

## It Came From The Web!

Note: This is the text of an article by Ann Brundige that appeared in the sept-Oct 2009 issue of *Closing The Gap*, a news magazine for educators working with special needs students.

In this third article of the series, we'll look at using resources from the web. In the first article, we learned strategies to create virtually real experiences in activities like the ones you can download from Annie's Resource Attic. In the second, I discussed how to use your digital photos to construct such activities. While your own photos are a great resource, there will be times you need to go to the web for photos, clip art, and sounds. There are both technical and ethical concerns in doing so.

Technically, you should know how to determine the graphic or sound file format to make certain you can use it, the resolution of the photo or other graphic, and how to download and save these onto your hard disk. You also may need to do some editing, especially to make the clip art look good in a particular application.

Ethically, you need to be able to determine the copyright status and terms of use. This is important to you and your students, both as responsible users of web resources and as possible authors of activities that might be posted on the web

or shared with other educators. In fact, I want to alert you some new copyright options that you and your students may want to apply to your own creations!

So let's take a look at some good sources for copyright-friendly graphics and sounds, find out about some new copyright possibilities, become adept at ferreting out the terms of use, and learn how to get those web resources onto your computer and into your activities.

### **What About Fair Use?**

While it may be okay to use some copyrighted materials to teach a lesson, the situation becomes less clear when you are in effect distributing materials such as handouts or activities you might share or post on activity exchanges. I'm also concerned that students may get the idea that they have a right to use anything they can pull off the internet. Here's another thought: You or your students could potentially want to sell your work! It's very easy these days to market things online without a big upfront cost. Why not keep copyright in mind from the start? You'd hate to come up with a winner of an idea, only to realize it's unmarketable because of copyright concerns.

### **Some Background on Copyright**

The idea behind copyright grew during the 1700's as a way to give authors control over their written works and to prevent often inaccurate copies of books being printed without

permission. Over time, the concept of copyright expanded to cover other creative works such as recorded music and videos, paintings, and software. Copyright reserves for authors the rights, among others, to copy, sell, and distribute their original creative work for a fixed time, after which the work becomes public domain. National governments will, for a hefty fee, register and store documentation of an author's claim to copyright on a given work, but it's up to the author to enforce the copyright through legal action.

### **Finding Terms Of Use information**

If you've used **Google Image Search™**, an excellent way to find any image you need, notice that it states that the images you find there **may be copyrighted**. You, the user, are left with the responsibility to find both the copyright information and any other restrictions on using the image. What you need to find is the **Terms of Use** information. Coming in directly to the image through **Google Image Search™** may make finding that a challenge, by the way.

### **Assume It's Copyrighted**

For example, I searched for images of the sea hare, a marine gastropod, and got a screen full of image thumbnails. I clicked one of the little images, and the next screen had a link in bold type to **See Full Sized Image**. When I clicked that, I got a page with only the image displayed. **Google Image Search™** had gone directly to the location where the image was stored and displayed it, without the surrounding web page and

probably without any copyright information. If I wasn't web savvy, I might assume the image is mine to use, but it's my responsibility to find definite information, and to assume that the image is copyrighted unless otherwise stated.

### **Anybody Home?**

A second link on the screen after the thumbnail, in smaller type, is **Below is the image at:** followed by the URL. Usually that link opens automatically, and you see the entire original page with the image. You may find definite copyright and usage information then, like this statement on a photographer's site: "This image is **copyright protected**. There is a **fee** for any use. This is **not** a source of free images". Well, that's clear enough!

But on many sites you must hunt for information. Not all pages of all web sites have the terms of use posted. If you don't see any information on the page with the image, look for a link to the **Home** or an **About** page for that site. Often you'll find the information there, possibly for the entire site. If you still can't find information, look for an email address on the site to contact someone and get permission. And remember that even uncopyrighted material may have some conditions for use.

### **Uncopyrighted, But With Conditions**

For example, another sea hare image I found using **Google Image Search™** turned out to be in the NOAA Photo Library. Since it's a U.S. government site, most of the images cannot

be copyrighted. But on the **About** page, the terms of use included a requirement to **credit** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/Department of Commerce as the source.

