

FREE

440

IMAGE SOURCES

40 FREE IMAGE SOURCES

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We'll explore all of these and then some in this post about free image sources. A few things to know before we get started:

What is Creative Commons?

Creative Commons is a nonprofit organization that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through free legal tools.

There are various types of Creative Commons licenses that range from allowing any type of use with no attribution to allowing only certain uses and no changes.

Works in the public domain are those whose copyrights have expired, have been forfeited, or are inapplicable. Finding something on the internet does not mean it is in the public domain.

These terms will come up often as we discuss free photo sources. Read over the terms and conditions of each site you try so you know exactly when and what type of attribution is required.

In this post, we'll break down more than 50 different sources and tools for visual content. We'll cover the following (click on any section to be taken to that area directly):

- Searchable photo sites
- Free-form photo libraries
- Photo search tools
- Create-your-own image tools
- Embeddable media

(One final note: Anywhere there's a representative photo that accompanies a tool or site, I've tried to leave it at the size it downloaded to give you an idea of what you'll be getting—click once to get a better look at any photo.)

Searchable photo databases

If you want a photo or image on a specific topic, you'll want a site that's searchable. Here are a few to check out. *(To better help you evaluate these sites, I performed the same search on each using the word "coffee.")*



1.) Dreamstime

Dreamstime offers a free section that's searchable and frequently updated. It requires you to create a (free) account.

2.) Free Digital Photos

Free Digital Photos houses a wealth of free images—categorized and searchable—for business, personal or educational use. They're smaller sized, and larger versions are available to purchase. Using the free images often requires a credit to the photographer and the site like the one you see below.

3.) Free Images

Free Images is a large gallery of more than 350,000 stock photos, searchable and categorized. Downloading a photo does require a longer-than-most signup process but the bigger selection might be worth it.

4.) Free Range Stock

Free Range Stock offers access to free high-quality, high-resolution stock photos. A (free) registration is required.

5.) Free Photos Bank

Free Photos Bank has a nice collection of free photos available for download without login. They're extensively categorized with a few different ways to search, too.

6.) ImageFree

ImageFree's registered users can download both free and paid images to use in corporate and personal projects. The free selection seems fairly limited, though—my "coffee" search didn't turn up a free photo I could use.

7.) IM Free

IM Free offers a curated collection of free resources, all for commercial use. Search for a keyword or browse through the stylishly crafted categories.



Image Credit: khunaspix via FreeDigitalPhotos.net



8.) Morguefile

Morguefile contains photographs freely contributed by many artists to be used in creative projects by visitors to the site. A short registration is required, and morguefile asks that users credit the photographer when possible.

9.) Pixabay

Pixabay offers copyright-free, cost-free images published under Creative Commons. You can copy, modify, distribute and use the images, even for commercial purposes. No registration is required.

10.) Public Domain Pictures

Public Domain Pictures is a repository for a wide variety of free public domain images uploaded by amateur photographers. A brief signup is required. (Premium download is an option if you need larger images.)

11.) Stockvault

Stockvault is a stock photo sharing website where photographers, designers and students can share their photographs, graphics and image files with each other for free and use them for personal and non-commercial design work. No registration is required.





12.) Rgbstock

Rgbstock is a free stock image site created by photographers and graphic artists. Registration (required) is one-click and the pool of photos is pretty deep.

Free-form photo collections

“Bloggers often look for specificity with the images they use on posts when they could see similar results from simply choosing high-quality photos,” says David Sherry of Death to The Stock Photo. His service and others in this category offer a more freewheeling approach to images—no searching but lots of discovery. Since there’s no search in this category, I’ve picked a representative image for each service.





13.) Ancestry Images

Ancestry Images offers a free image archive of historical prints, maps and artifact photos, like this print of a New Zealand Maori Warrior from 1817.



14.) BigFoto

BigFoto is a royalty-free photo gallery in which most of the photos have been contributed by amateur photographers. No login is required. It's organized mainly by geographic area—for example, this photo is from the “Copenhagen” collection.

15.) Gratisography

Gratisography is a collection of free high-resolution images for personal or commercial use. New photos are added weekly; simply click to download.

16.) Death to The Stock Photo

Death to The Stock Photo offers free high-res lifestyle photography sent to you monthly.



