

Chapter 4: Flickr

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Flickr is a popular, easy-to-use photo management and sharing application, and much more. Tags and other organizing tools help you easily sort your photos, which you can then post to a blog, embed on your Web site, insert in an e-newsletter, or share on other social media sites. You don't have to collect fans, friends, or followers (what a relief!), but other people can comment on your photos or designate them as their favorites (or "faves"). You can collaborate (or commiserate) with other photographers by joining or creating an online group.



The Web site, blog, or Ning community that carries your domain name is still the hub for your online marketing activity. Flickr should be considered a supplemental site: In fact, Flickr's community guidelines constrain commercial use (www.flickr.com/guidelines.gne). If Flickr's rules are too limiting, a commercial-level or Pro account on Photobucket may offer more flexibility (<http://photobucket.com>).

Now owned by Yahoo!, Flickr has grown rapidly since it launched in November 2003. As of mid-October 2009, the site hosted more than 4 billion photos and received well over 20 million visitors per month from the United States alone. Amateur and professional photographers worldwide upload about 5,000 photos every minute. By some calculations, Flickr has close to 50 million members, most of which hold free accounts.

Deciding Whether Flickr Is Right for You

There are as many ways to use Flickr legitimately for business as there are creative businesses to find applications. Though Flickr is obviously useful for B2C purposes, B2B companies may also find each other through Flickr

groups. If any of the following solutions would serve your marketing needs, consider expending some of your social media capital on Flickr or another photo-sharing site:

- ◆ **Enhance your image.** Consider documenting a special activity that you might support, such as the New York Special Olympics (www.flickr.com/photos/nysol), or show staff participating in community activities such as helping to refurbish the Queens Museum of Art (www.flickr.com/photos/panoramaqueensmuseum). Whether your staff contributes to a Habitat for Humanity house-building project, volunteers to clean wildlife, or helps serve a Thanksgiving Dinner, use Flickr to illustrate your company's involvement in issues that matter to your community.
- ◆ **Announce awards, exhibits, or your presence at events like trade-shows.** Brentano Fabrics does some of everything at www.flickr.com/photos/brentanofabrics/sets.
- ◆ **Draw your audience closer.** Asking members of your target audience to submit photos is a wonderful way to solidify relationships. The Nature program on the Public Broadcasting System runs contests for wildlife photography themed to its shows at www.flickr.com/groups/pbsnature. Consider asking your customers to upload photos of themselves assembling your products or using your services. You might even ask for photographs that might be used in future advertising. There's plenty of creative talent out there!
- ◆ **Cast a wider net.** Some prospects prefer looking at pictures to reading words. Use Flickr to illustrate images of your company, staff, or services, as California Fruit Company does in Figure 4-1. You can link actively to your Web site from your Flickr profile (as on www.flickr.com/people/californiafruitcompany), but not from photos.
- ◆ **Advertise to photographers.** This is a wonderful targeted site for offering goods and services to photographers, such as cameras, lenses, photo editing software, lighting equipment, workshops, studio space, or travel packages for photo safaris. Yahoo! serves ads to Flickr through its own ad network at <http://advertising.yahoo.com>.
- ◆ **Improve customer service.** Upload images that are limited to use by specific customers or invitees, perhaps marking them private for limited visibility. You can post pictures of work in progress, images of prospective sites or buildings, or photographs of optional product features. This feature is particularly useful when photos interest a smaller audience than the one served by your Web site.
- ◆ **Enhance branding and site traffic.** By using your *favicon* (a mini logo), tags, Web address, or links on your profile page, you can build name recognition and awareness of your primary site.
- ◆ **Improve search engine optimization.** Flickr can be helpful to your search engine optimization strategy. Tags, filenames, photo descriptions, names of sets, and profiles can all include some of your key search terms. Note, however, that comments include a `nofollow` attribute,

so they don't pass "link juice" for search purposes. For more on search optimization, see Book II, Chapter 2.

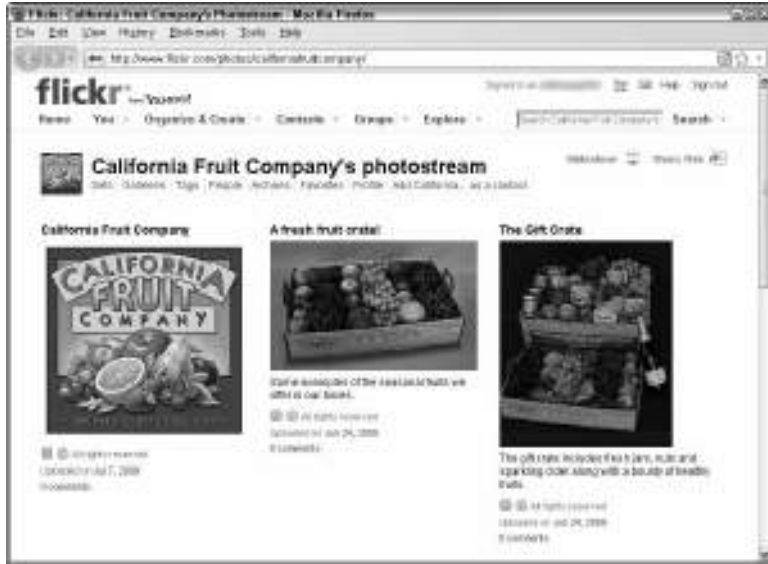


Figure 4-1: California Fruit Company uses attractive images in its Flickr photostream for informational purposes.

- ◆ **Supplement Web site or social media pages with additional photos.** For instance, you might display thumbnails on your Web site or one image from a set or a slide sequence of photos, as long as each of the displayed images links back to its Flickr page. You can't use Flickr simply to host images for products you're selling, but you might want to maintain photos of a company event, trade show, or conference or pictures of staff or your storefront decor. Continue to pull from your Web server the images critical to your Web site and post only copies on Flickr.



According to the Flickr community guidelines (www.flickr.com/guidelines.gne), you cannot use Flickr for commercial purposes. Flickr doesn't want to become a collection of product catalogs so avoid shots of actual products. You can include an active link to your Web store or other selling sites in your profile, but not on individual photo pages, photo descriptions, or anywhere on your photostream page. If you aren't selling from the link (if you have a nonprofit or informational site, for example), you can include an active link in descriptions and elsewhere. Flickr may terminate violators' accounts after a warning. If you aren't sure what's allowed, contact Flickr (www.flickr.com/help/with/other).

