



STATE OF THE COMMONS 2022



COVER ART: #BETTER SHARING ILLUSTRATIONS

In 2022, Creative Commons partnered with Fine Acts to produce the #BetterSharing collection of illustrations to strengthen our shared vision of *better sharing* practices and celebrate 20 years of Creative Commons. The collection features twelve CC-licensed illustrations by twelve renowned artists from around the world, inspired by quotes from global open advocates responding to our prompt: *What does better sharing for a brighter future look like?* [The twelve artworks](#) displayed on the front and back covers here are available to be enjoyed, used and adapted, and then shared again, by anyone, forever.

FRONT COVER

BACK COVER

All works clockwise from top left are by their creators for [Creative Commons](#) and [Fine Acts](#) and are licensed via [CC BY-SA 4.0](#).

1. [“The More We Share, The More We Have”](#) by [Pietro Soldi](#).
2. [“Open Is Beautiful”](#) by [Tetiana Kornichuk](#).
3. [“Open Palms, Not Clutching Fists”](#) by [Burcu Köleli](#).
4. [“Sharing Is Growing”](#) by [Olga Mrozek](#).
5. [“Blessed Is The Hand That Gives”](#) by [Sakina Saïdi](#).
6. [“Better Sharing For Brighter Future”](#) by [Janice Chang](#).

1. [“Better Sharing, Better Future”](#) by [Maria Picassó i Piquer](#).
2. [“Shared Knowledge, Shared Future”](#) by [Luisa Brando](#).
3. [“Sharing Brightens The Future”](#) by [Teo Georgiev](#).
4. [“Share Freely, Openly, Like We Share Air”](#).
5. [“Better Sharing, Brighter Future”](#).
6. [“The Future Is Open”](#) by [Preeti Singh](#).



OUR MISSION

Creative Commons is an international nonprofit organization that empowers people to grow and sustain **the thriving commons of shared knowledge and culture** that we need to **address the world's most pressing challenges** and **create a brighter future for all**.

Together with our global community and multiple partners, we build capacity and infrastructure, we develop practical solutions, and we advocate for **better sharing: sharing that is contextual, inclusive, just, equitable, reciprocal, and sustainable**.

CONTENTS

- 02 Global Summit & 20th Anniversary
- 03 Message from Our CEO
- 04 2022 Events & Productions
- 05 Better Internet: Policy for the Commons
- 06 CC Licenses & Legal Tools
- 07 Training & Learning
- 07 Community & the CC Global Network
- 08 Open Culture
- 09 Open Climate & Open Science
- 10 Open Education & Open Journalism
- 11 Stewarding the Commons: Financials, Board & Funders

LICENSE & ATTRIBUTION

Except where otherwise noted, this document is published under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license ([CC BY 4.0](#)).

Recommended attribution: [State of the Commons 2022](#) © 2023 by [Creative Commons](#) is licensed via [CC BY 4.0](#).

You are free to:

- Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
- Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material
- for any purpose, even commercially.

The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.





GLOBAL SUMMIT 2023

After meeting virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are thrilled to announce that our signature community event, the Creative Commons Global Summit will return to an in-person event in 2023, and this time we are heading to one of the most vibrant and culturally rich locations in the world — Mexico City! During 3–6 October 2023, we will be gathering at the Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco to unite, share ideas, and create a brighter future for *better sharing*. We are fortunate to be organizing the event in collaboration with CC Mexico, and hope you will be able to join in what will be an unforgettable experience.

This opportunity to gather together couldn't come at a better time: Never before has the public interest commons been richer, larger, or more essential to solving the world's biggest challenges and helping us all lead rewarding and meaningful lives. The theme of the Summit aligns with our five-year strategy, and we're excited to explore better sharing that is contextual, inclusive, just, equitable, reciprocal, and sustainable. The program will be filled with keynotes, panels, community sessions, workshops, networking, art, and music across themes including: art, climate, culture, education, emerging technologies, journalism, policy, and science.