17.) FreeMediaGoo

FreeMediaGoo offers royalty-free, cost-free media that can be used in print, film, TV, Internet or any other type of media both for commercial and personal use. There's no login required but the inventory is slightly more limited, organized into unique categories like "beach backgrounds" and "concrete textures."



18.) Hubspot

It's not a photo source per se, but marketing platform Hubspot often offers packages of free photos in exchange for your email address.

19.) iStock

iStock releases new a new batch of free stock images every week. (Signup for a free membership—a slightly confusing process—is required.)



20.) Little Visuals

Little Visuals delivers 7 high-res images to use anyway you want via email every 7 days. Subjects range from industrial parts to idyllic landscapes.



21.) New Old Stock

New Old Stock is a collection of vintage photos from the public archives, free of known copyright restrictions.

22.) PicJumbo

PicJumbo offers a variety of free photos for any kind of use—free of charge with no registration required. Although there’s no search function, categories will help you find your way.

23.) Pickupimage

Pickupimage is a large collection of free stock images mostly focusing on nature- and outdoor-related scenes that can be copied, modified and distributed—even for commercial purposes. No registration necessary! Since the pool isn’t too broad this site didn’t pass the “coffee” search, but here’s a sample of what you can find there.



24.) Superfamous

Superfamous houses the work of Dutch interaction designer Folkert Gorter, whose photography is available under the conditions of a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 license. This means that you can use the work for your own purposes — including commercial use — as long as credit is provided.





25.) Unsplash

Unsplash offers 10 free (do whatever you want) high-resolution photos every 10 days.

26.) Wikimedia Commons

Wikimedia Commons is a database of 21,049,775 freely usable media files to which anyone can contribute. The images are painstakingly organized but the classifications may not be super clear if you're not a big Wikipedia user (I'm not).

