

## Topic | Social Media

## Tutorial 48

# Flickr and Photo Hosting Websites

*Learn which sites to use to give more exposure to your photos, how to optimise them for search and what an image strategy entails.*

*Reading time: 35 minutes*

*Prerequisite: Images 101*



### 1. Benefits to your business

Making your images available online provides many benefits to your business. The first and most commonly recognised benefit is **the impact of showcasing your business and region online to people who might not otherwise know just how great it is.**

Images validate what you are saying using words. Showing quality images as part of your website, social media strategy or business listings may very well mean the difference between people believing or not believing what you are saying.

Let's compare the text and image below for the same product. Which one wins?

#### Text

Have the little penguins to all yourself on a private, secluded beach. Includes full ranger briefing and commentary through headsets. Use high-tech night vision goggles to watch the penguins in the dark.

#### Image



The image of course!

In addition to showcasing your product and experiences, images can provide an extra channel in which your website and business can be found online.

The lower cost and easier use of cameras makes it more affordable for your business to have video and imagery.

### 2. The importance of images to search engines

Before you upload your images to your website or to Flickr and/or other photo hosting websites it is important you understand the basic principles of search engine optimisation.

Images used to have one main purpose only: making your website look good. Things have since changed and search engines can now index images.

THIS MEANS THAT IMAGES HAVE A NEW PURPOSE: IMPROVING YOUR SEARCH ENGINE RESULTS AND

### DIRECTING VISITORS TO YOUR WEBSITE.

Search engines cannot “view” pictures as such. They rely on text to understand what the image is about. The table below gives you an idea about how image details are used to communicate what your image is about to search engines.


<b>File name</b>	<p>Use descriptive words in your file name:</p> <p>Uluru-bushwalking.jpg instead of DCM43x9AG.JPG)</p>	
<b>Image “Alt” attribute</b>	<p>Always use the Alt attribute and ensure you are using keywords. You will be able to edit all your images’ Alt attributes in your content management system.</p> <p>A good Alt attribute that uses keywords could be Bushwalking adventure in Uluru instead of John and Jane walking near the lake</p>	
<b>Text around the image</b>	<p>Search engines use the text surrounding an image to understand what the image is about.</p> <p>Come and join our 4-day adventure tour at Uluru. Bushwalking at sunrise, feeding the kangaroos and camping in swags are what you can expect at MyUluruAdventure</p>	
<b>Tags</b>	<p>These are used by social media sites such as Flickr and Facebook. Ensure you tag all your photos with numerous descriptive tags.</p> <p>Uluru, travel, adventure, camping, swag, kangaroos, morning bushwalk ....</p>	
<b>The general nature of the website</b>	<p>Keep in mind that search engines are proficient at understanding semantics (linguistic meaning) of webpages. Always ensure that your images are very relevant to the content of each of your webpages.</p>	

Photo Credit [http://flickr.com/photos/the\\_guenni/](http://flickr.com/photos/the_guenni/)

### 3. Permission

Before you can publish your images online it is important that you first ensure that you have permission to use the photos and are abiding by copyright laws.

#### a) *Gaining permission from my guests*

If you have taken any photos or videos of your guests or visitors, you will require their permission to use the material in order to promote your business. Below is an example of a picture or video release form. We suggest you make your own and check with your legal advisor.

# *Insert Your logo*

## **Picture/Video Release Form**

I hereby give [YOUR BUSINESS NAME HERE] permission to take photographs/videos of me or use photographs/videos in which I may be involved with others for the purpose of promoting [YOUR BUSINESSSS NAME HERE]. I also give the permission to use both photographs/videos that I took and/or photographs/videos that [YOUR BUSINESSSS NAME HERE] took of me to publish the same, including web and/or electronic usage, without incurring any debts of liabilities of any kind.

