holds regular photo contests. The competition themes can be specific objects or subjects, abstract concepts, photographic techniques and methods, or artistic styles and forms of presentation.

In addition, there are the large international photo contests **Wiki Loves Monuments** (WLM) and **Wiki Loves Earth** (WLE) that take place on an annual basis.

The photo contest WLM – the largest in the world according to the Guinness Book of World Records – has been held annually in September since 2011, and invites volunteers to take photographs of cultural monuments and upload them onto Wikimedia Commons.

WLE generally takes place in May and focuses on natural monuments and nature reserves.

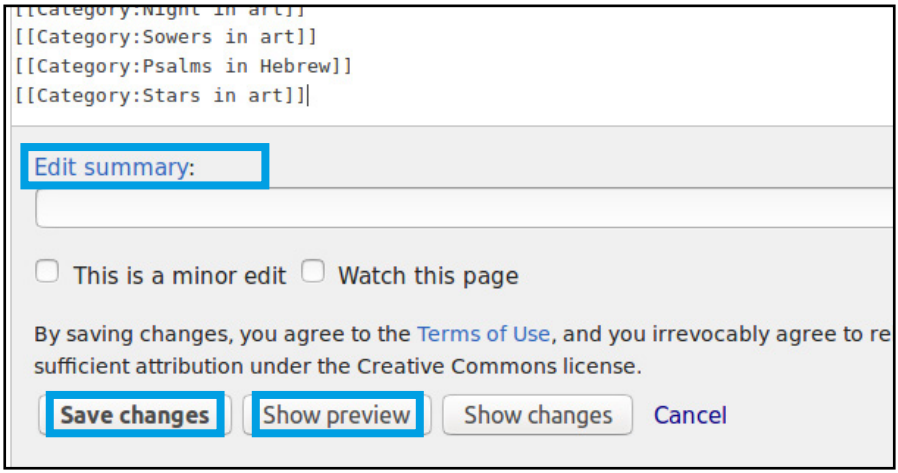
Winning images of the Wiki Loves Earth and Wiki Loves Monuments 2016 photo contests

Categorizing files on Commons

To make it easier to find what you are looking for, the files on Wikimedia Commons are assigned to categories.
There are also gallery pages that provide a selection of files on specific topics. If you do not find a suitable category for the file you are uploading then you can either select a higher level category or create a new one. Wikimedia Commons, like all other Wikimedia projects, is continually being expanded by the volunteers.

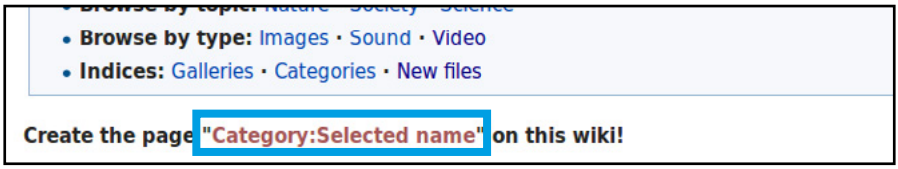
How do I assign my file to a category?

The basic rule is: Select the most specific category you can find. Beforehand, take a look at some similar files and check the categories to which these are assigned. Then open the editing page of your file by clicking on the tab "Edit".

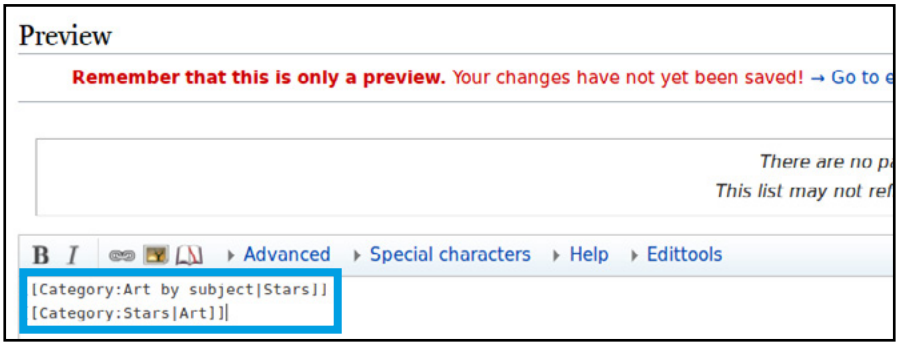


How do I create a category?

First make sure that there is no existing suitable category for your file. To do so, enter the category name you have selected in the form “Category:Selected name” in the search field. Bear in mind that names in Commons are in plural. Animals and plants are categorized under their Latin names. If your category already exists you will get a hit from the database. If not, you will be requested to create this category.



Now enter the names of existing parent categories to assign your category to the right place.



Tip: By activating the HotCat Tool in your user settings, you can add or remove categories with a click.

What types of files are accepted?

Wikimedia Commons uses free file formats. These include:

- For audio files: MIDI and ogg-Vorbis
- For video files: ogg-theora and WebM
- For image files: PNG, JPEG, SVG, GIF and TIFF
- For text files: DjVu. PDFs are also accepted even though this is not a free file format.

The patented formats MP3, AAC, WMA, MPEG, AVI are not accepted.

An overview of all accepted file types is available at:
commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:File_types

How big is a digital photo allowed to be?

As big as possible! The size of the file does not affect the loading time for the reader as the photo is shown as a preview image. Furthermore, the original from your camera also contains important image information that photo editing professionals can use to improve blurry photos as well.

To help you edit, you can use Graphics Lab for example, which is available at:
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Graphics_Lab/Photography_workshop

My file was deleted or cannot be found. Why?