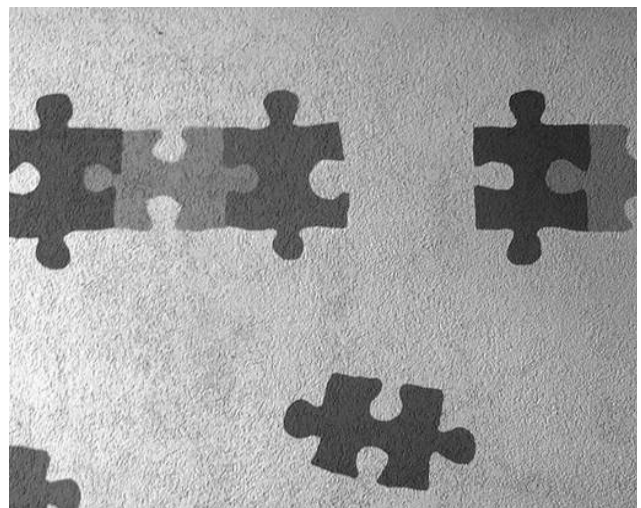
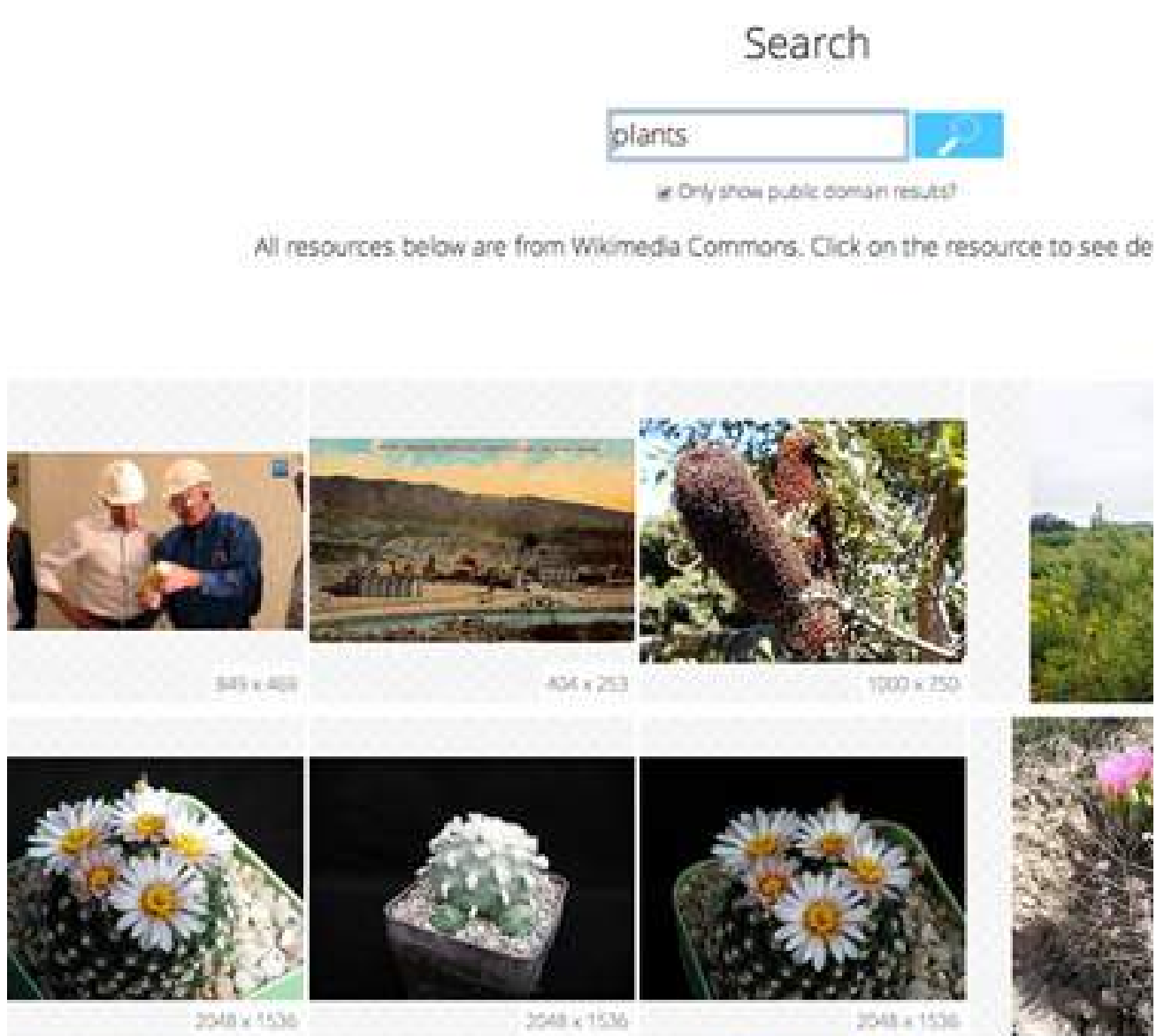


Photo search tools

These sites don't offer free photos themselves but rather provide a way to search easily through Flickr or public domain photos to more quickly find a photo you can use.

27.) Can We Image

Can We Image searches and displays results from Wikimedia Commons. All search results link directly to the resource's usage rights page.



