

An aerial photograph of a coastal scene. On the left, the ocean is a vibrant turquoise color. A white sandy beach curves along the center. To the right, there's dense green tropical vegetation and some exposed soil or rocks. The overall composition is a vertical rectangle.

AMAZING IMAGES

LEARN THE SECRETS OF FINDING GREAT IMAGES!

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INTRODUCTION

It doesn't matter what type of business you're in, chances are, you use images. Whether you're sharing images on social media, using images to create promotional material like banners or flyers, or posting images on your blog to go along with your articles, you're probably using images.

But are you using those images legally?

A lot of people seem to think it's okay to grab images from Google Images or other sources. After all, they're available publicly, so it must be okay, right?

WRONG!

Legally, you can only use images you have permission to use, and you can only use images you have permission to use in certain ways, depending on the license granted by the copyright holder. Confused, yet?

And to top it off, buying images to use legally can be extremely expensive. Some stock photo agencies charge several dollars for a single image, and may even charge hundreds of dollars if you want to use the image for something like a t-shirt or print. Outrageous!

Fortunately, there are ways to save money on your images, getting them much, much cheaper, or even free. Best of all, you can do this legally, so you won't be sued!



LEGAL ISSUES

If you use images you're not properly licensed to use, you could face serious legal consequences that could end up costing you thousands of dollars in damages, and you may be required to pay the other party's legal fees as well.

Big stock photo agencies have millions of dollars to spend fighting unauthorized use of their photos, and they often pursue the rights of the photographers who submit to them vehemently.

U.S. copyright laws allow for up to \$150,000 in damages for a single infringing use, which means you could end up on the hook for millions if you steal a large number of photos. That's enough to drive most companies completely out of business and put the owner in debt for the rest of his or her life!

In fairness, most cases are settled out of court for a few thousand dollars, but do you have that kind of money lying around to hand over to someone?

Legal stock photos only cost a few bucks, and if you look around, you can find sites that have them for \$1. Sometimes you can even get them for a few cents if you buy a bulk deal, which we will talk about later.

Read more here:

<http://www.contentfac.com/copyright-infringement-penalties-are-scary/>

OR

<https://enterprisebydesign.com.au/understanding-copyright/>

TYPES OF IMAGES

There are several types of images you can use legally, and the differences basically boil down to licensing. Let's take a look at the different types of images you can use, and what the typical licensing looks like for each type.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Public domain images are those images that are released for anyone to use for any reason whatsoever without having to pay a fee. These images could even legally be sold, because public domain is pretty much a license to do absolutely anything you want with an image.

Some people who release images may claim they are "public domain", but then put restrictions on their use. This is not truly public domain. If an image has been released into the public domain, it has no restrictions.

Public domain images are often sourced from the U.S. government, because many of the images they use are automatically placed into the public domain. After all, they are funded by taxpayers. Not all government photos are public domain, but many are.

There are also databases dedicated to providing access to public domain images from various sources, and some individuals have websites where they place their own photos for use on a public domain basis.





CREATIVE COMMONS

Creative commons also releases images to be used without payment, however restrictions may be placed on their use. Creative commons actually has several different license variations, each of which may restrict use of the photos in some way.

Here is a list of the different types of Creative Commons licenses:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

The most important thing you need to know with regards to Creative Commons images are that the licenses all hinge around three important elements:

- Whether or not you must give attribution
- Whether or not you can create derivatives
- Whether or not you can use the images for commercial purposes

Attribution requires you to give credit to the copyright holder. This is usually done with a simple link, especially if the image is used on a website or in a book, where giving an attribution is simple.

Derivatives basically mean artwork and

designs created with the original image and then used as that derivative work. For example, if you take the photo and change the colors of some of the items in it, that is a derivative.

Commercial purposes, of course, means anything that is used to make money, even indirectly. For example, if you make any kind of profit from your blog, or if you're even trying to make a profit with it, you could not use an image that is not licensed for commercial purposes.

ROYALTY FREE

Royalty-free images are not necessarily free, despite having the word "free" in the name. Royalty-free actually refers to not needing to pay a royalty percentage or fee to the copyright holder for each use of the item.

For example, a musician who licenses use of his song to a company for a television commercial may receive a royalty payment every time that commercial airs. Or a celebrity who allows the use of their likeness on the cover of a book might get a percentage of all book sales.

Royalty-free images require a one-time payment for use, and generally require no further payments after that. There are minor exceptions to this, but generally once you pay for a photo, you can use it once and you won't have to pay any additional money for it.

If you intend to use a royalty-free image for a printed item or something like a book cover, be sure to read the license carefully. Most stock agencies require you to pay a higher fee for use on things like t-shirts and posters that will be sold, and for things like book covers, have a limit to the number of copies that can be sold before another purchase is required. (It's usually 250,000 copies, and most of us don't sell that many copies of a single book, but it's worth noting, just in case.)



