

VALENTINE REMIX

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As Valentine's Day approached, copyright librarian Perry Collins saw an opportunity to engage students looking for a creative way to express affection for their loved ones. Together with fellow librarians Lisa Campbell and Chelsea Johnston, Collins developed a workshop to transform out-of-copyright materials into unique cards.

Navigating the complexities of copyright law is a challenge for everyone, and the Libraries work closely with students and instructors to improve their understanding of ways to legally repurpose archival collections, publications, and other sources for their own research and creative endeavors. To avoid overwhelming our audience with legal jargon, we focus on interactive programming and use welcoming language that empowers everyone to make responsible decisions on their own.

Students (along with quite a few of our creative library colleagues) gathered in Library West to assemble this collection of public domain images and texts together with heart-shaped paper cutouts, stickers, and personalized greetings. The Libraries also mailed over 50 postcards with some of our favorite images for those without time to make their own creations. Throughout the workshop, library employees chatted with students about copyright and the public domain and made sure everyone received a bookmark with helpful tips for using digital content legally and ethically.

Until the 1980s, a printed copyright statement on published items was required for protection; lacking this, materials such as this label often fell into the public domain.

Fred S. Johnston, Inc., "So-Sweet Brand," citrus label, University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries Special Collections.





This event, Valentine Remix, took advantage of vast swaths of online public domain materials, most too old to receive protection under copyright law and legally available to reuse without explicit permission.



These included scenes of love and friendship, playful kittens, elaborate textiles, and intricate paper Valentines from the 19th century. From the Libraries' Special and Area Studies Collections came one especially popular example, a "So-Sweet" brand citrus crate label. All of these have been made available digitally not only by UF, but also by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Library of Congress, and other institutions.

