Creative Cloud Libraries Implementation Guide

Unlock the benefit of Creative Cloud Libraries for enterprise workflows

Creative Cloud Libraries speed workflow and help designers adhere to brand guidelines

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Executive Summary
Creative Cloud Libraries help to get work done faster by reducing clicks in the creative process. By making it easy for designers to use the right assets—and for enterprises to control the use of assets—Creative Cloud libraries improve efficiency up to 10x compared to traditional methods using file servers (see sidebar). The following use-cases are most often cited by our customers:

Corporate Style Guide
Store corporate colors, type styles and brand assets in a read-only library to maintain control and ensure that designers always have the most up-to-date assets.

Shared Project Libraries
Teams may easily share design elements, colors, text styles and assets when collaborating. Items and updates are automatically synchronized across all users.

User Experience Element Libraries
Web, mobile and UX design teams often reference buttons, menus and other user interface elements across multiple design projects. Approved elements can be applied in Adobe XD, and utilized as Components across multiple projects.

Independent Research Study
Pfeiffer Consulting LLC, an independent research firm, found that CC Libraries can greatly improve productivity. Download the report here: Adobe Creative Cloud Libraries: The Productivity Impact of Shared Assets and Setting

Corporate Style Guides are a good use case for Creative Cloud libraries. A Library curator can create a read-only library and share it with design staff. Designers may use elements from the library in their designs, but cannot edit the original brand assets. If the Library curator changes a brand asset, it is updated for all collaborators across all Creative Cloud applications and projects that reference the library item.
Why is a Library valuable for enterprise creative work?

Creative Cloud Libraries provide a mechanism to capture design assets from Adobe’s desktop and mobile apps. Additionally, assets from Adobe Stock or the Creative Cloud Market can equally be integrated into the Library.

Enterprise creative organizations may think about libraries as a curated brand asset repository—or live, real-time style guide, ensuring that any materials utilized from that library will be the most current versions of those files. Libraries have some unique qualities that help solve typical collaboration issues:

**Cross application**
Store frequently used elements from one app and use them in another

**Collaborative**
Share frequently used elements

**Performance**
Sync elements to your desktop so they work fast—even off-line without an internet connection

**Control**
Share via read-only invitation to offer enterprises control over brand

How do Creative Cloud Libraries work?

Library assets can be created in many ways: via drag and drop, clicking the Add Asset button at the bottom of the Libraries panel, or uploading through the browser. When a library asset is updated, it synchronizes with Creative Cloud and each subscribed user receives the change.

Users do not need to be online to use library assets as synchronization takes place when they reconnect. For example, if you travel, the next time your computer connects to the internet, the library will update with the most recent changes.

What's the difference between Creative Cloud Libraries and a DAM (Digital Asset Management) System?

Creative Cloud Libraries are not a replacement for a DAM. A DAM is primarily intended to maintain a large number of approved image assets. Creative Cloud Libraries are best suited for design components that speed in-application tasks such as creating and applying colors, paragraph styles, page elements and assets. Creative Cloud Libraries are synced to each user’s desktop. A DAM, by contrast, runs exclusively on a server or in the cloud.
What can go into a Creative Cloud Library?

Creative Cloud Libraries make your favorite assets available to you anywhere. You can add images, colors, text styles, and other attributes in several Creative Cloud desktop and mobile apps, and then easily access them across other desktop and mobile apps for a seamless creative workflow. Here are the applications and the elements they support:

- **Photoshop**
  - https://adobe.ly/2kWgWue
  - Graphics
  - Brushes
  - Layer styles
  - Character styles
  - Colors

- **Illustrator**
  - https://adobe.ly/1BSjexW
  - Graphics
  - Character styles
  - Colors and Color Themes
  - Paragraph styles
  - Character styles

- **InDesign**
  - https://adobe.ly/2kmbVio
  - Graphics
  - Paragraph styles
  - Character styles
  - Text
  - Colors and Color Theme

- **Bridge**
  - https://adobe.ly/2RuodXr
  - Graphics

- **Dimension**
  - https://adobe.ly/2L8zX6z
  - Models
  - Graphics
  - Colors
  - Character styles
  - Text

- **Adobe Stock**
  - https://adobe.ly/1R36Sn5
  - Images
  - 3D models
  - Video
  - Design templates
  - Motion Graphics templates

