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# Keep Me!

Refer to this handy directory whenever you next need creative inspiration or guidance on staying the right side of the law when using visual media.

You'll find niche and general stock agencies, artist reps, production companies, and innovative search tools, all indexed by subject and media types at the end.



## Table of Contents

	PAGES
Ways to Connect	4 – 5
Image Buying: The Essentials	6 – 11
Directory of Agencies	12 – 26
Organizations and Partners	28 – 29
Advertisements	27, 30 – 31
Subject Index	32 – 33
Media Index	34 – 35
Assignment Index	35



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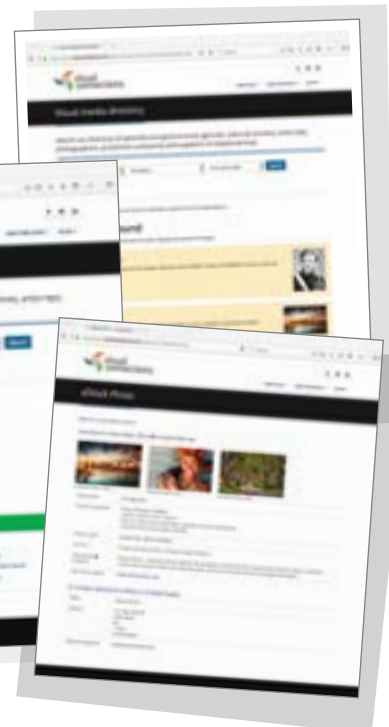
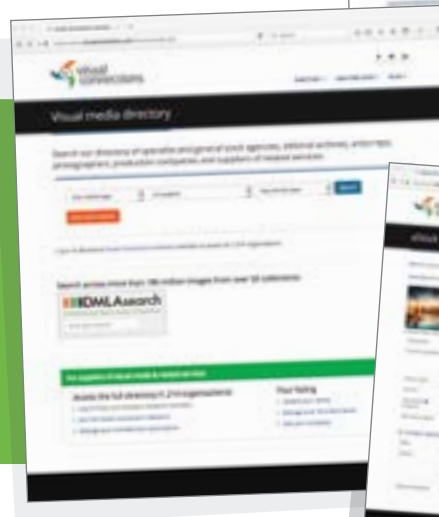
## blog

Up to date industry news, insightful interviews and insights from leaders in sourcing, licensing and commissioning visual media.



## directory

Search our directory of specialist and general stock agencies, editorial archives, artist reps, photographers, production companies, rights clearance specialists, and more.



# Image Buying: The Essentials

## COPYRIGHT

Copyright law gives copyright owners exclusive rights (with some limited exceptions) to control the use of their work for a limited period of time (see below). They can decide if and when to obtain commercial gain from their work by licensing any or all of these rights on an exclusive or non-exclusive basis:

### REPRODUCTION

the right to make copies

### DISTRIBUTION

the right to sell or otherwise distribute copies to the public

### DISPLAY

the right to display the work publicly

### PERFORM

the right to perform a motion picture or audio visual work publicly

### DERIVATIVE WORKS

the right to create adaptations

## Who is the copyright owner?

In most cases the copyright owner is the person who created the work, i.e. the photographer. However if the creator was employed to create the work as an employee or as a work for hire, the employer is the copyright owner. Any copyright owner may transfer all of their rights to another person or company, who becomes the new copyright owner.

## What images are in the public domain or available for public use?

- Any work created by the US government.
- Any work by US author first published or registered with the US Copyright Office more than 95 years ago.
- Published US works that fell into the public domain for failure to comply with formalities in place at the time such as notice and renewal registrations.
- Any image explicitly transferred for broad public use by its author under a type of **Creative Commons** license or the like.

## How long does copyright protection last?

Unfortunately there isn't a simple answer, but this table will help you determine if a particular US work may currently be in copyright:

For complete details of US copyright duration, refer to Circulars published by the Copyright Office ([www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)) or the Cornell University Copyright Information Center ([bit.ly/copyrftt](http://bit.ly/copyrftt)).

Copyright laws in other countries vary, but generally provide copyright protection for the life of the author plus 50–70 years.

\*The work is only protected if formalities were observed: e.g. publication with notice was required until March 1989 and renewal registration of published works was required after 28 years until 1964.

