STATE OF THE COMMONS

Collaboration, sharing, and cooperation are a driving force for human evolution. Creative Commoners have known this fact all along, and recently there has been a flurry of new research to explain why. We are hardwired for sharing. Harvard professor on evolutionary dynamics Martin Nowak calls it the essential "snuggle for survival" — evidence that sharing is not just a selfless act. Sharing has concurrent and lasting benefits, multiplied for the giver, the receiver, and communities at large.
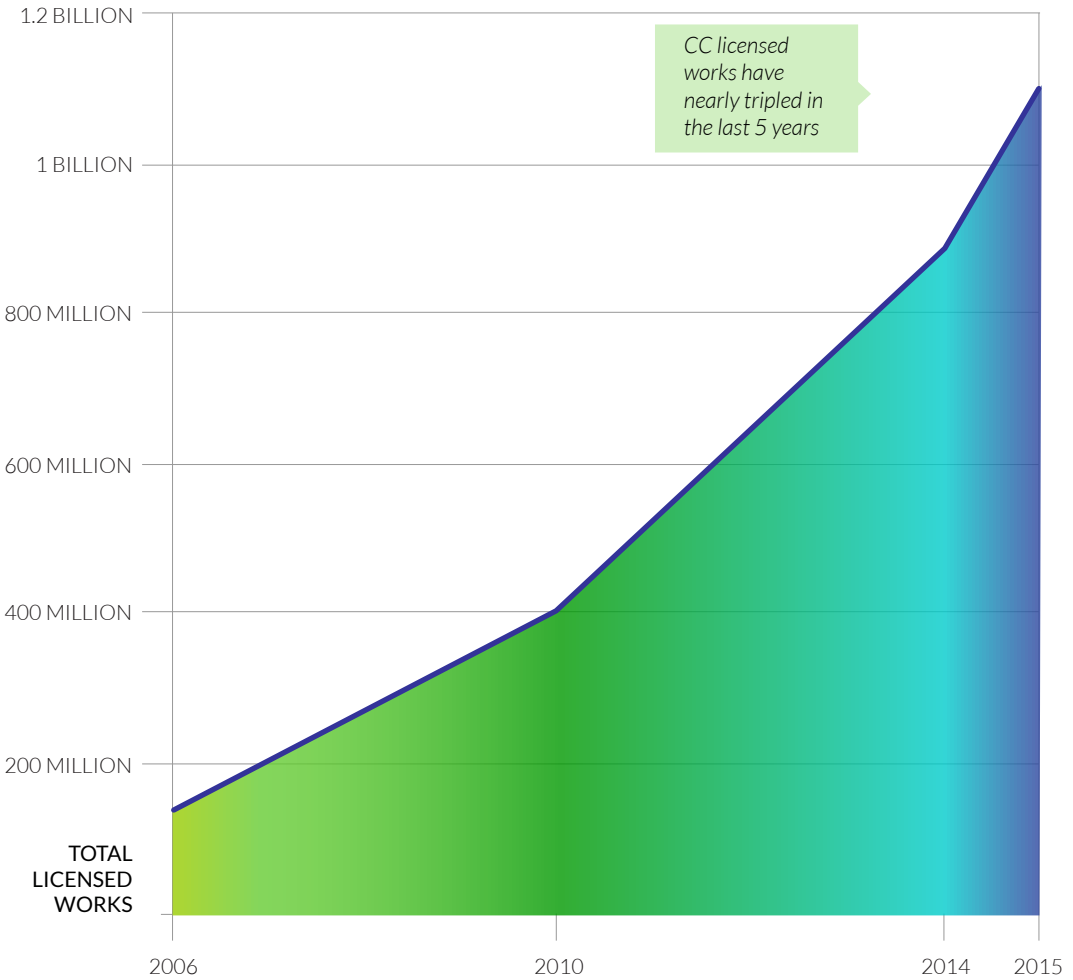
The online communities that we've created together are a global platform for sharing. If we want to live in a digital world that is fair, diverse, vibrant, serendipitous, and safe for everyone, we will have to choose to make it that way. If that world is going to be accessible, equitable, and full of innovation and opportunity, it will require our leadership to foster and defend these ideals. Founded in 2001, Creative Commons has created legal and technical infrastructure that is fundamental to the Web we know and love. Today, our work goes beyond the ubiquitous CC licenses to foster cooperation and sharing, support collaborative communities, and drive engagement across the spectrum of open knowledge and free culture.

