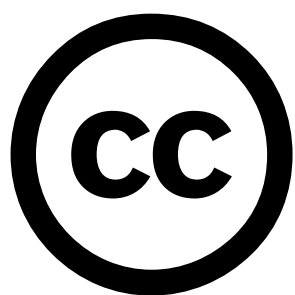


**About this  
Open Work**

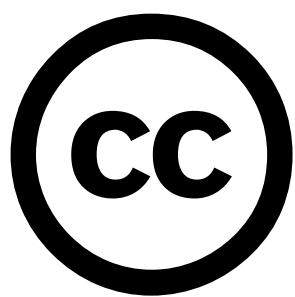
"Kaleidoscope 2" by  
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**creative  
commons**

2025-2028 Strategy





**creative  
commons**

2025-2028 Strategy

# Introduction

The world has changed a lot since our founding in 2001. At the time, the internet was a radical new technology that made it easier to share information despite the limitations of restrictive copyright designed for an analog world. The release of the Creative Commons (CC) licenses ensured that, as the internet continued to evolve, individuals and institutions could freely share in ways that were simple, standardized, and allowed for legal reuse. CC wasn't just about licensing that addressed the limitations of copyright in a digital world, it was a symbol of sharing and freedom that resisted against a restrictive environment and brought people together.

**The CC licenses gave creators choice over how their works could be reused, and in the same breath enabled a flourishing commons. This was the promise of the early internet.**

Fast forward to today! Information is more accessible than it ever has been, but now we face a new challenge—centralized control of the flow of information. At a time when there are increasing concentrations of power online, and when the monopolization of knowledge is amplified exponentially through technological breakthroughs, we need to intervene with the same creativity and collective action as we did with the CC licenses 20 years ago. If we continue down this path without intervention, the internet and our ways of connecting online will be controlled by the few who disproportionately benefit from the many in ways that deepen existing inequities.

The antidote here is simple, and obvious:

**We need a strong and resilient open infrastructure of sharing, enabling a healthy and thriving creative commons powered by reciprocity and community in the public interest.**

Our plan: further develop the open infrastructure of sharing, embody and encourage reciprocity, and work collectively as part of a global community. Our ask: the creativity and innovation that is enabled by reliable and sustainable funding to do this work.

We look ahead to the next few years with energy, optimism, and a sense of urgency. If we don't act now, a positive future for the commons may be out of reach. With our history to guide us, paired with the knowledge that we have gained since, we embark with a plan to go over, or around, or through broken systems, to ensure we can all continue to share knowledge, encourage creativity, and benefit from the commons for decades to come.



