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What's New in 4.0

Creative Commons worked for more than two years to develop the next generation of CC licenses — the version 4.0 CC license suite. The new licenses are more user-friendly and more internationally robust than ever before.

We made dozens of improvements to the licenses. Most will go unnoticed by many CC licensors and licensees, but some of them deserve particular attention.

For a much more in-depth rundown of the decisions reflected in 4.0, visit the [4.0 page on the Creative Commons wiki](#).

A more global license

In the past six years, Creative Commons has worked with hundreds of volunteers around the world – literally, some of the best minds in copyright law and open licensing on the planet – to translate and adapt the 3.0 and earlier licenses to local laws in over 60 jurisdictions ([what we call “porting”](#)). In the process, we’ve learned a lot about how our licenses work internationally and how they’re impacted by the nuances of copyright law in various jurisdictions.

We drew on this experience in the process of developing 4.0. We’ve worked closely with our wide international network of affiliates and countless other experts and stakeholders to make 4.0 the most internationally enforceable set of CC licenses to date. The 4.0 licenses are [ready-to-use around the world, without porting](#).

The new licenses have improved terminology that’s better understood worldwide. With the release of 4.0, we’re also introducing official translations of the CC licenses, so that users of CC-licensed material around the world can read and understand the complete licenses in their local languages.

Rights outside the scope of copyright

Other rights beyond copyright can complicate the reuse of CC-licensed material. To the extent that those rights are not addressed directly in a copyright license, the situation for users of works can be even more confusing. Version 4.0 addresses this challenge

through an open-ended but carefully tailored license grant that identifies categories of rights that could (if not licensed) interfere with reuse of the material. Accounting for these and other unenumerated rights will more fully enable users of CC-licensed works to use the work as they expect and as intended by licensors.

In particular, the fact that [sui generis database rights](#) are [not explicitly covered by the 3.0 unported licenses](#) has led to confusion in jurisdictions that recognize those rights. Version 4.0 removes any doubt, [pulling applicable sui generis rights squarely within the scope of the license](#) unless explicitly excluded by the licensor. It also [allows database providers to use the CC licenses to explicitly license those rights](#).

The 4.0 license suite uniformly and explicitly waives [moral rights](#) held by the licensor where possible [to the limited extent necessary](#) to enable reuse of the content in the manner intended by the license. [Publicity, privacy, and personality rights](#) held by the licensor are expressly waived [to the same limited extent](#). While many understand these rights to be waived when held by the licensor in 3.0 and earlier versions, version 4.0's treatment makes the intended outcome clear.

Common-sense attribution

Version 4.0 includes a slight change to [attribution requirements](#), designed to better reflect accepted practices. The licenses explicitly permit licensees to satisfy the attribution requirement with a link to a separate page for attribution information. This was already common practice on the internet and possible under earlier versions of the licenses, and Version 4.0 alleviates any uncertainty about its use.

Enabling more anonymity, when desired

Version 3.0 included a provision allowing a licensor to [request that a licensee remove the attribution from an adaptation](#), if she did not want her name associated with it. Version 4.0 expands that provision to apply not only to adaptations but also to verbatim reproductions of a work. Licenses now account specifically for situations where licensors wish to disassociate themselves from uses of their works they object to, even if their work hasn't been modified or published in a collection with other works.

30-day window to correct license violations

[All CC licenses terminate when a licensee breaks their terms](#), but under 4.0, a licensee's rights are reinstated automatically if she corrects a breach within 30 days of discovering it. The cure period in version 4.0 resembles similar provisions in some other public licenses and better reflects how licensors and licensees resolve compliance issues in practice. It also assures users that provided they act promptly, they can continue using the CC-licensed work without worry that they may have lost their rights permanently.

Increased readability

The 4.0 license suite is decidedly easier to read and understand than prior versions, not to mention much shorter and better organized. The simplified license structure and use of plain language whenever possible increases the likelihood that licensors and reusers will understand their rights and obligations. This improves enforceability of the licenses and reduces confusion and disagreement about how the licenses operate.

Clarity about adaptations

The BY and BY-NC 4.0 licenses are clearer about [how adaptations are to be licensed](#), a source of confusion for some under the earlier versions of those licenses. These licenses now clarify that you can apply any license to your contributions you want so long as your license doesn't prevent users of the remix from complying with the original license. While this is how 3.0 and earlier versions are understood, the 4.0 licenses make it abundantly clear and will help remixers in understanding their licensing obligations.

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