Creative Commons is a global charity, with a powerful affiliate network of researchers, activists, legal, education and policy advocates, and volunteers who serve as CC representatives in over 85 countries. Together, we lead this ever-growing global movement. Whether it's open education, open data, science, research, music, video, photography, or public policy, we are putting sharing and collaboration at the heart of the Web. In doing so, we are much closer to realizing our vision: unlocking the full potential of the Internet to drive a new era of development, growth, and productivity.

I am proud to share with you our 2015 State of the Commons report, our best effort to measure the immeasurable scope of the Commons by looking at the CC licensed content, along with content marked as public domain, that comprise the slice of the Commons powered by CC tools. We are proud to be a leader in the Commons movement, and we hope you will join us as we celebrate all we have accomplished together this year.

Ryan Merkley
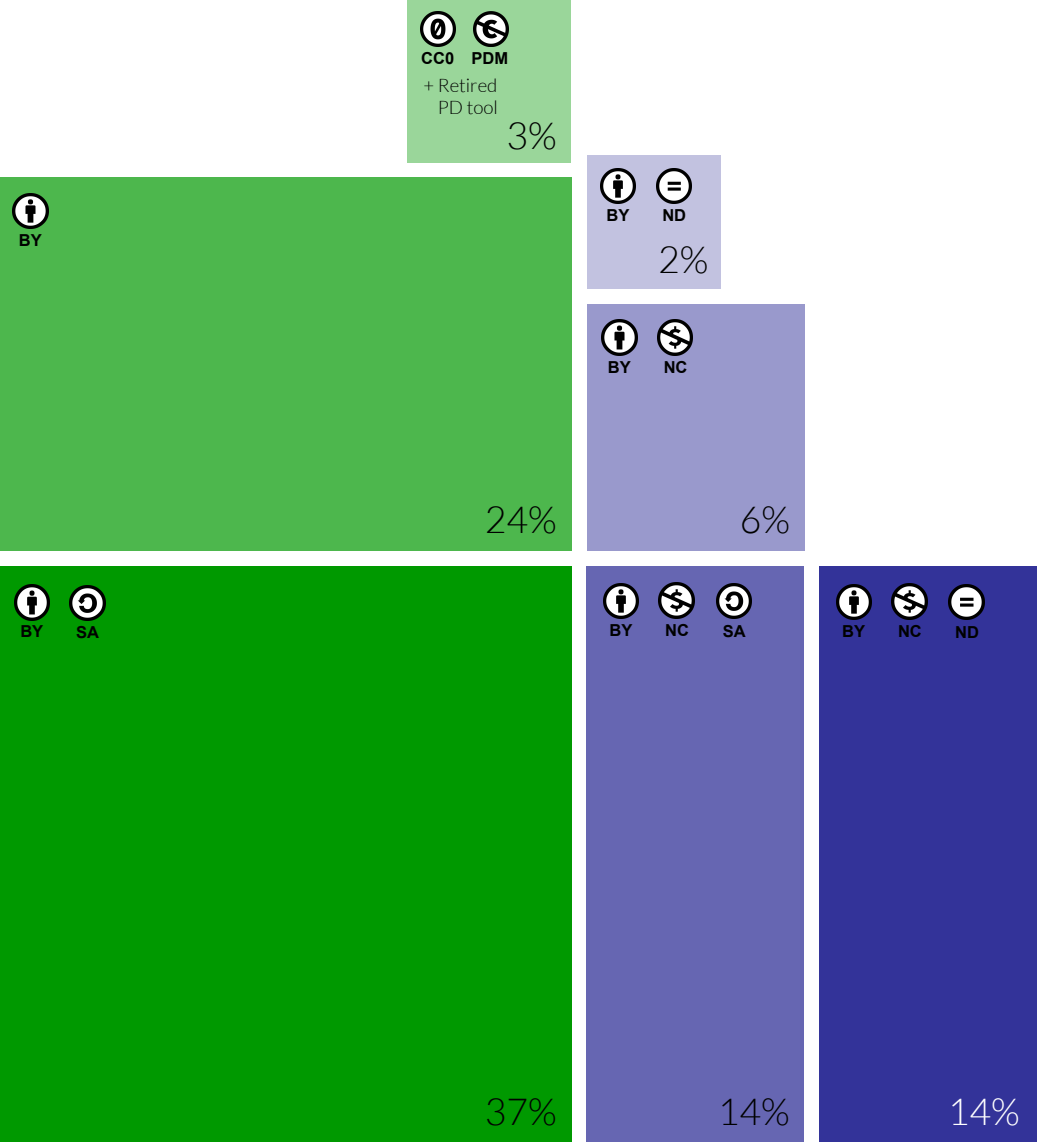CEO, Creative Commons
@ryanmerkley

