

FAQ

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What is Microstock?

Selling stock photos for micro payment; [read more](#) [2].

What are the best sites to sell my images on?

We recommend [these sites](#) [3]

Who can sell their creations on microstock sites?

Anyone! That's one of the great things about microstock. Clearly sales results will vary for less experienced photographers but amateur photographers of all levels can make money selling their images. Microstock is not just about photography, designers find use for content produced by all sorts of people whose careers or interests involve visual arts:

- Event and wedding photographers
- Cartoonists and illustrators
- Digital and traditional artists
- 3D artwork and CG video producers
- Videographers
- Landscape and travel photographers
- Commercial / advertising photography
- Portrait and fashion photographers
- Graphic designers (creating generic stock designs for use in their own industry)

For many contributors microstock provides additional (albeit small) income by selling something they already produce e.g. a hobby photographer who takes a few photos at the weekend. Read more if you are [contemplating starting out as a microstock photographer](#) [4]

What are the best referral programs?

That's a hard one to find a single answer, you can get a good idea of the income from each of the [referral schemes at a glance](#) [5]

What are the best types of images to sell?

Images which tell a story or hold a metaphor or concept. If your image suggests 'teamwork' 'quality' 'stress' 'organisation' 'professionalism' 'profit' or 'reliability' then you are probably on the right tracks. The stock photo cliché of a green apple on a white background does suggest health and vitality, but you can do much better with a group of people who are 'enjoying life' or a business person looking like they are in control of a busy situation. More reading: [what kind of stock images sell the best](#) [6]

Are there any images I should not be selling on a microstock site?

In general fine art and landscape are not really the sort of thing that produce good results on a stock photo site unless those images convey some sort idea, emotion or metaphor. However, sales can still be made in these areas.

Which is the cheapest site to buy from?

We were more interested in which was the [best value microstock site](#) [7], but we have answered the question "which is cheapest" in that article too.

Which is the biggest microstock site?

[shutterstock](#) [8] currently have the most images - replacing [istockphoto](#) [9] at the top, but it's not really [size that matters](#) [10].

So I can make money online, but it takes hours to make just a couple of dollars a week?

You need to [optimise your workflow](#) [11] and get organised, sure you can correct things in photoshop, but you simply cannot afford to spend hours tweaking and image only to have it rejected or find it's a non-seller, I also recommend you view our work-flow optimisation section and take a look at some of the software that will assist you in uploading to the stock sites

Are there any tools I can use to help me uploading?

Yes, check out the [workflow section](#) [11] or read our feature on [FTP software](#) [12]

Can I upload the same images to more than one agency?

Yes, you can sell the same images at multiple agencies (check the terms at each agency to be sure), you also have the choice to become an exclusive photographer at one agency where your images may earn you more commission. More about the [decision to become exclusive](#) [13].

Should I ever give my images away for free?

Difficult question that. One that each photographer has to evaluate depending on their market sector. Personally I say yes, but I only gave away my poorer quality work what WOULD NOT SELL in a paid market. Sites like [sxc](#) [14] and more over flickr who allow a huge audience to see you work are a great way to provide either free or low resolution version of your work and get your photo on the screen of a potential higher resolution buyer. I don't recommend this approach for high end work, where the photographers 'style and image cache' is everything, giving away work in that environment will do more damage than good. See [promoting your portfolio](#) [15] for more about this.

Microstock sites to avoid?

The net is riddled with sites that allow you to upload your images. There are a few simple rules to quickly evaluate a site you come across. If it's not on our review [list of microstock sites](#) [16] (we have been careful to highlight the [microstock bad apples](#) [17]) then look at it with caution and ask:

- How many photographers do they have?
- How many photos do they have? (try a search for a common topic like 'apples' and see how many results come up, then compare it against the results you get from one of the top ten [micro stock](#) [18] sites we have listed)
- How and when will I get paid? cheque only? no Paypal? ask yourself why...
- Do they list their contact information, a contact form or business address? or do they have some sort of online chat option? Is there a user forum or a blog with regular posts?
- Does the site look professional? A professional looking logo? any bugs or page formatting that is not quite right? If so walk away.
- Have people been talking about it in the [forums](#) [19]?

Also look at the [criteria sites are reviewed against](#) [20] in our post about long term reviews

Do you have another question?

Ask us using the comment form below or [ask the microstock community](#) [19] (links to other microstock resources including forums)

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