

# Creative Commons: A History

## What is it?

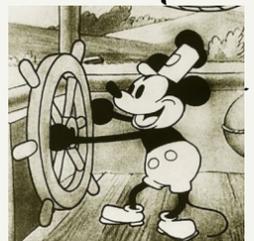
Creative Commons is a set of legal resources, a nonprofit organization, as well as a global network and movement - all inspired by people's interest in sharing their creativity and knowledge, and made functional by a set of open copyright licenses. (1.)



## 1998

The Sunny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act (CETA), commonly referred to as the Mickey Mouse Protection Act, was enacted in order to extend the "term of copyright for every work in the United States--even those already copyrighted." This change made the copyright term for individuals the life of the creator plus 70 years.

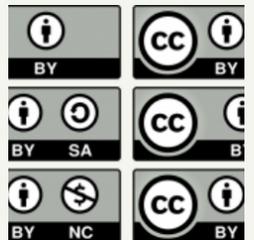
**Of note:** The end of a copyright term marks when work can now be used for any purpose without permission, so a limited copyright term ensures that copyrighted materials will eventually move into the public domain -- perpetuating new knowledge and creativity. (2.)



From MoMA Learning.  
Walt Disney, UB Iwerks, 1928.

## 2002

Lawrence Lessing, Stanford Law Professor, found this new act to be unconstitutional. Lessing and others created a nonprofit organization called Creative Commons and in 2002 published the Creative Commons Licenses - "a set of free, public licenses that would allow creators to keep their copyrights while sharing their works on more flexible terms than the default 'all rights reserved.'" The intent of these licenses was to address the tension between the creators right to share content publicly and copyright restrictions. (2.)



## 2003

**Eldred v. Ashcroft:** In 2003 the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the 1998 Sonny Bono CTEA. (3.)

Eric Eldred had made his career on making works available as they passed into the public domain. Lawrence Lessing represented Eldred, a web publisher. (2.)

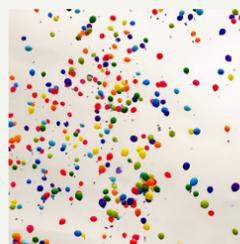


## 2022

Today, CC licenses are widely used on the web and around the world. "Since 2001, a global coalition of people has formed around Creative Commons and open licensing. Most of the people and institutions who are part of the CC movement are not formally connected to Creative Commons." (4.)



## 2 Billion



This represents the number of works that CC licenses and public domain tools are used on today! (4.)

## Get Involved

The CC Global Network (CCGN) is where anyone interested in and working with open movements can get involved! This exciting network currently has more than 700 members and 45 chapters around the world. Learn more about the chapters or contact [network-support@creativecommons.org](mailto:network-support@creativecommons.org). (4.)



Learn more at [creativecommons.org](https://creativecommons.org)

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  2. "The Story of Creative Commons" (<https://certificates.creativecommons.org/ccertedu/chapter/1-1-the-story-of-creative-commons/>) by Creative Commons. CC BY 4.0.
  3. "Eldred v. Ashcroft" ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eldred\\_v.\\_Ashcroft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eldred_v._Ashcroft)) by Wikipedia.
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