

# Thoughts on Sketchfab to Fab migration announcement, September 2024

Last edited 28 Oct 2024

## Intro

A few people have asked me about the most recent update regarding the transformation of sketchfab.com to fab.com, and while ***I no longer work for Sketchfab or represent them or Epic Games in any way***, I've tried to make some sense of the recent announcements made by them that will impact all current Sketchfab users, including the cultural heritage community. All in all, it feels like a bit of an end of an era 😊

### Update 19/11/2024

Epic Games is holding a live video stream on the 22nd Nov.

"Join the Fab team on November 22 at 10am ET to discuss the recent release of Fab, see the product roadmap and ask the team questions! Plus, get a sneak peek of the Quixel content roadmap and an update on Bridge from the Quixel team:"

<https://www.youtube.com/live/GriPX0OK1t0?si=2iM6M7EUeldssmy4>

FAB Roadmap

<https://dev.epicgames.com/community/fab/roadmap>

"Asked a question what the plan is for Sketchfab, and they are saying they want to replicate the features on FAB (community, viewing and distributing free content, businesses sharing files to view) - they say they don't take away functionality from Sketchfab until FAB can replicate them. Until then, Sketchfab will keep existing. Cultural Heritage licenses for non-commercial use are also considered for bringing on to FAB." via Cordula Hansen

### Update 28/10/2024

Article on 404 media published:

<https://www.404media.co/scientists-and-archivists-worry-epic-games-control-of-the-3d-model-market-will-destroy-cultural-heritage/>

Also article on gameindustry.biz:

<https://www.gamesindustry.biz/epic-launches-combined-fab-marketplace-amid-confusion-and-backlash-from-artists-and-developers>

### Update 23/10/2024

- [Fab.com](https://www.fab.com) has [launched](#).

- Sketchfab has published a blog post: Sketchfab Update: [What You Need To Know Now That Fab's Live](#)

### Update 11/10/2024

Sketchfab has just sent out an additional email with the subject "Clarification on cultural heritage content on Sketchfab" a copy of this email can be found [below](#).

### Update 10/10/2024:

American folk art specialist Emily Esser has opened a petition on change.org: [Keep Sketchfab Alive: Preserve Open Access To 3D Museum Collections](#)

## The Sketchfab Email

I don't have more info than the email ([copy below](#), don't worry if you've not received it yet it can take a few days to send out millions of emails) and [blog post](#) from Sketchfab, or the Unreal Engine [announcement page](#), but some things are clear:

- **Sketchfab as a whole will be winding down in 2025.**
- **"In 2025, we plan to stop offering downloadable content on Sketchfab."**
- All downloadable paid, CC-BY, standard licence 3D content will eventually move to Fab, so it is a matter of 'when' not 'if' to move your models in these categories if you want them to continue to be available for download.
- CC-BY-SA, CC-BY-SA-NC, CC-BY-NC licensed 3D models are *not* transferable to Fab, but eventually won't be downloadable on Sketchfab either 🤔 there is no mention of what will happen to CC0 public domain 3D content [link](#)
- It appears there will be a period of time where 3D content from a single user will be on both Sketchfab and Fab.

What is **not** clear:

- What happens to non-downloadable (view only) 3D content on Sketchfab in the long run.
- What happens to private downloadable 3D content on Sketchfab in the long run (my **guess** is that it is not supported on Fab).
- What happens to CC-BY-SA and CC-BY-SA-NC 3D content in the long run.

## Epic Developer Forums

There is also a fair amount of relevant info that is not directly included in the Sketchfab comms and I **reeeaaally** recommend looking at the more in-depth information over on the [Epic Dev Community](#). There are a lot more relevant details about what is happening and will happen to Sketchfab in the future, I've pulled out just a few here:

- **Fab is a straight up marketplace with no community layer, no word on whether that will continue at all in some form:**
  - Fab does not support likes, view counts, download counts, comments, collections, or follower feature [link](#)

- Not all 3D file formats will be supported on Fab [link](#)
- Not all compressed file formats are supported by Fab (e.g. RAR or 7-Zip are not supported) [link](#)
- "The migration process copies your 3D model data to Epic Games servers in the United States." [link](#)
- "Fab listing has a fixed list of tag [...] It cannot migrate a tag that does not match a Fab tag. The tag does not appear on your Fab listing." [link](#)
- "Sketchfab 3D models can have zero, one, or two categories, each with one level. Fab listings have exactly one category with optional subcategories." [link](#)
  - Models with the *Cultural Heritage & History* category will be mapped to *Objects & Decor* 😞
- The new Fab 3D viewer does not *currently* support Annotations, AR mode, VR mode, Custom backgrounds, or Custom HDRI environments [link](#)
- I suggest you take a look at the "Q: What Happens to Sketchfab Models after I migrate them to Fab?" FAQ [on this page](#)

## Copy of Sketchfab Update Email

Sep 19 2024



Hi,

We're excited to share that [Fab](#)—Epic's new digital marketplace—will launch in mid-October. Fab will host a massive community of sellers and buyers, and will offer an 88% revenue share. **From Fab's launch until the end of 2024, Fab publishers will earn 100% revenue share on sales of Fab Standard-licensed products.**

When Fab launches, it will replace the Sketchfab Store and you will no longer be able to buy or sell assets on the Sketchfab Store.