### IF THE WORK WAS ...

CREATED	FIRST PUBLISHED, OR REGISTERED WITH US COPYRIGHT OFFICE	IS IT PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT?
<b>1978 or later</b>	not relevant	<b>YES</b> [until at least 2048]
<b>Before 1978</b>	2003 or later	<b>YES</b> [until at least 2073]
	1978–2002	<b>YES</b> [until at least 2048]*
	Less than 95 years ago	<b>YES*</b>
	95 or more years ago	<b>NO</b>

## FAIR USE

The fair use doctrine under US copyright law provides a limited exception to the copyright owner's exclusive rights and permits use of a copyrighted work without the copyright holder's permission. Section 107 of the Copyright Act provides that reproduction "for purposes such as criticism, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research" is not an infringement of copyright subject to an analysis of factors. This is not an exhaustive list and is determined by the courts on a case by case basis. The doctrine of fair use aims to strike a balance between public interest and the rights of authors/artists. Whether unauthorized use is fair use or copyright infringement is determined by the courts on a case-by-case basis by analysing four factors prescribed by the statute (see [bit.ly/uscofu](http://bit.ly/uscofu)). Although not in the statute courts tend to find in favour of fair use if the second work does not replace the original work but adds something new, i.e. it transforms the original work and serves a different purpose and does not harm the market for the original work or derivatives. It can be a difficult doctrine to apply as the statute provides guidelines and not rules.

For example, reviewing a photograph that is part of a gallery opening is an example of fair use. To merely illustrate the subject of a blog or article with an image is generally not a fair use and would require a license from the copyright owner or authorized representative.

## ORPHAN WORKS

An orphan work is one where the copyright owner is either not known or, if known, not locatable.

Even if an owner cannot be identified or contacted, the image may be protected by copyright. If you use the image and the owner emerges, the owner may seek damages for the infringing use of the work.

Even without a credit, digital image and video files can contain textual information known as *metadata*, which may include the name of the copyright holder or his/her agent. If there is no credit with the image or in the metadata, you may need to engage a professional researcher or research service.

### Useful online resources include:

- DMLA's OrphanSearch service invites you to email an image to [orphansearch@digitalmedialicensing.org](mailto:orphansearch@digitalmedialicensing.org) and DMLA will forward your enquiry to all its members and affiliated associations.
- The PLUS Registry ([www.plusregistry.org](http://www.plusregistry.org)) and US Copyright Office ([cocatalog.loc.gov](http://cocatalog.loc.gov)) offer free online search tools.
- Google Image Search ([images.google.com](http://images.google.com)) lets you upload an image to find matches on the Web: click on the camera icon in the search box.
- TinEye ([www.tineye.com](http://www.tineye.com)) offers a similar search facility.

## tips:

Publishing on the Internet is, for copyright purposes, equivalent to publishing in every country of the world, so obtaining a license to use an image is a sensible precaution if an image may still be in copyright under the laws of some country.

Any unlicensed use of an image under copyright risks a copyright claim: obtaining a license makes good business sense.

MacOS Finder, Windows Explorer, Photoshop, and many other programs have an option to show the 'Properties' for any image on your computer. Look for a credit line, copyright notice or web address.



## CATEGORIES OF USE

### EDITORIAL USE

Editorial use is where the image is used to illustrate the content of a truthful article or news story of public interest, published in a newspaper, magazine, book, blog, documentary, news broadcast or other form of publication. If the main focus of the work bears a reasonable relationship to the content of the article or broadcast, **releases** from the subject are generally not required, under state right of privacy and publicity law.

### COMMERCIAL USE

Commercial use is where the image is used in connection with the sale or promotion of a product or service, or used in merchandise. **Releases** may be required for commercial use of identifiable persons and certain properties (see next section). However, merely because the product incorporating an image is sold, such as a magazine or an art print, does not mean the use is commercial and requires a release. Whether a use is commercial is determined under state right of privacy and publicity law.



## RELEASES

### MODEL AND TALENT RELEASES

Any person who is identifiable in an image or video has certain rights to privacy with respect to the **commercial use** of that image, and permission must be sought before publication. A person may be identifiable by something other than their face, e.g. a distinctive body part, hair style, tattoo, or clothing.

For professional actors permission typically comes in the form of a **talent release**. For professional models and members of the general public, permission comes in the form of a **model release**.

A stock **model release** typically permits unrestricted commercial use in return for a one-off payment (usually made by the photographer), but there are instances where the model or talent stipulates restrictions, such as no association with a political party or a controversial subject.