- **Premiere**
  - https://adobe.ly/1GjzjOG
  - Graphics
  - Layer Styles
  - Lumetri Color Looks

- **After Effects**
  - https://adobe.ly/2km7ttc
  - Graphics
  - Layer Styles
  - Character styles
  - Colors and Color Themes

- **Animate CC**
  - https://adobe.ly/2kWwaiM
  - Graphics
  - Colors and Color Themes
  - Brushes
  - Vector Brushes

- **Premiere Rush**
  - https://adobe.ly/2V2FuzR
  - Motion Graphics templates
You can add and manage your assets in your libraries using Bridge and easily access those elements in many of the Creative Cloud apps. Easily collect and organize images, colors, text styles, and other elements created across Creative Cloud desktop and mobile apps. Reuse and modify these elements and attributes across projects, devices, other Creative Cloud apps, and teams—all from the Creative Cloud Libraries panel.

The Libraries panel in Bridge CC lets you bulk upload your graphics. Do one of the following:
- Drag and drop assets from the Content panel to the Libraries panel.
- Drag and drop the assets directly from File Explorer (Windows) or Finder (macOS) into the Libraries panel.
Create and Share a Read-only Library for a Corporate Style Guide

A read-only access library ensures your creative assets stored in Creative Cloud remain unchanged and can't be deleted by other collaborators while still being made available for use by your team.

Step 1: Create the library
A library can be created inside the creative application of choice. From the Window menu, choose Libraries (CC Libraries in InDesign) then follow the below steps:

1. From the hamburger icon, click Create New Library, or from the Libraries panel, click the library list dropdown and choose Create New Library.

2. Type in the name of the new library and click Create.

3. The new library, Altura assets, may now be populated with design components.

What's the difference between Collaborate and Share Link?
Collaborate allows multiple users to work together securely and only with others who have been invited. Share Link creates a public link that lets anyone with the link to download a copy of your library. The copy is completely independent and not linked to the original.
Step 2: Add design assets and elements to libraries
Creative Cloud Libraries provide a mechanism to capture design elements from a variety of apps, and are not limited to desktop applications. You can capture inspiration, whenever it strikes, using the mobile app, Adobe Capture, or even download assets from Adobe Stock.

Adobe Stock is integrated with Creative Cloud Libraries
Adobe Stock is deeply integrated with Creative Cloud Libraries. You can add a watermarked preview of a Stock asset to any of your libraries directly, using the Adobe Stock website. Then, in Creative Cloud apps that support Libraries—Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Premiere Pro, After Effects, Premiere Rush, Dimension and Adobe Animate—you can drag the watermarked stock asset from the Libraries panel to your creative project. When you’re satisfied that the stock asset is appropriate for your project, you can choose to license the stock asset directly from within the Libraries panel. Creative Cloud apps that support library-linked assets—Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Premiere Pro, After Effects—take this integration a notch deeper. When you license the stock asset, all linked instances of the stock image in your open documents are automatically updated. In Photoshop, any non-destructive edits made to the asset are automatically preserved—potentially saving hours of rework.

1. With the Selection Tool, target the appropriate layer or layer group.
2. Click the Add Content button (+) and a contextual menu appears enabling you to add whatever is on the selected layer. In this case, click the Graphic checkbox, and then click the Add button.
3. The added content uses the layer group name, 07c Stories, as the default asset name. Assets can be viewed in list or thumbnail mode.
4. The asset type is recorded when the element is dragged into the Libraries panel.

Use Descriptive Names for Library Items
To change the name of a library asset, double-click an asset’s title to rename it.
Add Color Swatches
Standardization is key when formulating brand compliance. A good start is placing swatch colors in a library. This eliminates screen capture sampling and simplifies color communication.

1. Use the Eyedropper tool to select the color of interest. The chosen color appears in the color picker swatch at the bottom of the Tools panel.

2. Click the Add Content button (+) at the bottom of the Libraries panel. A contextual menu will appear enabling you to add whatever is on the selected layer. In this case, click the Foreground Color checkbox, and then click the Add button.