We're kicking off the transition process now and we're reaching out so you have all the details on what's changing:

### **Today**

The Sketchfab Store is no longer accepting new seller applications. Instead, if you are interested in selling assets, we invite you to sign up to become a publisher on Fab. Currently, asset migration is only available for Unreal Engine Marketplace sellers.

### **Early October**

Fab will open up for Sketchfab creators to migrate their models to Fab in advance of Fab's mid-October launch. We will reach out to you when that happens. Both CC-BY and Standard-licensable models will be eligible for

# Copy of Sketchfab Analytics notice

Sep 23 2024



Hello,

We're writing to inform you that, as part of our ongoing efforts to [transition Sketchfab's services to Fab](#), we will be discontinuing the "Analytics" feature of Sketchfab organization accounts ("Sketchfab for Teams") on **December 20th, 2024**.

After this date, charts and tables of model views over time, as well as impressions coming from different sources, will no longer be available. Total view counts will remain available on all model pages within your organization's Sketchfab account. If you are embedding the 3D viewer on your own websites, views of those pages over time can be captured with your own web analytics tools as a proxy for 3D model views.

We understand that changes like this can be disruptive, and we apologize for any inconvenience it may cause. We plan to offer enterprise analytics solutions in the future, when content management solutions become available in Fab.

If you have questions about how this change might impact your account, please [reach out to our support team](#) (requires logging into an Epic Games account).

Thank you for your understanding and for being a valued customer.

Best regards,

The Sketchfab Team

# Clarification on cultural heritage content on Sketchfab

October 11 2024



Hello,

We are reaching out to provide clarity about free content and view-only models on Sketchfab. If you are a member of the cultural heritage community on Sketchfab, nothing is changing to your experience at this time – your models will remain where they are and visitors will be able to continue viewing or downloading them on Sketchfab. You can also continue uploading new content on Sketchfab as you do today.

We're building a unified community of creators, artists and worldbuilders on [Fab](#), a destination to view and experience 3D content, and we hope creators of cultural heritage content will join us there in the future. We're working on a streamlined account creation process for creators who do not intend to sell, expanding support for additional license types, and creating a pathway to support free and view-only models on Fab in 2025. We'll share more details with the Sketchfab community as soon as we have plans in place.

There are many companies and organizations that use Sketchfab as a service to store and share content, and we'll continue supporting these functions until we have alternative options ready. We won't make any changes to these functions until we share the plan with you and give you plenty of time to prepare. Until that time, we hope you'll continue creating and sharing awesome content on Sketchfab.

We appreciate your support,  
Sketchfab Team



# Potential Alternatives to Sketchfab

The upcoming move to Fab for downloadable content and updates to Sketchfab will undoubtedly change the way we all use Sketchfab as well as how audiences access cultural heritage 3D on the site. While these changes may be unwelcome to some, they may also suit some aspects of heritage 3D outreach: in theory, moving open access (at least CC-BY) 3D heritage content closer to creators in the creative industries could be a good thing!

However, if you are starting to think about an alternative home for your heritage 3D content, here are some suggestions from the community (see comments as well):

## Open Source

### Kompakkt

- [kompakkt.de](https://kompakkt.de)
- Suggested by [Zoe Schubert](#)

### eCorpus

- [ecorpus.eu](https://ecorpus.eu) (Smithsonian DPO-Voyager + NodeJS server) for decentralised datasets
- Academic partners can provide hosting for 3D Heritage (Lille University (FR), Liege University (BE), Human-Num (FR))
- Example : [1](#), [2](#)
- Suggested by [Thibault Guillaumont](#)

### PURE3D

- [pure3d.eu](https://pure3d.eu)
- “Beta available by end of 2024”
- Works with a local version of Voyager Explorer and Voyager Story (The Smithsonian)
- Hosted at the KNAW/ Humanities Cluster-Digital Infrastructure in the Netherlands
- Suggested by [Costas Papadopoulos](#)

### Morphosource

- [morphosource.org](https://morphosource.org)
- Examples: [1](#), [2](#)
- Suggested by [Jocelyn Triplett](#)
- [Douglas Boyer](#): “Provides deep support to institutions sharing models representing natural history or cultural heritage objects, especially those with complex reuse and licensing requirements”
- Also see [SketchFab and the Changing Landscape of 3D Data Platforms for Cultural Heritage and Natural History · MorphoSource Community · Discussion #128 · GitHub](#)