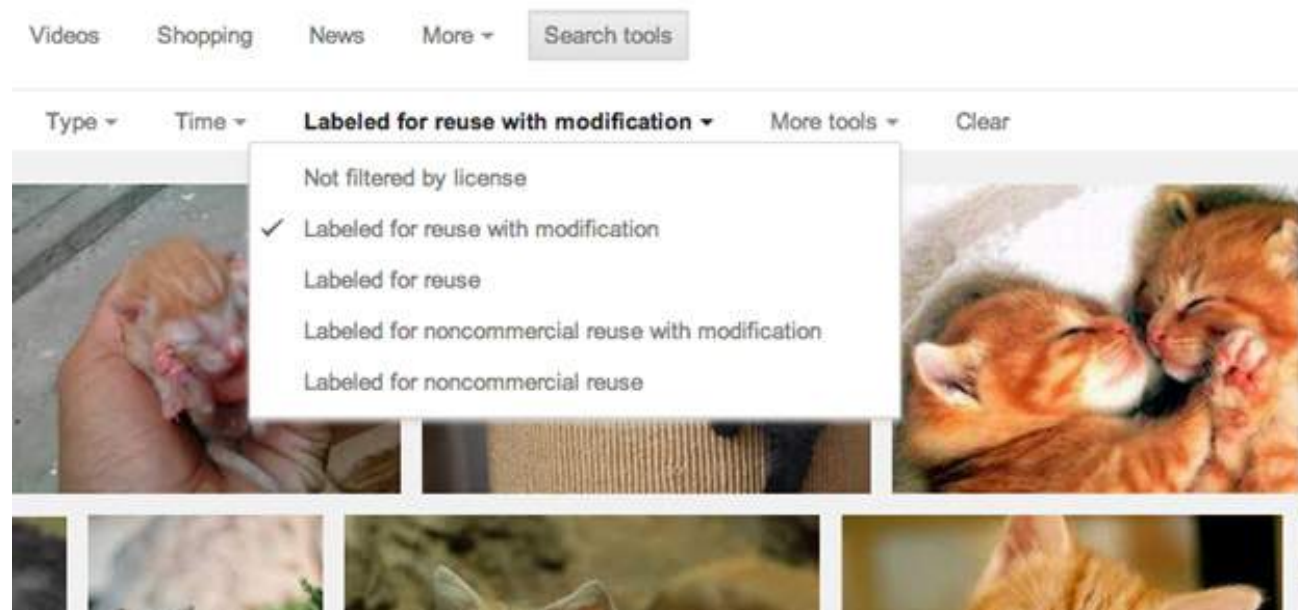
28.) Compfight

Compfight is a Flickr image search engine that uses the Flickr API to locate images based on your license needs.



29.) Creative Commons Search

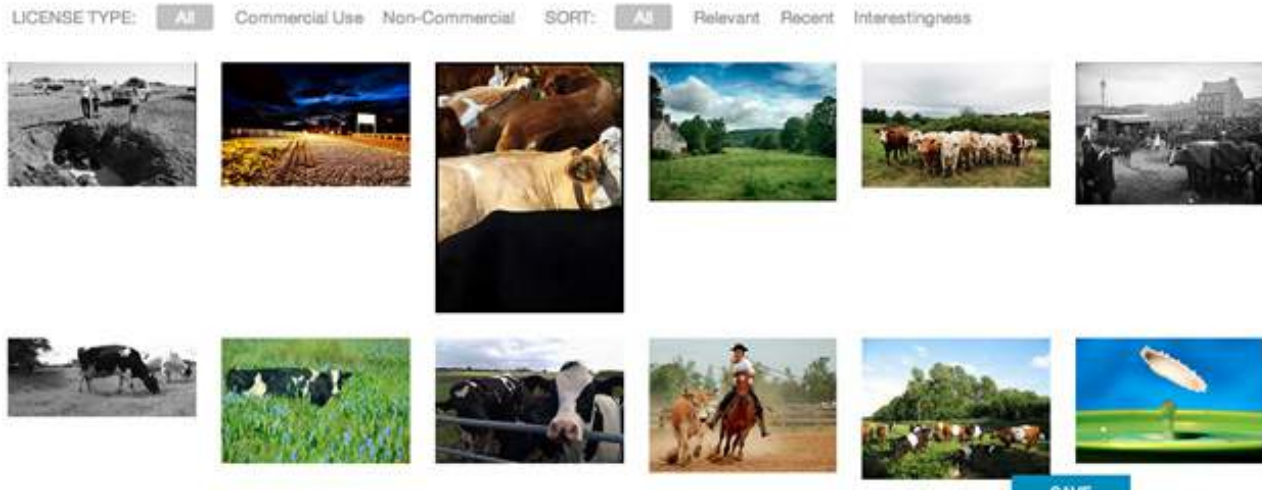
Creative Commons Search is a sort of photo search engine clearinghouse that offers access to search services provided by other organizations like Flickr and Google. For example, searching for “kittens” on Creative Commons Search and selecting Google Images brings me here. Note that the search has been set up with special parameters.



