

Feature



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Selling images on online image directories

The days of pounding the pavement, have been replaced by the option of pounding the keyboard, as more online image directories are requesting submissions from imageers to feed an internet-wide increasing user base **BY NATALIE JOHNSON**



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THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING MONEY ULTIMATELY DEPENDS ON THE QUALITY OF YOUR IMAGES



for creative and unique Photoshopped pieces that can be used for everything, from home-made canvas art, to multinational advertising portfolios. The opportunity is incredible and relatively still untapped.

Stock sites

Shutterstock (www.shutterstock.com) is one of the most recognisable sites, selling subscription access to a library of over 1.2 million high quality, royalty-free stock photos. In the last six months the site has seen a record 500,000 images uploaded. Jon Oringer, set up the website to sell his own images online, and was flooded with requests from photographers and Photoshop users to allow them to sell through the site as well. Currently 43,000 submitters from over 120 countries around the world make money from Shutterstock. "Some people earn enough in a year to pay for a new lens or a new camera. Others earn a comfortable living and do it as their full-time job. It all depends on how many images you have in your portfolio and how versatile and unique your subject matter is", says Adam Riggs Shutterstock's CFO/COO. "We look for images with a clear subject or theme, because that's what our customers look for when they search our library. We now accept about 40 per cent of what is submitted to us, but our content runs the gamut from untouched, to highly manipulated."

A keen advocate and customer of this vein of sites is Bert Monroy, a respected Photoshop guru with over 20 years of experience, creating images for advertisers, magazines and independent commissions. Bert uses image banks when looking to create a Photoshop masterpiece, or when he wants to sell his art and fund his enterprise. "My fine art is marketed primarily over the web", he tells us. "The internet is the primary avenue for selling my art as it provides a central place where all of my work can be viewed. These sites provide an image bank which serve as a place where I can market my art and make money."

Top tips for selling

In terms of advice, Adam Riggs knows the trade secrets of success. "Look carefully at what's selling. If you're an expert in a particular topic or region, or you have a special angle on a familiar theme, start from there. Attention to detail is what sets apart the best from the rest. The subscribers who are paying for access to our library are not kids looking for photos for their blogs or school projects, they're the world's top business and creative professionals. They craft the message of nearly every type of company and product you can imagine, and their attention to the details of an image cannot be overstated."

Rival firm Fotolia (www.fotolia.com) is another infamous multinational image market place enjoying success after only two years of being in operation. "Every Photoshop artist has an opportunity to make money on Fotolia, and fast." Chad Bridwell, Director of Fotolia's US Operations tells us. "If the image is approved, the images will be online within 24 hours. Once the image is sold the photographer will earn a commission which ranges between 33 and 80 per cent." Chad claims in its first year the number of posted stock has rocketed from 100,000 to 1.7 million images. "The average imageer with a large portfolio could earn about \$400 a month. However, the best make over \$2500. To become one of the 'best' we recommend artists review their images at 100 per cent, as this is how we review each image. Watch for excessive noise, over sharpening and smudges left by the cloning tools. In addition to this, we encourage users to add keywords to them in the IPTC data available through Photoshop."

In terms of size, most sites suggest "the bigger the better" but convey the optimal dimensions must be 300 dpi at five inches by seven inches, with a minimum 1200 x 1600 pixels. As the artist, it's your responsibility to enter keywords and descriptions, and the more descriptive you are, the more likely a search will match with your image. Include at least ten keywords and use a title. The more keywords you supply the more searches your image will match.

Photographer Ian Britton created FreeFoto (www.Freefoto.com) after visiting Venice over ten years ago. He decided he wanted to share his snaps via the internet, thus FreeFoto was invented. Nowadays the site hosts around 750,000 visitors who view around 8 million pages. Ian confides that because the market is becoming crowded they have had to diversify in order to attract customers and aid artist's commissions. "The whole sector is changing all the time with new companies coming online as well as price pressure from the micro-payment end of the business. That's why we've started offering more services to benefit both consumers and submitters. >>>



Over the past five years there's been a significant surge in the volume of online image stockists circulating the web, creating a wealth of new opportunity for Photoshop artists looking to make money from their art. Whether the consumer is looking for ready-made art or 'enhanced' images, Photoshop pros stand to receive a commission every time one of their images is downloaded from a site. So everyone, from hobbying Photoshop users to imageering professionals could stand to make money for old rope.

