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

Adobe

Executive Summary

Creative Cloud Libraries provide easy, intuitive access to important design components such as color swatches, paragraph and character styles, document elements and vector and image-based assets in a panel within Adobe creative applications.

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:
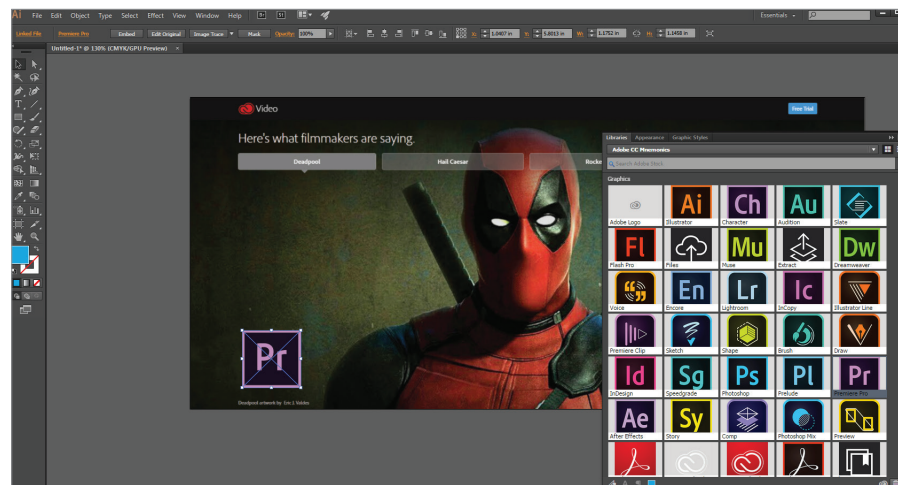
Corporate Style Guide

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 between 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 may be easily added and updated. Asset changes automatically take place across multiple projects.

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.

10x FASTER
with CC Libraries

Independent Research Study on Creative Cloud Libraries

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

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. To promote mobility benefits, enterprise creatives can capture inspiration, whenever and wherever it strikes, using the family of Creative Cloud mobile apps that work with assets from Adobe Stock or the Creative Cloud Market.

Enterprise creative organizations may think about libraries as a curated brand asset repository, or even a living style guide, that will ensure that any materials utilized from that library will be the most current variants of those files. Libraries have some unique qualities that help solve typical collaboration issues:

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

Collaborative
Share frequently used elements

Performance
Sync elements to your desktop so they work fast, even offline without a connection

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

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 to design components which speed in-application tasks such as 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.
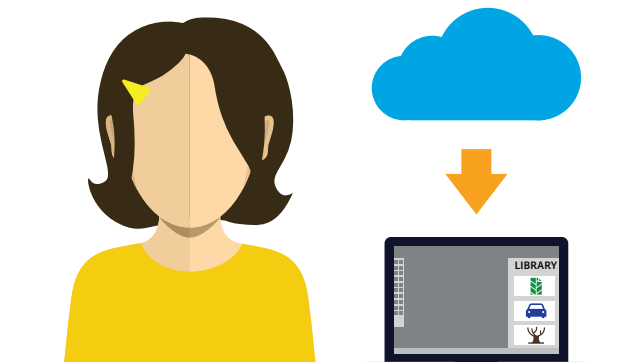
How do Creative Cloud Libraries work?

Library assets can be created in many ways: via drag and drop, clicking the Add Asset button, 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 connect to the internet the library will update with the most recent changes.

1 Ashton creates a Library and drags items into it. The library is saved locally on his computer and syncs to Creative Cloud.

2 Ashton invites Emily to the Library he created.
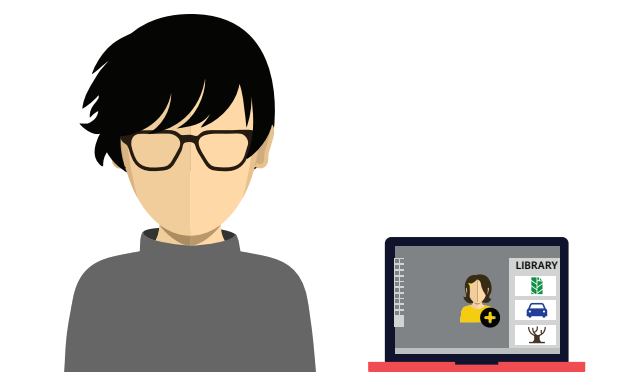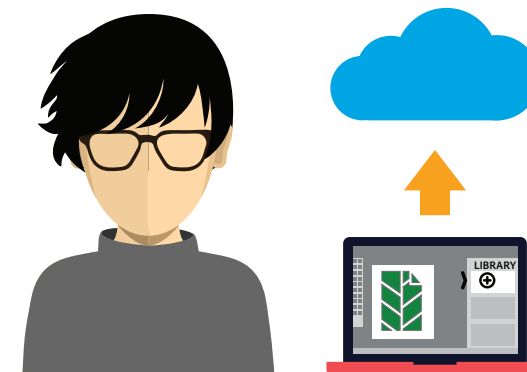
3 Emily accepts the invitation to the Library.

4 The Library and its contents are synced from Creative Cloud to Emily's computer.

What can go into a Creative Cloud Library?

Creative Cloud Libraries, powered by Adobe CreativeSync technology, make your favorite assets available to you anywhere. You can create images, colors, text styles, and more in several Creative Cloud desktop and mobile apps, and then easily access them across other desktop and mobile apps for a seamless creative workflow.