3. The selected color has been added to the library file. The color value (HEX, RGB, CMYK, Pantone) is recorded as well.

Library Color Support
If you need to change a color name to match the standards for your brand compliance team, right click on the color name to rename. You can also right click on a color swatch to add a Note. This can be helpful to provide context for when certain colors are applicable to design components. Creative Cloud mobile apps do not support spot colors. Mobile apps will convert spot colors to RGB.
Add Paragraph and Character Styles
After color swatches, standardizing typographic styles is critical in maintaining brand compliance. The process is similar to the previous steps for capturing colors.

1. Select a text layer containing the desired style elements.

2. Click the Add Content button (+) at the bottom of the Libraries panel. A contextual menu will appear allowing you to add whatever is on the selected layer. In this case, click the Character Style.

3. The Character Style uses the font names as the title. This can be edited later if desired. A description of the style is listed underneath the name.

Paragraph Styles Note
Creative Cloud mobile apps do not support Paragraph styles. The mobile apps only support Character styles. Some applications—such as Photoshop—only support Character Styles.
Using Library Assets in your Work

Once assets are saved to CC Libraries, you can reuse them in your designs—in the same file, another project, or another app—without worrying that you’ll grab the wrong versions.

To add a graphic asset to your project, drag it directly from the library onto your Illustrator artboard, Photoshop canvas, InDesign layout, Premiere Pro and After Effects project, Premiere Rush timeline, Animate timeline, or Adobe Dimension workspace.

To apply layer styles, colors, and text styles, select an object in your project and click the thumbnail of the desired library asset.

The following example utilizes Photoshop.

1. Open or create a new document. Open the Libraries panel, then drag the Library item to the canvas.

2. Adjust the transform handles to scale the item, then click the Commit button (or press Enter).

Place Linked and Place Copy:
What’s the difference?

Library-linked assets are instances that stay associated with the original asset in the library. When the original asset in the library is changed, all instances in your documents are automatically updated.

Unlinked assets, on the other hand, are embedded in your document documents and are not updated automatically when the original asset changes.

Right-click any library asset to access the Place Linked and Place Copy options.
Add Editors and Viewers for Collaboration

Initiate a ‘Collaboration’ from your Creative Cloud account to provide colleagues ‘edit’ or ‘view’ access to your CC Library.

When you provide ‘Can Edit’ permission to a library, collaborators can use, modify, rename, move and delete library content. ‘Can View’ permission provides recipients with linked use of assets only. These collaborators benefit from real-time updates to any changes but have no edit access.

Share a public library with more confidence when you allow someone to ‘follow’ it. When someone follows your library, they can not delete nor change the assets. When you update the assets, everyone following your library will automatically receive updates to all the assets in that library.

These collaborators can be added through the Libraries panel, or through the browser-based Creative Cloud Libraries page.

1. From the Libraries panel, click the flyout menu and choose Collaborate.
2. To initiate a Collaboration or Share via the web, click the Share icon in the upper right corner of the browser. Selecting ‘Invite’ is the same as selecting ‘Collaborate’ in app. Selecting ‘Get Link’ is the same as selecting ‘Share Link’ in app.
3. Type the email of the collaborator you want to invite. Also choose whether they “Can edit” or “Can view” materials in the library. After choosing their access permissions type, click Invite.
4. Collaborators must accept the invitation to gain access to the library by either:
   - Accepting the notification in the Creative Cloud app
   - By clicking the link in the email invitation sent to them

What’s the difference between Owner, Editor and Viewer?

Collaborators who are owners or have ‘Can edit’ access can use, modify, rename, move and delete library content. Owners and Editors may also change the permissions for other collaborators.

Collaborators with ‘Can view’ permissions cannot make any changes. They can see who the Owner and other collaborators are, but they cannot modify any collaboration permissions.

Best Practice: Add at least one Editor
It is important to have at least one editor associated with a library in case the library curator isn’t available to make a critical change or leaves the organization.
You can use assets in libraries as linked assets or copied assets in your Photoshop documents.

Assets in a library can be applied to documents as linked or copies (unlinked). Linked assets are instances that stay associated with the original asset in the library. When the original asset gets updated—including any effects applied, all instances of its use are automatically updated across all documents. Linked-assets in libraries are similar in behavior to Smart-Objects.

Here is how a Linked-Asset workflow would work in Photoshop:

1. Carol has Edit privileges to a shared library. She double clicks on a library item to edit it.
2. Carol saves her changes to the Library item. The Library item is updated on her local drive and synced to Creative Cloud and to all her collaborators.
3. Matt is working on a document which uses the Library item. He sees a warning that the Library item is out of date, so he updates it from the Links panel.
4. The Library item used in Matt’s document is updated.