Online image banks giants such as iStock, Getty Images, Shutterstock and Fotolia are a handful of the more well known brands ruling the roost. But there are more independent banks popping up everyday, and many Photoshop artists are even creating sites of their own as a way of retailing their handiwork. The possibility of making money, or getting your work noticed, ultimately depends on the popularity of your art. Currently the market favours photographers who are profiting from supplying 'clean' shots that Photoshop artists themselves will testify to using for their own manipulation. As such the Blue Peter-style "Here's one I made earlier" pieces are less marketable. But there's an indication of a steadily growing trend that suggests more customers than ever are searching



Feature

“IF YOU FIND ONLINE IMAGE BANKS AREN'T REWARDING ENOUGH, TRY SETTING UP YOUR OWN SITE”

For example 60,000 of our images are now available as high quality photographic prints." Ian has shrewdly observed what many larger image bank sites are choosing to ignore; a rise in smaller independent companies that are threatening their market share, but are being welcomed by digital artists looking to peddle their wares.

For example Findanimage (www.findanimage.co.uk) has been building an internet presence since April but claims to have one of the toughest acceptance policies. "We encourage images from professionals and amateurs alike, so long as they meet our quality standards" says company partner Carolyn Fuller. "We're getting a lot of enquiries from Photoshop artists, but we're ruthless about rejecting poor quality images. At present we have about 95 per cent unmanipulated images, but we're happy to accept Photoshopped images as long as they meet our quality criteria."

Go it alone

If you're finding the online image bank process isn't proving rewarding enough (and this may be the case due to the process sometimes being too strict or lengthy), self-promotion may be an offshoot to explore. Bert Monroy agrees that this is a viable option: "My advice to Photoshop artists who have tried image banks but want more sales, is to create a website of their own. Make it attractive, enjoyable and easy to browse through. Additionally prepare some mailers to direct potential clients to your website." Concerns over poor commission rates and unfathomable rejections by some image bank sites have pushed more digital artists into going it alone. Entrepreneur Scott Hortop did just this and decided to launch Photoconnect (www.photoconnect.net) as

a self-promotion site. But within days of being live he was hounded by a flurry of imageers looking to use his site as an avenue for sales. "Initially I spent far too much time dealing with submissions that were just not marketable, I felt guilty about not being able to include them, but the reality is that I had to be choosy about who I took on", Scott confides. "Now, my business is growing because I only deal with digital artists and photographers who are IPTC aware, and who can upload 15 images that are ready to go straight on to the site in a few clicks."

As a Photoshop pro it's advisable to explore the range of sites available by trawling through the web to discover what type of submissions each site accept (ie, clean photographs, Photoshop art, vector illustrations, Flash files, video clips, etc). Most are looking for clean images only, but sites like **iStock.com** feature the largest percentage of Photoshop work. Thoroughly read and digest the company's terms and conditions and determine whether you can supply images to more than one site. Recognise what the commission rate is and how it compares to its rivals. It's also important to understand how consumers can use your image.

After you decide which site or sites you wish to supply, there will be instructions on how to upload your images. Once you've attempted this, the site's creative team will then judge whether your images are suitable for their company. The most likely reasons for rejection are: the image isn't of a high enough quality, has legal ramifications, or isn't the right size. If you have used an 'identifiable face' in your art, most sites will need you to supply a model release form, many of them will offer this as a downloadable PDF. Unless otherwise stated it's common that images must be RGB JPG format only, and you must own the



BETTERPHOTO.COM: As well as having a great stock of photos, this site also offers tips and tutorials on how to create excellent photos

full copyright to any image you upload. This means you must be the photographer or artist that created the image. All trademarks will need to be removed, including logos, brands and entities with copyright or trademarked elements. This could also extend to trademarked products such as cast sculptures, toys, architecture and other elements of design. Although the amount of money you're likely to make depends on the quality and popularity of your work, the big guns such as iStock, Getty Images, Shutterstock, Fotolia and FreeFoto are likely to attract the largest user base, and therefore offer a more prominent shop window for your art.



FREEFOTO.COM: Was set up to sell some holiday snaps... now it hosts over 750,000 visitors

ISTOCK.COM: This is one of the largest online image banks out there and so it attracts a large user base



books

Swot up on the latest tips and tricks, and curl up with a good read

From Gutenberg to Opentype

Author: Robin Dodd
Publisher: Ilex Press
Price: £19.99
ISBN: 1904705774
Web: www.ilex-press.com

Type design is not a modern day phenomena, it's been with us for centuries. This title explores its making.

