



<http://creativecommons.org>

**Press Release**

## **Creative Commons Announces New Leadership, New Funding**

**San Francisco, CA, USA – April 1, 2008**

Creative Commons, a nonprofit organization that works to expand the body of creative work available to the public for legal sharing and use, today announced both a leadership evolution and a major new grant of \$4 million from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to support its activities. “Both pieces of news we are announcing today reflect Creative Commons' maturation from a startup into crucial infrastructure for creativity, education, and research in the digital age,” said the organization's founder, Stanford law professor Lawrence Lessig. Creative Commons celebrated its fifth anniversary last December.

Lessig has announced a shift of academic focus from copyright to political corruption. He recently launched Change Congress, a movement to increase transparency in the US government's legislative branch. In order to concentrate on this effort, Lessig is stepping down as CEO of Creative Commons. He will be replaced by entrepreneur, venture capitalist, and free culture advocate Joi Ito. Lessig will remain on the Creative Commons board.

“Although I have changed my focus, I'm still very much committed to Creative Commons and the Free Culture cause,” Lessig said. “The work I intend to do with Change Congress is in many ways complementary to the work of Creative Commons. Both projects are about putting people in power and enabling them to build a better system. I could not be more pleased to hand off the leadership of Creative Commons to the extraordinarily passionate and qualified Joi Ito.”

“Under Larry's management, Creative Commons has grown from an inspirational idea to an essential part of the technical, social, and legal landscape involving organizations and people in 80 countries,” said Ito. “With it, the organization has grown in size and complexity, and I am excited to increase the level of my participation to help manage this amazing group of people. The Hewlett Foundation has been a major supporter of ours from the beginning and we could not be more grateful for their support going forward into the future.”

Founding board member and Duke law professor James Boyle will become chair of the board, replacing Ito, who remains on the board. “Jamie has demonstrated his commitment to Creative Commons from its founding,” said Lessig. “He led the formation of Science Commons and ccLearn, our divisions



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focused on scientific research and education respectively. There is no person better suited to lead the Creative Commons board.”

Boyle is optimistic about Creative Commons' future. “If one looks at all the amazing material that has been placed under our licenses - from MIT's Open Courseware and the Public Library of Science to great music, from countless photographs and blogs to open textbooks - one realizes that, under Larry's leadership, the organization has actually helped build a global 'creative commons' in which millions of people around the world participate, either as creators or users. My job will be to use the skills of the remarkable people on our board - including a guy called Larry Lessig, who has promised me he isn't going away any time soon - to make sure that mission continues and expands.”

The Hewlett Foundation grant consists of \$2.5 million to provide general support to Creative Commons over five years and \$1.5 million to support ccLearn, the division of Creative Commons that is focused on open educational resources. “The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has been a strong supporter of openness and open educational resources in particular,” said Catherine Casserly, the Director of the Open Educational Resources Initiative at Hewlett. “Creative Commons licenses are a critical part of the infrastructure of openness on which those efforts depend.” The Hewlett grant was a vital part of a five-year funding plan which also saw promises of support from Omidyar Network, Google, Mozilla, Red Hat, and the Creative Commons board.

Creative Commons also announces two other senior staff changes. Diane Peters joins the organization as General Counsel. Peters arrives from the Mozilla Corporation, serves on the board of the Software Freedom Law Center, and was previously General Counsel for Open Source Development Labs and the Linux Foundation. She has extensive experience collaborating with and advising nonprofit organizations, development communities, and high-tech companies on a variety of matters.

Vice President and General Counsel Virginia Rutledge, who joined Creative Commons last year from Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP, will take on a new role as Vice President and Special Counsel. In her new role, Rutledge will focus on development and external relations, while continuing to lead special legal projects.



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### **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 was built with and is sustained by the generous support of organizations including the Center for the Public Domain, Omidyar Network, the Rockefeller Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, as well as members of the public. For more information about Creative Commons, visit <http://creativecommons.org>.

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### **Press Kit**

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