First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Post code: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(Parent/guardian signature if minor or under 18)

### 4. Setting up an image strategy

An image strategy is vital to ensure your images are being maximised online. The key part of an image strategy revolves around deciding where and when your images will be posted on the Internet:

- Will you be updating your image gallery on your website each time you take a great photo
- Are your images uploaded to Facebook, Flickr and Picasa ad hoc or do you upload them as part of folders and larger strategies.

Create an image strategy for your business that outlines the when, where and what of loading business images to the Internet.

Your image strategy document or plan could look similar to the below:

### Image strategy

**Who:** The receptionist is in charge of capturing happy snaps of clients once they are about to head on the tour bus. Email also sent to clients 2 weeks post tour enticing them to post images on company's Facebook Page.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI): 2 images per week.

**What:** Efforts should be made to photograph couples only as our target market is couples. Outdoor shots are preferred.

**Where:** Photos are to be uploaded on Flickr.com using the Flickr Uploadr tool and appropriate tags. Photos from Flickr need to also be added to our website and our Facebook Page.

**When:** This needs to be done on Fridays.

**Why:** Because our product is best showcased with images.

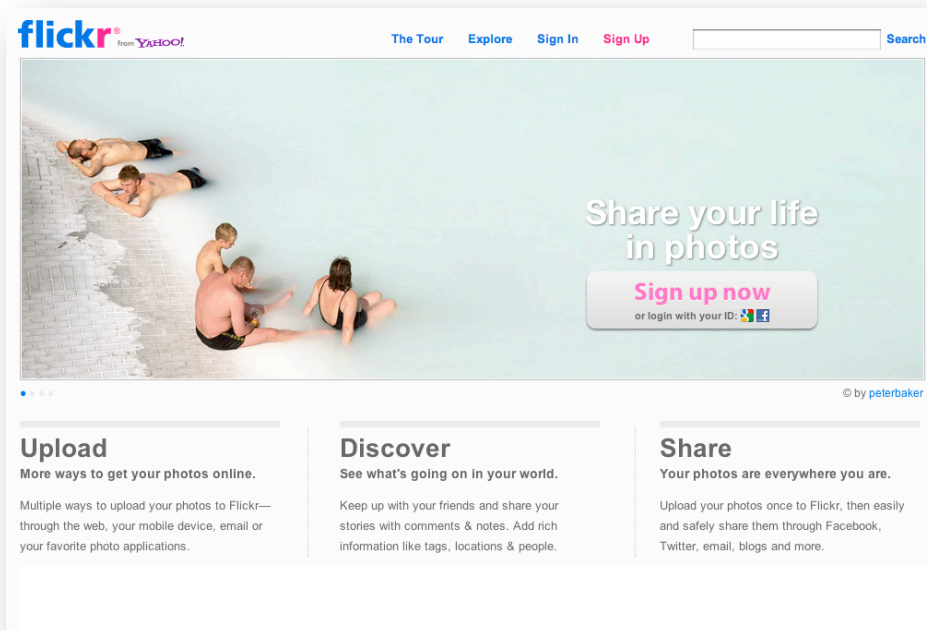
**How:** Please use company iPhone.

### a) *Photos on your website*

To effectively use images you need to ensure that your website is kept up to date. If your website is built on a content management system (CMS) updating your website with images should be fairly simple. If you have a group of photos relating to a special event you could use the images as part of a blog post to maximise readership and views.

### b) *Photo sharing*

Take your beyond your website and post them on photo sharing sites. This will increase your online visibility and it's free.



Screencapture credit: Flickr

There are many photo sharing sites, a few of the most popular ones are:

- Flickr: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)
- Pinterest: [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com)
- Photobucket: [www.photobucket.com](http://www.photobucket.com)
- Picasa Web Albums: [www.picasaweb.google.com](http://www.picasaweb.google.com)
- Panoramio: [www.panoramio.com](http://www.panoramio.com)

*If you have photos from a recent event or tour load them on to your Facebook Page and ask the businesses or guests that attended to comment and post photos on your Page as well.*

Please keep in mind that your clients can also do the same and post their photos of their holiday at your property or business on their accounts (e.g. Flickr, Facebook). Ask them to tag your business name on their photos when possible (on Flickr for example). It will maximise your

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business' exposure.