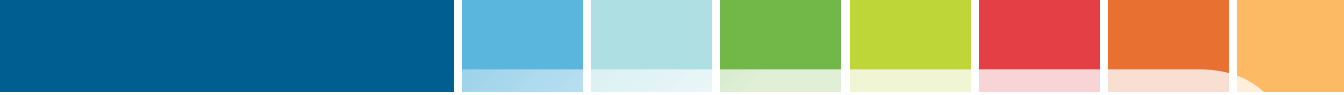
Professional photographers and videographers arrange model and talent releases as a matter of course. Amateurs rarely do, and unless they recorded contact details for the people depicted, you will not be able to obtain a model release, limiting your use to **editorial**.

### PROPERTY RELEASES

Where a work depicts an identifiable object or design, permission may be required for **commercial use** and, in some instances, **editorial use** before publication.

In the case of **editorial use**, if the work bears a reasonable relationship to the article or broadcast, property releases are generally not required for **editorial use**. If however the





work prominently features a property that has no real relationship to the content of the article or broadcast, a property release may be required.

If however the work features a copyrighted work, or prominently features a property that has no reasonable relationship to the content of the article or broadcast, a property release may be required. While state rights of privacy and publicity only applies to people, not personal or real property, some objects depicted in an image may be protected by copyright, and in some instances trademark or trade dress rights will apply depending on the context of the use (see next section).

### Copyrighted works

Where a work depicts a copyrighted work (e.g. a painting, sculpture, graffiti, distinctive tattoo or unique furniture\*) the permission of the copyright owner (typically the artist) is generally required for **editorial** or **commercial use**. Architecture built in the US after March 1, 1989 is protected by copyright, but the law permits any use of an image of a US building taken from a public location. (However the building may have trademark protection.) The same is not true of buildings in France, where the architect's permission must be sought.

In the case of **editorial use**, if a copyrighted work is shown without permission, but is directly relevant to the article or broadcast, it may be a **fair use** to depict the subject.

\* Useful objects are not protected under US copyright law but some countries provide design protection for distinctive designs.

### Trademarks

Where a work depicts a trademark or trade dress (distinctive packaging), registered or not, the permission of the trademark owner may be required for certain **commercial uses**. The key test is whether the presence of the property in the image or video might confuse or deceive the viewer as to the origin, sponsorship or association of the goods or services being promoted. Where the identifiable object or mark is peripheral to the main focus of the work, or part of a larger composition (e.g. a cityscape), permission is generally not required.

Trademarked properties include all company logos and distinctive trade dress, such as the McDonald's golden arches, Coke bottle shape, Tiffany blue box color, top of the Fender guitar, or Volkswagen beetle car. Some landmark buildings owners have attempted to assert trademark rights in recognizable features, such as the columns of the NY Stock Exchange, the radio city neon lights, and the top of the Transamerica building.

### Recognizable private property

Where a work depicts private property with attributes that make it recognizable as belonging to a particular person or company (such as a yacht with a legible name) the permission of the owner may be required for **commercial use**.

## tip:

Introducing a motion or depth-of-field blur to an image or video can be a simple way of rendering unidentifiable people or properties in the work.

Rights of privacy only apply to persons, so most images of animals do not require releases. Where an image depicts an animal that is a recognized commercial character (e.g. Geico Gecko), the permission of the owner is required for **commercial use** based on trademark rights.

## LOCATION RELEASES

Photographing on private property requires the permission of the owner of the land or building. Even if photography or filming is permitted (say, in a museum), restrictions on **commercial use** of such photographs or videos may apply, requiring the owner's explicit permission in the form of a location release (often termed a **property release**).

A work depicting real property taken from a public location does not generally require a location release, but one may be supplied for reassurance.

## LICENSING MODELS

Licenses are an agreement between the copyright owner, or his/her representative, and you. There are two principal licensing models: **rights managed**, where a license is granted for a defined use, and **royalty free**, where a license is granted for a broad range of uses. There are also various free licensing models, of which **Creative Commons** is now the best established (for content).

### RIGHTS MANAGED

The key characteristics of a rights managed license are:

- 1) The fee is determined by the details of the usage.
- 2) The usage is defined by a variety of parameters that may include image placement and size, publication medium, print run, duration, market sector, territories, and others.
- 3) The license restricts use to the pre-agreed usage parameters. If you need to use the work outside those parameters, you must purchase an additional license.