#20CC ANNIVERSARY

In November, CC brought the 20th anniversary celebration of our founding and the first release of our licenses to an official close with both online and in-person activities, successfully concluding an ambitious \$15M fundraising campaign to support programs like Open Culture, Open Climate, and Open Education, and to help ensure CC's ongoing sustainability. Highlights from these events were a collection of new open works showcasing the creativity and power of the open community. Explore video, digital experiences, music, and visual arts, all made to mark 20 years of Creative Commons, and now part of the open commons for everyone to share and remix.

"Ain't Nobody's Business"
© 2022 by Ouida is licensed via CC BY-NC 4.0.

"20 Years of Creative Commons (in 60 Seconds)"
© 2022 by Ryan Junell and Glenn Otis Brown for Creative Commons is licensed via CC BY 4.0.

"CC Timeline" © 2022 by Creative Commons is licensed via CC BY 4.0.

"20CC Open Mix" © 2022 by Creative Commons is licensed via CC BY 4.0.

FROM OUR CEO



“Catherine Stihler” by Martin Shields is licensed via [CC BY 4.0](#).

In 2022, Creative Commons proudly celebrated twenty years of CC licensing and all the groundbreaking collaboration it has enabled. As we look back on this remarkable journey, time seems to pass more quickly than ever — yet our gratitude for each milestone remains unwavering, as do words of thanks towards everyone who helped make it possible.

The team, network, and community of Creative Commons have so much to be proud of in 2022. We celebrated our [20th anniversary with community events](#) around the world and an [in-person party in San Francisco](#). In these two decades, CC revolutionized the copyright landscape, creating an open access alternative to traditional “all rights reserved” restrictions. Today, this system continues to empower a new era of online sharing and collaboration that has transformed our global digital landscape. Now more than two and a half billion pieces of content have been freed up because our open licenses and public domain tools enable creators, researchers, librarians, archivists, musicians, artists, educators, students, and individuals around the world to share content openly. We are so proud of our key relationships, where our licenses are used every second to share knowledge and culture on platforms like Wikipedia, YouTube, and Flickr. And now in new spaces: We saw our public domain tools celebrated during 2022’s #CC0Summer, where NFT artists used CC tools to place creations in the commons.

CC has made a dramatic new commitment to tackling the climate crisis this year. We’ve taken an ambitious leap forward by launching our [Open Climate Campaign](#) in partnership with EIFL and SPARC, turning open sharing of research outputs into a cornerstone of climate science. Huge thank you goes to the [Open Society Foundations](#), whose initial seed funding led to a four-year funding award from [Arcadia](#). At CC we know we have a huge role to play in opening up knowledge that can help solve humanity’s greatest challenges — like the climate crisis. We were thrilled to receive a further one million dollars from the [McGovern Foundation](#) to expand our efforts in 2023 to open large climate data sets.

We were also one of the organizing partners who joined forces to launch the [Movement for a Better Internet](#), a diverse community of advocates, activists, academics, and civil society groups working together to promote policies that create a better internet for people everywhere. We’ve made a great start in our mission to build an inspiring movement — with more than 60 committed partners and the launch of an online hub in October. We were delighted to join both the [Unfinished Network](#) and the [UN Global Goals Week coalition](#), and were proud to be chosen as a [Morgridge Family Foundation organization for the fellow/mentor program](#).

CC has been following the crucial debates on data and AI — especially in the EU — as policy becomes law and where *better sharing*, [our strategic theme](#), came under scrutiny. We have [written more on data and AI](#) than we had ever planned for, because there is just so much to reflect on and be challenged by. We must continue to pursue these policy areas into 2023, particularly giving a global perspective, so that *better sharing* may continue and empower everyone.

None of our programmatic work would happen if it were not for our licenses. I hope in 2023 we will be able to secure dedicated funding to support our license infrastructure, because in supporting our licenses, all other open projects are supported, from publicly-funded scientific research to all Wikipedia pages. Our value is everywhere, and it is our responsibility to advance CC’s impact and promote our work to a new generation of open knowledge enthusiasts and advocates.

In 2022, we met our 20th Anniversary fundraising goal, we launched two new programs, and were involved in policy deliberations in ways we have never been before. Our signature Open Culture program continued to make great strides in the global cultural heritage space. In 2023, we want to build on this success with our first in-person [CC Global Summit](#) in four years, which will be held in Mexico City the first week of October. This landmark event will explore emerging technologies and CC’s role in creating a more open world where everyone can thrive.