30.) Foter

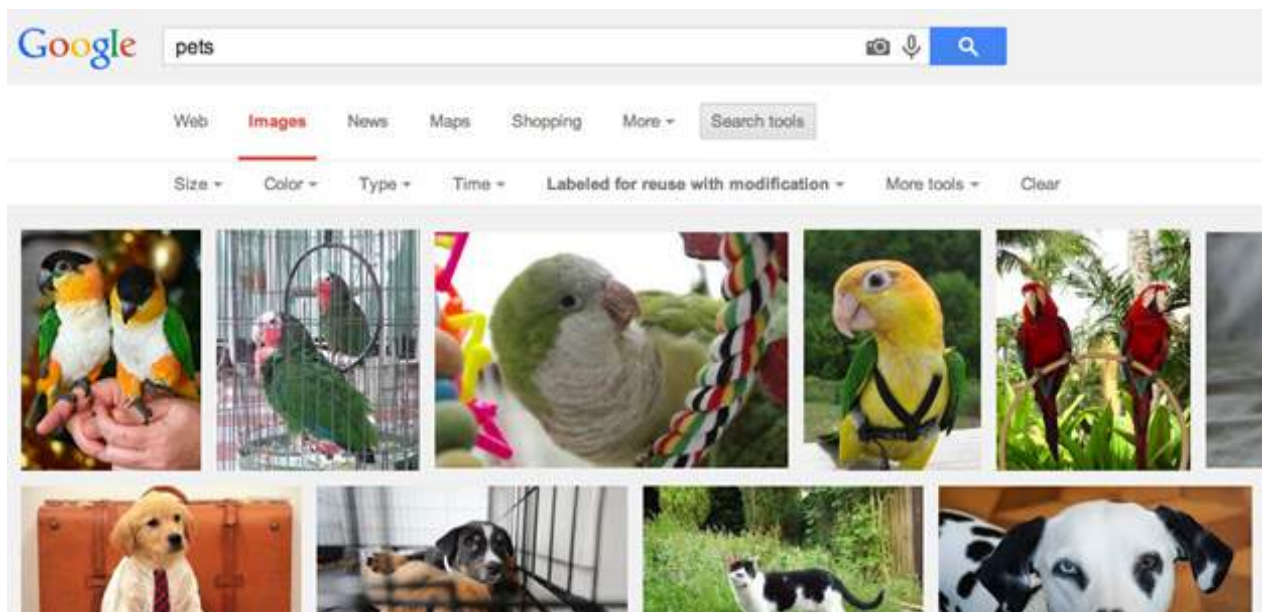
Foter is a Flickr-focused search tool that helps quickly unearth photos and identify their licenses.