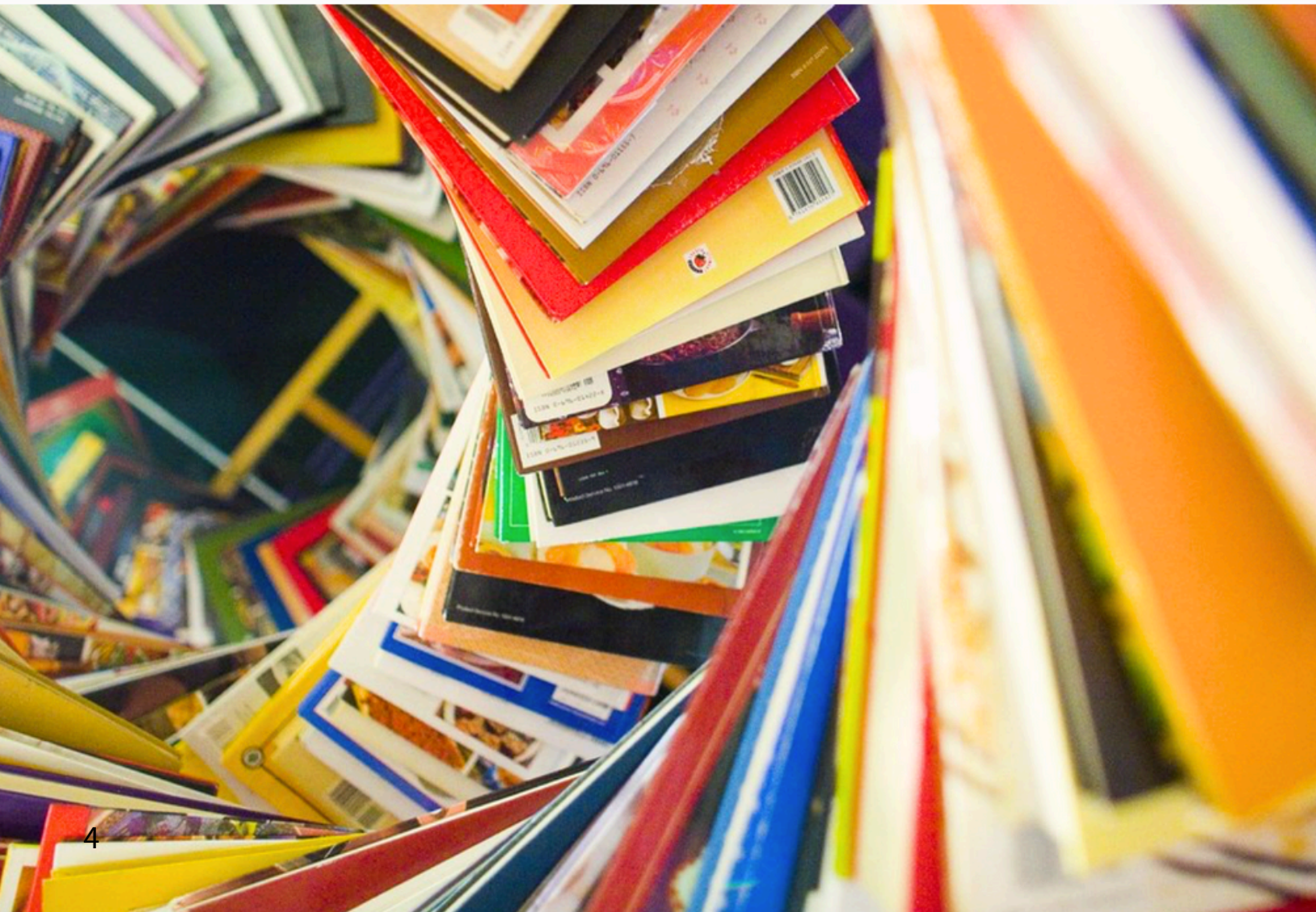
# Vision

A world where education, culture, and science are equitably shared as a means to benefit humanity.

# Mission

CC empowers individuals and communities around the world through technical, legal, and policy solutions that enable the sharing of education, culture, and science in the public interest.

"[Genetics Exhibit, San Jose Tech](#)" by [Thomas Hawk](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#).







“The Pillars of Creation” by James Webb Space Telescope is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

## **Strategic Goals: At-A-Glance**

**Goal 1:** Strengthen the open infrastructure of sharing

**Goal 2:** Defend and advocate for a thriving creative commons

**Goal 3:** Center community





"taking a leaf from the Fibonacci tree" by [theilr](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#).

## Goal 1: Strengthen the open infrastructure of sharing

CC serves as the legal layer of the open infrastructure of sharing. Our tools remove friction and barriers to sharing and accessing knowledge. Infrastructure is often taken for granted or assumed to be neutral and enduring. For many users of the internet today, it is as if the CC infrastructure has always been here and will always be here, as a way for individuals to express values and increase connection and collaboration. However, in today's legislative, political, and socio-economic context, there is nothing neutral about sharing knowledge, and there are no guarantees that the infrastructure of sharing online will be preserved and protected.

We imagine a world where CC's foundational open infrastructure is funded by default, and where individual creators and rightsholders reclaim agency in contributing to and benefiting from the commons. If we can ensure a strong and resilient open infrastructure of sharing that enables access to educational resources, cultural heritage, and scientific research in the public interest, we'll have a viable alternative to the concentrations of power that currently exist and aim to restrict sharing and access. Because the commons must continue to exist for everyone, we cannot allow an undesirable future to emerge unchallenged.



# **Goal 1: Strengthen the open infrastructure of sharing**

## **Our Plan**

In the long-term future, we will know we've been successful when a strong and resilient open infrastructure empowers sharing and access in the public interest.

### **Along the way, we will work towards ensuring that:**

- CC infrastructure interventions are a counterbalance to technologies that further entrench unequal distribution of education, science, and culture
- Reciprocity to support open infrastructure is increased
- There is a legal environment where open sharing is protected
- CC provides modernized or alternative tools that foster agency and sharing

### **Within this strategic period (2025 to 2028), we will focus our efforts on:**

- Being a clear and concise public interest voice in policy discussions
- Ensuring the wide use and integration of CC legal tools to enable humans and machines to benefit from the commons in ways that serve the public good
- Developing tools that encourage sharing in the age of AI
- Encouraging those who disproportionately benefit from the commons to commit to reciprocity
- Protecting CC's open infrastructure of sharing for the future through sustainable funding





"[Art Alley, Rapid City SD - Jul 2015, 12](#)" by [Ed Yourdon](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

## Goal 2: Defend and advocate for a thriving creative commons

Stronger open infrastructure enables the thriving creative commons that is required to solve the world's greatest problems. Knowledge must be accessible, discoverable, and reusable. In tandem with a strong and supported open infrastructure of sharing, a thriving creative commons redistributes power from the hands of the few to the minds of the many, and cements a worldview of knowledge as a public good and a human right. We cannot and must not take the commons for granted.