Keep in mind the standard conversion rate of 2 to 4 percent for people who reach your Web site. Make a quick calculation: How many prospects need to reach your photostream to learn about your business? How many of those will reach your Web site? How many will convert to customers after that, and how much will they spend? Will you make enough to cover your cost of participation in labor and photographic services?



Use the search function for people or photos (full text) to see how many, if any, of your competitors use Flickr. The presence of many competitors is a strong hint that your business needs to be here, too. The absence of competition is ambiguous: It can give you a temporary advantage or indicate that this effort isn't worth it. Being first isn't always the best idea.

Making the Most of Flickr

Initially, you might think that Flickr would work well only for companies with tangible products that are easy to photograph. Think again! Businesses that provide services — from dog trainers and fitness centers to performing artists, tai chi clubs, and wedding planners — can show images of events, training sessions, or facilities. Though the Flickr audience is predominantly consumer, B2B companies can use it to showcase their work.

Take a look at some imaginative ways companies have found to use Flickr:

- ◆ **Build awareness of your portfolio.** In perhaps the most obvious application for Flickr, creative folks can display their portfolios and new work to a broad audience:

- *Visual artists:* www.flickr.com/photo/ikaminoff
 - *Sculptors:* www.flickr.com/photos/stevecrowningshield
 - *Public art projects:* www.flickr.com/photos/artesprit/sets/72157623548855199
 - *Photographers:* www.flickr.com/photos/terretta
- ◆ **Display photos of completed projects or works in progress.** The Flickr organizational structure works exceedingly well for architects, builders, construction companies, and home painters as well as for interior, landscape, product, and packaging design companies and any other business with highly visual work results. The Women's Economic Self-Sufficiency Team (WESST) of New Mexico shows off its stunning new building at www.flickr.com/people/wesstnm, whereas Lux Design of Toronto shows examples of its residential and commercial interiors at www.flickr.com/photos/luxinteriordesign. Tanzania Development Support records the progress of its new dormitory under construction at www.flickr.com/photos/43749472@N07.
- ◆ **Entice viewers with examples.** Whether you offer pets for adoption like www.flickr.com/photos/kids4kats or bake cupcakes like Buttercream Bakery at www.flickr.com/photos/40786473@N02, you can use Flickr to lure visitors to your Web site as long as you don't post images from your online store or link to them in your photostream. Don't post your entire catalog!
- ◆ **Collaborate on content.** The Pharmacy School at the University of California at San Francisco (<http://pharmacy.ucsf.edu>) uses its Flickr account to manage its Web site photos and encourage participation from campus members. Flickr images appear on its virtual tour at <http://pharmacy.ucsf.edu/tou> and on other content pages. You can find a description of how UCSF uses Flickr as a collaborative activity at <http://pharmacy.ucsf.edu/flickr>. Note how the images link back to Flickr as required.
- ◆ **Build community participation and buzz.** In a novel interactive application, Marvel Comics created a Flickr group for movie lovers to post photos of themselves with statues of the Incredible Hulk that had been placed in movie theater lobbies to promote the film. Selected photos from the group at www.flickr.com/groups/hulkstatues also appeared on the Marvel site (http://marvel.com/news/movie_stories.3421.Hulk_Crashes_Iron_Man~apos~s_Opening) as a way to increase its fan base and enhance word-of-mouth advertising.



Set up separate business and personal accounts on Flickr. Although you can categorize images for public versus private (friends or family) viewing, you can create confusion if other staff members are involved, not to mention cloud your statistics. You can so easily create separate Flickr accounts that you have no reason to commingle the two.

Table 4-1 shows that Flickr is one of the few social media outlets that attracts more men than women. It has a higher percentage of ethnic Asian and Hispanic users than the Internet user population overall. The income distribution on Flickr may be a consequence of the large younger-student population (19 percent of users are under 18). To reach businesses rather than consumers, you participate in groups, discussed later in this chapter.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percentage of Users</i>
Female	47
Male	53
Under 18	19
18 to 34	38
35 to 49	27
Over 50	17
Caucasian	73
African American	8
Asian	6
Hispanic	12
Other ethnicity	1
No college	46
College	40
Grad school	14
Income \$0 to 30,000	17
Income \$30,000 to 60,000	26
Income \$60,000 to 100,000	28
Income over \$100,000	30

Source: Quantcast.com www.quantcast.com/flickr.com for 5/10

Beginning with Flickr

Flickr (www.flickr.com) is extremely easy to use. Start by clicking the Create Your Account button on the home page. If you don't already have a Yahoo! ID, you'll be asked to create one. Because you can follow your nose from here by using onscreen directions and visiting the FAQ pages on the site, we review only the critical marketing steps.

- ◆ **Get oriented.** Check out the Flickr tour at www.flickr.com/tour/share and its list of tips for extending the value of Flickr elsewhere at www.flickr.com/get_the_most.gne.
- ◆ **Click any Get Started button.** You're asked to either log in with an existing Yahoo! ID or create one. Your Yahoo! e-mail address appears in your Flickr profile, but you can change the e-mail address in your Flickr account later.
- ◆ **Select your Flickr screen name.** The screen name is your first branding decision — it's attached to every photo you upload and every message you post. For branding purposes, use your business name or Web address.
- ◆ **Create your buddy icon (or *avatar*, in other social media venues) by uploading a small version of your logo.** Flickr helps you resize the image to 48 x 48 pixels. If you have a larger version of your favicon (the 16-x-16-pixel graphic that appears to the left of a URL in the browser address bar), use it for consistent branding.



You can make a favicon for free at www.favicon-generator.com.

- ◆ **Select a custom Flickr URL.** In the best of all possible worlds, your custom URL should be the same as your screen name, and therefore the same as your business name or Web site address.

You can't change your screen name later, so choose carefully!