GETTING DEALS ON PHOTOS

There are ways to get better deals on stock photos than the normal prices, which can be several dollars per photo. Some sites, like [iStockPhoto.com](https://www.istockphoto.com), can actually charge \$20 or more for a single image if that picture is exclusive to their site and they deem it better than average quality.

MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTIONS

Most stock photo sites offer monthly subscription packages that give you a discount off their regular prices. The monthly cost can vary considerably, so it pays to shop around. It's also worth looking at the terms before you join, because some sites only let you download a certain number of images per day, others make your credits expire each month if you don't use them, and a few will let you build up credits each month.

Keep in mind that if you want to use the photos for printed items like t-shirts or posters, your credits will not apply and you'll still need to pay for them individually. Only standard images are usually available with credits.

DEAL SITES

There are a lot of deal sites out there that offer hefty discounts on packages of stock photo credits. Deposit Photos offers the best deals I've seen. If you catch it just right, you can get a package of 100 photo credits for just \$39! They run this deal a couple of times a year, or maybe quarterly, through a couple of different sites.

You'll need to sign up to their newsletters to be notified about the deals, and they often sell out quickly, so be ready to grab them when they show up. They also usually let you buy multiple packages, so if you need a large number of photos, you might want to buy more than one package. The credits usually never expire.

<http://www.appsumo.com>

<http://www.mightydeals.com>

Both of these newsletters regularly send out huge deals on other great, useful stuff, too. Sometimes you can get lifetime memberships to things like software and membership sites for less than a single year costs, so they're worth joining even without the stock photo deals.

FREE STOCK PHOTOS

There are a number of websites that offer free stock photos that you can use in a variety of ways. Many of them offer public domain photos, which means you can use them for anything you want. Others offer photos under the various creative commons licenses. Just be sure to read the license for each photo before you use it so you don't inadvertently forget to credit the photographer, if required.

THE STOCKS

<http://thestocks.im/>

The Stocks allows you to search many of the major free stock photo sites from a single location. This way, you don't have to keep remembering all the different URLs each time you want to go look for photos.

PIXABAY

<http://www.pixabay.com>

Pixabay is a huge archive of stock photos from a large number of contributors. The quality of the photos can vary, but there's enough photos available that you can usually find at least a few photos on just about any subject you can think of.

PEXELS

<https://www.pexels.com/>

Pexels is another huge archive of stock photos. They have a big variety with a lot of very high quality photos. All photos are licensed under the Creative Commons 0 (Zero) license, which allows any legal use. Basically, you can do anything you want with the photos as long as you're not portraying any humans in the photos in a bad light.

NEW OLD STOCK

<http://nos.twnsnd.co/>

New Old Stock is an archive of old photos that are in the public domain. Unfortunately, it's not searchable, but you can find some very cool historical photos there that are copyright free.

PUBLIC DOMAIN ARCHIVE

<http://publicdomainarchive.com/free-stock-photos/>

Public Domain Archive has a huge list of various sites that offer free stock photos. It's a great resource for finding pretty much any type of photo you could ever need.

SEARCH CREATIVE COMMONS

<https://search.creativecommons.org/>

You can search for Creative Commons photos at this site. Try using Flickr, as a lot of people post photos there with Creative Commons licenses that allow commercial purposes. Just remember that some may require attribution. Wikimedia Commons also has some good photos sometimes.

PAID STOCK PHOTOS

Although there are millions of photos available for free, sometimes you just can't seem to find the photo you need. That's when it's time to check out the paid stock photo sites.

There are thousands of sites that sell stock photos, but many of them are either extremely expensive or offer a very small selection. I'm going to list some of the stock photo sites that offer reasonable prices and good selections.

DEPOSIT PHOTOS

<http://www.depositphotos.com>

These days, Deposit Photos is one of the most affordable stock photo sites there is. They have a very wide variety of photos, and although their selection isn't quite as good as some of the older stock sites, they have enough of a selection that you can find photos for most needs.



99 CLUB

<https://goo.gl/ps2mz0>

99 Club from Stock Photo Secrets has a database of about 4,000,000 photos, and you only have to pay \$99 for a one-year subscription. You get to download 200 images during that time, and there are no limits on how many you can download in a day. That's less than 50 cents per image! And if you need more images after your 200, you can get them for just a buck each.

SHUTTERSTOCK

<http://www.shutterstock.com>

Shutterstock is one of the biggest, most popular stock photo sites. They have a huge selection of high quality photos. They are fairly pricey, but they do offer a few subscription packages that can help you save money.

ADOBE STOCK

<http://stock.adobe.com>

Adobe Stock is a fairly new option, but they already have a huge variety of photos and they're great quality. They have a subscription plan which offers 10 images per month for \$29.99, and your first month is free.