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

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

InDesign
https://adobe.ly/2kmbVIo
Graphics
Paragraph styles
Character styles
Colors and Color Theme

Muse
https://adobe.ly/2kYFgsb
Graphics
Animations
Colors and Color Themes

Premiere
https://adobe.ly/1GJzJOG
Graphics
Layer Styles
Lumetri Color Looks

After Effects
https://adobe.ly/2km7tt
Graphics
Layer Styles
Character styles
Colors and Color Themes

Animate CC
https://adobe.ly/2kWwaiM
Graphics
Colors and Color Themes
Brushes
Vector Brushes
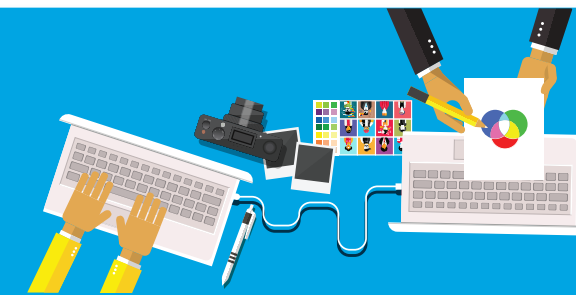
Create and Share a Read-only Library for a Corporate Style Guide

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.
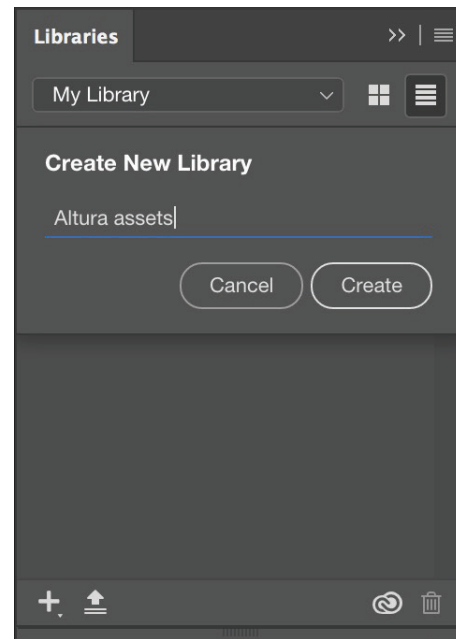
Step 1: Create the library

A library can be created inside the creative application of choice, and can be based on brand guidelines, projects or asset types.
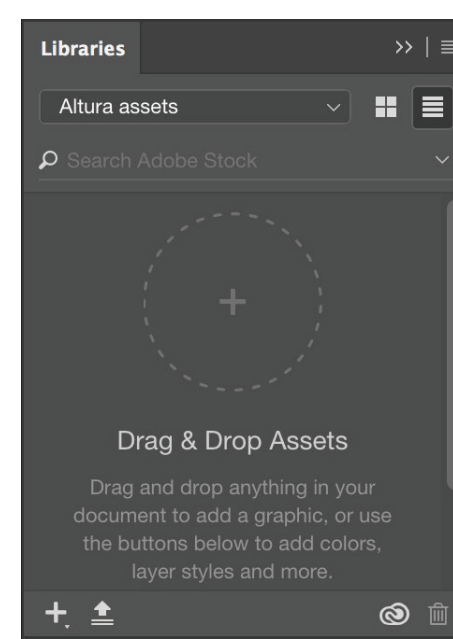
1 From the Libraries panel, click the **library list dropdown**. Click **Create New Library**.
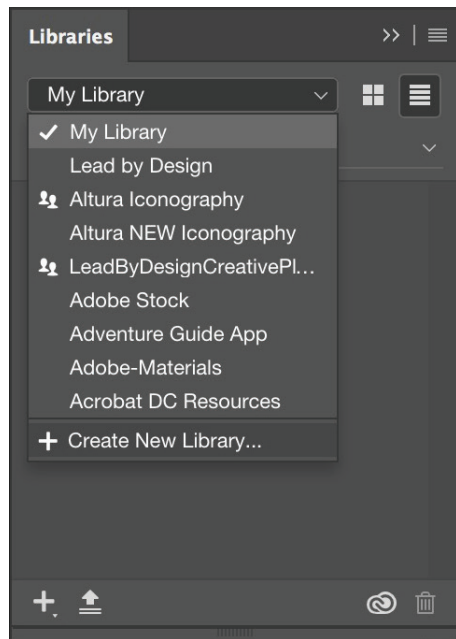
2 Type in the name of the new library and click **Create**.

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. 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 components to libraries

Creative Cloud Libraries provide a mechanism to capture design assets from a variety of apps, and are not limited to desktop applications.
You can capture inspiration, whenever it strikes, using the family of Creative Cloud mobile apps or even download assets from Adobe Stock.
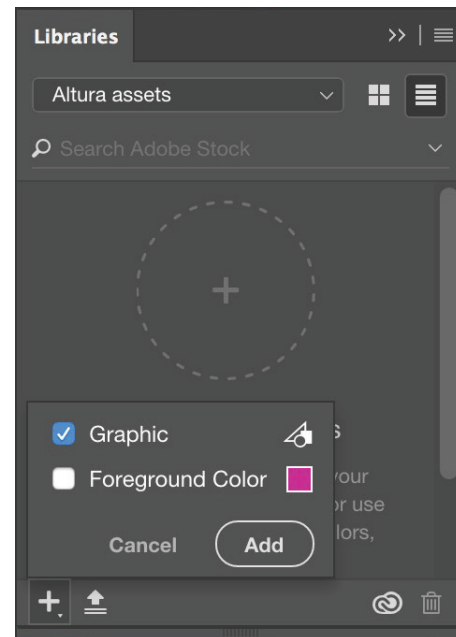
Ps The following example utilizes Photoshop.