COWS



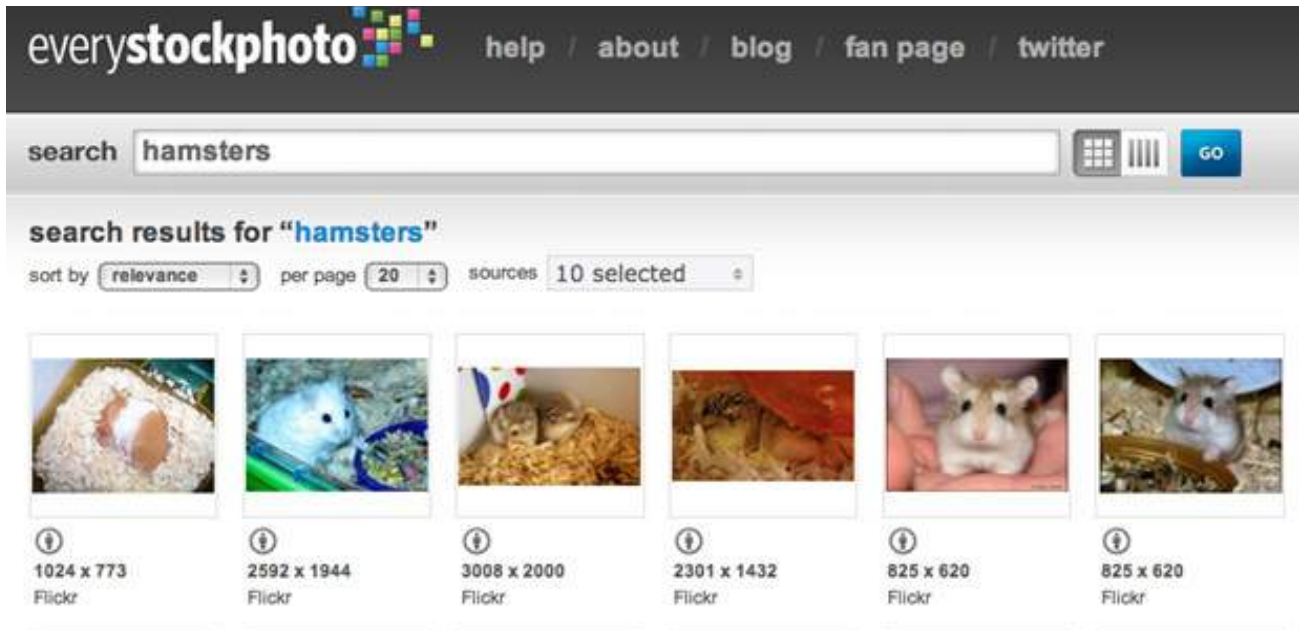
31.) Google Advanced Image Search

Google Advanced Image Search is a method of finding free-to-use images through Google's own search tools. Here's a quick guide.



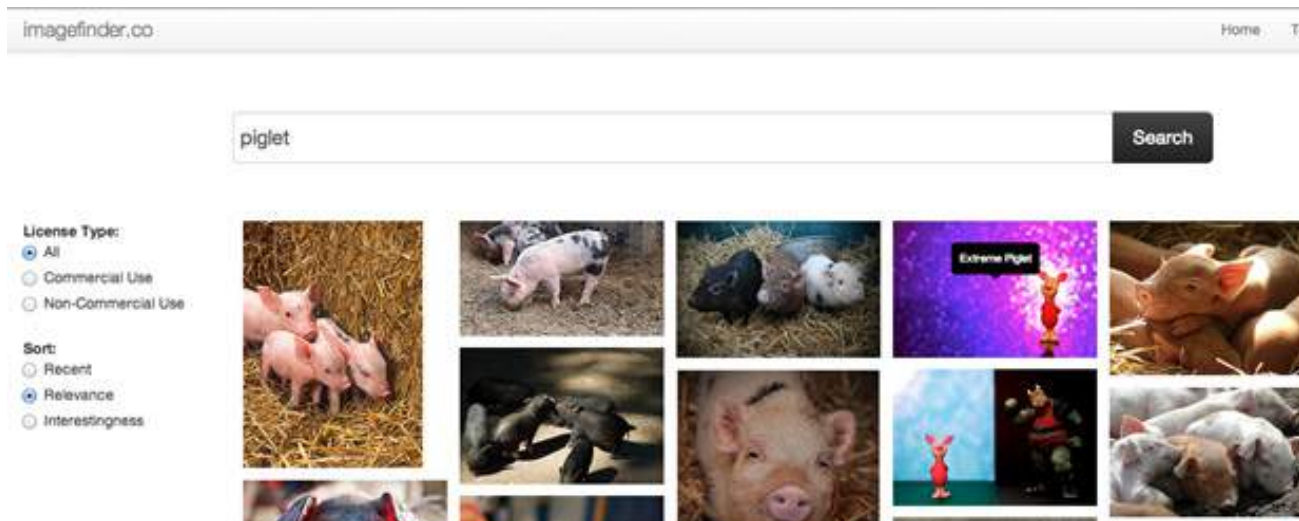
32.) Every Stock Photo

Every Stock Photo is a search engine for free photos. These come from many sources and are license-specific. You can view a photo's license by clicking on the license icon, below and left of photos. Membership is free and allows you to rate, tag, collect and comment on photos.