### c) Photo competitions

Holding competitions on your social media accounts where users can load their favourite photo of their time with you is a great way to increase interaction. Simple competitions like "Upload your funny holiday snaps at My Hotel for your chance to win an extra night stay with us next time you book" are a great way to encourage fan participation and get images of your business online.

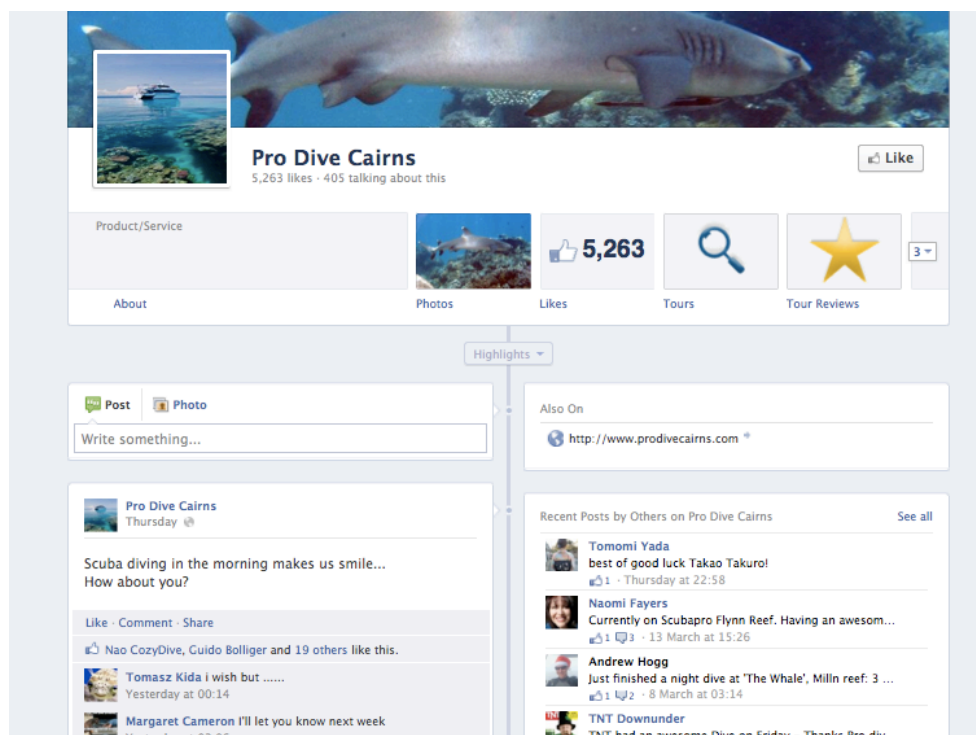
### d) Copyright

When you upload images to Flickr and other sites you are often able to choose between two level of copyright: full copyright (standard) and Creative Commons.

- For more information about copyright in Australia, download [http://www.copyright.org.au/admin/cms-acc1/\\_images/8735182134d3cb24174a63.pdf](http://www.copyright.org.au/admin/cms-acc1/_images/8735182134d3cb24174a63.pdf)
- For Creative Commons licence in Australia, visit <http://creativecommons.org.au/learn-more/licences>

## 5. Images case studies

Pro Dive Cairns ([www.facebook.com/prodivecairns](http://www.facebook.com/prodivecairns)) does a great job of utilising images for their social media accounts. They encourage their Facebook "likers" to post their favourite photos and the image with the most "Likes" wins a prize.



This is great for Pro Dive Cairns as it achieves 2 things:

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- **Community interaction and involvement:** by getting their own “likers” to provide images they are improving the feel and ‘image’ of the business
- **Showcase of the business:** while the majority of images don’t include the actual divers, the images show exactly what the majority of divers go in search of – sea life and amazing views. By showcasing these they are giving potential customers an honest account of the services offered.