### Smithsonian Voyager

- [smithsonian.github.io/dpo-voyager/](https://smithsonian.github.io/dpo-voyager/)

- Stand alone version: <https://3d.si.edu/voyager-story-standalone>
- Example: [1](#)
- Requires hosting your own content
- Suggested by [Kurt Heumiller](#)

## ModelViewer

- [<model-viewer> \(modelviewer.dev\)](#)
- Not a host, but could be used to adapt existing repositories to display 3D content
- Suggested by [Liam Green-Hughes](#)

## Dynamic Collections

- <https://www.darklab.lu.se/digital-collections/dynamic-collections/>
- customizable
- 3D hop based self hosting open source project.
- CMS in development as of version 2
- High res model support, but limited rendering (update planned)
- Suggested by G A Pantos

## Ariadne plus visual media service

- <https://visual.ariadne-infrastructure.eu/>
- Hosted sharing tool, not long term archive
- 3Dhop based
- scene configuration tools
- Has support for RTI
- Suggested by G A Pantos

## EUreka3D Data Hub

- [eureka3d.eu/eureka3d-data-hub](https://eureka3d.eu/eureka3d-data-hub)
- “EUreka3D project has developed a Data Hub dedicated to CHIs, with EU-based storage, 3D viewer, and a direct entry-gate to Europeana, for publishing the datasets. [...] we are also collaborating with [Kompakkt](#)”
- Suggested by [Valentina Bachi](#)

## Kintsugi 3D Viewer

- <https://github.com/UWStout/Kintsugi3DViewer>
- Demo here: <https://tetzlaff.itch.io/kintsugi-3d-viewer>
- Originally designed for sharing high-fidelity materials / specularly processed with Kintsugi 3D Builder (<https://michaelt919.github.io/Kintsugi3DBuilder/>)
- Works either as a website or desktop app
- Website runs slow on mobile devices; future plans to release dedicated mobile apps and possibly a more lightweight website
- Requires hosting your own content
- Suggested by [Michael Tetzlaff](#) (project lead)

## 3DHOP

- <https://3dhop.net/>
- Some other suggestions above mentioned being built on 3DHOP, so I figured it would be a good idea to mention 3DHOP directly as well.
- Open-source model viewer that can fit into standard web pages with relatively little technical setup. It can handle 3D meshes and point clouds.
- Suggested by [Jeremiah Stevens](#)

## Commercial

### \$ Marmoset Toolbag

- [marmoset.co/toolbag](https://marmoset.co/toolbag) + Artstation(embedd in your gallery) Example: <https://www.artstation.com/artwork/NqLk1>
- Suggested by [Dan Gemvall](#)

### \$ (?) 80LVL 3D Metasites

- [waitlist](#)
- Example: [80.lv/cgs/industrial-factory](https://80.lv/cgs/industrial-factory)
- Suggested by [Dan Gemvall](#)

### \$ Arloopa

- [arloopa.com](https://arloopa.com)
- Suggested by [Lisa Lokshina](#)

### \$ Ctrl.studio

- [ctrl.studio](https://ctrl.studio)
- Suggested by [Timo Korkalainen](#)

### \$ Saganverse

- [saganverse.com](https://saganverse.com)
- Suggested by [Ben Mazza](#)

### \$ Polycam

- [polycam.ai](https://polycam.ai)
- Suggested by [Tom Gosker](#)
  - “Polycam's pro/subscription product is a viable alternative, with public-facing pages for models. It's nowhere near as advanced as Sketchfab's 3D editor but the bare bones (ha ha) are in place, and you can now upload existing 3D models.”

## Pedestal

- <https://pedestal3d.com/features/>
  - Software as A service
  - Measuring and section tools and limited annotations
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Quote from Emily Esser's petition "[Petition · Keep Sketchfab Alive: Preserve Open Access To 3D Museum Collections](#)":

### Updated text 13/10/2024

"Since its inception, Sketchfab.com, a 3D model-sharing website, has served the invaluable function of hosting and showcasing the vast digitized collections and portfolios of many museums, universities, and artists across the world.

Unfortunately, their new owners, Epic Games, intend to destroy it.

In 2025, they have announced they will remove the download function, forcing creators and users onto Epic's "[Fab](#)," an game development asset store that exists purely for the sake of profit. But [killing the Sketchfab Store will severely harm independent artists and small businesses](#). There's no benefit to anyone from "Fab," except for lining Epic's pocketbook.

Sketchfab is irreplaceable. It is *the* service to host and view 3D models online. It provides invaluable assets, used and shared by everyone, from indie game devs to renowned institutions. Fab would happily destroy all that. [Comments are disabled](#), forbidding users to speak to each other. [Downloads will be unavailable](#), prohibiting the free sharing of content. Everything about this decision goes against the core of Sketchfab's nature and its significance in our digital modern world.