Most rights managed content is available for licensing for exclusive or non-exclusive use, limited to, for example, a specified industry, territory or time period. A licensor will typically charge a premium for exclusive use to cover the value of sales potentially lost.

A rights managed license for **commercial** use will typically include **model** or **property releases** applicable to the work, but you are still required to determine if the releases are adequate for your use.


### ROYALTY FREE

The key characteristics of a royalty free license are:

- 1) A one-time fee covers multiple uses in multiple projects for an unlimited period of time.

## tip:

It can be difficult to anticipate exactly what the usage parameters will be for a project: underestimate and you will end up having to buy an additional license, which may not have been budgeted for; overestimate and you may pay more than you could have. It is therefore good practice to get quotes at the outset for add-on licenses that you may require later, much like you ask a printer to quote a run-on or re-print cost when you are unsure how many copies you will need.

- 
- 2) The fee is determined by relatively few parameters, typically only the file size. Some licensors offer a choice of licenses at different price points, each covering a different bundle of uses.
  - 3) The range of acceptable uses is broadly defined by the licensor in advance but restrictions still apply so you must read the permitted and unpermitted uses.
  - 4) The license may not be transferred to another person or company.
  - 5) The license is always non-exclusive.

**Microstock** is a variety of royalty free, so called because of the low prices charged. The least expensive ('standard') licenses typically include restrictions on print runs and use in retail merchandise. A variety of more expensive 'extended' licenses with lesser restrictions are usually offered as well.

**Subscription** is a bulk licensing agreement that covers multiple images for a monthly or annual payment. The subscription agreement typically specifies:

- The permitted range of uses;
- The maximum number of works that may be downloaded during a period of time;
- The number of users who may download and use works. A standard license is typically single user with the option to add additional seat licenses.

## CREATIVE COMMONS

Creative Commons is a very broad license that requires no payment, but typically requires attribution and may exclude commercial use. It may also forbid alteration (so no retouching or compositing). An owner of a work can select from a variety of licenses offered by Creative Commons so you must review the license restrictions to determine if the work is appropriate for your project.

Always read the small print in the license terms and conditions. Look out for:

- > Usage exclusions, such as merchandise that is resold;
- > Limits on print runs;
- > Contextual exclusions, such as controversial, negative or derogatory uses;
- > Additional permissions required: you may have to obtain **model** or **property releases** yourself.

The best royalty free works get used many times by many different users. Choosing one for a high profile marketing campaign may confuse your audience ("Where have I seen that image before?"), especially if a competitor uses the same image. It happens! Licensing a **rights managed** image on an **exclusive** basis can be a good investment.

## Acknowledgements

Visual Connections would like to thank the DMLA legal committee, and Nancy Wolff, DMLA Counsel, for their assistance in writing this article.

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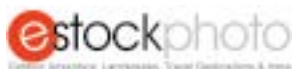


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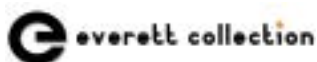


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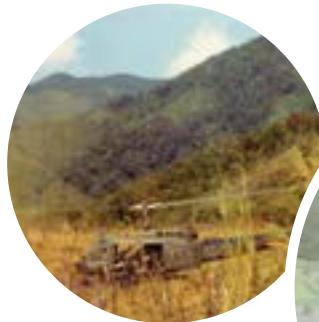


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AFP  
Alamy  
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DMLAsearch  
Foap  
FootageBank  
Global ImageWorks  
Historic Films Archive  
Illustration USA Inc.  
LOLA Clips  
Newscom  
NewsHour Productions LLC  
picturemaxx  
plainpicture  
Robert Bacall Reps  
Shutterstock, Inc.

SuperStock  
WGBH Stock Sales  
WPA Film Library

## ART / CRAFTS / HOBBIES

akg-images  
Art Resource  
Artists Rights Society  
Bridgeman Images  
Illustration USA Inc.  
MFA Images  
Screenocean  
Sotheby's Picture Library

### » entertainment / performing arts

Everett Collection  
Grand Ole Opry  
Mary Evans Picture Library  
mptv Images

### » illustrations / posters

Ikon Images

### » paintings / sculptures

SuperStock

## BUILDINGS / STRUCTURES

Art Resource  
Come Alive Images  
FootageBank  
Steven Sklifas

## BUSINESS / INDUSTRY

Ikon Images  
Wonderful Machine

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Alamy  
Dissolve  
Gallery Stock  
PICHA  
Shutterstock, Inc.  
Wonderful Machine