- ◆ **Personalize your Flickr profile.** Complete the form by following the steps shown on the screen:
 - *First and Last Name:* Use your company name (preferred) or your name, or the name of your marketing person.
 - *Gender and Singleness:* Select Rather Not Say.
 - *Describe Yourself Box:* Fill out this box with a good marketing description that includes all your contact information: business address, non-Flickr and non-Yahoo! e-mail addresses, and any phone and fax numbers you have. Be sure to include your primary search terms in the text you write! You may be able to modify the already optimized text of your home page for this purpose. Because the length is unlimited, you can add some information about your featured products or services, links to your Web site and other social media pages, or information about your company. For a good example, see California Fruit Company at www.flickr.com/people/californiafruitcompany. Click the triangle next to "How do I format my description?" for directions on inserting an image or link, or using HTML to format your text.



Although you're using your profile to describe your business, avoid any sales pitches, in keeping with the Flickr atmospheric and guidelines.

Flickr may close the profile screen at this point. If so, choose the You tab at the top of the page → Your Profile → Edit Your Profile Information to complete the remaining details.

- *Online Bits:* Add your primary Web address and Web site name in the labeled boxes.
- *Offline Bits:* For your occupation, use your business type. Including the current city/state, country, and airport code in their appropriate boxes helps with local marketing when someone searches Flickr, as well as with geotagging, an optional flag that identifies where a photograph was created. (Ignore the Hometown box.)
- *Edit Your Profile Privacy:* After you save your profile information and return to the Your Profile page, select this option. For most businesses, highly accessible settings are preferable: Let anyone see your e-mail address, real (business) name, and current city. Set your own preference for instant messaging or constrain it to your contacts. Save again.

Before you start uploading photos, take time to establish the rest of the settings on the Your Account page (www.flickr.com/account):

1. Click Privacy & Permissions in the breadcrumb trail at the top. Review every setting to fit with your business needs.

Click the Edit link next to each option for more detail and choices. Although you are establishing these as global settings now, you can later customize the privacy level for specific images or sets of images. Most business owners should opt for less restrictive use, although you might want to prevent downloads of some images.

This list describes a few key fields to consider in order to control the use of your images:

Global settings

- *Who Can Download Your Stuff?:* To control dissemination, especially if you're posting creative work, select Only You as the response to the first option in the Global Settings section. If you want your imagery to have wider distribution, set the levels accordingly. You can later specify licensing levels for individual photos or sets to override these settings.
- *Who Can Share Your Photos or Video?:* Specify whether a Share This button is visible to other people on your public uploads. Display the Share This button to let people e-mail or embed a link to your photostream, much like social sharing buttons described in Book II, Chapter 3, or the tell-a-friend function, which lets users quickly e-mail others a link to your page. The setting you choose depends on your content and reason for posting photos.
- *Printing:* Select Only You to constrain the distribution of your images. If you want your material more broadly accessible, change the settings accordingly.

This advice applies also to the Who Can Blog Your Stuff option.

- *Allow Your Stuff To Be Added to a Gallery?:* Choose Yes. Allowing your photos to be added to other people's Flickr galleries may give the photos greater exposure. Being able to make photos eligible for distribution by Getty Images (at the bottom of the page) is a gift to visual artists and photographers. Most will choose Yes, unless these are personal, private, or confidential images, or images of people you don't have permission to publish.
- *Hide Your Stuff from Public Searches:* Choose No unless you're using Flickr strictly to provide access to private clients, customers, or prospects. Anything else is counterproductive, especially if you're hoping for a boost in search engine visibility. If you're a creative artist, you might want to choose Yes, though that choice may reduce your visibility in image searches on Yahoo! (<http://images.search.yahoo.com>) and Google (<http://images.google.com>).



If you're in business, choose No to the Hide Your Profile option. Your profile is the primary vehicle for conveying information about your company.

Defaults for new uploads

- For most companies, the default settings in this main section work well, but you should review them to be sure that they apply to your business. For instance, on the first option, you may want to select Anyone to let everyone see images but select Only You to ensure that you're the only one permitted to add notes, tags, and people.
- Review the options to decide which licensing level to assign to your content; this is particularly critical for visual artists and others who are uploading copyrighted material— All Rights Reserved is the most restrictive.
- Under Safety Level and Content, select the potential “offense” level and specify the type of upload — photo, video, screen shot, screen-cast, or illustration, art, animation, or CGI.

Content filters

- In this main section, select the appropriate settings for your level of comfort with potentially offensive imagery provided by others and specify the content types to include when you search.
- You can change these options later for individual photos or sets of photos, and you can modify your global and default settings at any time.



2. **Click the Emails & Notifications link in the breadcrumb trail at the top. Add or change the e-mail address that serves as your primary notification address for messages from Flickr.**

This setting doesn't change your Yahoo! login. After you confirm the new address, you can specify it as your primary contact (the one that viewers see). Set the notification level you're comfortable with. Note the

e-mail address you can use to e-mail uploads directly to Flickr or configure settings to update your blog with Flickr postings.

3. **Click the Sharing & Extending link in the breadcrumb trail at the top.**

Depending on your marketing strategy and the progress of your implementation plan for social marketing, you can link your Flickr account to your blog, Facebook, Twitter, or Yahoo! Updates, and to other third-party applications.

Uploading Photos

Flickr gives you multiple options for uploading photos and videos. Start by returning to the You tab at the top of the page and select Upload Photos and Videos at www.flickr.com/photos/upload.

- ◆ **Individually:** Click on Choose Photos and Videos to select an image from your hard drive or other storage location. As you add each image, you can set its individual privacy level. Select the Add More link or Upload Photo button when you are ready.
- ◆ **In bulk:** Use the Basic Uploader at www.flickr.com/photos/upload/basic or one of the newer, fancier uploading tools at www.flickr.com/tools. Images uploaded through these methods will share the same tags and privacy settings, unless you modify them later in the Organizer described later in this chapter.
- ◆ **By e-mail:** Go to www.flickr.com/account/uploadbyemail to obtain a dedicated e-mail address for uploading your pictures. When you e-mail your photo, enter the title in the Subject line and the description in the body of the message.
- ◆ **By cellphone:** Visit www.flickr.com/tools/mobile to see the available mobile tools for using Flickr. As of August 2009, the iPhone is the most frequently used camera on Flickr!