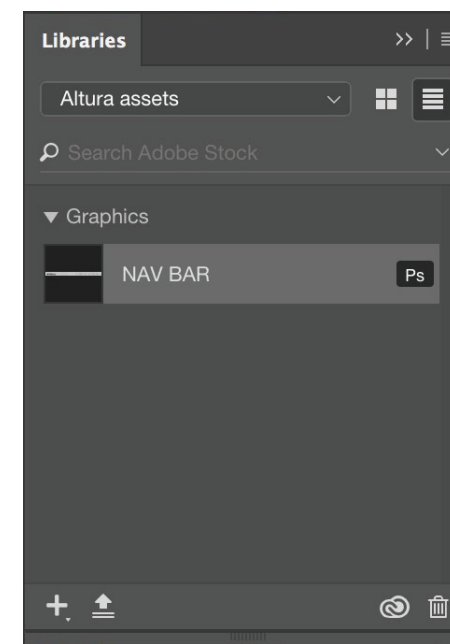**1** With the Selection Tool, target the appropriate layer or layer group.
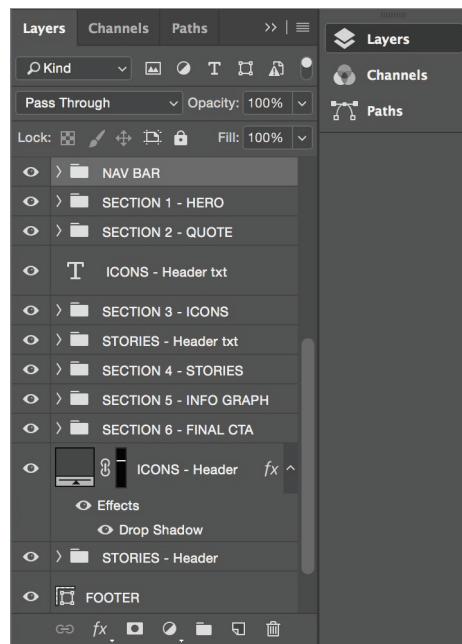
2 Click the **Add Content** button (+) and a contextual menu appears which allows you to add whatever is on the selected layer.
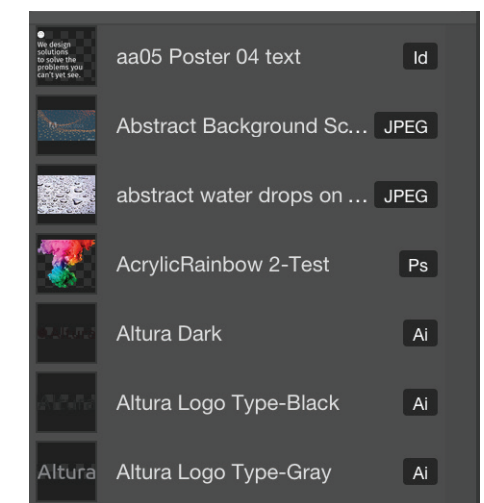
In this case, click the **Graphic** checkbox, and then click the **Add** button.

3 The added content uses the layer group name, NAV BAR, as the default asset name.

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.

## 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, and After Effects, Animate and Muse—you can drag the watermarked 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. Creative Cloud apps that support library-linked assets— Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign—take this integration a notch deeper. When you license the stock image, all linked instances of the stock image in your open documents are automatically updated and any edits that you made to the asset are automatically preserved, saving hours of rework.