You will be informed via your discussion page about an (impending) deletion. The most frequent reasons are:

1. Perhaps the file was inadvertently not uploaded or uploaded under a different name. Sometimes it's just because of a typo. Even changes in the upper/lowercase spelling of the file name (such as "JPG" rather than "jpg") can result in a photo no longer being found.

2. The photo is not directly yours but evidently belongs to someone else and was deleted due to possible copyright infringement.

3. The photo is yours but the information on the copyright holder/author was not clear. An example of this would be that the file was uploaded under a pseudonym but the real name was given as the author. The source information must be clearly understandable for third persons.

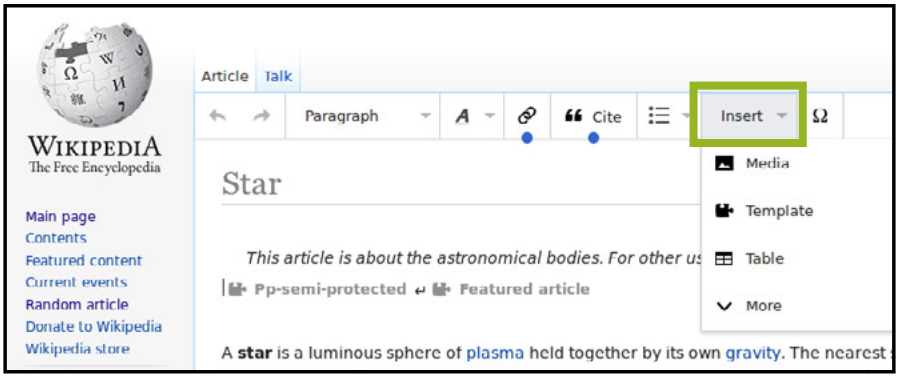
4. The information on the author and/or the license was missing or not plausible. Files with non-free or missing licenses are deleted immediately. Restrictions such as limiting use to Wikipedia or only subject to copyright permission are also not acceptable. Files may also not be declared as freely usable press material or show the following: CD covers, logos, press photos and other material that is evidently protected by copyright.

Tip: If you think that your file was deleted without cause then submit a request to undelete it to "Commons:Undelete" request. Before you do so, take a look at the deletion log book that you can access via the option "Contributions" in your user account.

Integrating media files in Wikipedia articles

Media that are stored on Wikimedia Commons can easily be integrated in Wikipedia articles. Alternatively, photos that are to be integrated in a Wikipedia article can also be uploaded to Commons directly via the Wikipedia article.

To do this, retrieve the article you want to add an image to and click on “Edit” in the menu at the top. This may open a dialog window that asks you for your preferred editing mode. The simplest way is to choose the option “Switch to the Visual Editor”. This will open a text editor with a toolbar. Choose the menu item “Insert” and then “Media”. This will open a dialog window that guides you through the next steps.



Many of the topics and objects on Wikimedia Commons are assigned to categories. Overarching themes are also collected in galleries by users. When writing a Wikipedia article, refer to these in the web links. Then you don’t need to indicate the photo collections in the article as well. Readers will be grateful to you! To make a reference to a category, use the template “Commonscat”. You can retrieve this via the menu item “Insert” and then by selecting “Template”. You can choose the template “Commons” to make a reference to a photo gallery.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND HELP PAGES

First points of contact

- If you would like to use images and you are unsure about how to create the license information, help is available at:
  en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Media_copyright_questions

- If you would like to upload files for which you have received consent from the author personally, please contact:
  permission-commons@wikimedia.org

- You can also put general questions to the forum:
  commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Village_pumps

Further information

- All information at a glance and a step-by-step guide is available here:
  commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Community_portal

Tools

- Useful tools:
  commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Tools

- Plug-in for Adobe Photoshop Lightroom
  commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:LrMediaWiki

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

For the creation, collection and preparation of free content, Commons volunteers can obtain financial and organizational support, e.g. in the form of technology, travel expenses or software.

There are over 110 Wikimedia organizations and groups around the world. If there is a Wikipedia organization or group in your country, you can contact it directly to find out about the possible opportunities for support. An overview of all organizations is available there:
meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_movement_affiliates

Further (although perhaps not complete) details on support provided by the individual chapters are also available on the following page:
meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants

If there is no Wikimedia organization or group in your country you can contact the Wikimedia Foundation directly, which offers comprehensive opportunities for support. These include e.g. so-called Rapid Grants of up to US$2000 for e.g. renting technical equipment, and Project Grants for larger projects that are awarded twice a year.
meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:Start

WORKING WITH CULTURAL & HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS

Today, the task of museums, libraries and archives is not just to preserve cultural heritage but also make it available in digital form. Many collections and exhibits have their own Wikipedia articles. But these often lack accompanying photos.

Wikimedia organizations and groups together with cultural institutions from around the world are encouraging Wikimedia project volunteers to comprehensively photograph the collections. The global activities of volunteers in the cultural sector are referred to by the acronym GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, museums). The event format GLAM on Tour was developed for this purpose in the German-speaking countries:

GLAM on Tour: Wikimedia volunteers from a particular region meet up on a weekend in a museum, archive or a library. The staff lead the volunteers through the collections to take photographs of the exhibits. The volunteers then upload their photos to Wikimedia Commons and assign them to the respective categories. The entire collections can thus be made available for Wikimedia projects and for re-use all over the world.

Over the past few years, volunteers have created more than 10,000 photos from the cultural sector for Wikimedia Commons and made them openly accessible in this way.

You can take the initiative! Read this Learning Pattern to find out how to persuade a cultural institution near you to join Wikimedia Commons: **wmde.org/GLAM_Partnership**. Your Wikimedia chapter will be happy to help you.

Further information is available at:
wmde.org/GLAM_Learnings

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