We thank you for all your contributions to the public interest commons and hope you’ll read this report to learn more about key accomplishments across the CC community in 2022. We look forward to engaging with you more in 2023!

OPEN MINDS

The *Open Minds...from Creative Commons* podcast was initially launched in 2021 as part of CC's 20th anniversary celebration to expand conversations with people working to make the internet and our global culture more open and collaborative. The podcast features conversational interviews with experts from various fields and gives us an opportunity to go beyond the surface on issues and topics that are connected to Creative Commons in a more intimate format than some of our other outlets. *Open Minds...from Creative Commons* is available on all major podcast platforms.

352 minutes

9 episodes

40K+ plays

in 120 countries



OPEN CULTURE VOICES

In January 2022, we launched *Open Culture VOICES*, a new CC video series featuring 39 historians, researchers, activists, curators, professors, and many others from around the world who share what it means to make works openly available online when they are often housed by cultural heritage institutions.

35 episodes

generating 3M+ views

and 4K+ engagements

on social media

2022 EVENTS

The CC team presented at over 20 major events in 2022, including:

- [C.O.D.E. Conference](#)
- [DWeb Camp](#)
- [International Copyright Institute](#)
- [International Forum: Digitizing in Common: Distributed Forms of Cultural Ownership and Authorship](#)
- [Libraries and the Digital Information Ecosystem](#)
- [Library Futures](#)
- [MYFest](#)
- [Open Access Week, including Open Climate Campaign: Social Justice through Better Sharing, What is Climate Justice? and Open Access Models & Policies: Shifting Towards Diamond](#)
- [Open Education Conference](#)
- [Open Education Policy Forum](#)
- [Open Education Week](#)
- [Open Science for Arts, Design and Music](#)
- [Public Domain Day](#)
- [Technology Policy Institute](#)
- [Unfinished Live](#)
- [United Nations Global Goals Week](#)
- [United Nations Transforming Education Summit](#)
- [UNESCO MONDIACULT](#)
- [Wikimania 2022](#)
- [WIPO Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights](#)
- [World Economic Forum at Davos](#)

BETTER INTERNET: POLICY FOR THE COMMONS



“Better Internet Session” by Anna Tumadóttir is licensed via [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

In 2022, CC redoubled our engagement with policy and policymakers, focusing on core copyright issues and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, data, and web3 that bring new challenges and opportunities to *better sharing* in the public interest commons. Our [Better Internet](#) blog post series set the stage for the launch of the [Movement for a Better Internet](#), a new collaboration to build and pursue a global public-interest policy agenda that reflects shared values like openness, diversity, privacy, and equity, cofounded with [Association for Progressive Communications](#), [Derechos Digitales](#), [Internet Archive](#), [Niskanen Center](#), [Public Knowledge](#), and [Wikimedia Foundation](#).

Read more about our ambitious work in 2022 to develop policy positions on [artificial intelligence](#) and [data](#), and our work to represent our *better sharing* strategy in key policy debates, like protecting the commons and public domain at [WIPO](#), engaging with comprehensive new [data regulation in the EU](#), supporting broad new guidance for [open access in the USA](#), [opposing mandatory internet content filtering](#) with the US Copyright Office, submitting comments to the UK government to ensure data sharing is part of infrastructure policy, calling on policymakers to [support open culture](#) globally, and, as a part of the [Open Climate Campaign](#), supporting standards for sharing climate and biodiversity data worldwide.



“Better Sharing With AI” by Creative Commons was generated by the DALL-E 2 AI platform with the text prompt “A surrealist painting in the style of Salvador Dali of a robot giving a gift to a person playing a cello.” CC dedicates any rights it holds to the image to the public domain via [CC0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



“Bicycle” by Stephen Wolfson for Creative Commons was generated by the DALL-E 2 AI platform with the text prompt “bicycle.” CC dedicates any rights it holds to the image to the public domain via [CC0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



“Grunge Heroes” by Stephen Wolfson for Creative Commons was generated by the Midjourney AI platform with the text prompt “a grunge band from the 1990s made up of superheroes.” CC dedicates any rights it holds to the image to the public domain via [CC0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



CC LICENSES & LEGAL TOOLS



2022 demonstrated how CC’s licenses and legal tools are more important than ever. As more institutions and communities move to open practices — such as the US government’s new mandate to open all publicly-funded research or the growing support for open content in the web3 community — we are dedicating new resources to support this essential infrastructure that the world relies on as a global standard.

