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Selecting Good Stock Photography in the Age of Digital

By Beth Brodovsky

Selecting Good Stock Photography in the Age of Digital

by: **Beth Brodovsky**

The business of stock photography has drastically changed over the last few years. Ten years ago, selecting photographs for your brochure or newsletter meant spending hours pouring over stock photography catalogs and ordering photo research to find the exact image. When the order came in a giant overnight package, designers would spread transparencies out on the light table, squinting through a magnifying loop to check every detail.

Enter the digital age.

High speed Internet connections. CD's. Searchable Archives. Royalty-free stock. These elements have changed the face of communication design forever. The quality, quantity, affordability and accessibility of stock imagery have made it the resource of choice for many organizations.

The advantages of instantaneous access to searchable archives of good images are numerous. Speed :: We can never have enough of it. Search. Download. Import. It's remarkable. Choice :: Searching "stock photography" on Google delivers 1,470,000 results. You can find pretty much anything out there. Price :: While there are free resources, unless you are doing a school report, you may need something slightly more exclusive. Also, many of the free images are only good enough for online display and the selection is very limited. Royalty-free images are reasonably priced, you pay for only the size you'll use and images can be used as needed with no extra charges. Flexibility :: Image selections can be grouped, saved and emailed to others in the review cycle. People in different locations can simultaneously review ideas. Archiving :: Some companies even keep a record of your buys that you can re-download whenever you need them. To use this resource effectively, there are a few things you need to keep in mind. Plan ahead :: Will you ever need the picture to be printed? The low cost of "low resolution" images can lure you into costly mistakes. Images need to be 300 dpi (dots per inch) at the size they will be printed. Low-cost tradeoff :: Pictures are now so affordable, everyone's buying them. That means your image could show up in your competitor's brochure. Some projects call for more exclusive imagery. Image-enhancement :: When you need something totally

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unique, such as your product in the shot, it may be more economical to hire a photographer than to have your designer spend countless hours in Photoshop trying to get it just right. Availability :: Good images still cost money. While many firms have images on file, don't expect your designer to have a database full of images right for your project.

When searching on the web, search for "stock photography" rather than doing an image search in Google or another search engine. Google returns all images from the web -- including those that are the property of others and not legally usable.

Beth Brodovsky is the president and principal of Iris Creative Group, LLC. Brodovsky earned a

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Communication Design from Pratt Institute, New York. Before launching her own firm in 1996, she spent eight years as a corporate Art Director and Graphic Designer, providing a sound foundation in management and organizational standards and structure. Iris Creative specializes in providing marketing and strategic communication services to clients in service industries and small businesses. For more information contact Beth at

or 610-567-2799.

Learn More About Digital Photography Through Books

By Dominic Ferrara

There has been a tremendous increase in the number of books on digital photography in recent years, including books on specialized aspects. You can find excellent books on such specialized topics as digital black and white photography, digital night photography and digital infrared photography. And nothing beats the pleasure of reading a book at your ease and convenience.

"Complete Digital Photography" by Ben Long is one of the best books on digital photography. It provides basic as well as specialized information. It even gives a lot of useful tips for shopping your new camera. It's the perfect book for people who are just venturing into digital photography

The book explains most technical aspects of digital photography. By the time you've finished it, you'll be able to shoot properly and edit the photos. The entire process of digital photography from the moment the image is captured to printing the final image is explained in simple language.

"Complete Digital Photography" is divided into four sections. Part 1 covers the basics.

Part 2 tells what features you might want to look for in your new camera.

Part 3 talks about setting up your shot, choosing the correct exposure, using a flash and using a histogram.

Part 4 tells you how to edit and otherwise "fix" your photos. It ends with instructions on printing them.

Selecting Good Stock Photography in the Age of Digital

In addition to printed books, you can buy many good e-books on digital photography, if you are looking for economic and easily accessible information right now.

Good luck!

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