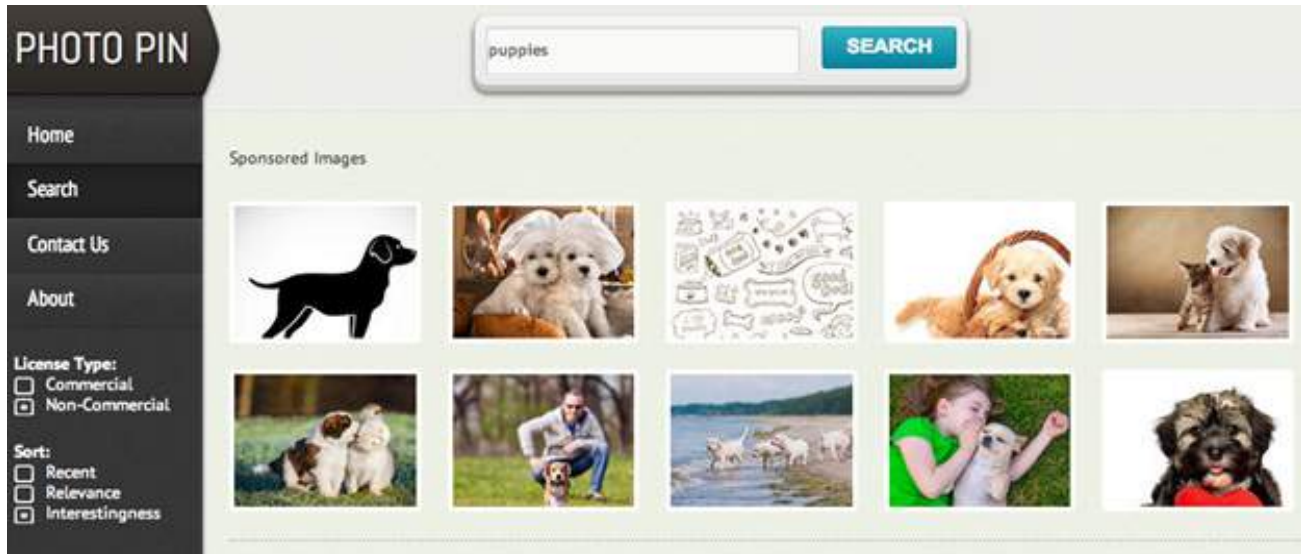
33.) Image Finder

Image Finder allows users to search Creative Commons photos from Flickr with similar filters for commercial/non-commercial and other categories.



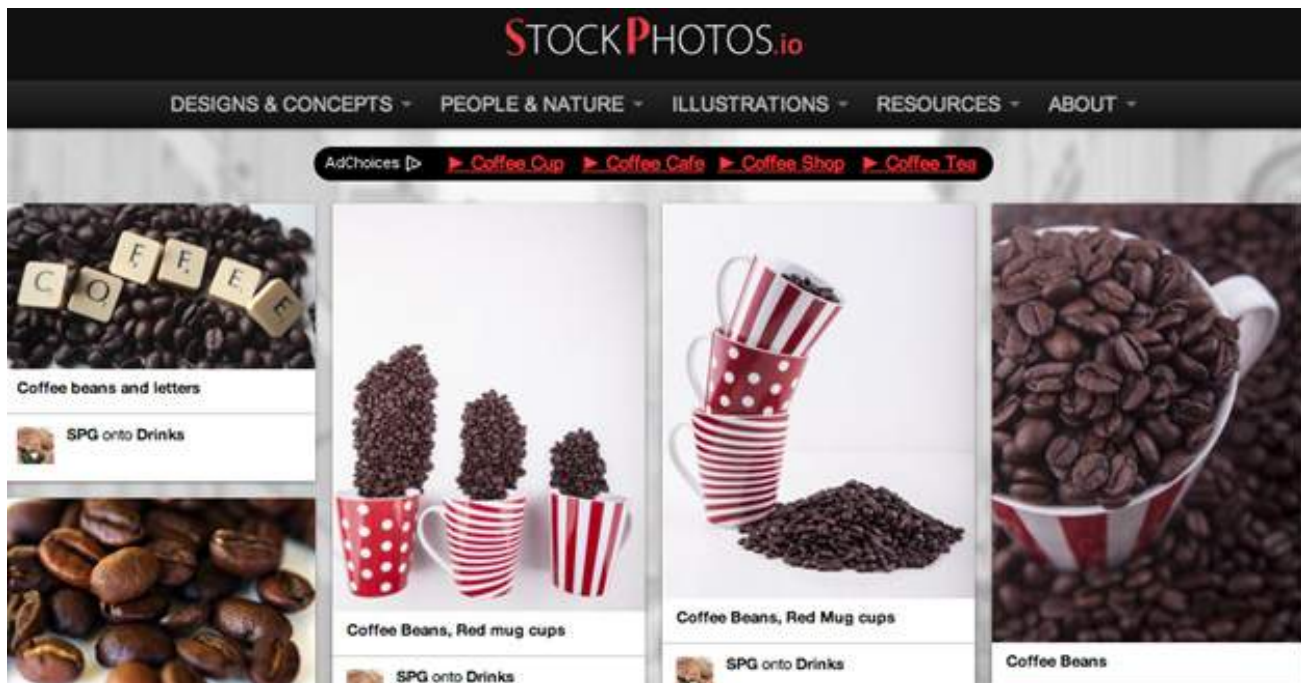
34.) PhotoPin

PhotoPin's interface allows users to search millions of Creative Commons photos from Flickr.