We continue to provide up-to-date educational materials to enable users to fully benefit from CC legal tools. The growing use of CC0 to openly publish works linked to NFTs — like during the #CC0Summer — inspired us to create [new guidance](#) for this novel open practice. We have updated the [Recommended Practices for Attribution Guide](#) to reflect the latest community norms associated with attribution.



2.5B+ open works

We collaborated with students from the Data Science Discovery Program at UC Berkeley to kick off our [Quantifying the Commons](#) project, which conservatively estimates over 2.5 billion CC-licensed open works available online — a measure we will continue to refine and update. We have updated our technology to better support the discoverability of open works, including our work with an Outreachy intern to augment our own [CC Search Portal](#), and our collaboration with external services like [the Openverse project](#), incubated at CC and now hosted in the WordPress community.



Our program to [translate CC licenses and tools](#) into 44 key languages continues, now with 89% of the translations complete or underway. The CC Legal team also began a series of open “office hours” to answer questions and discuss issues with the community.

As essential infrastructure for better sharing, we continue to sustain and augment CC licenses and legal tools both to support the existing public interest commons, and to meet new opportunities and challenges brought by emerging tools and practices.

44 languages

TRAINING & LEARNING

CC set new all-time precedents in 2022 with a record 16 online CC Certificate courses, raising the total number of graduates to over 1,255 from 65 countries by the end of the year. To further expand the global reach and breath of the Certificate program and training offerings:

- CC provided 38 Certificate scholarships to participants from 15 countries.
- CC expanded its Certification program, offering a new Certificate course for cultural heritage professionals working in galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM). As more cultural heritage institutions and communities seek to make knowledge and culture globally accessible, this training program empowers them with CC legal tools, expertise and community support.
- CC offered a 14-week facilitator training, certifying additional instructors to teach the Open Culture/GLAM Certificate courses.
- CC hosted the first Spanish translation sprint for Certificate reading content, and hosted a French translation, making Certificate content available to millions of new learners with openly licensed translations in French and Spanish.
- We piloted two open pedagogy courses for the CC Certificate program.

CC provided specialized training around the globe, collaborating with the US Department of State in their first cultural-heritage-focused TechCamp in Morocco, with the UK National Lottery Heritage Fund to deliver additional training on CC licensing for cultural heritage, and with Lafayette College to train Open Education Fellows and fuel their advocacy work.



A collage of selected works from [#20CC anniversary grants](#).

COMMUNITY & THE CC GLOBAL NETWORK

2022 was a year to reset and revive in the CC community and Global Network. After years of focus establishing standard, global, interoperable licenses for open content, the CC community paused to restructure around new goals: continue to maintain CC's licenses and legal tools for all, but also increase the size and diversity of our world-wide community to support better sharing of knowledge and culture in the context of emerging technologies and creative practices and global challenges like climate change, pandemics, political instability, and war.

To enable the CC community to welcome new generations of participants, we began the work to remove friction from the process to join the CC Global Network, which we expect to conclude in 2023, and to facilitate greater communication and collaboration among community members globally.

Meanwhile, CC community members were deeply engaged in activities all over the world to sustain and expand the public interest commons via collaborations in our three established CC Platforms: Copyright, Open Culture, and Open Education.

OPEN CULTURE

CC's [Open Culture program](#) is thriving. Launched in June 2021 with [generous funding](#) from [Arcadia](#) and the [Samuel H. Kress Foundation](#), the program expanded dramatically in 2022, generating deep engagement with cultural heritage professionals and champions around the world in each of the program's four areas of focus:

POLICY

Dozens of CC community members collaborated to develop [Towards Better Sharing of Cultural Heritage — A Creative Commons Call to Action to Policymakers](#), a guide to key policy actions that support open culture. With a focus on *better sharing*, we are also in the process of updating the 2018 white paper, [Traditional Knowledge and Creative Commons](#), focused on the intersections between indigenous cultural heritage and the open ecosystem. Members of the open culture community also co-drafted the policy paper [Towards Better Sharing of Cultural Heritage — An Agenda for Copyright Reform](#), to guide copyright reform in the cultural heritage context. We also [pushed for better exceptions and limitations for cultural heritage](#) in international copyright law at the WIPO Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR).

