

Tracking Microstock Sales with Lookstat

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Written 06 March 2009
Revised 26 March 2015

~~[Lookstat](#) [2] is a service that allows you to track sales of your microstock images across several websites.~~

Lookstat Has Closed, this review is for reference only

As an alternative we suggest you look at [StockPerformer](#) [3]

Tracking your sales statistics is important, seeing what's selling and what's not selling is vital to success in microstock unless you enjoy spending time keywording, sorting and uploading images that earn less money than they cost to produce. You could track sales from each site you use yourself but it's difficult to compare how each image or collection of images are selling across all the sites you use. Some microstock contributors use spreadsheets to manually tabulate their sales each month.

The lookstat site currently tracks and correlates your sales data from three microstock agencies:

- [istockphoto](#) [4]
- [dreamstime](#) [5]
- [shutterstock](#) [6]

...with plans to introduce support for more sites in the near future.

After setting up your account lookstat takes 24-72 hours to collect data, imagine if you will there is a lot of data, each image on each site, and each sale of each image on each site... Once that process is completed then you can view this wealth of information in various ways. At first my impression was 'where are all the buttons and menus?' You are greeted with a graph of earnings over a selected period, total earnings from each site and some thumbnails of the best sellers - that's it. From there you can then click the images and links provided to dig down into more specific information, e.g. clicking on each thumbnail image takes to you a list of how that image has sold by month, then clicking on that will take you into the sales of that image by day for the selected month, click that and you can see which agencies sold it on that day. You can of course filter by time periods and a chosen agency.

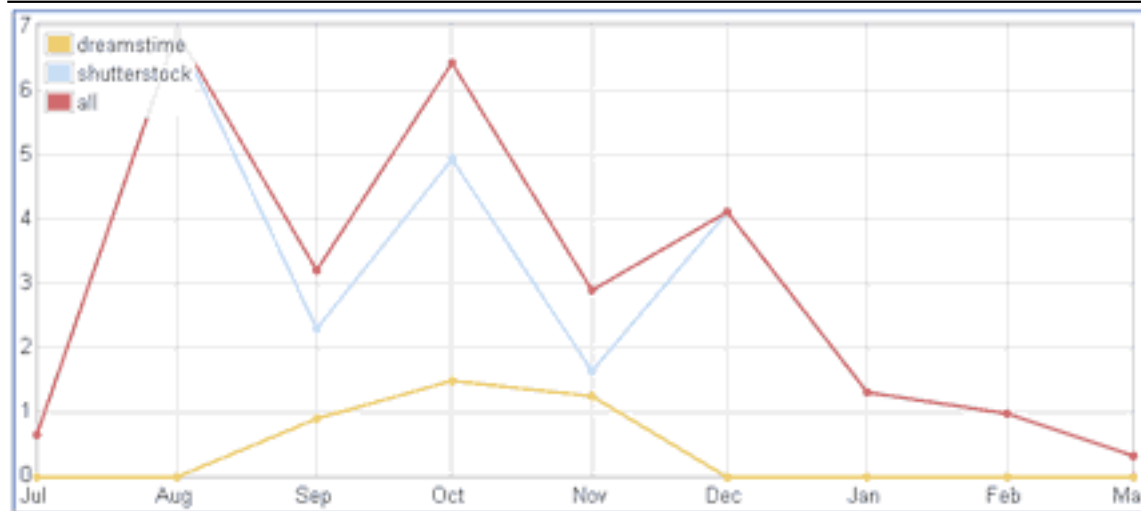


(Note: the above screen capture contains fictitious data)

Lookstat automates what you perhaps in some respects could do by hand with a spreadsheet or just by rule of thumb observation remembering sales figures over a specific period. For me it confirmed a few interesting things like my DT and SS earnings are approximately the same but lookstat shows me accurately that SS downloads are higher than DT downloads by 1:2.5 for the same income.

The site is still in beta so not everything is complete. The lookstat team are working on adding more sites (which as I understand it are coming sooner rather than later). At a minimum you will find lookstat a very interesting view on your sales, but depending on how many sales/images you have the site can also provide you with some very useful sales trends. The earnings per image over all time across all sites is very interesting especially if in the future that earnings information could be viewed against the time each photo has been on-line in such a way as to show earnings per day for a selected time period. I can already see that my most popular seller over all time no longer sells at all (or has not done in the past several months) probably as it is an old 3.1MP image from around 2004/5, I can see a couple of others that have a similar plot but after more than one year of zero sales an EL for \$25 eclipsed all the previous earnings for that file!

Here's an interesting plot for all those who talk about "[feeding the beast](#) [7]", fortunately most of my images have NOT done this!



Dashboard > Earnings > Stock Photo: Tokyo from above > All Time

Site:

Date	Earnings/Downloads	Downloads	Amount
2008-07	\$0.33	2	\$0.66
2008-08	\$0.33	21	\$6.93
2008-09	\$0.40	8	\$3.22
2008-10	\$0.40	16	\$6.45
2008-11	\$0.41	7	\$2.91
2008-12	\$0.68	6	\$4.13
2009-01	\$0.33	4	\$1.32
2009-02	\$0.33	3	\$0.99
2009-03	\$0.33	1	\$0.33
	\$0.39	68	\$26.94

Security

Security could clearly be a concern for users of lookstat, one which lookstat have [addressed](#) [8] by being transparent about all of the security features they have included into the service. If someone gained access to their servers then they could conceivably, although with the encryption used unlikely, have some level of access to your microstock data; this is however no different to your email service, if someone maliciously gained access to your email then they would have just the same (if not more) access to your microstock accounts by resetting passwords and logging in.

This is purely a question of trust, you trust your email host, on-line banks etc and their security systems with your data, there is no reason not to trust lookstat. Their site lists their contact details, staff and a physical address; and I've personally met one of their founders, he's real. Lookstat is certified by McAfee Secure, who independently sweep the site daily for security issues, the same security service is used by some of the major microstock sites.

The Future

Lookstat plan to introduce a charge for their system in the future, setting up such a service is costly and obviously someone has to pay. Their plan is to try to keep the service free for most users only charging those who make a serious income from microstock and hence have the most to gain from the insight lookstat provides.

In addition to the microstock agencies currently supported lookstat plan to support [Fotolia](#) [9], [123rf](#) [10] and [Bigstockphoto](#) [11] soon.

You can keep up-to-date with developments at lookstat via the [lookstat blog](#) [12], we'll also post the major updates here in our news feed ([rss](#) [13]).

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