

Microstock Tantrums

[Microstock Tantrums](#) [1]

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"I'm going to delete my portfolio if they keep doing this!"

"I removed all my photos after they changed their payment plan"

Sound familiar? You can read statements like this on a lot of microstock forums, including those of the agencies themselves. Crowd sourcing images brings 'crowd complaining', but you should think very carefully about what you write as once you press submit, it may reflect badly on you.

Photographers en-masse can make a difference

It's true to say that when large numbers of the top photographers are upset by change a site makes and then stop uploading their new work then the agencies do in some cases sit up and take notice, uploads of new images are an agencies life blood.

I know some photographers find it difficult not to get attached to their photos, and become very protective of them, while I share similar feelings for my work I also have an overwhelming sense of business when it comes to making decisions based on where and who I should upload to. The main questions for me are "does it make business sense" and "is it ethical". There is a long term issue with respect to not wanting to devalue my work so there are some websites I won't upload to because they give (insultingly) small commissions.

[Erik W. Kolstad wrote on his blog](#) [2]:

"Shutterstock: This is where many new microstockers get started. However, after a while I found their payout of \$0.25 per download almost insulting and removed all my images. SS was my best earner; I made around \$100 on just 100 images in a few months. I have now uploaded a few of my new images to give it a new try. The revenues in November were around \$15, about half a dollar per image."

What Erik did was not what I would call a tantrum (and he is certainly not the only photographer to write something similar), but it's a fine example of making a rash decision to delete a portfolio. Not one the sort of choices that should have been made at the drop of a hat. Some agencies make you delete photos individually instead of having a delete all button perhaps to avoid this type of thing. Think of this post if you ever consider deleting everything, **read all the facts, read the comments of others on the subject, sleep on it for a couple of days at least, and only then make an informed decision.**

Agencies are in the business of staying in business, their business models are usually well planned, and their decisions are more often than not done for a good reason. They never intend to alienate contributors, nor do they make financial decisions that might sound like a 'pay cut' to contributors without good reason.

Does it make sense?

The truth of the matter is that if you upload your images to multiple sites then the profit decision on if you should upload to one more site is only based on the time it takes to upload to the new site vs. any expected return. Those new photos are essentially sat there on your hard disk waiting to monetize.

The flip side of that is that if you have a portfolio of images on a site then for you the total running cost once those images are uploaded and accepted is zero. Choosing to delete those images even if they have earned enough to cover the cost of upload is equivalent to just throwing that time you spent uploading down the drain.

I never understand the motivations of any microstock photographer who chooses to delete their images for reasons other than exclusivity, removing low raking sellers (trying to get overall profile popularity up) or portfolio vanity - i.e. they no longer feel an image is up to their current standards or has dated badly.

As far as workflow goes: **It's wise to stay informed about changes in the microstock**

industry, but it's unwise to spend hours of your valuable time on a non-profitable vendetta. Comments you make on a forum are recorded for a long time; even if you delete them they can be accessed through archives, feeds and cached copies.

0 Comments

It's quiet in here!

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