INFRASTRUCTURE

We surveyed cultural heritage professionals in 43 countries to develop our [Public Domain Tools in GLAMs Needs Assessment](#), identifying the needs galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAMs) have to open cultural heritage in different institutional contexts. We also published a comprehensive report on the [Barriers to Open Culture](#), which lays out the legal, financial, resource, and technical barriers faced by institutions in opening their collections. In 2023, we plan to produce a matching report on the Benefits of Open Culture.

CAPACITY BUILDING

CC launched the [Open Culture/GLAM Certificate](#) to equip cultural heritage professionals around the world to engage effectively in opening culture at their institutions and beyond, and have also offered tailored training and awareness activities to various audiences.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our [Open Culture Platform](#) organized five working groups to tackle [emerging issues in open culture](#). We produced the first season of [Open Culture VOICES](#), a multilingual series of 35 short interviews with distinguished open culture experts from around the world that engaged more than three million people across multiple platforms — a series that continues in 2023. Our report, [Pioneers of Open Culture](#), looked back at how three major cultural institutions began their journey to open access. We also published eight [community case studies](#) and conducted the [Open Culture Remix Art Contest](#).

CC Open Culture Remix Art Contest 1st Place Winner:
"Open Culture Salon — A Librarian's Dream" by Alwaleed Khalid licensed via [CC BY 4.0](#).



OPEN CLIMATE

In August 2022, [Creative Commons](#), [SPARC](#), and [EIFL](#) launched a four-year [Open Climate Campaign](#) with funding from [Arcadia](#), building on funding from the [Open Society Foundations](#), to promote open access to research on science and biodiversity to address the climate crisis. This global campaign is acting on one of CC's core beliefs: To address the world's most pressing challenges — like climate change — and create a brighter future for all, we must grow and sustain a thriving commons of shared knowledge and culture. Our focus in 2022 was to build the campaign's profile, leading or participating in 27 events like [Open Access Week](#), the keynote of the [Open Education Conference](#), [UNESCO](#), and a panel with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and a workshop with NASA. Going forward, the campaign will initiate bibliometric analysis of existing open access in climate change research to set a baseline and goals, and begin working with national governments, funders, and environmental organizations to develop and implement effective and equitable open access policies for the research they fund.



“Pillars of Creation” by NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI; Joseph DePasquale (STScI), Anton M. Koekemoer (STScI), Alyssa Pagan (STScI) is in the public domain.

OPEN SCIENCE

While CC devoted a big part of our work on open science and open access research in 2022 to the Open Climate Campaign, we also celebrated a momentous occasion when the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy [announced a mandate](#) for all research funded by the US government to be published freely with no embargo. CC has been working for years to realize this watershed goal: to align national governments with the [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science](#). We are now working with US government agencies to provide direct support on best practices for open licensing and attribution as they update their public access plans. By requiring rights retention and full re-use rights, now research outputs funded by the US government can be broadly shared and analyzed to fully leverage taxpayer investments. Initiatives like this to establish inclusive, just and equitable knowledge is at the heart of our strategy at CC to enable *better sharing*.

OPEN EDUCATION

In 2022, CC continued work collaborating with governments, advocates, and coalitions to safeguard and advance open education globally, partnering with UNESCO at eight regional meetings to support national governments in implementing the [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Educational Resources](#), and presenting at the United Nations to amplify how open education helps meet [Sustainable Development Goal #4](#): to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



Open education continues as one of the most vibrant areas of activity across the CC community. To get a flavor of what’s happening, see [our full report on 2022 activities](#), and our lightning talks from all around the world on open educational practices that support educational equity and student agency, from open syllabi to ungrading to capstone courses.