Wow! Over 1 billion CC licensed works in the Commons in 2015

CC licensed works have nearly tripled in the last 5 years

1.2 BILLION	
1 BILLION	
800 MILLION	
600 MILLION	
400 MILLION	
200 MILLION	

TOTAL LICENSED WORKS

2006   2010   2014 2015

CC and its suite of licenses are the global standard for legal sharing, embedded in major content platforms from Wikimedia to Europeana, and adopted by foundations and governments from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to the White House.

Note: Data includes content licensed with the full CC license suite, along with content marked with CC public domain tools. This is a low bound estimate based on what we could count. Dig into our data sources.

More people are choosing to share with "Free Culture" licenses

CC0 **PDM**
+ Retired PD tool
3%

BY
24%

BY ND
2%

BY NC
6%

BY SA
37%

BY NC SA
14%

BY NC ND
14%

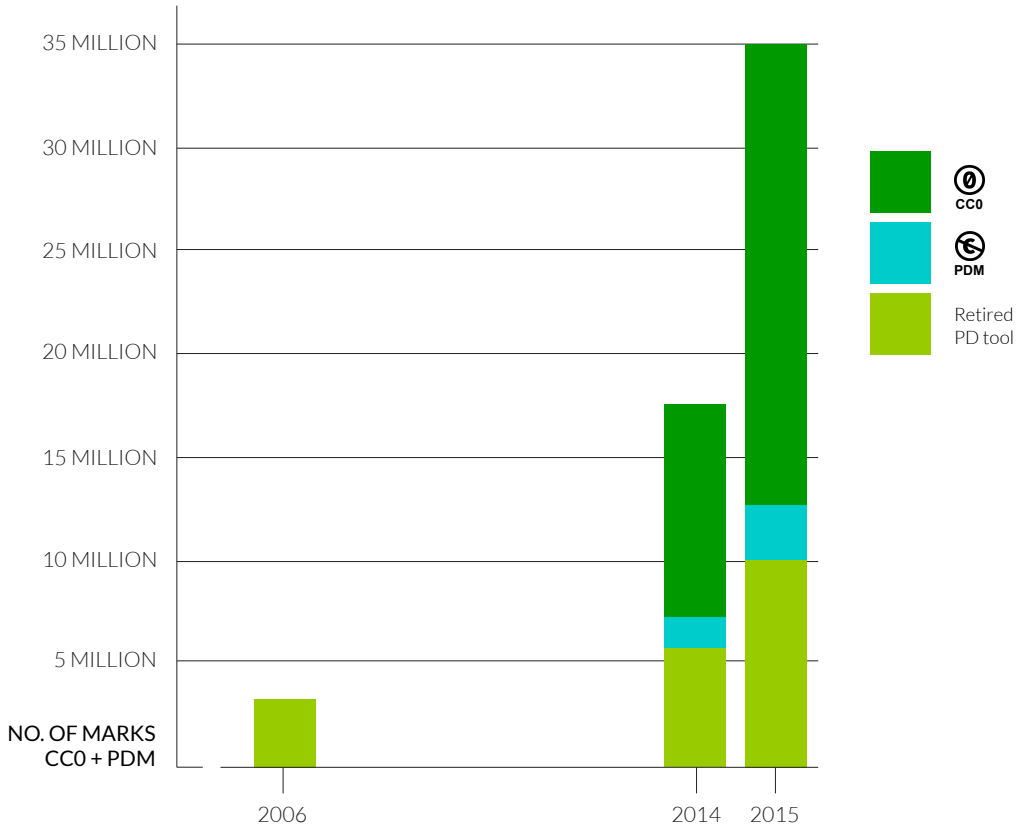MORE OPEN   MORE RESTRICTIVE

Less restrictive FREE CULTURE
licenses allow for both commercial
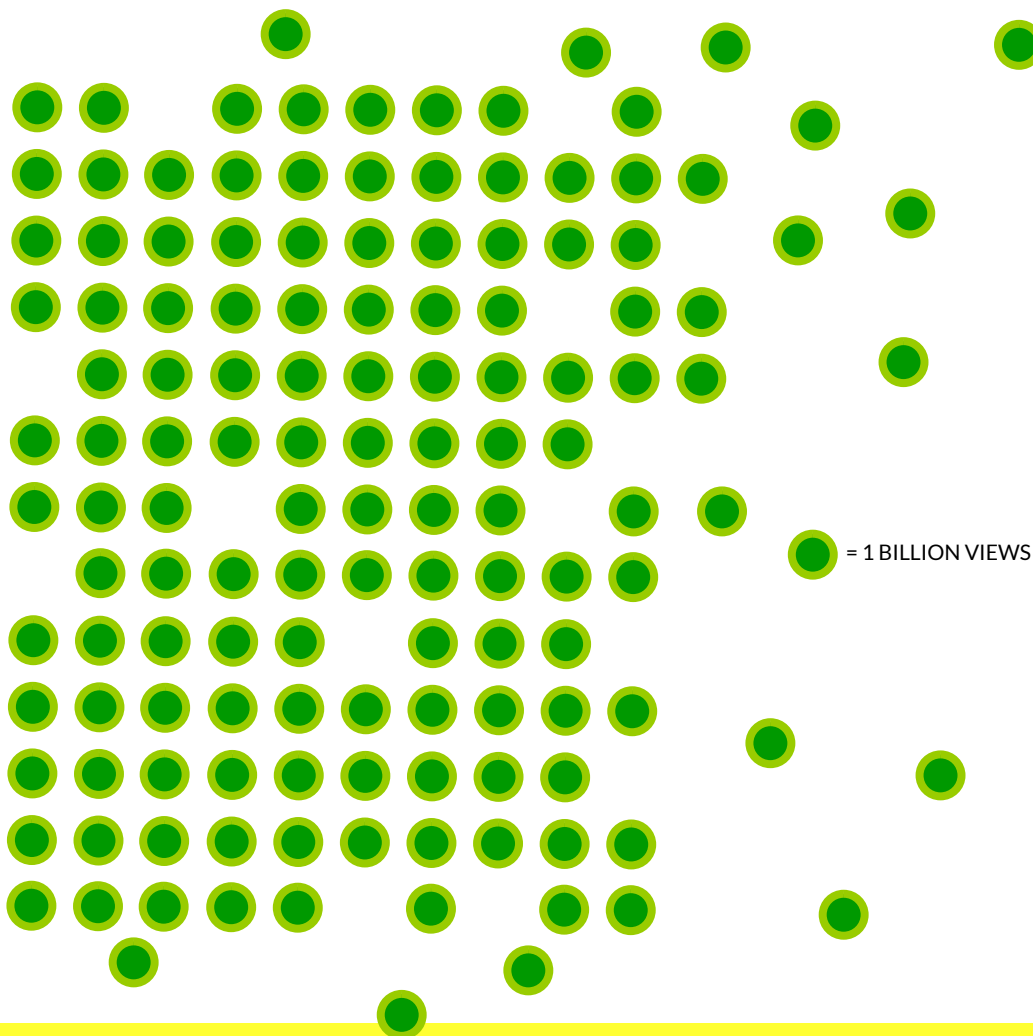use and adaptations

Note: Data includes content licensed with the full CC license suite and marked with our public domain tools. Dig into our data sources.

The CC marked public domain has nearly doubled in size over the last 12 months

35 MILLION

30 MILLION

25 MILLION

20 MILLION

15 MILLION

10 MILLION

5 MILLION

NO. OF MARKS
CC0 + PDM

2006   2014   2015

CC0

PDM

Retired
PD tool

In 2015, CC licensed works were viewed online
136 billion times

= 1 BILLION VIEWS

CC licensed work is retained, reused, revised, remixed, and redistributed in infinite ways. We captured just a slice of this massively distributed collaboration by measuring the number of times CC licensed work gets accessed from the global pool of content.

Note: Data tracks downloads on CC license buttons, or the number of times CC licensed content was viewed on a web page. Dig into our data sources.

Diversity and global visibility

Creative Commons is a truly international movement with active communities on every continent (yes, even Antarctica). A significant milestone was the 2013 launch of Version 4.0 and CC's first official translation policy for internationalizing the license suite. To date, the 4.0 license suite has been officially translated into 7 languages, with 3 more to be published in 2015.

People are sharing with CC licenses in 34 languages with more than 90 million views of CC's deeds in the last 10 years.