The requirement to include attribution in some form is a very common condition of use. It's generally good practice to list sources for all sounds and images, and help students to get in the habit of doing so. Otherwise, the ease with which we can now obtain these resources may mislead students into forgetting about copyright issues altogether!

### **The Hidden Trap In Google Image Search™**

I frequently use **Google Image Search™** to find clip art or photos, but I've learned to be wary of one thing: Google is such a powerful search engine that it can go right past the gate on restricted web pages.

After clicking a thumbnail, I've landed in photo archives posted by professors for their students' exclusive use, for example. If I had accessed that university's site through the home page, I'd have come to a page where a password must be entered. But Google had let me in the back door. I've also landed in web sites that were...questionable as places you would want your students to go, even though the image I had clicked was perfectly acceptable. So use **Google Image Search™**, and teach your students how to use it your students use it, but be aware of this limitation.

## **Public Domain and Royalty Free**

It may not be worth your time to email for permission to use a resource. There are many good sites with public domain images, both photos and clip art, and also public domain sounds. **Public domain** means you can use things however you want without a credit or fee. It's not the same as royalty free, though.

**Royalty free** means you pay for the image once, and then use it several times without paying for it again. Some sites, like that of the commercial photographer, charge an ongoing fee, a **royalty**, to use the work. That may seem ungenerous, but once you've spent many long hours creating some super activities you may feel differently.

## **A New Copyright Option: Some Rights Reserved**

One last sea hare image thumbnail in my **Google Image Search™** took me to the site at <http://www.squidoo.com/sea-hare>, a site by my daughter Ellen. She made the terms of use easy to find. Look at this site, and you'll find this line near the top of the first page "All photographs on this page by Ellen Brundige © 2009. **Some Rights Reserved.**" After that is a rectangular symbol with some little icons on it. It marks a site with a **Creative Commons** license, the same type as I use on my web site.

Click the icon, go to the license and read it. The license tells you in simple and specific terms exactly what you can and cannot do with those photos. This is a new experiment in

copyright notice, hoping to fill the gap between "All Rights Reserved" like the images on the photographer's site, and public domain. I've been seeing the Creative Commons icons more and more often, so let's look into it a little closer.

### **What's This Creative Commons About?**

Creative Commons is a non-profit group that hopes to make it easier to share, use, and adapt creative works while preserving the rights of authors to specify how their works may be used. You'll find a link to it on my site under the **Info Links** section of the sidebar. One part of their website has tools you can use to create a customized license, choosing from a menu of terms so that you can share your work in exactly the way you want.

### **Generate A Custom License**

Let's look at the Annie's Resource Attic license as an example. Go to my site at [www.annbrundigestudio.com](http://www.annbrundigestudio.com), look down the right sidebar for the Creative Commons icon, and click on the icon to open the license. First, it tells you what you as a user can do with work from the site. You can share it (make copies), and you can adapt or remix it. Someone else might let you use their work but not change it. There is also a link back to my site for permissions that might not fit into this form, a nice touch that lets you add any special instructions for use. The next section gives the conditions for sharing. In my case, I wanted a credits (attribution) notice to follow the work so that people would find out about my

website, and I decided the resources should be for non-commercial use.

As you can see, it's possible to set up a very specific license that lets people use your work without it becoming public domain. The license is automatically generated for you once you answer a set of questions about how you want your work to be used. It's simple enough for students to do it. If you come up with an exceptional class or individual project, you could guide students in licensing their work using the Creative Commons site. It's a good way to teach them about copyright from the author's viewpoint.

### **Does A Creative Commons License Really Have Any Weight?**

The answer, increasingly, is yes. Traditional copyright has gained power over time because court decisions have accepted the registered information as proof in copyright infringement cases. Recently there have been some court decisions in which the terms of the creative Commons license were accepted as specific enough to be binding.

One case involved a license for open source software that was offered for free download. Someone downloaded it and used the code in a project without giving the author credit, identifying the source, and detailing how it had been changed, all conditions of the license. Overturning a lower court's decision, the United States Court of Appeals in August, 2008 decided that the terms of the CC license were quite specific



and that the author's copyright had been infringed even though the software was free.