From Gutenberg to Opentype is an illustrated history of type in chronological order. The opening chapter provides an introduction to type and trawls through history revealing major influences that are still present. 'Heading to the Renaissance' describes the period when type began to make a real impression. The book talks about Claude Garamond, a name that may mean little to most, but the 16th century typesetter's legacy is still seen today. It continues to trace the path of type through to 'Post Second World War Two', where type really



formed the basis of the fonts we know today. The book's in-depth knowledge is accompanied with many illustrations. ■

Rating: **3/5**

The Complete Guide to Digital Illustration

Author: Steve Caplin
Publisher: Ilex Press
Price: £19.95
ISBN: 1904705006
Web: www.ilex-press.com

This title is a combination of seven parts that cover the complete spectrum of all that's digital illustration.

Each section opens with a discussion relevant to the forthcoming material and provides solutions and methods to achieve the style. The opening section of the guide takes a practical approach and gives the lowdown on exactly what a digital artist needs. This ranges from instructions on buying a PC or Mac to choosing the best software, input devices and extras. With the basics absorbed, the reader can then take a logical path through digital painting, digital printing, illustration and animation or simply head straight to the style of choice. This is where the



book is a winner, a great reference that can be picked out at will with some great examples and guides to the chosen technique. ■

Rating: **3/5**

Create Your Own Graphic Novel

Author: Mike Chinn
Publisher: Ilex Press
Price: £14.99
ISBN: 1904705901
Web: www.ilex-press.com

The graphic novel is a style to be admired and this title takes the core concepts to heart and presents itself from start to finish in the long form comic book style.

This can be seen as a great example or a cheap gimmick, but the book is well illustrated, well presented and really works. The sole intention of this title is to take the reader (in its own words) from pencil to pixel. Along the way teaching how to translate writing and drawing skills into digital artwork. Complete novices, newcomers and enthusiasts will all find something for their skill level. The book opens with the basics and brings together a few essentials before getting to the good stuff. The



main core of this title is dedicated to getting the script written, drawn and published, giving vital tips along the way. ■

Rating: **4/5**

books

Photoshop CS2 for Digital Photographers Only

Authors: Ken Milburn, Doug Sahlin
Publisher: Wiley
Price: £25.99
ISBN: 0-471-74689-4
Web: www.wiley.com

As the title of this book indicates, it's squarely aimed at digital photographers.

Digital Photographers Only provides a logical set of chapters that guides the reader through the complete picture process. The starting point is a section entitled 'Shooting and Improving Photos', which brings together the finer points of organising, viewing and preparing images. 'Camera Raw' then looks at fine-tuning your images. The middle section of this book takes a close look at editing; including creating selections for localised editing, retouching and adding special effects. This is before it touches on getting images ready for output. To finish up there's an extremely useful couple of chapters on improving and automating workflow. ■

Rating: **3/5**

Photoshop for Right-Brainers: The Art of Photo Manipulation

Author: Al Ward
Publisher: Wiley
Price: £25.99
ISBN: 0-7821-4430-6
Web: www.wiley.com

This second edition doesn't lift with some of the more obvious techniques adopted by the competition. It dives straight in at the deep end and brings readers immediately up to speed with the art of photo manipulation. The opening chapter, 'Tools for Building Your Masterpiece', is a great indicator of what to expect. This broaches the subject of using Blend Modes, extracting an image from a background, layer masks and displacement mapping. The following chapters of the book swing to the right of tedium, and try to integrate a sense of imagination and creativity into the process. Discover how to embellish portraits, generate plastic from scratch plus a whole lot more. ■

Rating: **4/5**

Stingermania

Author: Jan Willem Wennekes
Publisher: Zeptonn
Price: 15 Euros
ISBN: 90-811226-1-4
Web: www.zeptonn.nl

This is an interesting little spectacle from the artist known as Stinger (see page 20).

In this 44-page guide, text is kept to an absolute minimum and lets the artwork do the talking. *Stingermania* provides a collection of his recent work, which concentrates mainly on print design: shirt prints, posters and canvas prints. If you have yet to sample the delights of Stinger, it's well worth a trip to his website. ■

Rating: **3/5**

books

Circles and Dots

Authors: Keith Stephenson, Mark Hampshire
Publisher: RotoVision
Price: £15.00
ISBN: 2-940361-16-9
Web: www.rotovision.com/

Designers with a taste for the world of round will find this compact 256-page offering a delight to view.