OPEN JOURNALISM

CC dove into open journalism in 2022 with support from the [Google News Initiative](#) to convene a new webinar series and training, [Ground Truth in Open Internet](#). The series grew out of our research with over 500 journalists from 18 countries to better understand journalists’ needs during this turbulent time as digital news rapidly changes. We published outcomes in our new global report on the state of journalism, [From Broken Revenue Models to Embracing an “Open” Ethos](#), which identifies the growing challenges of information disorder and the disconnect between the public and the media. Look forward to our next big engagement in open journalism during a dedicated track at CC’s [Global Summit](#) in October 2023.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CC celebrates the immeasurable contributions of Molly Shaffer Van Houweling, who ended her term as a member and chair of CC’s board of directors in 2022. Over the years, Molly has played many roles with CC, including her earlier tenure as CC’s executive director, and we know she will continue to contribute in many ways to benefit the public interest commons. We also thank outgoing board members Amy Brand and Ruth Okediji. CC is honored to welcome board member Delia Browne to her new role as interim board chair.

2023 DIRECTORS

- Alek Tarkowski**
- Angela Oduor Lungati**
- Bilal Randeree**
- Carolina Botero**
- Delia Browne**
- Glenn Otis Brown**
- Jeni Tennison**
- Lawrence Lessig (emeritus)**

SUPPORTERS & FUNDERS

In 2022, CC brought our 20th anniversary campaign to a successful close, exceeding our ambitious \$15M fundraising goal to support our programs and help ensure our ongoing sustainability. Over the year, CC received generous support from nearly 6,000 individual donors, organizations, foundations, and companies who share our commitment to open knowledge and culture. Foundation funding and major gifts accounted for 74% of CC’s budget. The remaining support came from individuals, organizations, and companies.

THANK YOU!

MAJOR DONORS

- Ben Adida
- Colin Sullivan
- Derek Slater and Lila Bailey
- Douglas Jaffe
- Douglas Van Houweling
- Gabriel Levin
- John Seely Brown
- Molly Van Houweling
- Paul and Iris Brest
- Robert Greenwald and Heidi Frey
- Stawski Family
- Ted Wang
- Zahavah Levine

FOUNDATIONS

- Arcadia
- Filecoin Foundation
- MacArthur Foundation
- Open Society Foundations
- Patrick J. McGovern Foundation
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- 20 Million Minds Foundation

