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Guide for School Photographers

This guide for school photographers will help you make the most of your Zenfolio site and create the best experience for your clients.

If you are a school, sports or dance photographer and you use Zenfolio, this guide is for you! It is intended to give you best practices information for foundational activities like setting up galleries for your school or event and provide answers to some of the questions you may have. We have included recommendations on how to optimize your account on our platform as well as tips and tricks to help you make the most out of your Zenfolio account. If you have feedback, please send us an email at school@zenfolio.com.

Getting Started

Organize photos.

Given your photos reside in galleries, we recommend using groups and subgroups to organize your galleries. This can be done by year, school, competition, or any other method you choose. Some photographers organize galleries in groups and then convert the group into an event. Creating an event gives your galleries security and customization benefits. You can find more details about how the events feature works [here](#).

Edit photos.

If you are using an application such as Adobe Lightroom, we recommend you do your editing in that application and upload the finished products to Zenfolio. Your uploaded images are then ready to be shared and purchased directly from your Zenfolio website.

Additionally, you can choose whether you want to show your before and after images on Zenfolio. If you do, we highly recommend naming the pictures in a way that clearly indicates the difference between the original and the touched-up picture.

Example

Original picture: SmithJonSpringfieldHigh11_original_1234.jpg

Touched up picture: SmithJonSpringfieldHigh11_retouched_1234.jpg

Finally, save images in sRGB color space. Zenfolio sends files to all labs in sRGB.

Showcase your gallery of photos.

What we have learned from researching your clients' needs is that they want to see bigger photos in your website's gallery, especially for portraits. This helps them fall in love with the photos immediately and discern some key differences in photos that may look similar at first glance. We encourage you to not show thumbnails and explore options to show bigger photos in your gallery settings. You can learn more [here](#).

Upload pictures.

Many of our customers who use Adobe Lightroom on photo day use a plugin by Jeffrey Friedl to upload the files from Lightroom directly to their Zenfolio account. Details of this plugin are available [here](#).

Set up selling.

If you haven't set up the built-in e-commerce features on your Zenfolio website we recommend you do so ASAP! Whether it's a digital sale, quality products from industry leading vendors, or you are self-fulfilling your products, an e-Commerce business can significantly add to your bottom line. You can also take advantage of [Zenfolio-run client sales](#), an opt-in program where we promote your products to clients to increase your sales.

Choose the right vendor.

We make it easy for you to increase profits by partnering with the [best labs](#) that offer quality school, sports, and dance photography products. If you would like to offer products that are not offered by them, you always have the option to self-fulfill your unique products through Zenfolio. Our recommendation is that while you may be able to self-fulfill basic products like prints, an integrated vendor can offer higher quality for more advanced or complex products like wall decor or photo books.

Create packages.

Packages are another great way to increase your sales. For school photography the recommended best practice is to offer up to 10 different types of packages designed for a variety of budgets. Also, it helps to add unique products that you want to showcase. For example, adding a key chain to your package may incentivize your customers to purchase more of those key chains separately. We recommend creating well-named, consistent package names so they can be used for multiple events. [Here is a great Zenfolio blog post](#) by photographer Laurence Kim on creating packages.

Getting Started

Optimize performance of your account.

To ensure the best performance of your site and galleries, please stay within the recommended limit as detailed below.

FEATURE	RECOMMENDED MAXIMUM LIMIT
Photos per gallery	1,000
Galleries per group	50
Galleries per event	50
Photos per event	50,000
Number of groups	10
Number of events	10
Participants per event	2,000
Addresses per email campaign	500
Number of email campaigns	2 per day
Number of rows for bulk metadata upload	10,000
Number of contacts	10,000
Number of emails	1,000/day
Number of packages	30
Number of price lists	50
Number of packages in a price list	10
Number of products in a price list	20
Number of products in a package	10

- If the number of images in a gallery is more than 1000, we recommend using Thumbnail Layout D and pagination for a better viewing experience for your clients
- If the csv file you are using for bulk metadata upload has greater than 10,000 rows we recommend splitting the larger CSV files into smaller files that each have less than 10,000 rows and upload them separately
- For your contact list, the system will load a maximum of 3,000 at one time in your account
- For your packages, remember to use descriptive names for your packages to provide a better way for your clients to understand and evaluate them

Match photos to their metadata.