The very title Circle and Dots conjure up a myriad of circular objects and desires, with many making an appearance here. The book embraces design and choice from all design disciplines, the author himself having designed contemporary wallpaper. The book itself boasts a host of photographs that reveal the unique, obscure and everyday objects that are naturally or manually of the spherical. From shots of crop circles from outer space, to Stonehenge, crockery, badges and road signs. This book pretty much has it all. ■

Rating: **3/5**

Digital Horror Painting Workshop

Author: Martin McKenna
Publisher: Ilex Press
Price: £17.99
ISBN: 1904705928
Web: www.illex-press.com

Digital artists who wished to integrate this form of illustration into their portfolio or alternatively, want to pursue this particular career path, should take a look at this book.

Digital Horror Painting is a disciplined and definite art form and this book embraces the techniques needed and gives them to the reader. The workshop offers detailed step-by-step tutorials, analysis of finished paintings, work-in-progress drawings and sketchbook pages from leading artists working at the forefront of the genre. Each of the sections gives readers a guide to the creation process, from inspiration to inception. This is a must have for lovers of the gruesome, macabre and supernatural. ■

Rating: **4/5**

Photoshop CS2 Workflow

Author: Tim Grey
Publisher: Sybex
Price: £27.99
ISBN: 0-7821-4396-2
Web: www.wiley.com

Not the most inspiring of titles, but then again the true aim of this book is the functional rather than the creative.

However, it's the construction of a well-planned and structured workflow that really let's the creative process flow. This tidy tome opens with the solid foundations of a productive workflow before uncovering the basic adjustments any CS2er needs to know. Advanced adjustments are well covered before the book starts to wind down with 'Finishing the Workflow'. This book will prove to be far more useful than you imagine. ■

Rating: **3/5**

Digital Fantasy Painting Workshop

Author: Martin McKenna
Publisher: Ilex Press
Price: £17.95
ISBN: 1904705375
Web: www.illex-press.com

Fantasy art is a distinctive style that has a long tradition. It went through a stylistic revolution in the Eighties with the widespread adoption of the airbrush.

However, another revolution was just around the corner, and Photoshop has taken the whole concept to another level. The digital age has brought with it a host of tools and techniques to simplify the process. This title offers a quick introduction to the creative process before concentrating on the three main categories within the genre: fantasy, science-fiction and horror. Each is adequately catered for with step-by-step guides. This is essentially the crux of the book, and the theme continues



throughout. However, we cannot forget the expert tips and comments that permeate the pages offering inspiration for all. ■

Rating: **3/5**

Digital Sci-Fi Art

Author: Michael Burns
Publisher: Ilex Press
Price: £17.95
ISBN: 1904705324
Web: www.illex-press.com

Advanced
 Photoshop
 Recommends

Stunning, futuristic images are the staple diet of sci-fi art, but the real winner is the artists imagination.

Faraway worlds can exist in any form they wish and it's down to the artist to recreate their thoughts in a style that befits their creativity. This is another book that adopts the step-by-step approach to ensure that digital artists can follow the techniques needed. However, before delving into Photoshop, *Digital Sci-Fi Art* gives readers a quick grounding in the main components that help create their masterpieces. Examples are provided by well-known artists with a pointer to the software used to create the art. Further examples break down an image and annotations



point out exactly how parts of the image are created along with what tools were used. ■

Rating: **4/5**

Web Photoshop: Start Here!

Author: Peter Cope
Publisher: Ilex Press
Price: £14.95
ISBN: 1904705049
Web: www.illex-press.com

This title boasts the tagline: 'From zero to hero in easy lessons', and this just about sums it up.

The book is a practical guide to Photoshop and how to use its toolset to create great graphics for the web. Much of the book is pretty basic Photoshop techniques, but there are specific sections related to its web capabilities. Like all good books *Start Here* begins with an overview of the main components to be encountered throughout the rest of the guide. This includes more web specific features such as HTML, other web languages and web browsers. Beyond this the opening chapter breaks down the core Photoshop experience before continuing on to



basic image manipulation. It's then that the book breaks into the web stuff with optimising images and creating web elements. ■