CORPORATIONS

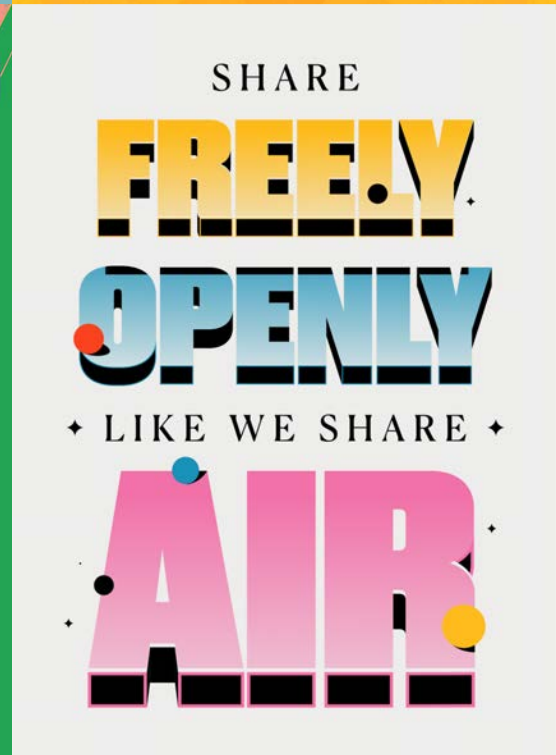
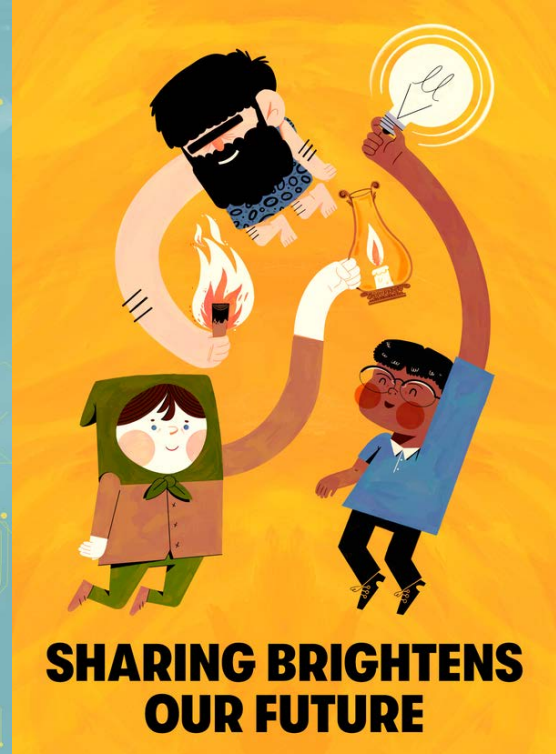
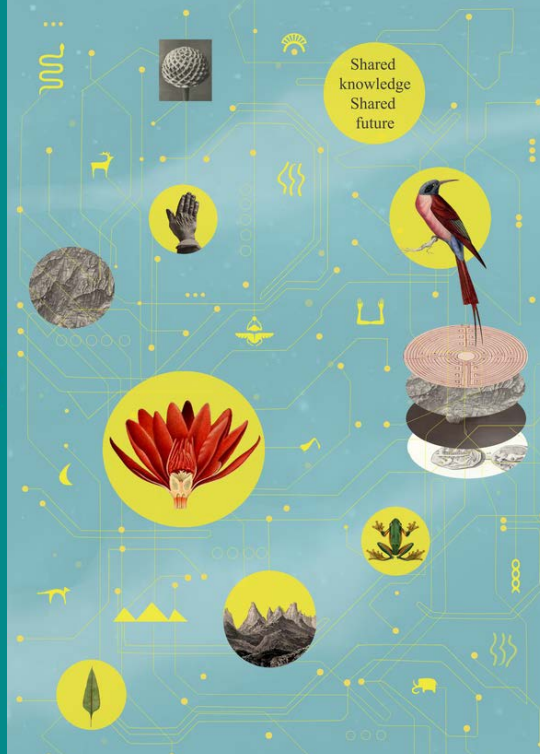
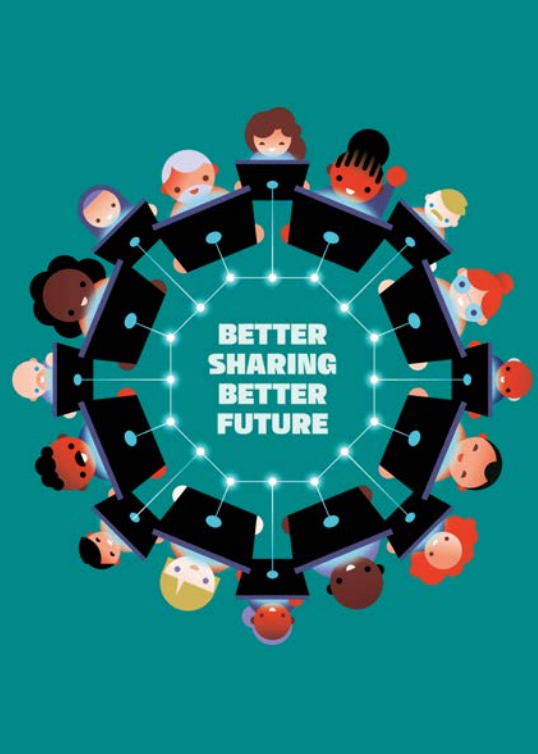
- BCCampus
- CouponFollow
- Hypothesis
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Pressbooks
- Saylor Academy

FINANCIALS

2022 EXPENSES	USD
Licenses	\$851,017
Beyond the Licenses	\$95,489
Capacity Building	\$1,827,195
Operations	\$1,389,158
TOTAL	\$4,162,859

2022 REVENUE	USD
CC Certificate	\$233,600
Events	\$6,875
Corporations	\$74,027
Foundations	\$6,621,470
Individuals	\$294,374
Consultation	\$78,750
Other Income	\$372,327
In-Kind Donations	\$36,517
TOTAL	\$7,717,940





Creative Commons
PO Box 1866 Mountain View CA 94042 USA
+1 415 429 6753
info@creativecommons.org

