

"If I have seen further
it is by standing on
the shoulders of Giants."

-Isaac Newton



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Keep
Culture
Wild & Free

Our Culture:
behind bars



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Canada
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Free Culture Canada wants to liberate our culture.

Overly restrictive intellectual property laws threaten to prevent us from using technology in ways that foster a culture of participation. The Free Culture movement seeks to promote a culture of freedom in the digital era by educating and advocating...

- Free Software and Creative Commons media that encourages creativity and innovation
- fair copyright policy that strikes a balance between users rights and artists needs

Free Culture Canada is a newly created national umbrella for the Free Culture international student movement. We aim to promote and support chapters of the Free Culture movement in colleges and universities across Canada. Because Canada has difficult legal issues to confront, it is important that we unite in creating policy that is friendly to the interests of Free Culture.



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What role does technology play in liberating our culture?

Digital technologies make it easier for people to create and distribute culture. For example, they have dramatically reduced the entry cost of producing audio and film, and have given us new ways of synthesizing and modifying this media.

The internet and digital media allows us to easily share this culture. Technology has presented the potential for alternative models for cultural production and participation, ones that challenge the highly centralized and monopolized ways of big media.



If our culture is free, how will creators of content get paid?

The "Free" in Free Culture does not mean "without cost"; we are not a group that believes that creators of culture and information don't deserve to get paid. In fact, many companies (i.e. the Linux distribution business Redhat and record label Magnatune) have made money participating in the creation of Free Culture. The "Free" in Free Culture refers to freedom. As humans, we are all swimming in the culture that we create, and that creates us, be it in the form of written words, images, audio, video, and other multimedia. Free Culture believes that this culture belongs to all of us, and that we all deserve the freedom not only to access it but also to create something new from this existing media.

HOW IS OUR CULTURE RESTRICTED?

Excessive Copyright

Copyright in Canada lasts 50 years after the death of the artist, whereas most commercial value is obtained very early into this term. This long term restricts old works from passing into the public domain in which they could be derived into new works without explicit permission of the artist.

All Rights Reserved de Facto

When you create a fixed work, it is automatically copyrighted for the full term, even if you don't add any [copyright symbol] notice. That means by default you can not copy or "remix" that work without permission from the artist. Even if someone wanted to share their work, most creators don't know how to express this in a legally enforceable way. Creative Commons licenses for artistic works and Free Software licenses for computer programs help to unlock our culture and share it with the world.

Anti-Circumvention laws = rights infringement

Digital Rights Management (DRM) is a technique used on digital media to restrict our use of media; copy-protection on CDs is the most common example of DRM. In the United States under the DMCA, it is illegal to break (circumvent) these protection measures even if it is to do something that is otherwise legitimate (i.e. make a personal backup copy of a CD, move your CD to your MP3 player, or create a movie clip for the purposes of social commentary). Right now Canada's copyright policy is under review, and legislators are considering bringing anti-circumvention measures into Canada, which would be a great threat to our cultural freedom.