To match metadata to every photo in a gallery, we recommend the following options:

Recommended Option 1. Add titles, captions and keywords outside of Zenfolio before uploading.

Recommended Option 2. Add titles, captions and keywords to single or multiple photos in Edit View.

After the above step, use the [Bulk Update Metadata](#) feature to upload the data.

When you upload, our system automatically imports data from the IPTC title, caption, keywords and copyright fields. More details on this can be found [here](#). If you have added titles, captions or keywords in an external editor such as Lightroom, this info would be automatically added to the photo details if you uploaded through the plugin, or exported the photos as JPEGs.

Match photos to their metadata.

As a school photographer, we recognize that you have a large number of client galleries. Here are some organizational strategies that will optimize the performance and make yours and your client experience easier.

1.) Group your galleries. Create a gallery per class or school. Create a group of galleries per school. The advantage in doing this vs creating a gallery for every student is that by having a smaller number of galleries overall, you have a better gallery load and search performance. You can still direct clients to only their individual photos within the gallery by using the events feature (more information below). Note that if you upload to Miller's through their ROES system, you do have the option to simultaneously upload your photos to your Zenfolio account and that creates a single gallery per student. Each student has a unique gallery ID that is password protected. You have to create the groups and events outside of it. We are working with Millers to streamline this integration so you can use our events feature more easily.

2.) Create an event. Events are specialized groups of galleries. They are used in situations where the main event page is referenced to customers as a landing page for multiple galleries. From this landing page customers may search photos and videos from the event using keywords (or a passcode for restricted events). Photos must have keywords added to them for this feature to work. Events can also be set for restricted access where customers can view a specific set of photos by using a special passcode. A unique ID must be referenced to a photo keyword for this to work. This [link](#) has more information on events.

Using events gives you several benefits:

- Personalized email invitations that will take your clients to a view of ONLY their photos in a single click
- Unique event ID and short link that can be easily shared with your customers
- Customizable event landing page
- Participant list to send communications to and
- Restricted event capabilities with a passcode for an added layer of security

Communicate with your customers.

1. Create a [contact list](#) from your CSV files and store it on Zenfolio.
2. Send emails from a set of [predefined templates](#) or create your own template.
3. Set predefined triggers to [send emails](#) automatically.

Combine individual and group photos in a search result.

To combine individual and group photos in a search result:

1. Create an event on Zenfolio
2. Add the keywords from your individual photo to the group photo

This can be done in an external editor before uploading to Zenfolio - add the keywords in Edit View, or use the bulk update metadata feature. More details on this process can be found [here](#). Once the keywords are added to the photos, when a customer searches for a particular photo, they will see the individual photo as well as the group photo associated with that keyword.

Troubleshooting

Based on our conversations with photographers like yourself, we have developed these tips on how to troubleshoot some common issues you may face.

Client enters code twice to access gallery.

We hear that your customers may be confused or even concerned when they have to enter an access code twice. This happens when your clients are not directed to their galleries, but rather have to use a GalleryID to find their gallery, and then enter a password to see their password-protected photos. We believe that this additional level of security is a positive thing. However, you are able to choose the access level by doing one of the following:

1. Offer direct access to the gallery (no friendly URL to landing page). With this, you have to ensure that each gallery link is personalized to the recipient. If you have a large list of clients, use the option in our events feature to create a participants list and auto-generate the passcode. This will save you time. For more information on how events work, please refer to [this document](#).
2. Offer only the friendly URL and access to a landing page with no further access requirements for the gallery. This would mean you have an open gallery and anybody could guess the access.