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.
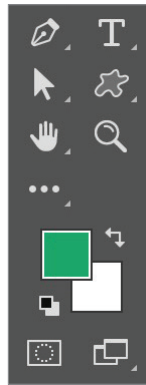
2 Click the **Add Content** button (+) at the bottom of the Libraries panel. A contextual menu will appear allowing you to add whatever is on the selected layer. In this case, click the **Foreground Color** checkbox, and then click the **Add** button.
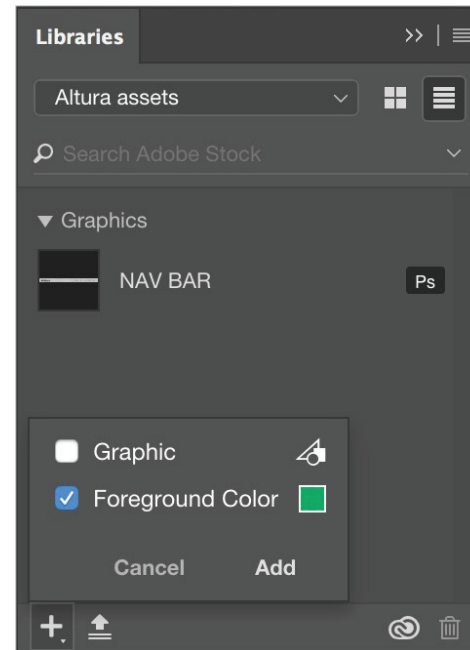
3 The selected color has been added to the library file. The color value (HEX, RGB, CMYK, Pantone) is recorded as well.
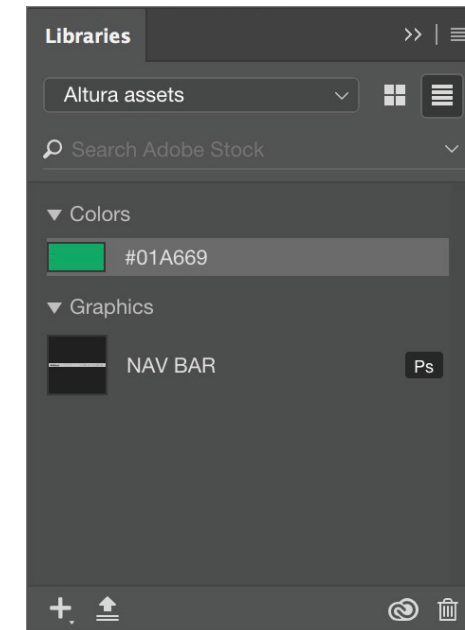
Library Color Support
Creative Cloud mobile apps do not support spot colors. Mobile apps will convert spot colors to RGB.
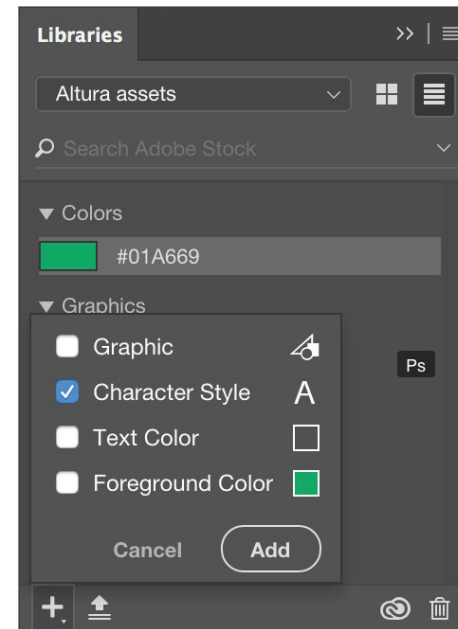
Add Paragraph and Character Styles

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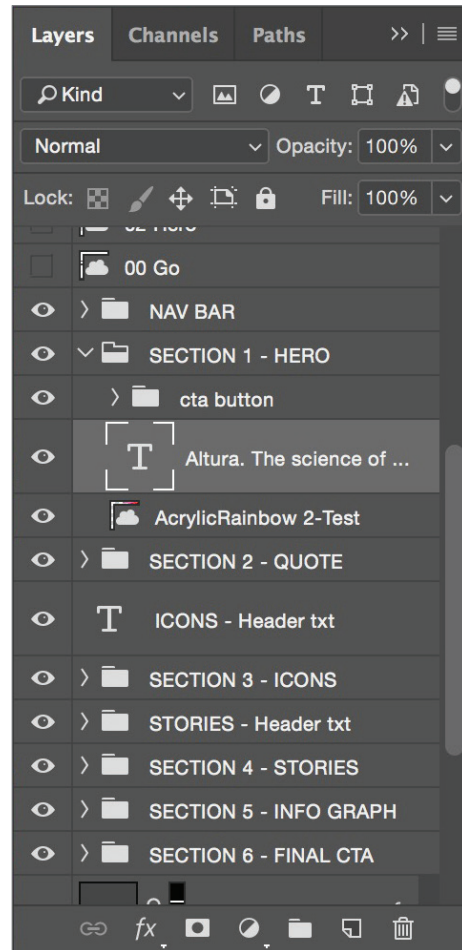
2 Click the **Add Content** button (+) at the bottom of the Libraries panel. A contextual menu will appear allowing you to add whatever is on the selected layer. In this case, click the **Character Style** checkbox, and then click the **Add** button.

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.
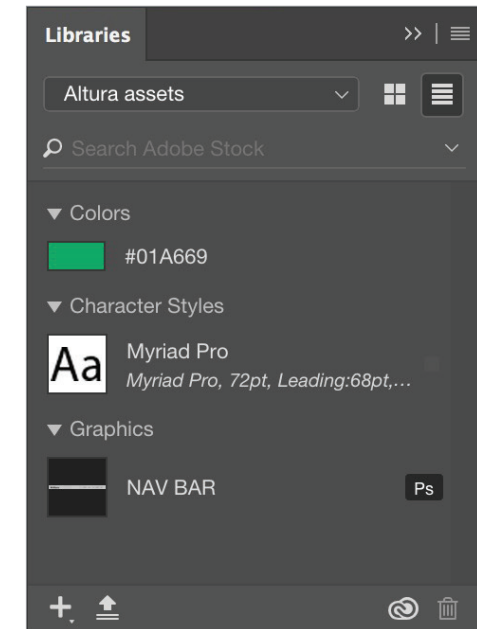
Paragraph Styles Note
Creative Cloud mobile apps do not support Paragraph styles. The mobile apps only support Character styles. Some applications— such as Photoshop— only support Character Styles.

Using Library Elements 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 or Animate timeline, or web page layout in Dreamweaver or Muse.

