

‘Making the most of what we’ve got – why we need an Australian Creative Archive’

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The internet, digital recording devices and the ready availability of content production software have together drastically changed the creative landscape, making it easy for anyone, from every-day bedroom experimenters to professionals, to find and reuse content. As a result, linear models of knowledge and cultural production and commercialisation are rapidly being supplanted by more distributed, collaborative, user-generated and open networking models. In this context the ability to create, access and reuse digital content is paramount. Remixing, recycling and online distribution are integral to the digital environment’s creative capacity, and to the economic, educational and cultural benefits that it brings.

Yet Australians have great difficulty gaining access to quality online content about their own culture and history. Unlike countries such as the US and UK, which have led the digital revolution and dominate online content, it is very difficult to locate Australian-specific content online that can be legally and safely viewed and re-used. This paper will follow the Venturous Australia recommendations to put forward an argument for increasing user rights to access and, most importantly, reuse government owned and public domain content held within Australia’s creative archives. Drawing on national and international examples, it will examine the limitations of the current mechanisms for accessing Australian content online and the benefits that could be gained in the fields of education, the creative industries and business innovation from allowing sharing, repurposing, remixing and reinterpretation of our national collections.