BIG STOCK PHOTO

<http://www.bigstockphoto.com>

Big Stock Photo has been around for years, and they have a pretty big selection of photos. Their packages are relatively expensive overall, but because you get such a large number of photos included, they actually work out to be cheaper than many sites.

DREAMTIME

<http://www.dreamstime.com>

Dreamstime has been around for years, and they have a pretty wide selection at fair prices. You can get cheaper photos by buying larger credit packages, and they also have monthly subscriptions.

123RF

<http://www.123rf.com>

123RF is a very affordable stock photo site with credits that amount to less than a dollar a photo for most packages. They also have monthly subscription plans, and a wide variety of photos to choose from.



OTHER PHOTOS

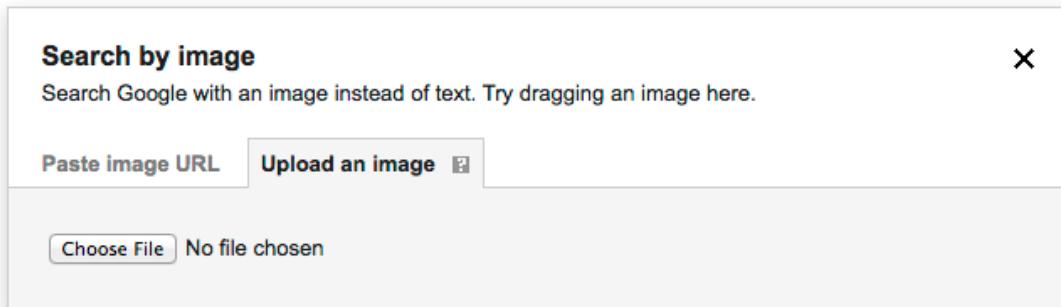
Sometimes you may have a hard time finding exactly the photo you need for a particular purpose through free and paid stock photo sites, but you might find the perfect photo through Google Images, Instagram, or somewhere else. What should you do in this case?

The answer, of course, is to contact the photographer and ask for permission to use the photo. Be upfront and honest about what you want to use the photo for, and ask them if they'd be willing to allow you to use it.

They may say no, which unfortunately is their right. However, you may be pleasantly surprised. Many photographers are just happy their work is appreciated, and would love to see it being used. They may ask for attribution, such as a mention on your blog or inside your book, or they may ask for payment. In this case, it's up to you to decide if their asking price is worth it to you.

But at least by asking, you'll avoid any potential legal troubles down the road.

If you have trouble finding the original photographer of an image, try uploading the photo to Google Images. Just go to Google Images and click the camera icon by the search box. Then enter the URL of a photo you found online, or click the upload tab to upload a photo you have on your computer or device.



This will search Google for other copies of the photo, often allowing you to find the original source.

You can then contact the photographer through their email, contact form, blog, or social media.

CONCLUSION

Photos are a critical component of pretty much any type of online business. Blogs, websites, social media—they all require quality images. But if you use photos you're not legally licensed to use, you could be on the line for thousands of dollars in damages!

Fortunately, there are plenty of free and affordable stock photos available for almost any purpose you can imagine. There's no need to risk thousands of dollars in fines and legal fees when you can locate the photos you need legally!

Remember, even if you can't find the right photo via the free and paid stock photo sites, you may still be able to get the right picture by contacting the original photographer of an image you find online and asking for permission to use it.

It can be frustrating being unable to find the right photo, or having to pay for images when you're not yet profitable, but it's a lot more frustrating to wind up in court and coming out of pocket thousands of dollars for a single image. It's best to follow the right legal channels and save yourself the hassle.

If nothing else, you can take your own photos. At least that way you'll have precisely the right photo with no legal issues.

Best of luck!



RESOURCES

Here are links to some of the resources found in this guide.

CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSES:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

FREE STOCK PHOTOS:

<http://thestocks.im/>

<http://www.pixabay.com>

<https://www.pexels.com/>

<http://nos.twnsnd.co/>

<http://publicdomainarchive.com/free-stock-photos/>

<https://search.creativecommons.org/>

PAID STOCK PHOTOS:

<http://www.depositphotos.com>

<http://www.shutterstock.com>

<http://stock.adobe.com>

<http://www.dreamstime.com>

<http://www.bigstockphoto.com>

<http://www.123rf.com>

COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT CASES:

<http://www.contentfac.com/copyright-infringement-penalties-are-scary/>

DEAL NEWSLETTERS:

<http://www.appsumo.com>

<http://www.mightydeals.com>



APPLY IT!

go ahead and apply what you have learned throughout this e-book in your own business!

I'd love to have you [join my facebook group](#) where I share lots of tips & tricks about design, branding & navigating the world of small business.

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