Rating: **3/5**

online treats

From files sharing to P2P, here's our pick of the best around

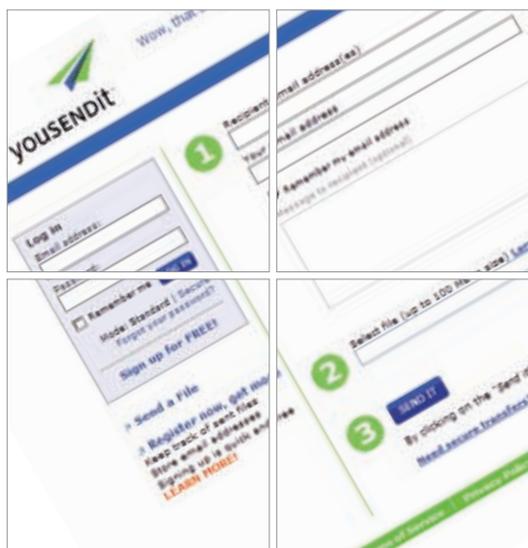
Yousendit

Developer: Yousendit
Price: Lite – FREE, Plus – \$4.99 per month
Web: www.yousendit.com

YouSendit is exactly what the customer does with this email service.

This web-based service, no software downloads here, comes in two versions and allows registered users to send large files via email. Once activated the Lite or Free version gives users the option to send files up to 100MB in a single instance. Simply add the address, locate the file and send it. Using Lite does incur a few restrictions, such as the file size and single file sends. Upgrade to Plus for larger files – a maximum of 2GB, multiple file sends and automatic backups. Alternatively, try out Business Plus for your own branded pages. ■

Rating: **3/5**



Pando

Developer: Pando Networks
Price: FREE
Web: www.pando.com

Pando is a P2P service that allows users to send large folders and files with the help of email, instant messaging and the web.

The beauty of Pando is, once downloaded, you can send large files across the internet using an existing email account. A limit of 1GB is imposed, and with such a large file the download is not the quickest but still a viable option. Sending a file is no more difficult than adding an attachment in your everyday email. Enter the address, drag and drop folders and files, enter a subject and the job is done. Get your friends to download the software and you'll be swapping large files with ease. ■

Rating: **3/5**



Limewire

Developer: Limewire Project
Price: Basic – FREE, Pro – \$18.00
Web: www.limewire.com

The term file sharing means different things to different people, but Limewire is definitely the more traditional app people expect.

This popular P2P file sharing application has been around for a while now. The software has slowly developed and evolved into a legitimate file sharing service. The latest incarnation boasts a guaranteed clean install, no bundled software and offers ease of use. Installation is a breeze and the program a doodle to use. The search facility makes the whole process very simple, with the option to search via different categories. Remember to Enable Content Filters, and keep it legal. ■

Rating: **3/5**



file sharing

Free Covers

Developer: Free Covers
Price: FREE
Web: www.freecovers.net

Free Covers is an interesting concept for a site and one that has a whiff of the DIY about it.

It's true to say the site is essentially a host of covers from films, albums, software, PS2, Xbox and a mixture of consoles scanned and placed into a web directory. However, the collection is pretty comprehensive and provides a wide range of covers that'll prove inspirational as well as productive. To get to grips with the scale of this site, the Movies category alone boasts nearly 50 pages with over 2400 covers. This site is definitely an acquired taste but one that could prove eternally useful. ■

Rating: **3/5**



Art-e-zine

Developer: Art-e-zine
Price: FREE
Web: www.art-e-zine.co.uk

Not the greatest website design you'll ever see and the navigation is nothing to write home about either.

However, putting these little exertions aside you have a unique collection of vintage images that corner a niche market. The site presents a long list of links accompanied by a short description to inform the user. Head into the page, browse at your leisure and save any images you love. Plus don't forget to look at the Vintage Image resource. The one downside is image resolution, with many only being fit for web work. If you like the site make sure that you make a small donation to help preserve its future. ■

Rating: **3/5**

Image After

Developer: Image After
Price: FREE
Web: www.imageafter.com

Image After describes itself as the 'raw base for your creativity', and provides a concise collection of images and textures.

The image base is primarily restricted to architecture, nature, objects and vehicles. This does not deter from what are some great images, albeit at varying resolutions, and subtle search fields. A favourite of ours is the Filter By Colour option, which as you would expect, matches up images to the selected colour. A low resolution preview is immediately available, while a full size preview is just a single click away. To assist in the selection process each thumbnail presents the actual resolution plus a clippings icon which allows for batch selection and easy download. ■

Rating: **3/5**

font sites

Identifont

Web: www.identifont.com

This site dedicates itself to helping users identify a typeface from a sample, by answering a series of questions about key characteristics.