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).
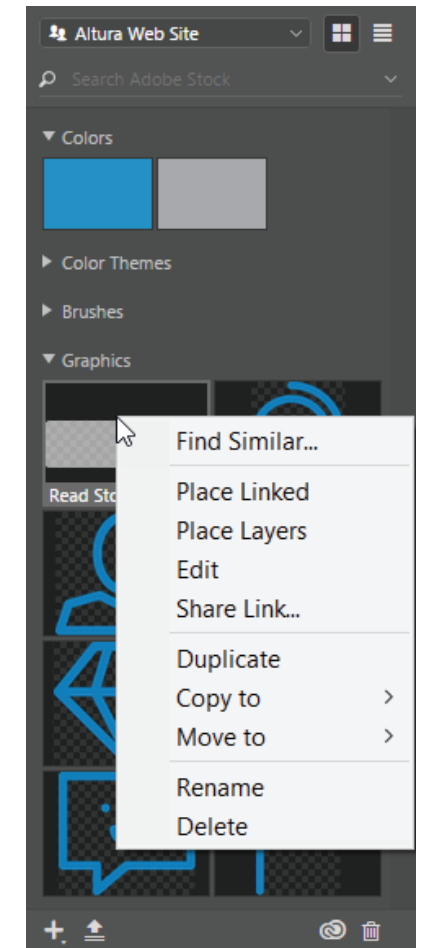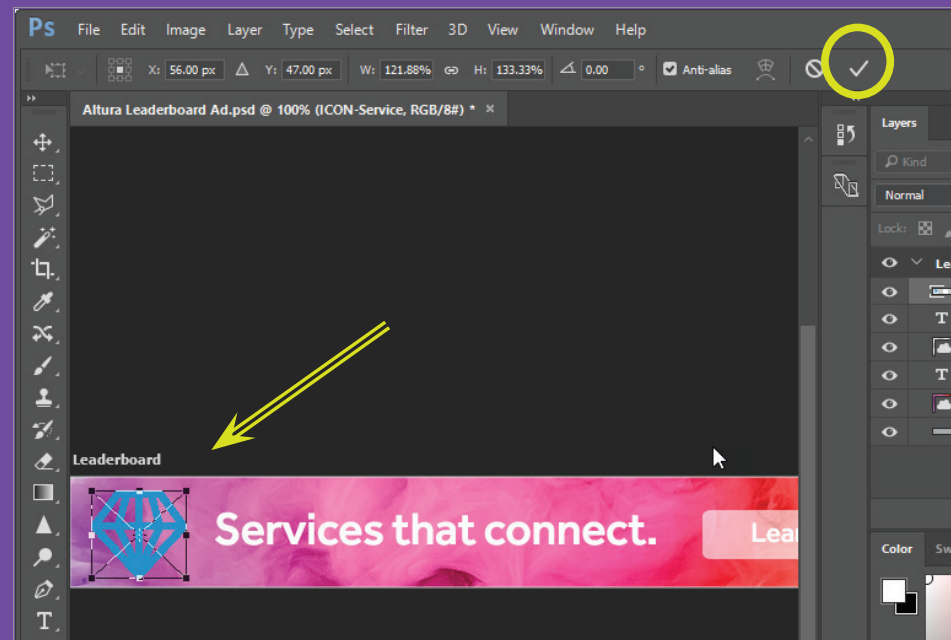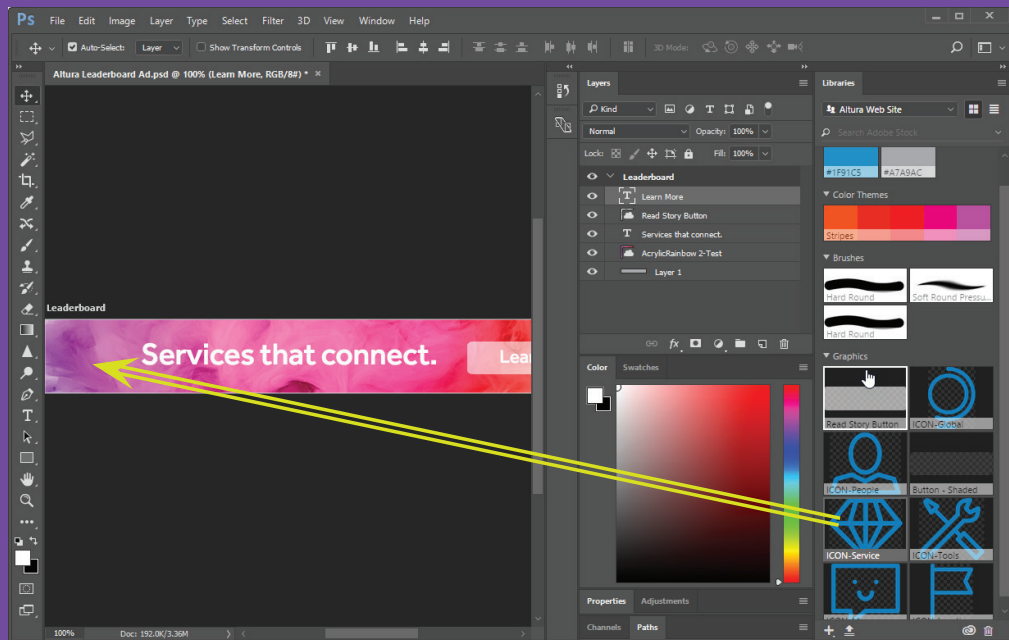
Place Linked and Place Copy: What's the difference?

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

You can collaborate with fellow creatives to share a Creative Cloud library or folder from your Creative Cloud account.

While adding collaborators to a library, you can choose whether they receive Edit-level permissions (edit, rename, move, and delete contents) or View-level permissions (only view the contents of the library and comment on them).

You can also create followable libraries. Anyone who has the URL of such a library can follow it. Whenever you update the contents of the library, followers automatically get the updates across all supported Creative Cloud apps.

