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## *CCau's Building an Australasian Commons*

### **MEDIA BACKGROUNDER**

#### **About Creative Commons**

Founded by Prof Lawrence Lessig in 2001 and publishing its initial licences in December 2002, to counter “a culture in which creators get to create only with the permission of the powerful or of creators of the past”, Creative Commons (CC – <http://creativecommons.org>) is now a global phenomenon. Creative Commons Australia (CCau – <http://creativecommons.org.au>) is one of forty-three countries involved in the initiative, with another nineteen potential member nations currently being developed.

Building on the “all rights reserved” model of traditional copyright, the CC project offers a voluntary “some rights reserved” system. Building on the ideas of the open source software movement, Creative Commons aims to “foster a creative community premised on remixable creativity” and achieve its mission of using “private rights to create public goods”. However, unlike these earlier software licences, CC licences are specifically aimed at such creative areas as websites, scholarship, film, music, photography, and literature.

Aiming not only to “increase the sum total of raw source material online” but also to “make access to that material cheaper and easier” CC’s current and future projects are united with the goal of “building a layer of reasonable, flexible copyright in the face of increasingly restrictive default rules.”

A Creative Commons licence does not relinquish the creator’s copyright; rather it allows them to share some of their rights with any member of the public under certain conditions whilst enjoying full legal protection. Focusing on four basic licence protocols – attribution, non-commercial, no derivations, and share alike - the Creative Commons licences give creators the tools they need to legally express how they want others to use their work. By mixing and matching these elements, creators are able to create a range of freedoms for their creations – from merely letting people distribute the work for non-commercial purposes in its original form, to allowing full commercial re-use and mixing.

The Creative Commons system aims to be accessible to all creators and users, and includes a number of tools designed to assist those who are not copyright experts to understand and make use of its licences. These range from the Licence Generator (<http://creativecommons.org/license/>), which helps creators pick out the most appropriate licence for them, to the Commons Deeds a simple, plain language summary of each of the licences (eg <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/us/>). All of the licences also include machine-readable metadata that lets them be identified by search engines – which means that finding material available for re-use is now as simple as going to Google or Yahoo advance search.

Creative Commons has become extremely popular with the online community, with more than 160 million web objects now available under its licences. This includes material from the BBC, Yale University, Sony, Ford Motors, Warner Bros Entertainment, the Beastie Boys and the Nine Inch Nails. It has been incorporated into popular websites such as Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com>), Blip.tv (<http://www.blip.tv>) and Jamendo (<http://www.jamendo.com>), the Firefox web browser, and even is even the subject of an official Microsoft plug-in.

### **About Creative Commons Australia**

CCau is the Australian arm of the international Creative Commons project. Creative Commons is a non-profit organisation that aims to promote flexible copyright options for creators. At the core of the Creative Commons project is a suite of standardised licences that are made freely available to authors and artists and which provide a range of protections and freedoms for their material. Creative Commons builds upon the “all rights reserved” of traditional copyright to create a voluntary “some rights reserved” system.

Based at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Faculty of Law in Brisbane, CCau is devoted to the implementation and promotion of Creative Commons in Australia and to fostering opportunities for the creative community to take advantage of the potential afforded by digital technologies. The CCau project is lead by:

- Professor Brian Fitzgerald – Senior Professor, QUT Law School; and
- Tom Cochrane - Deputy Vice Chancellor, Technology, Information and Learning Support, QUT.

CCau is closely associated with the Creative Commons Clinic, a research project of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation. The ccClinic undertakes a wide range of research and industry engagement activities aimed at documenting and furthering the implementation of Creative Commons in Australia.

These activities range from running a QUT undergraduate research unit to presenting at conferences and festivals, to providing advice and training to groups implementing CC in Australia. Recent publications of the ccClinic include *Open Content Licensing: Cultivating the Creative Commons* (<http://creativecommons.org.au/ocl>), *Unlocking the Potential Through Creative Commons* (<http://creativecommons.org.au/unlockingthepotential>) and *Asia and the Commons Case Studies 2008* (<http://creativecommons.org.au/asiaandthecommons>).

### **About Building an Australasian Commons**

The ARC Centre of Excellence for the Creative Industries and Innovation’s (CCi – <http://www.cci.edu.au>) Creative Commons Australia conference, *Building an Australasian Commons*, examines the local Creative Commons experience. It will include case studies of local Creative Commons users such as ABC Pool (<http://www.pool.org.au/>), the Queensland Government Information Licensing Framework (<http://www.qsic.qld.gov.au/>) and YouDecide 2007 (<http://youdecide2007.org/>), and updates on CC activities from around the Asia-Pacific region. It incorporates two expert panels - one on the possibilities of CC for music in Australia, the other focusing on CC as a tool for education.

The conference will also host workshops focused on areas of special interest, with topics such as: blogs, wikis and web 2.0; film and audio online; writing, poetry and literature; open access and government information; open education resources (OERs); CC for libraries and public institutions; technology to support the commons; and the commons experience in Asia. The conference will conclude with a facilitated report-back session by the workshop leaders.

## About the ccSalon

Just as the term “commons” refers to the practice of non-owners exercising certain traditional rights over land has been adapted to contemporary experience by CC for intellectual property, the seventeenth century French Salon has been reinvigorated to meet the unique demands of the cyberage. Patterned after such successful endeavours as Remix Reading and Dorkbot, the ccSalon following the event presents an opportunity for artists and developers of the post-digital era to interact face-to-face.

The event features a live showcase of CC art, music, film and text including the official launch of animations by local animators Black brow (<http://www.blackbrow.com/>) and Chunky Fish (<http://www.chunky-fish.com/>), a performance by successful Sydney-based musician Yunyu (<http://www.yunyu.com.au>), a showcase of photographs from the Powerhouse Museum (<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/>) and concludes with structured improvisations by Andrew Garton's Terminal Quartet ([http://www.toysatellite.org/agarton/2007/01/terminal\\_quartet.html](http://www.toysatellite.org/agarton/2007/01/terminal_quartet.html)).