العربية	Arabic	italiano	Italian
беларускі	Belarusian	日本語	Japanese
Català	Catalan	한국어	Korean
中国	Chinese*	Latvijā	Latvian
hrvatski	Croatian	Lietuvos	Lithuanian
čeština	Czech	Melayu	Malay
danske	Danish	te reo Māori	Māori
Nederlands	Dutch	norsk	Norwegian
English	English*	فارسي	Persian (Farsi)
Esperanton	Esperanto	polski	Polish
suomi	Finnish	português	Portuguese
français	French*	Română	Romanian
galego	Galician	Русский	Russian
Deutsche	German*	Español	Spanish*
ελληνικά	Greek	svenska	Swedish
Magyar	Hungarian	Türk	Turkish
bahasa Indonesia	Indonesian	Український	Ukrainian

Note: Data reflects total views of CC deed pages from Jan 1, 2005 through Nov 3, 2015. *Category includes variations on that language for simplicity, eg. Chinese includes simplified and traditional Chinese. Dig into our data sources.

From research to cute cat photos, the Commons offers a treasure trove of content.

IMAGES (PHOTOS, ARTWORKS):
391 MILLION

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES: **76,000**

RESEARCH (JOURNAL ARTICLES):
1.4 MILLION

AUDIO TRACKS:
4 MILLION

VIDEOS: **18.4 MILLION**

OTHER (MULTIMEDIA, 3D):
23,000

TEXTS (ARTICLES, STORIES, DOCUMENTS): **46.9 MILLION**

Note: Data only reflects media on 16 platforms + Directory of Open Access Journals, just a slice of all available CC media on the web. Dig into our data sources.

CC is everywhere:
Millions of websites use CC licenses,
including major platforms like
Wikipedia and Flickr and smaller
websites like your grandma's blog.

flickr
356 million photos

bandcamp
1.95 million tracks

WIKIPEDIA
35.9 million articles

YouTube
13 million videos

500
661,000 photos

jamendo
496,000 tracks

INTERNET ARCHIVE
2 million files

vimeo
5 million videos

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
21.6 million media files

FMA
86,000 tracks

BOUNDLESS
49,000 open educational resources

SKILLS COMMONS
open for learning
24,000 career training materials

europeana
think culture
20.9 million digital objects

Tribe of Noise
29,000 tracks

PLOS
140,000 articles
(Total Open Access articles across the web under CC BY: 675,000; under any CC license: 1.3 million)

MITOPENCOURSEWARE
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
2,300 courses