Before you upload images, rename image files so that they're descriptive, or include search terms to increase their visibility within Flickr search results and on external image search engines. You have much better luck when you use `bathing-black-labrador-dog.jpg` than with `picture1234567.jpg`.

Determining what to upload

Obviously, the content of your photos or videos depends on your business, your target market, and your goals and objectives for establishing a Flickr presence.

You can use pictures of installed products in use, service deliveries, facilities, studio and store tours, events, trade shows, or whatever else seems appropriate. If you're an individual service provider or artist, you might

want to include a picture of yourself to personalize your Flickr page. The series of images you upload is called your *photostream*. Images appear in reverse chronological order, with most recent first.



Upload only good images! Because you're using Flickr to create an impression, photo quality matters. If your photos aren't well lit, well cropped, and well composed, hire a professional photographer. You may be able to find one by searching Flickr member pages for photographers in your city.



You must have a signed waiver giving you permission to use another person's likeness if your photos include recognizable faces. Just search for *photo waiver form* or *photo release form* at www.google.com or another search engine to find a model release form. Parents or legal guardians must sign for their underage children.

The dimensions and file size of individual files and the total monthly upload limit depend on whether you have a free account or upgrade to the Pro version for \$24.95 per year. Table 4-2 compares the two types of accounts.

Table 4-2 Flickr Pro Version versus Flickr for Free

<i>Pro</i>	<i>Free</i>
Unlimited display	Photostream limited to the 200 most recent images
Unlimited photo uploads (20MB per photo)	100MB monthly photo upload limit (10MB per photo)
Full count and referrer stats available	Limited availability of activity stats
Photo or video posting limit in group pools: 60	Photo posting limit in group pools: 10
Unlimited sets and collections	Sets only, no collections
Unlimited video uploads (90-second maximum and 500MB per video)	Two monthly video uploads (90-second maximum and 150MB per video)
High-definition (HD) video	Not available
Six layout choices	Four layout choices
Access and archive your original high-resolution image	Access to only smaller, resized images
Ad-free browsing and sharing	Not available
Photo replacement	Not available



Under no circumstances should you upload anyone else's work without permission. You must own or have the right to use whatever images you upload.



Hey, big spender. Unless you plan to have only a minimal Flickr presence, upgrade to a Pro account for \$24.95 per year. You can then access important statistics, display an unlimited number of images, and upload larger files.

Flickr has calls to action to upgrade to the Pro version on almost every public page, or you can go directly to www.flickr.com/upgrade and click the big Buy Now button.

Adding titles, tags, and descriptions

After you upload photos on Flickr, you have a chance to create a title, add as many as 75 tags (similar to keywords), and write a descriptive paragraph for each image, either individually or by set.

Flickr prompts you to add these tags, titles, and descriptions every time you upload an individual image or a batch of images. You can get to this screen, www.flickr.com/photos/upload, only as part of the upload process, but you can always add this information later in several ways:

- ◆ Use the Organizr at www.flickr.com/photos/organize (see Figure 4-2, in the following section); you can find more information on the Organizr in the next section, “Setting Up Sets and Collections.”
- ◆ Log into Flickr and click the individual photo in your photostream. This takes you to the individual detail page for that photo. On the right side are several links, including one near the bottom of the page to Edit the Title, Description, and Tags.

Be sure that the Title, Tag, and Description fields include at least one of your primary search terms apiece. The Description and Tag fields can also include your company name and location.

Because of constraints on commercial use of Flickr, be discrete in the Description field. Though you can talk about benefits and features, be careful with calls to action (what you tell the viewer to do). In particular, don't include a Buy Now link, though you may be able to write “Get more information about Day-Glo coloredwhozee-whatz at MyWebSite.com,” as long as the URL is not an active link.

Finally, use geotags to put your photos on the map. This indication of where a photo was taken can be quite helpful, especially if you own a tourism-related or hospitality business, or want to let local customers know where they can buy items or obtain business services. To add a geotag, click the individual photo in your photostream to go to its detail page. Click the Add to Map link in the lower-right corner and follow the directions. Batch options are available for geotagging in the Organizr, too.



Though you can use Flickr-stored images on your site, don't use Flickr to host your Web site's logos, banners, icons, avatars, or other *nonphotographic* images. Violating this Flickr no-no (www.flickr.com/guidelines.gne) can terminate your account.

Setting Up Sets and Collections: A Tactical Choice

Flickr is a dream site for compulsive organizers. Even if you like a cluttered desk, take advantage of the easy sorting features on Flickr. Unlike a traditional directory structure in which an image “lives” in one folder, the Flickr Organizr lets you assign each image to no sets, one set, or many sets of photos.

If you have a Pro account, you can group sets into collections and even gather collections into metacollections. Your tactical choice is defining which images belong in each set or collection. Grouping photos from each product line into their own set is tempting but isn't always the most effective marketing solution. Consider whether you should create sets, segmented by target market, that cut across product lines.



You can set the privacy level for each set or collection separately as you create them or in the Organizr.

Suppose that you sell laboratory equipment to high schools and colleges and several different industries. Though you can group photos of all balance scales into one set, you might want to also create sets that include scales, flasks, beakers, and burners appropriate to each market segment. These items can vary by price, quality, use, or size.

An artist or artisan might organize a portfolio into sets and collections by medium (oil, acrylic, or watercolor, for example), by content (portrait, landscape, abstract), or chronologically — or in all three ways. The Pharmacy School at the University of California at San Francisco (www.flickr.com/photos/ucsf/sets) uses sets to categorize locations, activities, and other types of items, as shown in Figure 4-2. Most sets contain multiple photos.

After you upload some photos, simply click the Organize & Create tab at the top of any page. Across the bottom of the page, you see a gray bar named the Findr. It contains a timeline of all your photo uploads in chronological order, with the newest on the left and the oldest on the right.

Click the Set tab. Then it's just a matter of dragging and dropping the images you want into each set. Name and save a set and off you go. Use descriptive names for sets, including a tag or search term, if possible. For more information, view the Organizr FAQ at www.flickr.com/help/organizr. This resource URL and others we mention in this chapter are compiled in the table in the nearby sidebar, “Useful Flickr resource URLs.”

