**Stock Image Libraries and Images from the Internet – What am I allowed to do?**

**Introduction**

Use of images from the internet by teachers significantly contributes to increased licence fees under the [Statutory Text and Artistic Works Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/statutory-text-and-artistic-works-licence/) that allows schools and TAFEs to [copy](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/copy/) text and images for educational use. Schools and TAFEs currently pay approximately $63 million for this licence, and a significant amount of this is for content that teachers have downloaded from the internet. This includes so-called “royalty free” stock imagery (eg Getty, Shutterstock, iStock) as well as images from Facebook and other social media sites, and even images from online store catalogues!

Did you know, for example, that Australian schools have paid under the [Statutory Text and Artistic Works Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/statutory-text-and-artistic-works-licence/) when teachers have used (eg by downloading, saving, printing or emailing):

* a screenshot of a yellow raincoat from a hardware store catalogue
* images from a Facebook page
* photo in Wikipedia pages
* a photo of the NRL grand final teams
* a photo of a bowl of chicken soup
* a photo of a crazy party hat from Google Images
* a photo of a strawberry from Pinterest.

There is, however, a way to avoid unnecessary costs without in any way compromising on the quality of teaching materials, and that is by using [Creative Commons (CC)](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/creative-commons-cc/) licensed images wherever possible. CC licensed images are truly “free” for teachers to use, [copy](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/copy/), modify and share. There is also much greater flexibility in how you can use CC licensed content than there is when the [Statutory Text and Artistic Works Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/statutory-text-and-artistic-works-licence/) applies.

By using CC licensed images wherever possible, you will be helping the Schools and TAFE sectors manage their copyright costs as well as ensuring that the teaching resources you have created can be used freely and flexibly used by your students and other teachers.

**Key points**

* **Don’t** use images from stock image libraries, social media sites, or other internet sites unless they are CC licensed.
* **Do** use CC licensed images wherever possible. See the CC licensed image repositories listed below.
* There are plenty of CC licensed images available to meet your needs. Generally, there will be no pedagogical difference between an image sourced from a stock image library, and a similar CC licensed image.
* If you follow the points above, your resource can be legally shared with other
* teachers, free of copyright restrictions.

**What is the problem with using stock imagery and freely available images from the internet?**

There are two main problems with using stock imagery and most freely available images from the internet: the cost, and restrictions on how you and your students can use the content.

**Cost**

Sometimes, teachers, as well as curriculum and e-learning developers, use images from the internet under the mistaken belief that they are automatically free for schools and TAFEs to use because they were either purchased as a “royalty free” image (eg from Getty, Shutterstock, iStock etc) or downloaded from a freely available internet site (eg a social media site such as Facebook or Pinterest, a company website, and even online store catalogues).

In many cases, however, schools and TAFEs pay under the [Statutory Text and Artistic Works Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/statutory-text-and-artistic-works-licence/) when this content is used in teaching materials. The costs are significant: Australian schools and TAFEs are currently paying millions of dollars a year to use freely available internet content.

***Restrictions on how you can use the images***

Another problem with using stock images and freely available internet images is that there is very limited scope to allow teachers and students to remix the content.

**CC licensed images are FREE and easier to use**

CC licensed images can be used without payment. By choosing a CC licensed image you help ensure that schools and TAFEs are not spending millions of dollars a year unnecessarily.

CC licensed images can also be adapted, translated, remixed and improved. You can incorporate them into your own resources to make [Open Educational Resources (OER)](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/open-education-resources-oer/). By doing this, you can be assured that you can legally share an educational resource with other educators, parents and students, free of charge.

With more than a billion CC licensed resources on the internet, there is plenty of content to choose from.

***Attribution and other obligations under the CC Licence***

There are a few obligations you need to keep in mind when using CC licensed images, but they are not onerous. See the [Smartcopying website](https://smartcopying.edu.au/) and following links for more on this:

* [Creative Commons Information Pack for Teachers and Students](https://smartcopying.edu.au/creative-commons-information-pack-for-teachers-and-students/)
* [Quick Guide to Creative Commons](https://smartcopying.edu.au/quick-guide-to-creative-commons/).

**Where do I find CC licensed images?**

These sites have material, which is searchable by how it can be used, including whether they are under a CC licence:

* [Creative Commons Search](https://search.creativecommons.org/): returns CC licensed images.
* [Google Advanced Search](https://www.google.com.au/advanced_search): allows you to search for material based on its “usage rights”.
* [Flickr Creative Commons Search](https://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/): allows you to search the Flickr photo archive for CC material.

The following websites are useful resources when looking for CC licensed images:

* [CC image search](https://ccsearch.creativecommons.org/) – best resource for teachers when looking to find CC licensed images. It also gives you the attribution for the image.
* [Compfight](http://compfight.com/) – uses the Flickr search tool that can filter for CC licensed photos.
* [CSIRO’s Science Image](http://www.scienceimage.csiro.au/) – contains over 4000 science and nature images.
* [Encyclopaedia of Life](http://eol.org/) – contains over 2.9 million images depicting life on Earth. Some, but not all, of this content is CC licensed
* [Google Images](http://www.google.com/advanced_image_search) – allows searches for CC licensed images through its advanced search function by setting the “usage rights” parameters to be “Free to use, share, or modify”.
* [Pexels](https://www.pexels.com/)
* [Solvonauts](http://solvonauts.org/?action=index)
* [Stock Up](https://www.sitebuilderreport.com/stock-up)
* [The Wellcome Institute](http://wellcomeimages.org/)
* [Wikipedia Commons](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page).

**Where do I find websites that clearly allow for educational use?**

* [Pixabay](https://pixabay.com/)
* [Unsplash](https://unsplash.com/)
* However with websites that have terms of use that allow for educational use, it’s important to check the terms and conditions to ensure they haven’t changes. It’s also important to always attribute the source. For information about attributing and labelling material see [Labelling and Attributing](https://smartcopying.edu.au/labelling-and-attributing/).

**Other useful resources**

Certain government websites may also be useful repositories of images that can be incorporated into [OER](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/open-education-resources-oer/). For example, in the UK, most government agencies publish their websites (and content, including images) under the UK Open Government Licence (UKOGL). The UKOGL is a very similar licence to the [CC BY Licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). You can find out more about the UKOGL at [The National Archives](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/).

Similarly, most US Federal Government material is not subject to copyright protection due to US law. However, you should exercise some caution because this may not apply to the commercial activity of some US Government agencies.

* <https://www.ga.gov.au/copyright>.

**Further Information**

For further information, see the [Smartcopying website](https://smartcopying.edu.au/) or [contact your local copyright manager](https://smartcopying.edu.au/contact-us/). You can also contact the National Copyright Unit on (02) 7814 3855 or by email at smartcopying@det.nsw.edu.au.