

How do Copyrights, Fair Use and Creative Commons affect how we use photos from the Internet?

The simplest bottom line for our "educational, non-profit" purposes is that you can reuse any photo you find as long as you give credit to the owner. If no owner is obvious for the photo, then it can be considered "public domain" and freely used, and it is best to state "public domain" on it just for clarity. This comes from understanding the basic rules for Copyright, Fair Use, and Creative Commons, as follows:

- Copyright law says anything a person creates can be considered "copyrighted, with all rights reserved", and requires permission from the owner to re-use or copy in any way.
- Fair Use is a widely accepted guideline that allows the use of copyrighted works for non-commercial, commentary, news reporting, research and education without obtaining permission from the owner. However, credit to the owner is required. In text documents, you often see footnotes notated with superscript numbers to do this. For photos, putting the owner name on it, or next to it, would suffice. Everything we do would fall under these Fair Use guidelines.
- Creative Commons (CC) is a way for copyright owners to specify a variety of different usage conditions for re-use of their product, usually less than the very limited "all rights reserved" copyright, and also without having to obtain permission. In this case, a photo provided with one of the creative common license logos "should" repeat that license logo when we use it. We have done very little of that to date, and neither do many other web sites that reuse CC licensed photos. Since all varieties of the CC licenses require giving attribution to the owner, as does the Fair Use guidelines, then that's what we need to do on these. All the other CC restriction licenses would not apply as long as we do not make altered derivatives of the photo in any way, or try to make a profit on it. They also have a "public domain" or 'no rights reserved' mark for those who want to use that on their products, but it's usage seems very rare.

Copyright law and CC licensing require the owner to contact any offender to ask them to remove any copies of their protected works, and only if you refuse to do can they use the courts to protect their rights.

There are four basic CC terms: attribution, non-commercial, no derivatives (ie no changes), and share alike (repeat my CC license if you do make a derivative). They use combinations of these four to create 6 standard licenses that would make sense. All 6 CC licenses include the attribution tag. To learn more, see <http://www.creativecommons.org>, but suffice it to say that if we do not make any money on it, do not make any derivative products from it, then all we have to do is give attribution.

For a long list of "public domain" image sites, go to [Wikipedia public domain resources](#). Knock yourself out!

However, the simplest solution to find a CC licensed photo to safely use is the [creative commons search site](#). Enter your search term (ie monarch butterfly), un-check the boxes for commercial and modify, then pick your search engine - I recommend the "Flickr Images", "Google Images" and "Wikipedia Commons Media", but try any of them. When you find a photo you like, click on it to see who owns it and get the right size image you want. Then right click that photo and select "save image as...", then pick a folder on your hard drive and fill in the filename with meaningful photo name and name of owner, ie "monarch in flight by annabelle smith.jpg". Then you'll have the person's name to put on or next to the photo.

You can also easily search all photos (whether public domain, copyrighted, with or without any CC license) by searching Images directly on [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) by selecting "Image" in the header area and entering your search term, and also [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org) or [flickr.com](http://flickr.com). Then do the same individual photo lookup to see who owns it if anyone and proceed as above.