The opening page is simple, concise and direct. Centre stage is taken by two options: Identify a Font and Find a Font. Identify a Font takes a reader into the realms of the site's core objective and helps decipher a font by appearance. For more interaction users can search via name, similarity, designers or publishers. To add to the circus, Identifont offers one-click access to its Latest Additions, Top Ten and its collection of Free Fonts. ■

Rating: **3/5**

Type Now

Web: www.typhenow.net

A quick glance at the home page of TypeNow is insufficient in showing what lies beneath its ordinary exterior.

Head to the Navigation drop-down menu and take a stroll down the list to find Themed Free Fonts alongside Themed Commercial Fonts. Plus a comprehensive collection of free and commercial fonts arranged alphabetically. The themed sets provide an impressive collection of fonts used for well-known TV shows, films, bands, album covers and video games. If you really need the font used for *Airwolf*, *The Goonies*, *Spongebob Squarepants* or *Sin City* – this is the place to get it for free. ■

Rating: **4/5**

Blue Vinyl

Web: www.bvfonts.com

Blue Vinyl doesn't provide the biggest collection of fonts, but it does provide an environment that suggests you're going to get style.

Split into the standard 'free' and 'pay' categories, both offer something for the design cause. A browse through the list offers some attractive fonts and dingbats, all on display and closely accompanied by a download icon for quick access. The pay fonts, as you might expect, get a little more attention to detail. Take your pick and press 'Click here' to see more, which presents a quick demo of the font in all its glory. Plus, many get the Look Book, to view real examples of the chosen font. ■

Rating: **3/5**

font sites

Beat the winter blues and jazz up your designs with these fab font sites

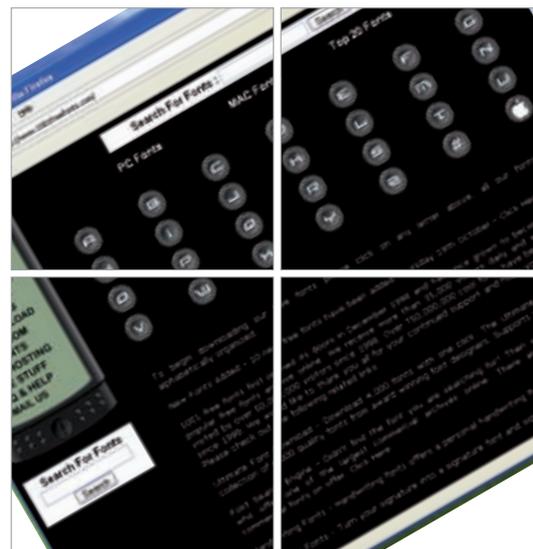
1001 Free Fonts

Web: www.1001freefonts.com

There's a big clue in the title of this comprehensive site with an abundance of decent fonts on offer.

Categorised alphabetically, users can get to browse through one of the 26 categories with a single click. Each category is arranged with a simple scrolling page that presents the font in big bold self-titled letters, to make sure viewers know what they're getting. The vast majority of the fonts are available for PC and Mac, with each font attributed a corresponding button. Simply hit the appropriate button and the font is yours. The free fonts, while plentiful, lack a little class – proving functional rather than stylish. However, with such a large collection there are some real gems in there. While it may take a while to find them it's worth the effort. ■

Rating: **4/5**



Dingbat Depot

Web: www.dingbatdepot.com

This site strays from the standard font theme and provides a delve into the world of dingbats.

So, if you're on the lookout for standard issue fonts then this site is a definite no-no. However, if the dingbat is an item that tickles your fancy then this site provides more than enough to keep most Photoshoppers happy. The site is a simple affair with the home page revealing a random selection of dingbats handily placed next to a category list. Select an aptly titled category, and Dingbat Depot produces a list of samples for each and every font. Navigation is much the standard process of jumping from page to page and scrolling, while downloading is a doodle. Make sure you pay this site a visit, as there's creativity and imagination a-plenty. ■

Rating: **4/5**



MyFonts

Web: www.myfonts.com

'Find, try and buy' is the motto, and visitors get plenty to choose from with over 51,000 fonts available.

The home page is a little lacklustre with the promotional Font of the Day, plus an indistinct selection of categories on offer. However, it's the tabbed browsing that brings into play this comprehensive collection. A quick click of Find Fonts and you're instantly presented with a myriad of choices to find a font. You can search using keywords or price brackets, or by names or font foundry. Beyond the standard search, the site introduces a number of alternative methods, including What's New, Best Sellers, Starlets and the very interesting WhatTheFont – a great tool to identify a font that you've found online or in a publication. ■

Rating: **4/5**

