



CREATIVE COMMONS LAUNCHES PUBLIC DOMAIN MARK; EUROPEANA AND CULTURAL HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS LEAD EARLY ADOPTION

San Francisco, California, USA; The Hague, Netherlands — 11 October 2010

Today, Creative Commons announces the release of the [Public Domain Mark](#), a tool that enables works free of known copyright restrictions to be labeled in a way that clearly communicates that status to the public, and allows the works to be easily discovered over the Internet. The Public Domain Mark effectively increases the value of the public domain by making works that are already free of copyright readily accessible to the public. The Mark makes it clear to teachers and students, artists and scientists, that they are free to re-use material. Its release benefits everyone who wishes to build upon the rich and vast resources that are part of the shared public domain.

Europeana – Europe’s digital library, museum and archive – is the first major adopter of the Public Domain Mark. The tool will become the standard mark for works free of known copyright that are shared via the [Europeana portal](#), playing an important infrastructural role in the EU’s efforts to ensure that all works shared online are marked with rights information. Europeana, whose partners include the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Bibliothèque nationale de France and Germany’s Bundesarchiv (Federal archives), estimates that the millions of out-of-copyright works made accessible via its searchable database will be labelled with the Public Domain Mark by Spring 2011. Europeana will announce the adoption of the Public Domain Mark at the upcoming [Europeana Open Culture 2010 Conference](#), to be held 14-15 October in Amsterdam.

“The Public Domain Mark is a further step on the path towards making the promise of a digital public domain a reality,” said Michael Carroll, a founding board member of Creative Commons and a law professor at American University. “Marking and tagging works with information about their copyright status is essential. Computers must be able to parse the public domain status of works to communicate its usefulness to the public. The metadata standard underpinning the Public Domain Mark and all of CC’s licensing and legal tools are what makes this possible.”

“An important part of our mandate is to ensure that digitized works made available through Europeana are properly labelled with rights information, including when a work is free of known copyright restrictions so that teachers, students and others can freely use it in their work, changing it and remixing it as they wish,” noted Jill Cousins, Executive Director of Europeana. “The legal and technical rigour applied by Creative Commons throughout the development process makes the Public Domain Mark the natural choice for Europeana’s infrastructure. We have also worked with Creative Commons and our content providers to develop a [Usage Guide](#) for public domain works to help users of cultural content use it responsibly – by crediting the provider, among other things.”

The Public Domain Mark in its current form is intended for use with works that are free of known copyright around the world, primarily old works that are beyond the reach of copyright in all jurisdictions. Creative Commons is mapping the next phases of its public domain work, which will look at ways to identify and mark works that are in the public domain in a limited number of countries.

Creative Commons worked closely with Europeana and several of its members throughout the development of the Public Domain Mark. That process also included a public consultation period and review by CC's worldwide affiliate network comprised of legal experts from more than 70 jurisdictions. The Public Domain Mark, to be used for marking works already free of copyright, complements Creative Commons' [CC0 public domain dedication](#), which provides an easy and reliable way for adding new works to the public domain prior to the expiry of copyright.

More information about the Public Domain Mark can be found on the [Creative Commons website](#).

About Creative Commons

Creative Commons is a not-for-profit organization, founded in 2001, that promotes the creative re-use of intellectual and artistic works, whether owned or in the public domain. Through its free copyright licenses, Creative Commons offers authors, artists, scientists, and educators the choice of a flexible range of protections and freedoms that build upon the "all rights reserved" concept of traditional copyright to enable a voluntary "some rights reserved" approach. Creative Commons' public domain tools enhance the public domain by allowing cultural and other works that are free of known copyright to be easily discoverable over the Internet, and works to be dedicated to the public domain by their owners. Creative Commons was built with and is sustained by the generous support of organizations including the Center for the Public Domain, Google, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Mozilla Foundation, Omidyar Network, Red Hat, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, as well as members of the public. For more information about supporting Creative Commons contact development@creativecommons.org.

Contact

Diane Peters
General Counsel
Creative Commons
diane@creativecommons.org
Phone +1 415 369 8480

About Europeana

Europeana is a partnership of European cultural heritage associations that have joined forces to bring together the digitised content of Europe's galleries, libraries, museums, archives and audiovisual collections. Currently Europeana's interface is in 26 European languages and gives integrated access to 12 million books, films, paintings, museum objects and archival documents from some 1500 content providers. Europeana is funded mainly by the European Commission, and the content is drawn from every European member state.

The great majority of material digitised by Europe's cultural and scientific heritage institutions is out-of-copyright. To clarify the legal issues around digitisation and contractual arrangements, Europeana released the [Public Domain Charter](#). The Charter also reminds content providers and users that the great majority of our shared cultural heritage is out-of-copyright and can be freely re-used. It is a shared resource that society uses to generate ideas, develop knowledge and inspire creativity.

Contact

Jonathan Purday
Senior Communications Advisor
Europeana
jonathan.purday@bl.uk
Phone +31 70 314 0684
Mobile +44 7885 516234