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

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**Introduction**

The educational use of images from the internet is not free. Schools and TAFEs pay significant licence fees to use online images which under the [Statutory Text and Artistic Works Licence](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/statutory-text-and-artistic-works-licence/). 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!

For example, Australian schools have paid to use (eg download, save, print or email):

* photos in Wikipedia pages
* free [downloadable teaching ‘printables’](http://www.3dinosaurs.com/printable/abc-letter-find) and [worksheets](http://cleverlearner.com/color-the-parts/images/parts-of-the-body-writing-and-coloring-sheet.pdf)
* a screenshot of a McDonalds Nutrition page
* a photo of a bowl of chicken soup
* [bullying](https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/bullying) and [mental health](https://kidshelpline.com.au/kids/issues/talking-about-feelings) resources on the Kids Helpline website
* the [definition of an emoji](https://www.dictionary.com/e/emoji/fearful-face-emoji/) from dictionary.com.

Schools and TAFEs currently pay approximately $55 million each year for the Statutory Text and Artistic Works Licence, and a significant amount of this is for content that teachers have downloaded from the internet.

Teachers should use [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. This means teachers can avoid unnecessary costs without compromising on the quality of teaching materials. CC licensed images also offer greater flexibility compared to content used under the Statutory Text and Artistic Works Licence.

**Quick tips:**

* **Avoid** images from stock image libraries, social media sites, or other internet sites unless they are CC licensed.
* **Use CC licensed images** wherever possible.

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:

1. the cost
2. 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 or online store catalogue).

In many cases, however, schools and TAFEs pay to use this content in teaching materials under the Statutory Text and Artistic Works Licence.

**Restrictions on use**

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 or share resources more freely (eg on public websites). For example, material used under the Statutory Text and Artistic Works Licence must be password protected.

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

In contrast, CC licensed images are free to use and can be adapted, translated, remixed and improved.

Resources comprising of CC images can be shared publicly and added to the pool of [open educational resources (OER)](https://smartcopying.edu.au/glossary/open-education-resources-oer/). This means resources can be shared legally online 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.

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

These sites have material, which is searchable by whether they are under a CC licence:

* [Openverse](https://wordpress.org/openverse/) – returns CC licensed images and audio. It also gives you the attribution for the image.
* [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 licensed images.

For information on where to find CC licensed images, see [Where to find CC licensed material](https://smartcopying.edu.au/where-to-find-cc-licensed-material/).

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

When using CC licensed images, you must attribute the copyright owner and comply with the relevant CC licence conditions. Attribution is as simple as **TASL**:

* **T**: Title
* **A**: Author
* **S**: Source
* **L**: Licence

For example:

[Title – hyperlink to source] by [Author] is licensed under [CC licence – hyperlink to licence deed (eg [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/))].

See:

* [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/)
* [How to attribute Creative Commons licensed materials](https://smartcopying.edu.au/how-to-attribute-creative-commons-licensed-materials/).

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

Some websites do not use Creative Commons licences but allow for the free educational use of their images by granting permission in their terms of use.

For example, the following websites’ terms of use allow for educational use of their material:

* [Pixabay](https://pixabay.com/)
* [Unsplash](https://unsplash.com/).

It is important to regularly check website terms and conditions to ensure they haven’t changed since your last visit. It is also important to always attribute the source.

For information about attributing material, see [Labelling and Attributing](https://smartcopying.edu.au/labelling-and-attributing/).

**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](mailto:smartcopying@det.nsw.edu.au).