

Selling Photos on Smugmug

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Smugmug is a site which allows you to setup a portfolio of your images and if you opt for professional account you can sell the images as downloads via a commercial license direct to buyers, you keep 85% of the sale.

The real decision on using this site is the content of your photos.

Sites like this (photoshelter and many others) are great if you want to sell prints of fine art, abstract and landscape images, or event photography. These sales areas are off topic for microstockinsider.com, but probably not off topic for many of the readers who work different image genres. If you are interested in selling such images then you might find an operator like smugmug very interesting. I would imagine that their site has a lot of visitors who are in the market to buy a print if they see something they like.

Is Smugmug Good for Micro-Stock [2] Photos?

While smugmug offer the facility for you to sell images as digital downloads with a commercial license, and indeed for the price (~~149 dollars~~ US \$25/Month as write this) you can set-up your own site, with unlimited space, even add on your own domain name to it, and sell downloads directly to image users. I have always felt there is a catch, just like owning your own custom written website site, you will have to collect visitors from somewhere (pay for advertising) and convince them to buy. Microstock works because there are image buyers who want a one-stop-shop for their photo needs, and these needs are fulfilled because so many photographers have submitted work that there is an image for almost every requirement. In microstock your only income if you try to sell direct will be for niche, hard to find images that an image buyer has had a hard time searching for and cannot find cheaper on one of the main microstock sites. At microstock prices there is little chance of 'undercutting' on price.

smugmug is not really a place for microstock photos, I would assume that the digital download is offered more as an option so that a buyer can make a print of the image themselves and not pay for printing of it, or for fulfilment of some kind of Macro priced [RM](#) [3] or [RF](#) [4] sales. Most of the images offered are either personal images by users, and the professionals on there are very much into landscapes and art prints, perhaps a few with a selection of 'hopeful' stock images (someone let me know if they do have a viable stock photo business on one of these sites).

For a more in-depth look at selling stock photos direct read [why not just sell the images yourself](#) [5].

Backups

While smugmug might not be such a good place to go for those hoping to find a steady stream of potential stock image buyers looking at their images, one thing that is interesting is their offer of unlimited space. I can imagine this being an excellent option for those who want secure off-site storage of all their images. It's always wise to make backups, and even wiser to keep at least one of those backups somewhere other than at home/the office in case some sort of disaster destroys all your backups which you keep in the same place. Keeping backups online is great because you can access them from anywhere, and backup new images anywhere you have internet access.

Overall

It's not that I don't like smugmug and all the sites like it, they can be a valuable marketing tool for certain genres, and a good way to set-up a portfolio if you don't know how to set-up a custom website yourself. Also excellent as place to sell photos if you already have customers contacting you with needs you can fulfil, or have a portfolio of images they want to buy prints of. I just feel that for stock photography you would be very wise not to **waste a lot of time** paying for and uploading images to a site like this unless you can send a lot of potential buyers to it.

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