Figure 4-2:
The UCSF School of Pharmacy uses Flickr sets to arrange dozens of photos by location and activity.



Courtesy UCSF School of Pharmacy

Useful Flickr resource URLs

<i>Resource You're Looking For</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>What You Can Do</i>
The App Garden	www.flickr.com/services	Find free third-party applications to attract attention
Badge	www.flickr.com/badge.gne	Create a Flickr badge for your Web site
Collections	www.flickr.com/help/collections	Read collection FAQs
Creative Commons	www.flickr.com/creativecommons	Post photos allowed for public use under license
Community guidelines	www.flickr.com/guidelines.gne	Read what you can and can't do on Flickr
Explore	www.flickr.com/explore	View featured photos
Explore	bighugelabs.com/faq.php?section=scout	Explore FAQs

<i>Resource You're Looking For</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>What You Can Do</i>
FAQs	www.flickr.com/help/faq	See the site map for commonly asked questions
Advice for getting the most from Flickr	www.flickr.com/get_the_most.gne	Maximize your use of Flickr
Groups	www.flickr.com/help/groups	Read group FAQs
Interestingness	www.flickr.com/explore/interesting	Find out how interesting you are to Flickr visitors
Making stuff	www.flickr.com/tour/makestuff	Turn your photos into promotional items, corporate gifts, and branding tools
Organizr	www.Flickr.com/help/organizr	Read Organizr FAQs
Photos	www.flickr.com/help/photos/#34	Check out photo uploading guidelines
Pro version	www.flickr.com/upgrade	Sign up for the Pro version for \$24.95 per year
Scout	bighugelabs.com/scout.php	Determine whether your photos are on Explore
Search	www.flickr.com/search	Search for photos, groups, or people
Site map	www.flickr.com/sitemap.gne	Find a topic in the page index
Terms of use	www.flickr.com/terms.gne	Read the Yahoo! terms of service
Tour	www.flickr.com/tour	Get introduced to Flickr
Uploading tools	www.flickr.com/tools	Select options for uploading images
Uploader Basic	www.flickr.com/photos/upload/basic	Use the simplest uploading tool



To speed the process of building sets and collections, plan them on paper first, either in outline form or as a tree diagram.

630 *Setting Up Sets and Collections: A Tactical Choice*

Take advantage of the many shortcuts built into the Organizer interface — for instance:

- ◆ Double-click the image for the set to gain the option to arrange the sequence of images within a set or to batch-edit titles, tags, permissions, and other parameters, as shown in Figure 4-3.
- ◆ Double-click any individual image in the Findr to open a window and edit parameters for that image.
- ◆ Select the Batch Organize tab at the top of the screen to edit parameters for multiple sets or photos at the same time.



To get to the Organizer for your images, simply click the Organize & Create tab at the top of any page with photographs.



For simplicity, start by duplicating the organization of your Web site or online store or other social media pages with Flickr sets and collections. If you have designed your site with separate pages or store categories based on market segments, rather than by service or product line, so much the better.

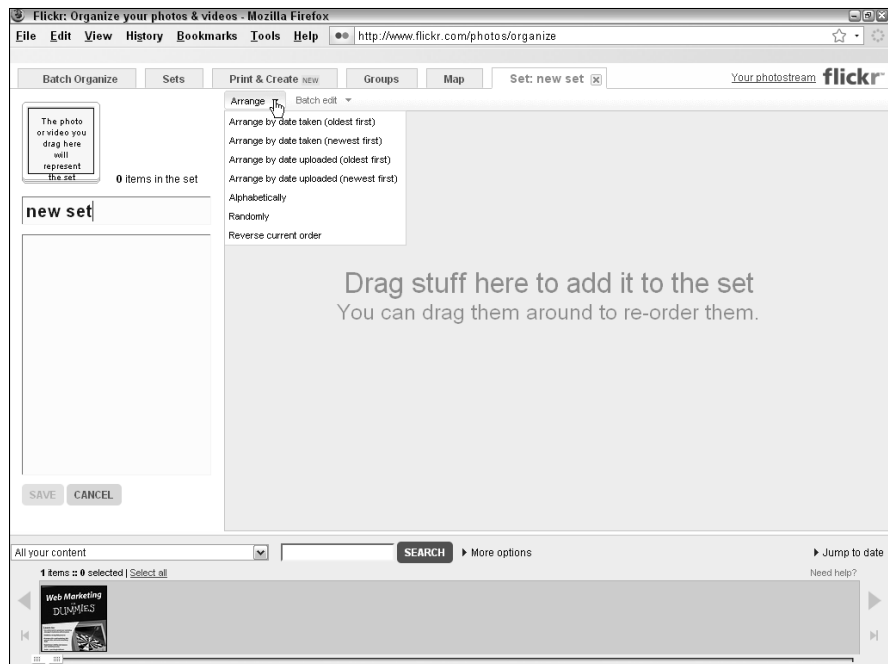


Figure 4-3:
Use the Organizer feature in Flickr to manage your photos.

Participating in the Flickr Community

As with other social networking sites supported by a large user base, gaining traction on Flickr is difficult. The only solution is to target distinct niche markets. As with Facebook and MySpace, groups are the easiest way to do it.

Flickr groups, which are organized by a volunteer administrator, can be

- ◆ Public
- ◆ Public by invitation only
- ◆ Private

The groups themselves are fairly similar. Every group has a discussion board and a place to share photos in a group pool, as seen in Figure 4-4. Membership can vary from several to several thousand. For more information on group how-tos, see www.flickr.com/help/groups.



Figure 4-4: A typical Flickr group displays photos from its members “pool” and allows discussion among members.

Top row photographs courtesy of Mike McHolm. Bottom row photographs courtesy of Chi King

Getting into groups

Start searching groups by tag or interest area or another search term. After you have a list, you can sort by relevance, activity, size, or age (how long the group has existed). It pays to sort the same list several different ways because you also want to find groups that

- ◆ Have been around for at least six months
- ◆ Continue to attract new members
- ◆ Display a high level of activity, with frequent postings from many participants
- ◆ Have more than one or two people dominating the conversation and postings
- ◆ Demonstrate a clear need or want for the type of products or services you offer



Participating in a small group can take as much work as in a large one. To ensure that your time investment pays off, look for groups with at least 200 members, if not more. This number, of course, is somewhat dependent on your business. For instance, a relatively small group of film directors might be happy to share production tips and shooting angles with each other.