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...
A web browser window will be launched.
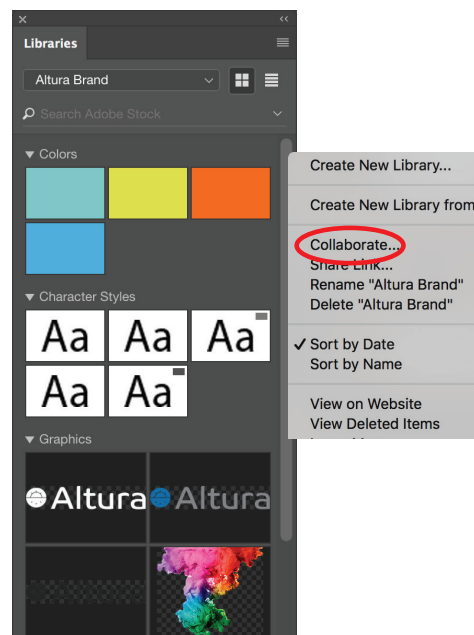
2 Type the email of the collaborator you want to invite. Also choose whether they "Can edit" or "Can view" materials in the library. After choosing their viewing permissions, click **Invite**.
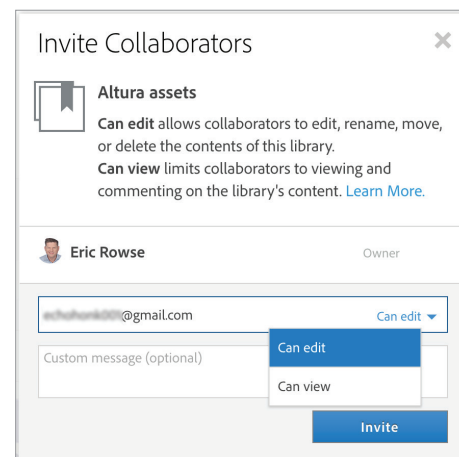
3 After clicking the **Invite** button, the collaborator is added. To revoke access to a library, click the "X" next to the collaborator's name.
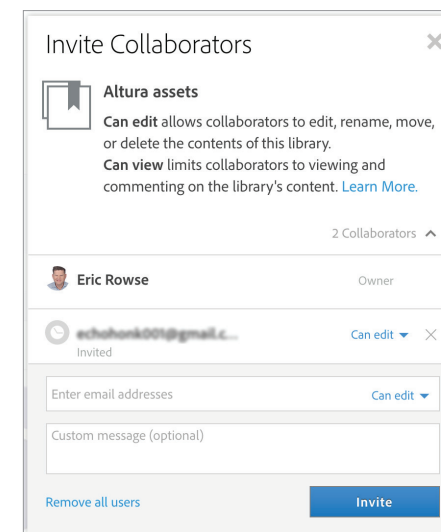
4 Collaborators must accept the invitation to gain access to the library by either
- Accepting the notification in the Creative Cloud app
- By clicking the link in the email invitation sent to them

Email Invitation

Creative Cloud App
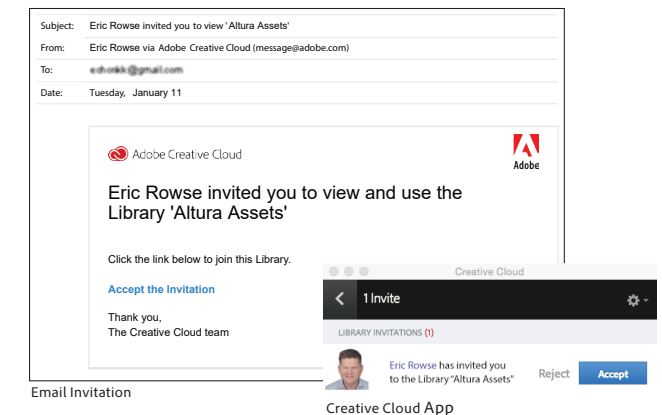
What's the difference between Owner, Editor and Viewer?
Collaborators who are owners or have "Can edit" access can edit, move and delete assets.
Owners and Editors may also change the permissions for other collaborators.

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.
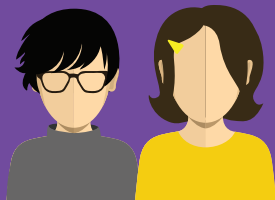
Best Practice: Add at least one Editor
It is important to have at least one editor associated with a library in case the library curator isn't available to make a critical change.

Update or Change Library Elements

You can use assets in libraries as linked assets or unlinked assets in your Photoshop documents.

Library-linked assets are instances that stay associated with the original asset in the library. When the original asset in the library is updated, all instances in your Photoshop documents are automatically updated. Any effects that you applied to the instances are retained as well. Library-linked assets are similar in behavior to Linked Smart Objects.

The illustration below describes a Linked Asset workflow:

1 Carol has Edit privleges for 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.

Unlinked assets, on the other hand, are embedded in your Photoshop documents and are decoupled from the original asset in the library.
Unlinked assets are not updated automatically when the original asset changes.
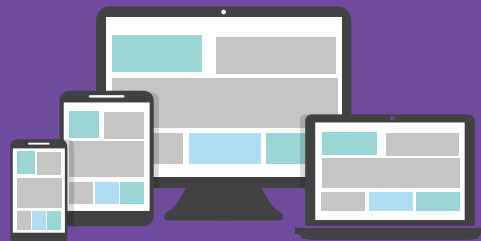
**Updating Libary Elements varies by application**
Adobe applications vary in how they display and update out of date links to assets.