Ensure only your client can access their gallery.

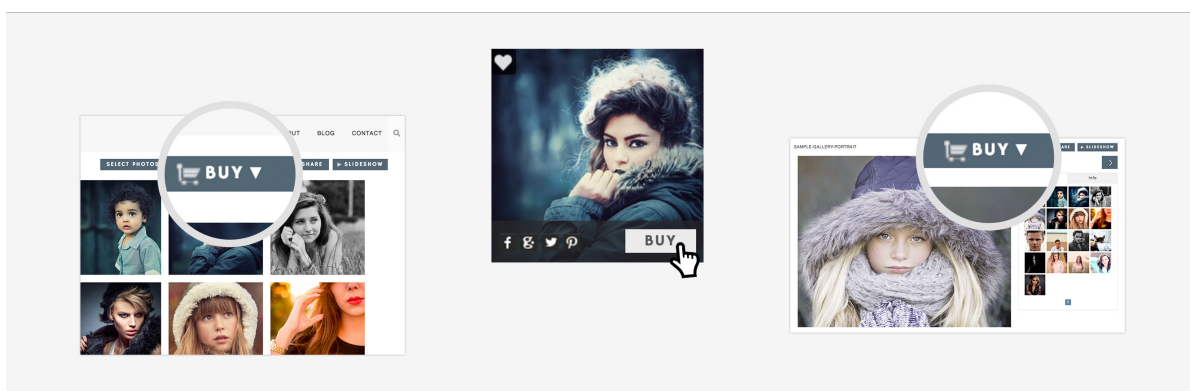
This could happen when your password is easy to guess or is the same as your friendly URL. We recommend that you don't use the same password as the friendly URL. More information on how to secure your client galleries can be found [here](#).

Clients are confused by multiple 'buy' buttons on the gallery.

We offer several ways to initiate shopping through the Buy button on your website. Buy buttons are available on the following locations of your gallery:

1. On the gallery header
2. While hovering over of an individual photo*
3. After clicking on a photo
4. From the details page of an individual photo
5. On Dynamic Thumbnails (Grid Layout A,B, C only)

This variety can be daunting for the clients, so please know that the option to show a Buy button while hovering over an individual photo is optional. If you want your customers to have a more focused approach to buying, consider [turning this feature off](#).



Digital Download orders expire before clients have downloaded them.

Digital orders have a 30 day expiration date by default. Our research indicates that 30 days is the optimal time period for downloading, so we recommend encouraging your clients to download within that time. You can send them a reminder email a week before the expiration date. You can always extend the time of the download for an order if you needed to.

How to combine individual and group pictures in a search result.

Do you want to combine an individual picture with a group picture?

1. First, create an event on Zenfolio.
2. Then, add the keywords from your individual photo to the group photo.

This can be done in an external editor before uploading to Zenfolio, adding the keywords in Edit View, or by using the bulk update metadata feature. More details on this process can be found [here](#). Once the keywords are added to the photos, when a customer searches for a particular photo, they will see the individual photo as well as the group photo associated with that keyword.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know about these additional Zenfolio features?

1. **Complete your profile.** If your profile is complete on Zenfolio, it helps us better understand you and offer you promotions and services that meet your needs. Take a moment and update your profile by going to Settings > Account > Profile Questions.
2. **Mobile App for your clients.** Check out the [Zenfolio Photo Moments app](#).
3. **Upload custom self-fulfilled preview images for packages.** To showcase your self-fulfilled products better, upload a small and/or large image of the product to the package. This will give your customers a better idea of what you are offering.
4. **Email Templates.** You can send personalized emails to your clients using our templates. Find them by going to Visitors > Email Communications > Templates. You can configure your emails to include a wide variety of parameters too.
5. **Google Analytics.** It's free with every account and helps you understand your clients. Learn more [here](#).