Click the More link to view samples of the group photo pool and to monitor the tone of the discussion. When you're ready to participate, click Join and then confirm your entry. You might want to join a dozen or so groups initially and then winnow them to five or six that produce the best leads.



If you sell or service only a specific region, use a search term that includes your location (for example, *Albuquerque balloon*) to find groups that draw from or are interested in your area. By geographically narrowing your target market, you're more likely to find qualified prospects.

Creating your own group

If you can't find any groups, you can easily start your own. Simply select the Group tab at the top of the page and click the Create Your Own Group link. Click the Create button under the level of group accessibility you want: Public, Public by Invitation Only, or Private.

If you create a public group, you might have to make a serious commitment of time and effort to reach a critical mass of members, and you may find yourself conducting a membership campaign.

Posting properly

The etiquette for participating in a Flickr group is standard for groups everywhere:

- ◆ Comply with the group’s posting rules.
- ◆ Lurk and listen before you participate.
- ◆ Participate often in the discussion board, but avoid hard-sell techniques or blatant advertising. You can leave your screen name or Web address as a branding tool.
- ◆ Share your photos with the group pool.
- ◆ Don’t try to stuff search terms into text on the group discussion board.
- ◆ Comment on or “fave” the photos produced by others in the group; they’re more likely than random viewers to return the favor.



Because Flickr generally doesn’t permit the commercial use of groups, you can’t set up a company-based group. The only way around this restriction is to become an official sponsored group.

Casting bread upon the Flickr waters

In addition to groups, all participation options described in this section provide an opportunity for you to become known to others within the Flickr community. Think of it like you’re networking a party: Decide whom you want to meet — your prospects or vendors, presumably — and then do one of these favors for them.

A vendor or prospect who receives a notification of your favor may be intrigued enough to visit your photostream out of curiosity, if nothing else. At least the person then finds out about your company and perhaps returns the favor. Who knows? You might even gain a customer.



Groups and favors can become time-consuming retail marketing methods. Be sure to schedule time to nourish your Flickr presence.

Follow these guidelines to begin putting together a community on Flickr:

- ◆ **Faves:** Mark someone else’s photos as one of your favorites (faves) by clicking the Add to Faves button in the upper-left corner above the image on an individual photo page. You can fave an unlimited number of photos by other people, but you can’t fave your own photos — not even one.
- ◆ **Galleries:** A gallery is a “curated” set of as many as 18 photos that you recommend to others. Click the Add to Gallery button in the upper-right corner of the set of options above the image on an individual photo page. You can’t include your own images in your galleries. But you can create as many galleries as you’d like with other people’s photos.
- ◆ **Comments:** Comments are made on your own or other contributors’ individual photo pages or set pages. If you receive a positive comment, pay it back or pay it forward. Making comments encourages other people to visit your site and say something positive in turn. This strategy adds to your interestingness, a Flickr characteristic we discuss in the later section

“Extending Your Market Reach with Flickr.” When it comes to comments, remember what Thumper said in *Bambi*: “If you can’t say something nice, don’t say nothing at all.” You can refer to your Web presence in your own comments, but don’t do it on other contributors’ photos. Your screen name is enough branding.

- ◆ **Contacts:** Add people whose work you want to follow as contacts by clicking the Add As a Contact link in the list of options above someone’s photostream. You might add specific group members, collaborating companies, or prospects to your contacts list. You can include current clients who need ongoing access to private sets of images and mark them as a friend. Because the latest uploads from your contacts appear on *your* contacts list and home page, you may not want to include competitors or anyone else whose work would distract from your own company’s presence. For more information, see www.flickr.com/photos/friends.
- ◆ **Testimonials:** Testimonials written by others appear at the bottom of your profile page. You can ask mutual friends or contacts to write them for you, or you can write them for others. To create a testimonial for someone (call her Pixtaker), you and Pixtaker must first select each other as a contact, and you must each have at least one photo or video in your photostream. Then scroll down to the bottom of Pixtaker’s Profile until you see the Testimonials section. Click the Write a Testimonial about Pixtaker link. Pixtaker has to approve your testimonial before it appears on her Profile page. To manage your testimonials, choose You↔Your Profile and then click the Write and Review Testimonials link in the options list on the right or go directly to www.flickr.com/testimonials_manage.gne.

Use calls to action in the Description or Comment fields to ask people to fave your photo, add it to their galleries, write a testimonial, or leave their own comment. Remind people how to do it.

Extending Your Market Reach with Flickr

In addition to building viewership through community participation, you can attract people to your Flickr pages by conducting audience-building activities, promoting your Flickr presence on your own Web site and other people’s Web sites, and using search engine optimization techniques to drive traffic to your Flickr images.

Building an audience on Flickr

Flickr provides several ways to attract new people to your site:

- ◆ **Invitations:** When you sign up (or at any other time), Flickr offers to e-mail customized invitations to join Flickr and view your photos at www.flickr.com/invite. It also offers to help you find contacts already on Flickr by searching your Gmail, Hotmail, or Yahoo! Mail address books.

- ◆ **Guest passes and sharing:** A guest pass (www.flickr.com/help/guestpass) is a way to offer clients, customers, and prospects a chance to view one set of images or your entire photostream without their having to become Flickr members themselves. Simply click the Share This button in the upper right corner of your photostream or set page and e-mail a link. Track your history of offers and acceptance for invitations and guest passes at www.flickr.com/invite/history.
- ◆ **Explore:** Flickr features about 500 diverse images each day in its Explore space. Flickr uses its own proprietary “interestingness” algorithm to select these images, which are meant to intrigue and involve viewers, not to showcase photographers. Interestingness is based on such uncontrollable factors as the number of visits to a photo, where visitors come from, who comments, who marks a photo as a favorite, the presence of tags and geotags, the number of groups that include the image, and how often and when these actions occur. (The more frequently within a fixed period, the better.) You can’t do anything to list your images on Explore, other than to be active in the Flickr community, follow best practices, and try to build buzz for a particular photo by using invitations, passes, and offsite exposure.