In 2015, more platforms added CC license options for their users, including Medium and edX, with Flickr adding support for CC0 and the Public Domain Mark. Expect growth on these platforms in 2016.
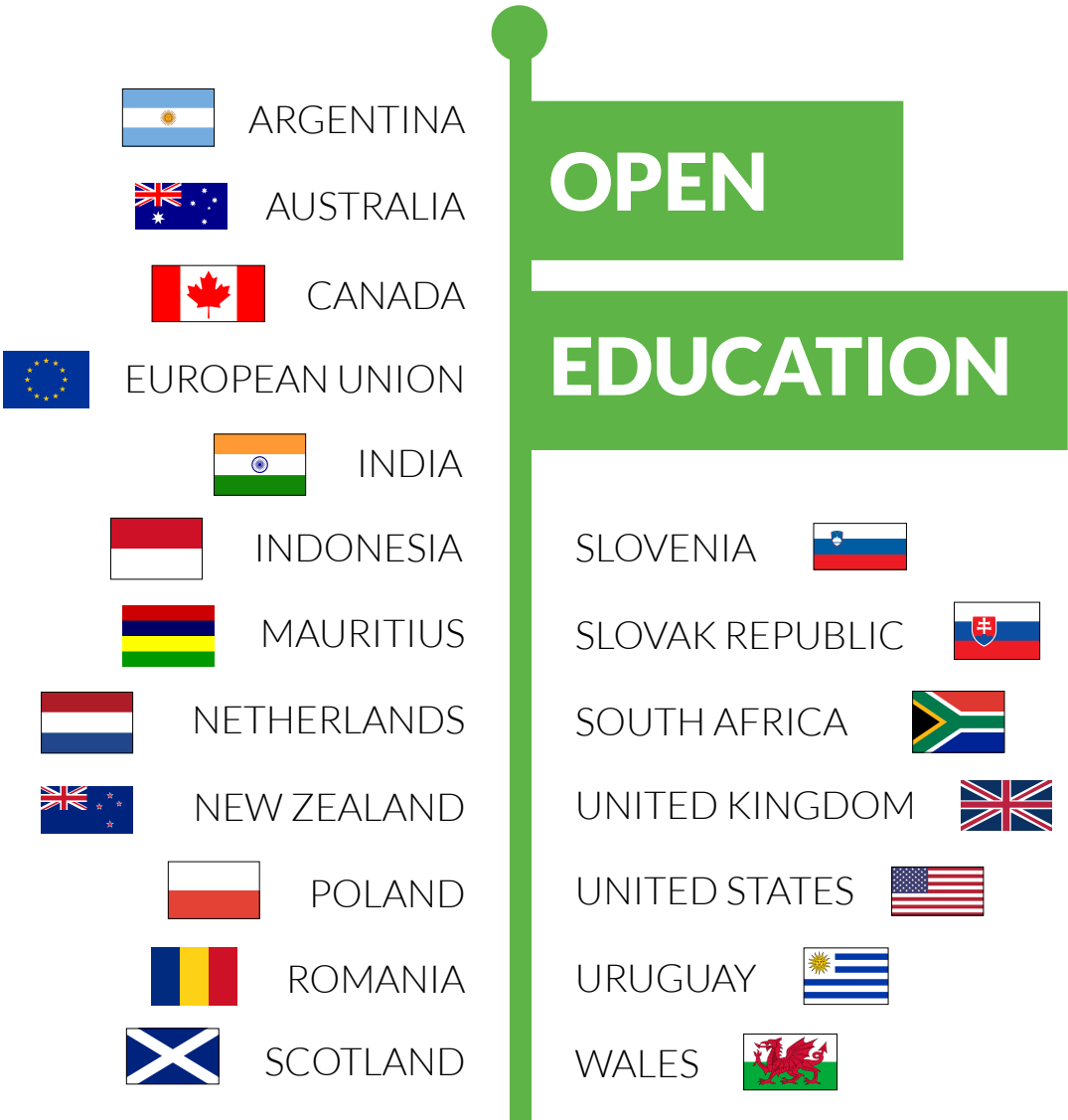
...and many more!
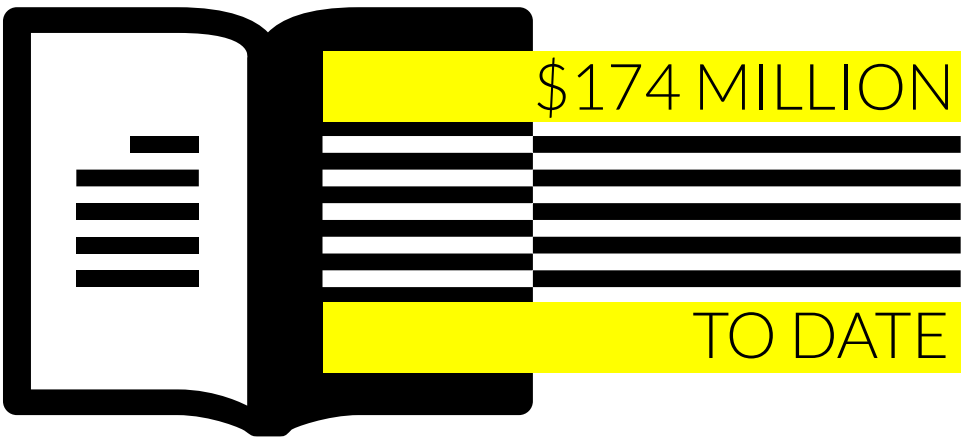
2015 Impact:
CC + Open Education

CC is at the very heart of the open education movement; our licenses put the "open" in Open Educational Resources (OER). CC and our open education partners are leading an international OER campaign to make it easy for educators and students around the world to freely share curriculum, textbooks and research at near zero cost. CC is also helping governments add open licensing requirements on publicly funded educational resources.

Countries with Open Education Policies

Countries with legislation, policies, or funder mandates at the national, provincial/state, or institutional level that lead to the creation, increased use, or support for improving OER.

