

The 3 Worst Ways to Undersell your Photos

[The 3 Worst Ways to Undersell your Photos](#) [1]

By Steve Gibson
Written 08 April 2008
Revised 12 April 2015



You could call this post the three 'best' ways to undersell your work, either way here are three great ideas that you DO NOT want to touch with a barge pole...

1) Photo Competitions that take your rights.

First off, it is good to enter competitions if you are starting out, but take care, while they offer a lot of

opportunity for a beginning photographer to make a name or get themselves known you should also be reading the conditions of entry very carefully. Are they just taking your photos and helping themselves to an unlimited license at the same time? It's popular to have statements like "Competition winners license their work for promotional use of the company following the competition" Look at that statement one way and if you win (wh-hooooo! applause) you will get your name and photo printed in the company magazine or website, look at it a little more cynically and, if there is no clarification about what the 'winners' are, then the competition organisers can take free reign over selecting all the professional looking useful images they like, using where and when they like for time infinitum. Travel companies are very 'good' at this practice when it comes to sourcing media for their brochures. To read more in competition rights then we recommend pro-imaging.org [2], they have a 'rights on' list of competitions that fill their 'Bill of Rights'

2) Uploading an exclusive image to a news site just for the honor of getting it in print.

Look at all the news media sites, especially the gutter press, lots of them have "upload your news story" etc. it is tempting to catch an exclusive event, celebrity with their pants down etc. and think 'cool I can make a mint selling this to a newspaper'. If you are not a professional news photographer you are likely to be in for a disappointment. Editors will take what they can for free from an amateur who is just looking for a moment of fame, the fame if having your surname and first initial printed in the local cheap sheet will not gain you sales in your microstock career. if your image is genuinely newsworthy it then it is worthy of being paid for, and you keeping control of the license is an important step.

3) Giving images away as public domain or CC0

If you are not going to charge at least make the license an attribution license. There are lot of temptations to give images away or for a low cost, to help a charity, the church, the local community, and indeed there are cases when you will end up giving images for free, perhaps in exchange for something like a valuable opportunity to shoot an event or gain publicity. Whatever the scenario, never make images public domain (PD) or Creative Commons Zero. You lose all rights over the images if they become PD ([Introduction to stock image licensing terms](#) [3]). The creative commons system has simplified the process of giving an image away for no charge but maintaining your rights as a photographer. You could also come up with you own license also, but the minimum you should be doing where you see fit to be charitable is:

- maintain copyright for yourself (there is rarely an exception here)
- license only to the recipient or to specified licences (no sub licensing by them to others)
- control the media that the image will be used in if you can, i.e. only on their website or magazine
- require an attribution/printed credit in return for the free use license, perhaps this could accept a mention in a newsletter or website links page etc. in lieu of a direct attribution.

A quick look at the [stats page on freeimages.com](#) [4] reveals that free photos are not just an internet curiosity, with 10 million downloads at time of writing from their top contributor, those high resolution stock images without requirement for an attribution are clearly earning somebody some money (in the case of freeimages.com that would be advertising revenue for Getty images).

Related Posts

[Microstock photos and the free economy](#) [5]

[100 million creative commons images on flickr](#) [6]

Source URL: <https://microstockinsider.com/guides/the-3-worst-ways-undersell-your-photos>

Links:

- [1] <https://microstockinsider.com/guides/the-3-worst-ways-undersell-your-photos>
- [2] <http://www.pro-imaging.org>
- [3] <https://microstockinsider.com/guides/introduction-licensing-images>
- [4] <http://www.sxc.hu/stats>
- [5] <https://microstockinsider.com/guides/microstock-photos-for-free>
- [6] <https://microstockinsider.com/news/flickr-hits-100-million-creative-commons-images>