zenfolio®

Releasing images to the World Wide Web is an important step in a modern photographer's marketing efforts, so when uploading your images, it's crucial to know that your images are securely protected from photo thieves. Fine art photographer Adam Edwards breaks down the five steps he takes to protect his images.

Getting the perfect shot isn't easy. As a landscape photographer, some of my shots are months or even years in the making—waiting for the right time of year, appropriate lighting and weather conditions, with further time being spent in post-production. I don't want to let all that hard work go down the drain so I make sure to protect my images online. Here's how to keep them safe:

1. Copyright your images

The first step I take in my image protection workflow happens offline before uploading—I fill out the metadata fields for the image. I use Adobe Lightroom, which allows me to save a template with standard fields like copyright and common keywords pre-populated. I can then tailor the titles, captions, and keywords as needed before uploading the images to my website using the plug-in. Once uploaded, the title, description, keyword and copyright fields are then automatically populated in my account, saving precious time and ensuring that all images carry a consistent copyright notification.

2. Resize your images

When exporting and posting these images online in places other than my personal website, I always make sure to resize the images to smaller versions so that even if they were to be downloaded, high-quality prints could not be made from the files. Rather than needing to create multiple resized versions offline, my website actually does this for me when a large image is uploaded, helpfully creating several resized versions ready for sharing on external sites.

3. Create a watermark

When posting on social media or art communities, I always include a watermark. While I'm not a big fan of large, intrusive watermarks that detract from an image, adding a simple watermark with your logo, business name and/or URL of your website can be an effective way to reinforce branding and allow anyone viewing the image out of context to find more of your work and/or contact you.

4. Restrict gallery access with passwords

For the majority of my work I don't need password-protected galleries, since the images I create generally aren't sensitive client images requiring protection. That said, I do occasionally shoot more personal images for clients, friends and family, and on these occasions I truly value the flexibility my website offers in presenting and protecting these images with a hidden or password-protected gallery. If all of your work is client-related, it's generally a smart move to implement this on every gallery, so that only the people in the photos have access to them.
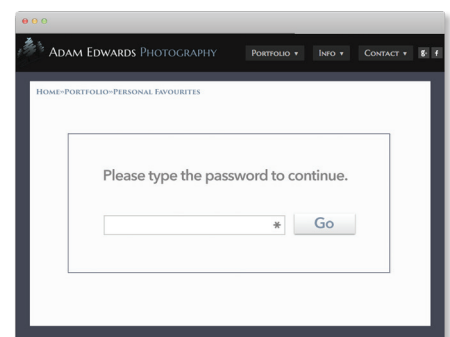
5. Choose a website that keeps photos safe

All images uploaded to my website benefit from built-in protection against right-click saving or dragging to desktop by default, ensuring the images cannot easily be downloaded by would-be thieves without your say-so. My site allows me to upload my full-resolution images for storage and print sales but limits the size they are displayed. This lets me strike a good balance between displaying photos large enough for viewers to appreciate the details while ensuring they aren't so large that any downloaded files would be able to make high-quality prints. The ability to apply a watermark and select my preferred image size when exporting to social media, without needing to create multiple resized, watermarked versions of the file before uploading, is a great time saver. Also, the Share button I make available in my galleries allows anyone to easily share a link back to the page rather than allowing people to download and re-upload elsewhere as they choose.

As photographers, our images are our livelihood, so it is of the utmost importance to take steps to protect our images online. Having a website that ensures safety measures, along with being part of a good community of photographers who know your work, will surely keep the majority of your images safe.

Adam has been using Zenfolio for years and loves the right-click protection, copyright notice on each page, and the vast array of image protection tools at his disposal. "Zenfolio allows me to display my work at its best across a wide range of devices, while also ensuring that my image security needs are met. It also offers me peace of mind knowing that high-resolution versions of my images are backed up online and available for me to download back to my computer at any time."

To learn more about how you can keep your images safe with the best photo website out there, visit **www.zenfolio.com** and sign up for the free, two-week trial today.