Managing Libraries on the Web

As valuable as collaborating, moving and updating library assets inside the creative applications is, there may be an occasion where being able to see, sort, and search across multiple Libraries could be useful.

Library participants can log into https://assets.adobe.com to see all the Libraries they've authored or to which you have been invited to participate.

1 Go to https://assets.adobe.com. From the assets page, click the Libraries link to view the libraries you've authored or to which you have been invited to participate.
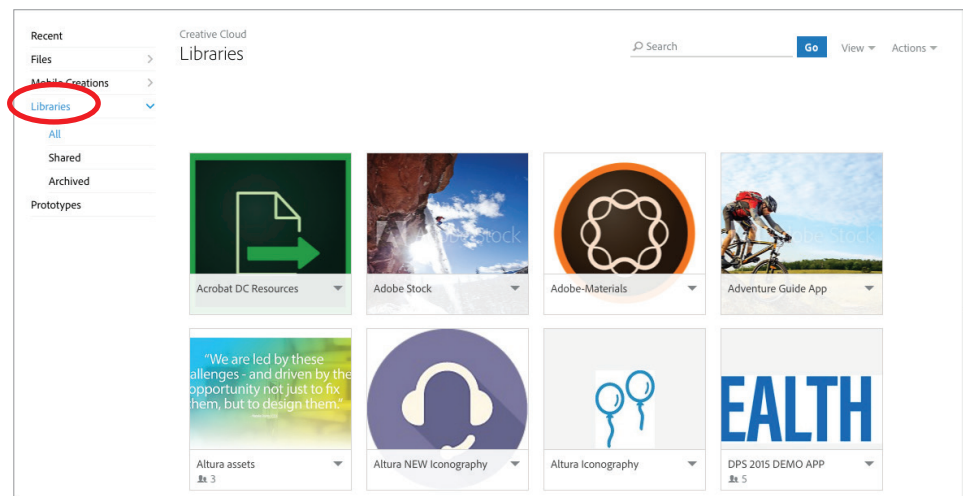
2 The **View** menu allows you to view and sort your libraries by Grid, List, Date, Name, Ascending or Descending.
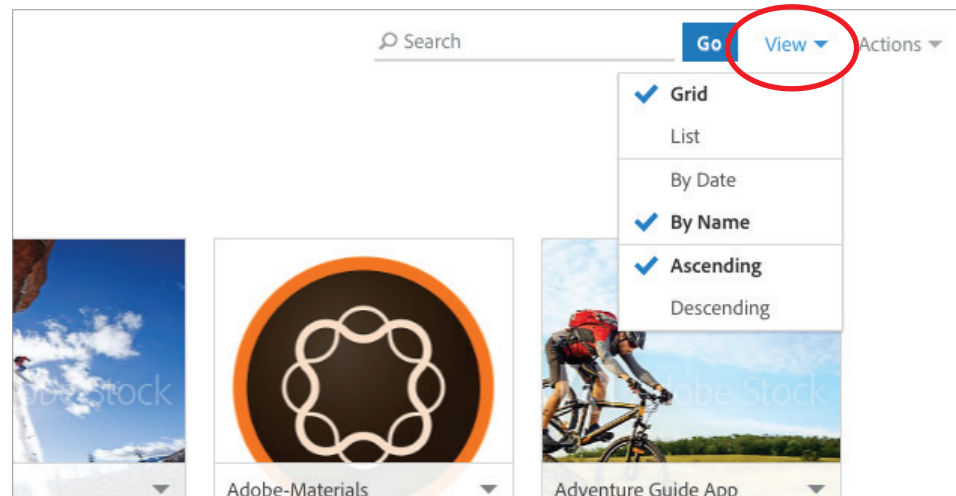
3 The Libraries > Shared link lists which libraries have already been shared with the colleagues and collaborators.
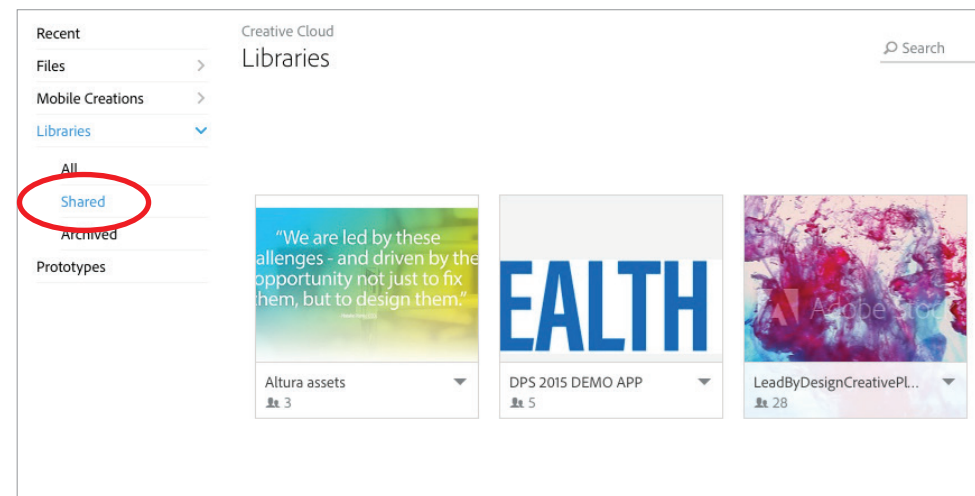
Swatch Only Libraries
CC Libraries are a great way to share a set of colors with colleagues or partners. Simply add in the swatches from source applications and share a View only link

Working with Archived Library Elements

As libraries follow the life span of a project or campaign you may no longer need some of the design assets. You do not have to make the hard choice of which assets to delete or keep. When you delete an item in the library— either via the panel in a desktop application or via the Assets website's Archive option, it will be removed from the library panel of your collaborators. However, if you made a mistake or need to resurface the deleted assets, you can use the web interface to restore the item from the Libraries archive.