This is the virtual equivalent of burning the Library of Alexandria.

But the "Fab" upheaval was delayed for a year once already. With enough active effort, we can stop it again. And we must.

Update 10/12/24: The Sketchfab Blog website is down, denying access to the specific Fab terms of service unveiled 10/1/24. However, [here is a PDF copy of the email issued to all Sketchfab Store sellers](#) (I am also a 3D artist, so I received it.) Here as well is a [news article](#) reporting on the announcement.

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[Read here for a discussion of the Sketchfab Store's importance to 3D artists.](#)

Read on for a discussion of Sketchfab's value in preserving cultural heritage.

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Five years ago, Sketchfab celebrated the [massive milestone](#) of 100,000 models in the “Cultural Heritage” collection. It’s always been clear that Sketchfab acts as a public good, not only a commercialized marketplace. Researchers rely on the availability and accessibility of these assets — and [Sketchfab’s announcement](#) made that same point: “What’s even better is that almost 20,000 of these models are available to download and re-use under easy-to-understand Creative Commons licenses, which means that this amazing wealth of 3D data can travel beyond Sketchfab to be reused in new and amazing ways.”

That is exactly what they intend to wipe out from the site.

[The “Fab” announcement](#) ominously declares that time is limited. “Free content will continue to be available on Sketchfab into 2025, before we remove free licensing from Sketchfab next year.” Out of greed or short-sightedness, Sketchfab now plans to force a massive inconvenience upon all these individuals and institutions that they once proudly partnered with.

Countless museums have already put in the vast and time-consuming effort of digitizing their collections. They, and all other users who wish to maintain downloadability, are expected to go through the onerous “Fab” migration process, which [does not support](#) the common Collada/DAE file format, [erases all usage statistics](#), and, worst of all, rejects many Creative Commons licenses, like CC0, that are used by museums such as [the Smithsonian](#): “Models that are currently licensable under CC0, CC BY-ShareAlike, CC BY-NonCommercial, or CC BY-NoDerivatives cannot migrate to Fab under those license types, as those licenses do not exist on Fab at this time.”

There is no benefit here. Epic wants to convince users that the site’s impending doom is a good thing, but “Fab” has received nothing but [widespread outcry](#). Users have reported that the transition process is [filled with technical failures](#) and [deeply demoralizing](#). “Educate, inform and add metadata to your content with Tags and Descriptions,” says Sketchfab's page [advertising to museums](#) — data that would be lost when starting over on the “Fab” store. And that very same Museums page promotes the download option. They know how important it is.

Why should academic research materials be forced onto a marketplace? And why should artists and model sellers be forced to re-set their statistics and start from scratch?

Epic Games claims this is an improvement to the site. Do not believe it. There is nothing wrong with Sketchfab in its current form, and its destruction would be a massive mistake for

the sake of profit. Epic will lose nothing by leaving Sketchfab intact. But if this site is destroyed, the world of digitized content would lose everything.

Individual users may be powerless to stop the ruination of Sketchfab in the face of Epic's attempt at a market monopoly. But I believe that a coordinated effort, spearheaded by its massive user-base, including research institutions, could save it. Please sign this petition, and send the link along to anyone you know. Thank you very much.

Threads of user objections:

[https://www.reddit.com/r/Sketchfab/comments/1fj7diz/epic\\_is\\_killing\\_the\\_sketchfab\\_marketplace\\_to/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Sketchfab/comments/1fj7diz/epic_is_killing_the_sketchfab_marketplace_to/)

[https://www.reddit.com/r/Sketchfab/comments/1fn18fe/this\\_fab\\_situation\\_need\\_to\\_stop\\_right\\_now/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Sketchfab/comments/1fn18fe/this_fab_situation_need_to_stop_right_now/)

[https://www.reddit.com/r/Sketchfab/comments/1fvd7de/fab\\_store\\_is\\_a\\_massive\\_downgrade\\_and\\_loss\\_of\\_stats/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Sketchfab/comments/1fvd7de/fab_store_is_a_massive_downgrade_and_loss_of_stats/)

[https://www.reddit.com/r/Sketchfab/comments/1fu0bcp/epics\\_new\\_fab\\_store\\_rejects\\_sketchfab\\_dae\\_format/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Sketchfab/comments/1fu0bcp/epics_new_fab_store_rejects_sketchfab_dae_format/)

[https://www.reddit.com/r/Sketchfab/comments/1fui6mo/help\\_with\\_migrating\\_sketchfab\\_assets\\_to\\_fab/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Sketchfab/comments/1fui6mo/help_with_migrating_sketchfab_assets_to_fab/)

## Original Text 11/10/2024

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