OPEN

EDUCATION

ARGENTINA

AUSTRALIA

CANADA

EUROPEAN UNION

INDIA

INDONESIA   SLOVENIA

MAURITIUS   SLOVAK REPUBLIC

NETHERLANDS   SOUTH AFRICA

NEW ZEALAND   UNITED KINGDOM

POLAND   UNITED STATES

ROMANIA   URUGUAY

SCOTLAND   WALES

Open Textbooks have saved students

$174 MILLION

TO DATE

with an additional $53 million projected through academic year 2015/16

Note: *European Union is a collection of member states but included in this country list for reporting purposes; Data reflects savings for students in Canada and the United States; Data provided by the open education community. Dig into our data sources.
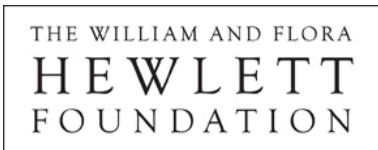
2015 Impact:
CC + Foundation Open Policy

CC continues to lead the way in advocating for major philanthropic foundations to adopt open licensing policies. Foundations can exponentially expand the impact and reach of their grantmaking through a "default open" policy that ensures that all grantees openly license any digital outputs of their work, an important shift that has a tremendous ripple effect.

In 2015, the following major foundations adopted open policies:

FORD FOUNDATION

BILL & MELINDA GATES *foundation*

THE WILLIAM AND FLORA HEWLETT FOUNDATION

WIKIMEDIA FOUNDATION

vancouver foundation

These foundations set their default to open from closed, collectively granting approximately $1.9 billion in 2015.

2015 Impact:
CC + Cultural Heritage

Creative Commons has fundamentally changed the way the world can share, use, and preserve our cultural heritage now and generations to come.

Museums and cultural institutions are choosing to share every day.

Over 50 cultural institutions have made their permanent collections or records available for unrestricted use around the world under CC licenses or public domain tools, including:

RIJKS MUSEUM

Brooklyn Museum

York Museums Trust

THE ART WALTERS MUSEUM

MoMA

SMK
Statens Museum for Kunst
National Gallery of Denmark

europeana
think culture

Thanks to CC's public domain tools, digital images of outer space are made freely accessible and more broadly available to the public than ever before.

A collaboration with NASA, the Project Apollo Archive makes available thousands of images of the iconic Apollo moon missions of the late 1960s and early 1970s under the Public Domain Mark.
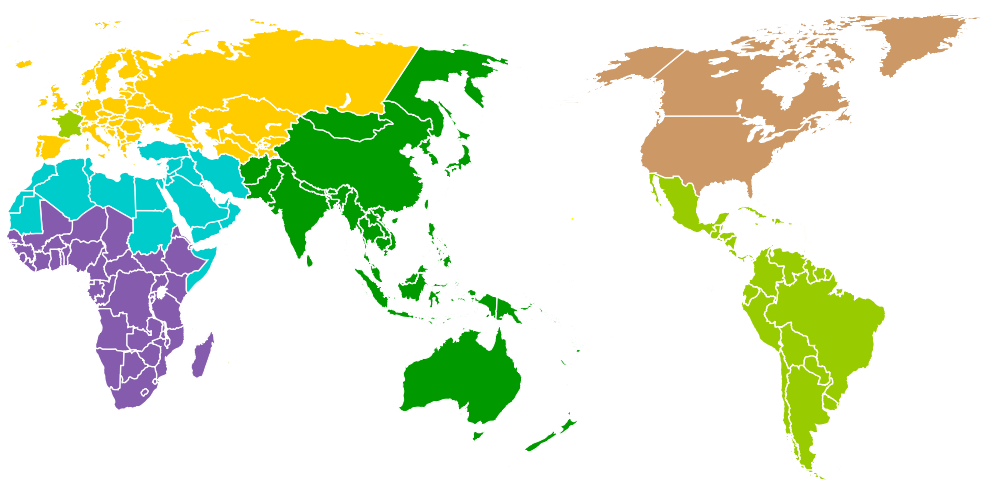
SpaceX, a private corporation, dedicates its photos to the public domain using CC0.

#FREEBASSEL: Lead of Creative Commons Syria, Bassel Khartabil is a key contributor to projects that digitize, preserve, and share cultural heritage. He has been illegally imprisoned in Syria since March 2012. CC and its Board of Directors continue to call for Bassel's immediate and safe release.

Building on his invaluable contributions to the Commons, Bassel's #NEWPALMYRA project features the 3D models of the ancient ruins of Palmyra, one of Syria's greatest archaeological treasures. The online community platform and data repository is dedicated to the preservation and creative reuse of data about Palmyra.