Asset copies, on the other hand, become unlinked and embedded in your Photoshop documents. They are decoupled from the original asset in the library. Asset copies placed in your documents are not updated automatically when the original asset changes.

Updating Library Elements varies by application
Adobe applications vary in how they display and update out of date links to assets.
Creatives need options to group assets for easy access and organization. Creative Cloud Libraries offers the ability to View by Group and the ability to create groups according to custom group names. When viewing your library of groups, you can change the order of your library assets within the groups, as well as change the order of groups within the library.

Organizing Library Elements

1. Libraries can be viewed by Type or by Group.
2. To create a Group, choose View by Group and then click Create Group.
3. Drag items into the group window, or SHIFT click to select, and then CTRL click and choose from Group options.
4. Rename the Group by clicking the ellipsis and choose Rename Group.
5. The selected items are nested inside the source Library item. More than one Group can be present in a Library.

So who controls these groups?
Drag and drop the library assets within the group or between groups to specify the order. By default, the assets are sorted in chronological order—the recently added assets are listed at the top. When you change the order of assets in a group, the same order is visible across all applications and to the collaborators of the library.
As valuable as collaborating, moving and updating library assets inside the creative applications is, there may be occasions where being able to see, sort, and search across multiple Libraries could be useful.

1. Go to https://assets.adobe.com. From the assets page, click the Libraries link to view the libraries you own or have been shared with you.

2. Sharing a Library can be done by clicking the ellipsis and choosing Invite or Get Link.

3. Libraries can be viewed by type or by group, and sorted by date modified. Adding collaborators can also be achieved by clicking the Share icon at the top right of the browser.

Swatch Only Libraries

CC Libraries are a great way to share a set of colors with colleagues or partners. Simply add in the swatches from source applications and share a View only link. Some brand guidelines may ask for RGB, CMYK, HEX, or spot colors. You can either create multiple libraries, one for each color space, or, create a single library and organize the colors by groups.
Sharing common assets like graphics, colors, and character styles in a team library makes it easy to collaborate and maintain consistency across projects. Assign editing access to team members to allow them to make changes to assets, and assign view-only access to others. Any updates made will appear in the library automatically.

1. Libraries can be accessed through the Creative Cloud mobile app.
2. Login with your credentials to see your collection.
3. Scroll through your collection and click to enter into that Library.
4. Double click an asset to add comments.
5. Use the markup tools to add comments for other participants to see.

Everywhere access
Your libraries are available from within Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Premiere Pro, After Effects, Animate, XD, Dimension, and Creative Cloud Assets. They’re also available from within mobile apps like Adobe Capture, Premiere Rush, Adobe Comp, Adobe Sketch, and Illustrator Draw. They’re even accessible when you’re offline.
You can export libraries and import them as new libraries, retaining linkage of elements from the original. This will allow you to take a library off-line and store it for future use.

1. Click the Options menu at the upper-right corner of the Library panel and then choose Export <library_name>.

2. The Export Library pop-up is displayed on top of the panel. In the pop-up, click Select Folder.

3. In the Select a Folder dialog box, browse and select the location where you want to save the library. Click Save.

4. In the Export Library pop-up, the selected location is displayed. Click Export.

5. A confirmation is displayed. Click OK.

Top three reasons to export libraries
Clone it: Creating a CC library for one seasonal promotion can save a lot of time when the next season rolls around.
Pass the baton: If your role changes, you can export those libraries, and store the files for the new owner to import.
Keep it safe: Store libraries off-line until they’re ready to reintegrate into current design projects.
Working with Adobe Stock

Adobe Stock is deeply integrated with Creative Cloud Libraries. You can add a watermarked preview of a stock image to any of your libraries directly using the Adobe Stock website. Then you can drag the stock image from the Libraries panel to your creative project. When you’re satisfied that the stock image is appropriate for your project, you can choose to license the stock image directly from within the Libraries panel.