1 Go to https://assets.adobe.com
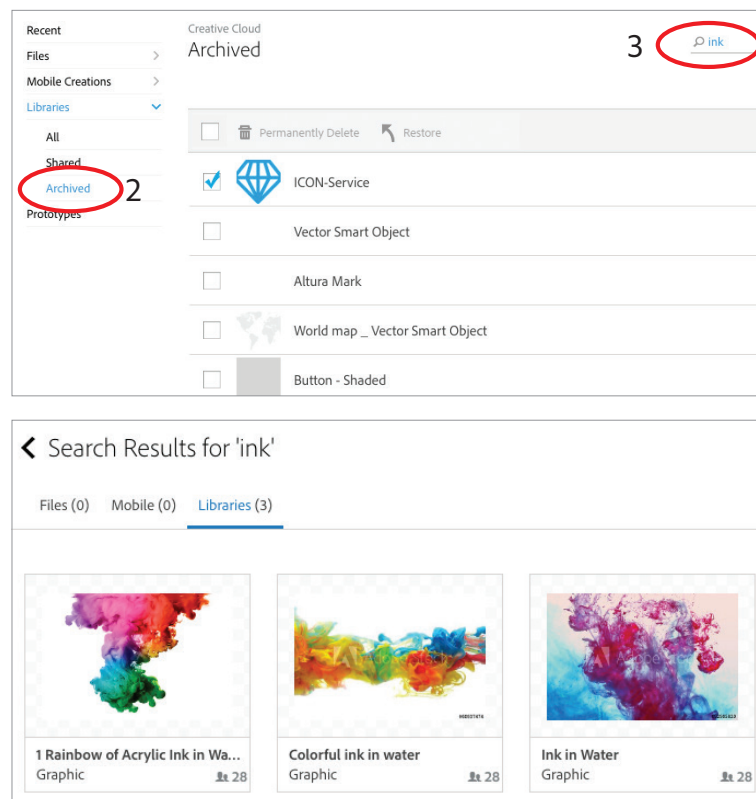
2 Click the **Archived** link in the Assets interface.
This will show you all of the archived assets across all your libraries.

3 To find a particular asset by name, type in the subject matter by the Search icon and any relevant assets with that name will appear.

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How long are items available in the archive?
If you are under your current storage quota (typically 100GB per user), then items are archived indefinitely.
For accounts over storage quota, Adobe may permanently delete items over 90 days old.

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?
Yes, libraries 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 limiting the total to no more than 150. 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 mulit-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.

Adobe ID
All Adobe ID users get 2GB of free storage, hence a library created by an Adobe ID user persists until the owner deletes it. It might be worthwhile for enterprises to create a few Adobe ID accounts and use them as library curators.

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 entilement is lost by the owner, which can happen when an account is deleted or the user is removed from an entitlement which includes storage.
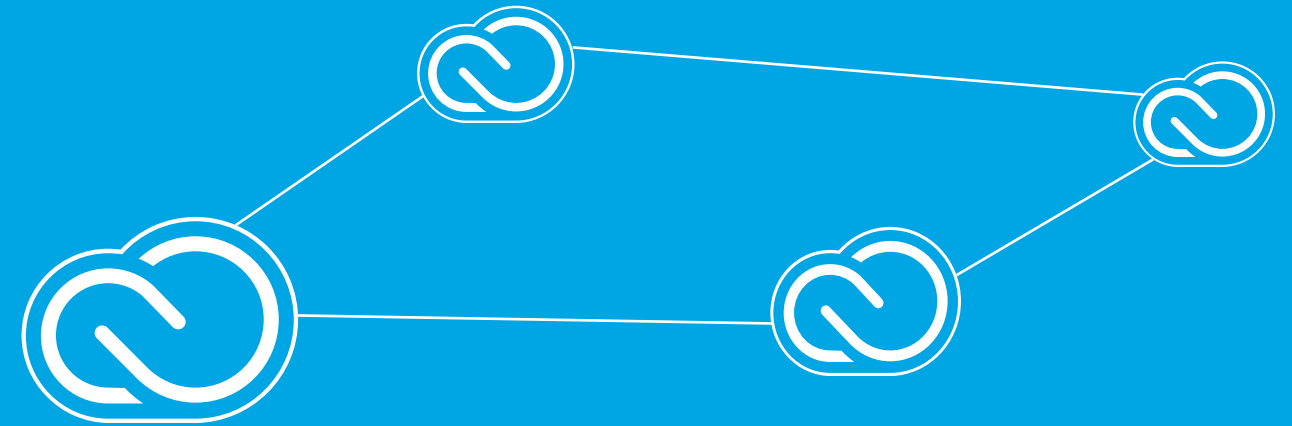
Conclusion
No one likes searching through multiple servers, local files, or worse, reach back in to older projects to look for sanctioned, on-brand assets. Creative Cloud libraries allow enterprises to easily roll out a curated, brand repository which is the "one source of truth" for design components 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.