### » fashion / glamour

IMG Replay  
mptv Images

### » health

Medical Images

### » lifestyles

IMG Replay

## NATURAL WORLD

Alamy  
ARDEA wildlife pets environment  
Danita Delimont  
Depositphotos  
Dissolve  
eStock Photo  
GIW Photos  
MFA Images  
National Geographic Creative  
PICHA  
plainpicture  
WGBH Stock Sales

### » animals

ARDEA wildlife pets environment  
Minden Pictures

### » countryside / seaside

Danita Delimont Stock

### » environment

ARDEA wildlife pets environment  
Minden Pictures  
NFB Archives

### » plants

Minden Pictures

## PEOPLE

CNN Collection  
Depositphotos  
Dissolve

Gallery Stock  
MFA Images  
National Geographic Creative  
NBCUniversal Archives  
Newscom  
NowAnThen  
PICH  
plainpicture  
Screenocean  
Sotheby's Picture Library  
Wonderful Machine

#### » famous people

British Pathé  
CriticalPast  
Everett Collection  
Gado Images  
Grand Ole Opry  
GRANGER  
Look and Learn  
mptv Images

#### PLACES / MAPS

akg-images  
Art Resource  
Bridgeman Images  
CNN Collection  
eStock Photo  
GIW Photos  
Map Resources  
NBCUniversal Archives  
Steven Skliff

#### » cities

Map Resources

#### » historical scenes

GRANGER  
Mary Evans Picture Library  
North Wind Picture Archives

#### » tourist destinations

Danita Delimont Stock  
eStock Photo  
Map Resources

#### SCIENCE / TECHNOLOGY

Gado Images  
Global ImageWorks  
SuperStock

#### » medical

Medical Images

#### SOCIETY / CULTURE

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Artists Rights Society  
Bridgeman Images  
CNN Collection  
Come Alive Images  
Global ImageWorks  
Grand Ole Opry  
Look and Learn  
National Geographic Creative  
NBCUniversal Archives  
Newscom  
NowAnThen  
Screenocean  
Sotheby's Picture Library  
Steven Skliff  
WGBH Stock Sales  
WPA Film Library

#### » current affairs

British Pathé

#### » history

British Pathé  
CriticalPast  
Everett Collection  
Gado Images  
GRANGER



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Mary Evans Picture Library  
NFB Archives  
North Wind Picture Archives  
WPA Film Library

#### » war / disasters

CriticalPast  
NFB Archives  
North Wind Picture Archives

#### SPORTS / ACTIVITIES

Gallery Stock  
IMG Replay

#### » team sports

FootageBank

#### TRANSPORT

GIW Photos

# Media Index

## ANIMATIONS

AFP  
Come Alive Images  
DMLAsearch  
Gado Images  
Global ImageWorks  
Illustration USA Inc.  
North Wind Picture Archives  
Shutterstock, Inc.  
WGBH Stock Sales  
Workbook

## DIGITAL/COMPOSITES

Alamy  
ARDEA wildlife pets environment  
Come Alive Images  
Depositphotos  
DMLAsearch  
GRANGER  
Graphic Design USA  
Historic Films Archive  
Ikon Images  
MFA Images  
North Wind Picture Archives  
picturemaxx  
Robert Bacall Reps  
Shutterstock, Inc.  
Workbook

## FONTS

Workbook

## FOOTAGE

Adobe Stock  
AFP  
Alamy  
Bridgeman Images  
British Pathé  
CNN Collection  
Come Alive Images  
CriticalPast  
Danita Delimont Stock  
Photography  
Depositphotos  
Dissolve  
DMLAsearch  
FootageBank  
Gado Images  
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North Wind Picture Archives  
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Alamy  
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Artists Rights Society  
Bridgeman Images  
Come Alive Images  
Depositphotos  
DMLAsearch  
Everett Collection  
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Minden Pictures  
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Art Resource  
Artists Rights Society  
Bridgeman Images  
British Pathé  
Come Alive Images  
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Depositphotos  
Dissolve  
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Workbook

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20/20 Software, Inc.  
DMLAsearch  
NowAnThen  
picturemaxx  
Workbook

## SOUNDS

Historic Films Archive  
picturemaxx

## Assignment Index

AFP  
CNN Collection  
Come Alive Images  
Curated Artists  
Danita Delimont Stock Photography  
Gado Images  
Gallery Stock  
Global ImageWorks  
Illustration USA Inc.  
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