The richness that is shared within the commons is interwoven into our lives through art, cultural heritage, science, medicine, education, and so much more. Sharing in service of the public interest should be the norm, not the exception. A thriving commons can only exist with reciprocity, because without reciprocity, the commons will stagnate. It's time for new approaches that tell the stories of how we can all benefit from the commons, and for an increase in reciprocal sharing of the knowledge that will advance solutions to the greatest problems of our time.

## **Goal 2: Defend and advocate for a thriving creative commons**

### **Our Plan**

In the long-term future, we will know we've been successful when a thriving creative commons exists to solve the world's greatest challenges.

#### **Along the way, we will work towards ensuring that:**

- CC-licensed content and open access are enablers of solving the world's greatest challenges
- The commons is strengthened against the enclosure of knowledge
- The commons is maintained as a public good
- Reciprocity within the commons is increased

#### **Within this strategic period (2025 to 2028), we will focus our efforts on:**

- Identifying and protecting against exploitative and extractive systems
- Being a valued partner in community-driven initiatives that are mission-aligned, so we can do more together than we can apart
- Advocating for publicly funded research to be available for all to access and reuse
- Ensuring that anything lovingly created by humans can safely be shared in ways that benefit creators and the commons
- Making available and sharing content that has been created by machines for the good of humans





"Globe" by A S Morton is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#).

## Goal 3: Center community

We steward the open infrastructure of sharing and contribute to a thriving creative commons with, and for, community.

Community is not a means to an end; it is central to everything we do and at the heart of our mission and vision. We need to recalibrate our commitment to serve and recognize those who have built the commons upon which we all rely. We aim to better center the community of open advocates, who are credited for the global usability and adoption of the CC legal tools, alongside the rich generational and geographical diversity of open advocates with varying needs and awareness of CC.

It is not only open advocates who benefit from the commons or who need clarity on how their work is being used with emerging technologies. It is everyone who benefits or contributes, whether they consider themselves part of the movement or not.

By centering our community, we can model the world we want to see, of distributed power and reciprocity.

# Goal 3: Center community

## Our Plan

In the long-term future, we will know we've been successful when communities leverage CC's open infrastructure to share knowledge in the public interest.

### **Along the way, we will work towards ensuring that:**

- CC's work is co-generated with open advocates from around the world
- CC contributes to developing and nurturing deep and collaborative partnerships within open communities
- CC's infrastructure and the ways it fosters the commons is a tool for individuals and communities to meet goals and solve challenges
- CC's infrastructure meets the needs of creative communities

### **Within this strategic period (2025 to 2028), we will focus our efforts on:**

- Meeting the needs and interests of creative communities in the face of emerging technologies
- Setting realistic expectations about what the organization can provide in supporting the global community
- Being clear and transparent so that global community members, whether individuals or groups, can better plan and resource their work
- Reducing unnecessary silos within the open movement where there is clear overlap and shared priorities across open communities
- Removing barriers to entry and participation in the CC global community





"Circles" by [Sorin Mutu](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#).

# Resourcing

The work of Creative Commons is not simply important, it is an essential service.

As an essential service, we require sustained and predictable long-term funding to improve infrastructure and build for the future. As an act of reciprocity, we look to those in strong financial positions who benefit from CC's infrastructure to make a commitment to financially supporting this infrastructure.

As we put this strategic plan into action, our sincere aim is that our contributions are adequately and sustainably funded. Without the ongoing support of funders, especially those who fund our core operations through the Open Infrastructure Circle, our work is not possible. The extent to which we meet our strategic goals and realize our strategic outcomes will be directly correlated with the funding we are able to secure.

Here's to reciprocity and a thriving Creative Commons for years to come!



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## About Creative Commons

Creative Commons (CC) is the global nonprofit organization behind the CC licenses and public domain tools, which power open sharing on popular platforms like Wikipedia, Flickr, YouTube, Medium, Vimeo, and Khan Academy. Since 2002, the CC licenses have served as an alternative to traditional copyright, providing a simple, standardized, and legal way for individuals and institutions to freely share images, music, research, educational resources, and cultural artifacts.

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