2015 Impact:
Regional Highlights

Creative Commons Affiliate Network includes over 500 researchers, activists, legal, education and policy advocates, and volunteers who serve as CC representatives in over 85 countries. Working alongside non-governmental institutions, universities, and public agencies, CC affiliates employ region-specific approaches to copyright and intellectual property that help solve local and global challenges. CC affiliates impact the growth and quality of the Commons across all sectors from education, science, and research, to cultural heritage, data, design, and hardware.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
• CC affiliates from across the Middle East and North Africa gather in two historic meetings to restructure, build capacity, share best practices, and officially translate the latest version of the CC license suite into Arabic.
• Al Jazeera English integrates CC licensed interactive material and infographics from Al Jazeera Labs, including an Arabic translation of the The Data Journalism Handbook.

AFRICA
• South Africa publicly releases 17 years of parliamentary files under CC BY, including bills, documents, and audio recordings.
• CC African Affiliates and WikiAfrica launch the 2nd annual Wiki Loves Africa campaign successfully crowdsourcing more than 9,000 CC licensed images covering African fashion and design.
• Affiliates team up with local partners, the African Storybook Project and Book Dash to provide CC licensed children's books in 62 African languages across Kenya, Uganda, Lesotho and South Africa.

EUROPE
• CC Portugal launches a "CC Toolkit for Business" outlining 6 economic benefits of using CC licenses.
• CC affiliates across Europe collaborate with national lawmakers to implement the European Union's Directive on Collective Rights Management. The directive requires collecting societies to allow their members to self-license their works under noncommercial terms, providing CC musicians with more control over how to share and manage their music.

ASIA-PACIFIC
• CC Korea hosts Creative Commons' 2015 Global Summit in Seoul, featuring workshops, panels, and special keynotes by Kilnam Chon, Julia Reda, Lawrence Lessig, and more.
• Chinese speaking affiliates collaborate across cultures and time zones to prepare for the official translation of the 4.0 license suite.

NORTH AMERICA
• The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York welcomes the CC logo into its permanent collection, featuring it alongside the @ symbol and the International Symbol for Recycling in the exhibit, "This Is for Everyone: Design Experiments for the Common Good."
• Grantees of U.S. Department of Labor's $2 billion career training program contribute their first round of OER to the Skills Commons platform under CC BY.

LATIN AMERICA
• CC Latin America's mini-grants program, now in its second year, awarded funds to kick off new affiliate projects in El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Paraguay, including a digital scanner for educational institutions to provide online access to resources; a free digital newsletter covering CC topics for Central America; and a mobile application featuring basic information about CC licenses.
• CC Uruguay translates the Open Licensing Policy Toolkit into Spanish to encourage Latin American governments to create, adopt and implement open policies.

THANK
YOU
FOR
SHARING!

It's been a remarkable year, most notably for the more than 1.1 billion works under one of the CC licenses, CC0, or the public domain mark. CC licenses offer an elegant solution; a release valve to the constraints of copyright. But it's much bigger than that: Creative Commons has become a steward of our global Commons, a universe of openly-licensed content that has the power to spark everyday ideas and solve global challenges. We've unlocked the door to an alternate reality of free and open content, powered by millions of creators who share our values.

But the key challenge facing the Commons today isn't quantity — it's usability, vibrancy, and collaboration. Today's web is social and interconnected, and it has completely changed the way we share, tell stories, and build communities. While integral to many kinds of creativity and sharing, Creative Commons has yet to fully activate the content and creators in our movement. We need our contributors to be able to talk to each other, find new content, give feedback, offer gratitude, get analytics, and build networks around the content they are creating. We need to light up the global Commons.

We hope you'll join us and help build a more creative, free, and open Commons. Together we'll be much closer to realizing our vision: unlocking the full potential of the Internet to drive a new era of development, growth, and productivity.

Thank you to our Creative Commons Affiliate Network who work tirelessly everyday to protect and enrich the Commons. We also owe our thanks to Google and the many CC platforms, partners, institutions, and individuals from the broader open web community who contributed the essential data and information for this report. Simply put, our 2015 State of the Commons report would not be possible without your valuable contributions. Thank you!

Invest in a creative, free, and open Internet: Support Creative Commons today.
donate.creativecommons.org

twitter.com/ creativecommons

facebook.com/ creativecommons

Tune in to all things Creative Commons. Follow us on Twitter & Facebook.

For the complete list of acknowledgments and data sources, see Data, Notes and Acknowledgments.

Design: Eva Rogers