That final point is important, because in the past it was difficult to claim copyright infringement when there was no direct monetary loss. To me one of the best things about the web is the growing number of people who use it to generously share their work. It's encouraging to see the courts gradually recognizing the validity of that sharing, and recognizing that there is a wide spectrum of possibilities for terms of use.

### **Where to Get The Goodies**

That's enough about copyright! Let's check out sites with free art and sounds to download. You'll find links to eight good sites for clip art and photos on my web site, <http://www.annbrundigestudio.com>. Look down on the sidebar past the bookmark and contact buttons for a section entitled **Free Stuff**. One of the links there, **Legal and Fee Web Images**, leads to another of my daughters' sites and has a bunch more links for copyright-friendly photos and clip art. She also mentions some sites where you can subscribe for a small fee, or use the low resolution versions of commercial art. You'll find a link to Creative Commons as well, because they have a search page to find their many licensed works. There are links to some of the government photo archives, a great resource for science and history projects.

I've also included three links to sites with free sounds to

download, from sound effects and button noises through animal and environment sounds and even short music tracks. Look for links to 5,000 Free Sounds, PacDV Free Sound Effects, and the Freesound Project. You can try out the sounds before you download, and they are arranged into logical categories.

### **Choosing and Downloading Web Graphics**

Now that you know how to check the terms of use and where to find graphics, the only problem is choosing which ones to use. Be sure to consider the resolution of an image, usually expressed as pixel dimensions. If the image is only 300X200 pixels, it wouldn't look good at all as a full screen background, but would be fine for a piece of clip art. Check the file format. Usually for web graphics, it will be .jpg or .gif, both of which work in many multimedia applications. You'll find more varieties of videos.

If you check the requirements of your application and it won't load the image or video you want to use, you may be able to convert it. There are links to a SoftTouch Windows-only graphic converter and to one called FastStone Image Viewer under **Free Stuff** on my site. There are free video converters online, but I haven't tried them. I use a shareware editor, Video Edit Magic.

When you find something you can use, be sure you note the source, and be sure it's really saved. It's possible to display an image without actually getting the file saved on your

computer. Note where you put the file and open it in something to be sure the download was successful. It's much quicker than trying to find the image again! You may even be able to drag and drop images into the application. For example, if I have Clicker 5® set at less than full screen, I can drag an image from the web browser and drop it into a cell. But I feel it's better to save the file so that you can edit it or find it easily to use it again. Build up your own image library!

### **Web Images Recycled**

Besides using images as is, you can modify them in many ways to customize clip art and photos. It's easy to change colors and even combine and rotate parts of clip art images to create new ones. You may need to clear the background and outline an image to prevent "fuzzies" showing up around a piece of clip art in some applications. Saving in .gif format with no background also works for some applications. It's worth experimenting and keeping notes on what works best for the applications you use.

You also can use web art as a reference in constructing art for a project. Getting several different images of the same thing might help you to draw your own version. If you are using a graphics application like PhotoShop Elements® that uses layers, you could put an image in a lower layer to trace an outline. You'll find links to two good free graphics editing programs under **Free Stuff** on my site: The GIMP and Paint.NET. These use layers, but are both Windows only.

Another option is to use the online editing tools of Piknic. That link is also on the Annie's Resource Attic site under the **Info Links**.

### **Choosing and downloading sounds**

The three sound sites for which I've provided links have simple buttons that let you download and save the sounds. You'll want to keep track of these and their sources, so one suggestion is to create a folder for each site and download directly into those. Again, check the file format you need for a particular application. Usually you will be downloading .wav and .mp3 files. If your application can use .mp3, that's your best choice because it will save a ton of file space! You can convert files from .wav to .mp3 in iTunes®. I also recommend Audacity, and sound editor that runs on both mac and Windows. It's free and will give you many options for combining sounds, changing the pitch, and adding effects. For a discussion of Audacity, a get-started tutorial, and a link to download Audacity, search for the **More Audacity** post on my site.

### **Happy Web Hunting!**

So go ahead and search the web for the resources you need for outstanding class projects. Just be sure you encourage students to check terms of use, include the source, and let users know it came from the web!