35.) StockPhotos.io

StockPhotos.io is a Creative Commons-licensed professional free stock photos sharing community of about 25,000 images. All photos displayed on this Pinterest-esque site are allowed for commercial use with proper credits to the authors.



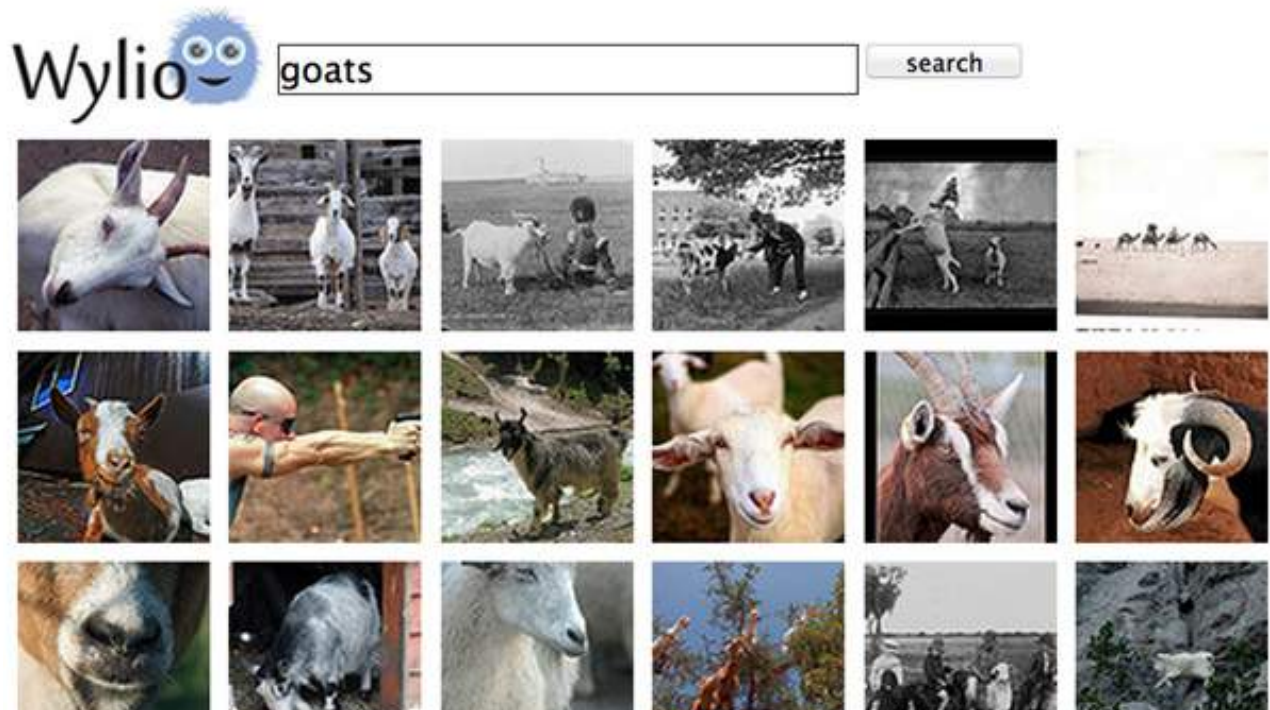
36.) TinEye

TinEye is a reverse image search engine. It finds out where an image came from, how it is being used, if modified versions of the image exist, or if there is a higher resolution version.



37.) Wyllo

Wyllo is an all-in-one picture finder, re-sizer and attribution builder for bloggers. Users can resize up to 5 free images per month.



Create-your-own image tool

For options beyond readymade images, consider the many tools available to help even the design-challenged among us create attractive, original images.

37.) Canva

is one we particularly turn to often for creating new images to accompany Buffer's blog posts. This tool allows users to search for the best graphics, photos, and fonts (or upload your own) then use Canva's drag-and-drop tool to create a new design.