Use the Scout tool (bighugelabs.com/scout.php), shown in the table in the sidebar “Useful Flickr resource URLs,” to see whether one of your photos has been “Explored.”

Using Flickr to build an audience offsite

You can easily expose to a larger audience all your hard work on Flickr by embedding images elsewhere online, posting a Flickr badge, linking Flickr with your other social media sites, or distributing your images on items or as stock photos. Remember to use calls to action to tell viewers what you want them to do or the benefits they’ll receive by visiting your Flickr site.

Embedding photos or photostreams offsite

Posting photos, sets, slide shows, or photostreams on your Web site or blog or other social media pages or including them in e-mail messages or newsletters is simple. Just click the Share This link in the upper-right corner of any page. Click to select Grab the Link to obtain the URL for the image to copy and paste elsewhere. For more information, see www.flickr.com/help/faq/search/?q=embedding+photos.



Flickr guidelines require that you link back any Flickr images posted on an external Web site to their respective Flickr pages.

These HTML links “break” easily. Whenever you rotate, resize, or reset the privacy level of an image, its filename changes. If you delete a photo from your photostream, the image filenames of other photos change, too. Viewers then see a blank box with an X in it rather than the image that once appeared.



To avoid broken links, create permalink URLs for the images you post elsewhere. On an individual photo page, click the All Sizes button and select the size image you want to use. Copy and paste into your Web page the HTML code that appears in the first box beneath the photo. This code also includes the required link back to Flickr.

Adding a Flickr badge

A Flickr badge on your Web site or other social media pages acts like a banner ad. The badge links to one of your Flickr pages. Flickr has an easy widget to create badges at www.flickr.com/badge.gne, or you can use a third-party badge builder. Select a static HTML graphic or a Flash-driven badge, with your choice of photos and layouts. The badge acts as a teaser to your Flickr site, particularly because it can present multiple images at a time.

Figure 4-5 shows the Flickr badge for the Just Add Worms site (www.justaddworms.com). This Flash-driven version of a badge, in which rotating images are randomly enlarged, links to the Just Add Worms photostream page on Flickr (www.flickr.com/photos/justaddworms).

Figure 4-5: Just Add Worms posts a Flickr badge on its Web site to entice viewers to see more images on Flickr.



Flickr badge

Linking to other social media marketing sites

Flickr makes it easy to coordinate your social media marketing efforts, saving you time and helping you build your audience.

Flickr has prebuilt options for updating your blog (or blogs), including Twitter and Facebook. Choose You↔Your Account and then click the Sharing & Extending link in the breadcrumb trail. Follow the wizards in the Your Blogs or Your Facebook Account options to configure these connections. Contemporaneous updates keep your other sites active, without requiring extra effort on your part.



You can upload directly to Flickr and sites such as Twitter simultaneously, or you can tweet a photo that's already on Flickr.

Flickr also provides RSS feeds for your photostream, sets, group discussions, favorites, and other elements. When viewers subscribe to a feed, they receive automatic notifications whenever new content appears on that page. Any Flickr page with an RSS feed displays at the bottom of the page the standard orange RSS icon. Users with an RSS reader simply click the appropriate link next to the icon (most people use the Latest link) and follow the directions to add it to their favorite RSS readers. For more information about RSS, see Book II, Chapter 1, or go to www.flickr.com/help/faq/search/?q=rss.



Use the Description field or Comment field to remind people to activate the RSS feed and tell them how to do it.

Disseminating your images and name on products

Flickr lets you easily send photos to third-party applications to create cards, business gifts, promotional items, awards, loyalty rewards, or event commemoratives. All these branding opportunities are ways to keep your name (and Web address!) in front of customers even when they're offline.

From the Organize & Create tab, select Prints & Photo Products and then Create Photo Products. You have your choice of photo books, calendars, cards, collages, canvas prints, and other items from the Flickr partner Snapfish. For a broader range of options and providers, visit the App Garden at www.flickr.com/services, where creative third-party developers offer additional photo ideas, such as screen savers, wallpaper, magnets, mugs, puzzles, or ID badges. You can also find alternative sources for photo products, such as Qoop at www.qoop.com.



Of course, you can always send your Flickr images to sites such as CafePress (www.cafepress.com) for a broader range of branding and company-identification products.

Disseminating your work as stock photography

If you're an artist or a photographer, Flickr offers an opportunity to receive payment for professional work by using the well-known stock photo site Getty Images (www.gettyimages.com) and a way to introduce your name and work into the public eye by using Creative Commons. Consider both options as marketing avenues for your work.

To be considered for Getty Images, choose You↔Your Account and then click the Privacy & Permissions link in the breadcrumb trail at the top. Choose Yes to the option to make photos eligible for invitation by Getty Images. If you don't want to wait for Getty to find you, you can submit your work for consideration to Getty's call for artists at www.flickr.com/groups/callforartists. For more information, see www.flickr.com/help/gettyimages.

As an unpaid alternative, consider offering *some* of your work under a license from Creative Commons (www.creativecommons.org), a nonprofit organization that supports ways to retain your copyright while still distributing your work, under certain conditions, as a branding and publicity opportunity.



Create a set containing the work you're willing to share under a Creative Commons license. For instance, you might create a set that offers only thumbnails, only older work, or only work on certain topics or in specific genres. You can indicate in the Description field that other sizes, views, or uses are available for a fee on your Web site.

At Flickr, you can start with a preferred licensing level at a global level by choosing You↔Your Account and clicking the Privacy & Permissions link in the breadcrumb trail at the top. In the Defaults for New Uploads section, click Edit next to the question "What license will your content have?" (You should be on www.flickr.com/account/prefs/license/?from=privacy.) If you aren't sure what to do, select the most restrictive option, All Rights Reserved, as your global setting and decide whether to liberalize your policy later for certain images.



Creative Commons licenses are irrevocable. As a professional, you may depend on copyright protection for your livelihood. Though you can change your mind about distribution going forward, you can't withdraw a license from someone who has already exercised it.