A similar initiative could be put in place for your business using any of your social media channels or even on your website.

PRO DIVE CAIRNS COULD HOST THEIR IMAGES ON FLICKR INSTEAD OF JUST HOSTING THEM ON THEIR WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE. THIS WOULD GIVE THEM MORE EXPOSURE.

## 6. Using other people’s images

Image hosting sites such as Flickr allow use of some of their photos by people and businesses. This can save you a lot of time!

*If you are a business based in Byron Bay, you could for instance go to the Flickr homepage and click on the Search button. Another page will appear with an Advanced Search link. Click on the link and search as per the screenshot:*

### Advanced Search

**Search for**

Tip: Use these options to look for an exact phrase or to exclude words or tags from your search. For example, search for photos tagged with "apple" but not "pie".

All of these words

None of these words:

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**Search by content type**

Tip: Check the boxes next to content you'd like to see come up in searches.

Photos / Videos  
 Screenshots / Screencasts  
 Illustration/Art / Animation/CGI

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**Search by media type**

Tip: Filter to only display either photos or videos in your search results.

Photos & Videos  
 Only Photos  
 Only Videos  
 HD videos only


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**Search by date**

Tip: Use one or both dates to search for photos taken or posted within a certain time.

Photos taken    
mm/dd/yyyy mm/dd/yyyy

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 **creative commons**

Tip: Find content with a Creative Commons license. [Learn more...](#)

Only search within Creative Commons-licensed content

Find content to use commercially  
 Find content to modify, adapt, or build upon

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Note the Creative Commons section at the bottom and the ticks.

Results similar to these will appear:



From Yortw



From Yortw



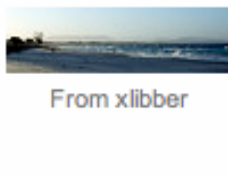
From eGuide...



From eGuide...



From eGuide...



From xlibber

Check each image individually and read the Creative Commons guidelines to ensure you attribute credit as per the licence.

## 7. Tips and tricks

- When it comes to publishing images online you need to **be aware of your community's interests**. Do they want to see pictures of the amazing nature around you, pictures of other people enjoying your services or do they want to see 'behind the scenes' images? Mixing up a collection of different image content will increase your interaction
- **People love creative "guess the ....." games**. You can take a photo on an obscure angle, of a more detailed section of a commonly used item or even the back of one of your tour guides' heads. Send out the challenge for people to guess the rest of the picture
- Online images don't have to be professionally taken. Just make sure your picture is clear and big enough for people to see the details. It's always better to show that amazing view than miss out all together
- You can use images from Flickr if you utilise the ones under a Creative Commons license and credit them properly. Ensure you use the advanced search option to find them as described in this tutorial.

## 8. Key learning outcomes

- Images are so easy to take and use, every tourism operator should use their smartphone/iPhone to take and share snaps
- Images are not visible to search engines as such. To optimise your images for search you need to give them a keyword rich file name and a keyword rich Alt attribute

- Consider posting images on sites such as Flickr and Facebook to get more exposure
- Using images as part of a competition or game is often very successful, as people love to provide their thoughts. Don't be afraid to try something new.

## 9. Related Material

### a) *Related tutorials*

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- Images 101
- What is a content management system
- Google tools

### b) *Related websites*

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- Photos to build inbound links: [www.smallbusinesssem.com/using-photos-to-build-inbound-links/1073](http://www.smallbusinesssem.com/using-photos-to-build-inbound-links/1073)
- Creative commons licenses: <http://creativecommons.org/about/licenses>
- Pinterest for the travel industry: [www.tnooz.com/2012/03/05/how-to/why-pinterest-works-in-the-travel-industry-especially-destinations/?utm\\_source=Tnooz+Mailing+List&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=f901ad2b3-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN](http://www.tnooz.com/2012/03/05/how-to/why-pinterest-works-in-the-travel-industry-especially-destinations/?utm_source=Tnooz+Mailing+List&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=f901ad2b3-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN)