

Visual Resources

CRAIG NEWMARK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

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John Smock ©

There are many online sites and resources that offer photos, videos and graphics that are copyright free and free to use, even for commercial purposes. These are terrific resources for journos.

But they are not without limitations and drawbacks. Finding the right content can take time. Some archives are not organized or keyworded in a way that is easy to search. An understanding of [Boolean search terms and operators](#) is not essential but can be helpful.

While all offer royalty free content, you need to read the fine print for each image. Some sites have restrictions specific to some images and not others. Some sites have tiered levels of use -- they distinguish between educational use and commercial use, or they have specific language about altering images.

Credit the source and the producer whenever possible. Don't forget about [alt text](#).

Of course, original photo or video is always preferred.

PHOTO/VISUAL ARCHIVAL RESOURCE

- [Google](#) Advanced Image Search - search "Images" and then in the "Setting" dropdown menu choose "Advanced Search." Toward the bottom of the search criteria window you will see a box/filter option for Usage Rights. Select "Creative Commons" (the results are sometimes different than with the link below). This will display only images that are available for reuse in student stories. NOTE: The other option, "Commercial or other licenses," MAY require payment or permission. NOTE: A [Google Image](#) reverse search is a good method to help identify the origins of an image and perhaps copyright status.
- [Creative Commons](#) - one of the more popular sources for free and royalty free images online. Note the licensing language/information. Verify and credit when possible.
- [Getty Images](#) -- Getty is the World's largest photo agency and commercial repository of photos. Getty will allow you to use somewhat low resolution versions of many of its images FOR FREE. But (always a but) it allows this only through an embed code. When you do an image search you will see the embed code option for many of its images: </>. Copy the code. You need someplace for the code to live. Wordpress, for example, supports code. When viewers click on the image, it will take them to Getty.
- [Unsplash](#) - An example of the many archives of available stock images that are free and royalty free.
- [Pixabay](#) - A free stock image site that also offers illustrations, graphics and videos.

- [NYPL](#) - A rich archive of digital photography
- [Library of Congress](#) -- This is a page of free-to-use images and sets of images. Many other images in the LOC archive are also free to use. Not
- [NYC Mayor](#) Edward Adams and other politicians' sites offer images for free and for the media to use.
- [NY Governor Kathy Hochul](#) - She is a national figure and these pix are available.
- [Charles E. Schumer](#) - Another examples of a politician with available images and video
- [Ford Motor Company](#) media kits -- Private corporations have media kits with "hand outs" for the press.
- [Defense Visual Information Distribution Service](#) - This site is a rich source for photos, videos and other material about the U.S. military, much of which is held in the public domain. Some restrictions apply.
- [New York City Department of Records](#) - The site is tough to navigate and many of the images require payment but the NYCDR will often give exceptions for CUNY students and faculty.
- [Rare and Historical Photos](#) - Most if not all of the pix featured here are held in the public domain. If you scroll down to the bottom of the articles there will be a photo credit that lists (and sometimes links) to the source.
- [Picryl](#) - The site boasts that it is the largest repository (search engine, really) of archive photos and other visual resources in the world. It is pretty new to me but pretty promising.

VIDEO RESOURCES

- [Pixabay](#) - A free stock image site that also offers illustrations, graphics and videos.
- [Videvo](#) - free video stock footage
- [Prelinger Archive](#) - a resource for free vintage video clips and stills
- [Internet Archive Prelinger Archives : Free Movies : Free Download, Borrow and Streaming](#) - source for royalty free vids (and other content)

GRAPHIC RESOURCES

- [Iconfinder](#) - A repository of simple graphics and line art
- [SVG Sikh](#) - Another repository for simple but very large SVG graphics
- [The Noun Project](#) - Another repository of simple graphics.
- [EZ - GIF](#) - A free but fairly robust GIF-building tool that allows for some customization
- [Canva](#) - a very robust design platform that is beginning to introduce Visual AI features including avatar creation and image generation.
- [Chat Story Maker](#) - Allows you to create GIFs/vids that look like text messages.

VISUAL AI RESOURCES

- [Midjourney](#) - Built on Discord, Midjourney is an AI image generator and community. Images can be generated from text prompts or uploaded images
- [Dall - E2](#) - Similar to Midjourney, Dall-E2 offers greater photo realism and less stylization
- [FireFly](#) - Adobe's new AI generation software

- [Shutterstock](#) - a photo stock agency that features an AI tool trained on only copyrighted material.
- [Topaz](#) - An AI generator that can dramatically upscale and improve photo and video resolution.
- [Synthesia](#) - An AI video generation tool that features avatar creation.

AUDIO RESOURCES

- [Incompetech](#) - free (and almost free) music clips
- [dig.ccMixer](#) - another source for music
- [BBC Sound Effects](#) - an archive from the BBC of sound effects and an editing tool.