The next most restrictive choice is the third button, Attribution NonCommercial NoDerivs. Creative Commons calls it the "free advertising" license because "it allows others to download your works and share them with others as long as they mention you and link back to you, but they can't change them in any way or use them commercially." For more information about protecting your photos online, see www.flickr.com/creativecommons.



Treat Creative Commons as an important resource. Read the list of issues to think about first at http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Before_Licensing. A wizard at the site can help you select the right licensing level: It's at <http://creativecommons.org/choose>.

Using Flickr to improve search engine rankings

Because Google, Yahoo!, and Bing all crawl Flickr, it pays to use good SEO practices, as outlined in Book II, Chapter 2. By aligning your Flickr content with your overall SEO strategy, you can help improve the appearance of your business in relevant search results and indirectly increase traffic.

Try to incorporate some of your preferred search terms in appropriate fields for Flickr. These fields, described in the following list, automatically become available after uploading an image, or go to the individual photo page and scroll to the end of the options in the right column to edit the title, description, and tags. (It's the last option under Additional Information.)

- ◆ **Filename:** If necessary, rename your files before uploading them. Be descriptive and include a search term such as “snowshoe-siamese-cat-plays-piano.jpg” instead of “image12345.jpg.”
- ◆ **Title field:** Like the filename, the title should be descriptive and include a search term.
- ◆ **Description field:** In addition to incorporating the search terms that appear in the title and filename, you might want to include your business name and address and your Web address (without an active link), if appropriate. Don't use blatant calls to action or hard-sell language. From the point of view of an external search engine, the description is “surrounding content” and essential to assessing the relevance of search terms.
- ◆ **Tag list:** Tags, which work like keywords, help users search for images on Flickr as well as externally. You can use as many as 75 tags per image, so all your preferred search terms plus tags specific to the image might comprise your tag list. You can include your business name, address, city, and unlinked Web address in your tags. Separate individual tags with spaces; put a tag with multiple words between double quote marks. For a good example, see how Brentano fabrics handles its tags at www.flickr.com/photos/brentanofabrics/tags and www.flickr.com/photos/brentanofabrics/alltags.



Save time by using the bulk editing feature in the Organizer to add shared tags and descriptive content to sets or already uploaded images. Choose Organize & Create. Then drag the photos you want to modify from the Findr bar at the bottom into the large box in the center of the page. Click the Batch Organize tab, choose Edit Photos⇨Titles, Tags, and Descriptions. Enter and save the shared tags and description. For after-the-fact editing of all tags, choose You⇨Your Tags and select the All Your Tags option.

Measuring Your Flickr Results

Basic statistical information about usage of your Flickr account is available in the free version; the Pro version offers additional detail. For more general information, see www.flickr.com/help/stats.



To gain the most value from your statistics, review them in the context of the overall statistics on your primary Web site, as discussed in Book VIII. In particular, look at referrers to your primary Web site to see how much traffic to your site comes from Flickr, as compared to other Web sites, other social media efforts, advertising, or search engines.

Reviewing free stats

You can see either a quick snapshot of your Flickr activity for all time or somewhat more information for a specific timeframe. For the snapshot, go to your photostream. Then click Popular, an option that only you — and not other viewers — can see. In addition to showing which of your photos is the most popular (viewed most often), these four options summarize your site's all-time activity:

- ◆ **Interesting:** Provides the relative “interestingness” ranking of images within your photostream (and varies continually)
- ◆ **Views:** Measures every view of your photostream, except for the times you viewed it yourself
- ◆ **Favorites:** Tells you how many times other people have labeled one of your photos as a Favorite
- ◆ **Comments:** Totals how many comments others have left

For more data, choose You↔Recent Activity↔Custom View. This generates a column of choices on the right. In the drop-down menu, choose a timeframe, which ranges from as recently as “the last hour” to as far back as “since the beginning” of your account. Then check all options that matter to you in terms of activities on your photos, replies you've made, or other people's actions related to you. Your home page then displays aggregate numbers for your photostream activity during the timeframe you specified.



Set a schedule for checking your stats. Unless you're tracking the impact of a specific marketing initiative or managing a huge online marketing budget, checking stats monthly is generally enough for Flickr and all your other online marketing activities.

Reviewing Pro stats

For more detail by image or by sets for marketing purposes, purchase the Pro version of Flickr for \$24.95 per year. If Flickr is a major component of your social media strategy, the detailed information may be worth it. For a peek at

the extended information and graphic displays in the Pro version, see www.flickr.com/photos/me/stats. This list describes its advantages:

- ◆ **Referrers:** List of where your Flickr visitors have come from
- ◆ **Statistics:** Page views broken down by individual image, sets, or collections
- ◆ **Traffic:** Charts of visits over time
- ◆ **Popularity:** Rankings for individual photos and videos by number of views



Statistics offer valuable insight and feedback. Use your results to help guide future uploads, to listen to your target audience, and to modify your Flickr behavior. There's no point in looking at numbers for numbers' sake.

Protecting Your Photos on Flickr

No matter what you try, you always risk losing control of your pictures. This concern matters particularly to professional artists, artisans, photographers, and designers whose business is imagery. A delicate balance exists between getting your name out and getting ripped off.

In addition to selecting the most restrictive options discussed in this chapter (no downloads, no blogging, and no printing by others, selecting All Rights Reserved as the licensing level), you have a few other options to reduce your risk. Follow these guidelines:

- ◆ Rotate visible stock. Either delete images or remove them regularly from public view.
- ◆ Post only a small sample of your work to whet users' appetites without presenting a significant loss if the images are misused.
- ◆ Display only thumbnails or low-resolution images of limited usefulness.
- ◆ File a copyright claim with the U.S. Copyright Office at www.copyright.gov. Prices start at \$35 per image.
- ◆ Watermark images with your copyright notice, domain name, and business name. You can find free versions for watermarking a small number of photos online at <http://picmarkr.com>, www.watermarktool.com, and www.webwatermarks.com. The first two sites also offer paid, full-featured versions to batch-watermark many photos or integrate watermarking with your photostream.



If you have serious concerns, consult with an intellectual property attorney about your exposure on Flickr, licensing agreements, photo waivers, copyright infringement, or other legal matters.