1. Choose Adobe Stock from the Libraries pulldown
2. Search for an item of interest, and the return of images, Premium content, or videos will appear in the panel
3. If a blue checkmark is present on an asset, that indicates it is already licensed
4. Hover over the asset to download a watermarked or high resolution image
5. Clicking the download icon will place the image in the active Library inside the Library panel

Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign take this integration a notch deeper. Once you’ve licensed the asset, all instances of the watermarked asset in your open documents are automatically updated to the high-resolution licensed stock asset.
Best Practices and considerations for Corporate Style Guide Libraries
Libraries can give your creative teams peace of mind by helping ensure brand consistency across the wide spectrum of assets utilized in visual treatments. Before jumping into full blown production with Creative Cloud libraries, consider some of the best practices below.

RGB vs CMYK Assets
Libraries do not offer a method to filter items by color space. There are two possible workarounds:
1. Add text to the library asset name such as Logo (RGB) or Logo (CMYK).
2. Create separate RGB and CMYK libraries.

Resolution Considerations
Some disciplines such as UX design require specific resolution source files. Libraries do not offer a method to filter by size or resolution. Consider these workarounds:
1. Add text to the library asset name such as “1920x1080 Logo” or “1024x768 Logo.”
2. Create separate libraries for each resolution needed.

Spot Color Support
You may add spot colors to Libraries and they are supported between Illustrator and InDesign. Spot colors are not supported in Adobe mobile apps.

Naming conventions
Be mindful about naming library elements. The only way to find library elements is either visually or by searching for text in the item name. Be consistent in your naming scheme.

Avoid multi-level links
Libraries do not support multi-level links. For example, do not create a create a library item containing another library item. Similarly, do not create a library item with a link dependency to another file on your local file system or server. Embedded links work fine, so that is a useful workaround.

What is the difference between a nested and an embedded link?
A nested link has a dependency on another library item. Adobe applications cannot resolve nested links and the content may be rendered incorrectly or be reported as out of date. An embedded link is incorporated and present in the library item itself.

Do CC Libraries count against storage quota?
No, libraries do not count against the storage quota for each user who accepts an invitation to a library.

Not all apps treat properties the same
If you use an InDesign text style asset in Illustrator or Photoshop, those applications will attempt to map the properties of the asset with the properties for text styles available in the host application. Any properties not found in the host application are ignored.

Recommended number items in the library
While Libraries can contain up to 1000 elements, we recommend the use of groups to more efficiently organize assets. Scrolling through very large libraries can be tedious.

Element “weight”
Consideration needs to be given towards individual asset file size. Libraries are a mechanism of synchronization – huge files take time to upload. Remember that other creatives may be using the same library. Elements like color looks, swatches, paragraph and character styles are negligible, while assets like multi-layer high resolution Photoshop content are heavy assets.

Always add at least one editor to a read-only library
It is likely that you will need to add or update library elements over time. We recommend adding at least one editor to a library. If the library owner is not available, an editor can make the changes necessary to keep you on deadline.

Share the library before you share a document which has links to it
When multiple creatives across many teams need access to files utilizing library assets, it is a best practice to share the library first. If the source file is shared first, then applications will report missing links and each cloud asset will need to be relinked. Always share the library first.

Relinking to a different library is time-consuming
It is a lot of work to redirect links from one library to a different one because each link must be updated individually.
Library Ownership and Continuity

Since organizations may have multiple people and projects dependent on libraries, it is a good idea to put some thought into library ownership since there are business continuity implications.

The identity type of the library owner can affect the longevity and security of assets.

Enterprise and Federated ID

Libraries belonging to Enterprise ID or Federated ID users only exist if the user is part of the organization and has a storage entitlement.

Therefore, any user who is subscribed to a library owned by an Enterprise ID/Federated ID will lose access to it if the storage entitlement is lost by the owner, which can happen when an account is deleted or the user is removed from an entitlement which includes storage.

Conclusion

No one likes searching through multiple servers, local files, or worse, reach back in to older projects to look for sanctioned, on-brand assets. Creative Cloud libraries allow enterprises to easily roll out a curated, brand repository which is the "one source of truth" for design components in your organization.

While Creative Cloud libraries are simple to use, organizations should have a good understanding of how they work in order to derive maximum benefit.

What happens when a library owner deletes the library?

When a library is deleted by the asset curator, all the elements linked to the library will remain in the various files, projects and timelines. They will not disappear. Also, those assets will remember they were formerly associated with a library. Assets will display error messages stating a relink is required. You can either embed the asset in the file or drag the asset into a new library.