



PRODUCT/EDITORIAL BACKGROUNDER

fotocommunity (fc)

Europe's Leading & Largest Photographic Community Site Showcases Deepened US Commitment With New Features To Innovative Social Networking Concept



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.fotocommunity.com

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Q. How did fotocommunity get started?

A. Andreas Meyer, a successful German-based multimedia entrepreneur for 16 years, took a sabbatical in 2000 from his various projects to pursue a love of travel and photography. When he returned to Bonn, he created a homepage to share his photos, and noticed some disturbing trends. Not only were his expenses in building the site disproportionate to returns, but also the entire experience was less than satisfying. His page garnered too few visitors who offered too little feedback. He began to wonder if a uniform user interface could solve the same dilemma for hundreds of similar photo-philes faced with their own "little projects," and the idea of fotocommunity was born. The inaugural site www.fotocommunity.de went live in Germany in 2001. By 2004, the site was international, offering platforms in five languages for members to share photos, find inspiration and trade ideas.

Q. What was fotocommunity's founding concept – to help further the cause of photography or technology?

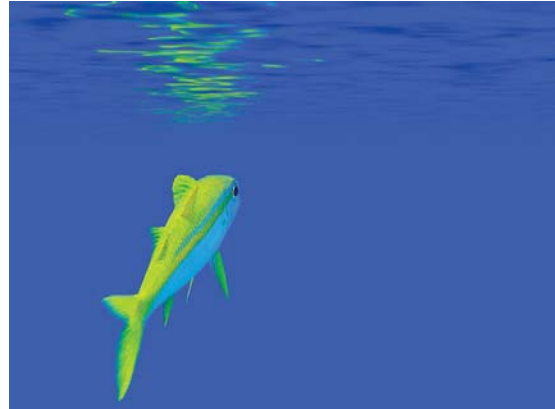
A. As a self-described enthusiastic amateur photographer, Meyer was looking first and foremost for a place where he could share his passion for the hobby with others easily. When researching the idea of fotocommunity, he was surprised to find that even on the Internet, which was then becoming rife with social networking sites, he couldn't find an appropriate online forum for people with an intense interest in photography. To him, the essential element of an online community was not in the ability to post unlimited photos, but was – and still is – the impetus to foster discussion among like-minded people with an intense interest in photography.

Q. Today, though, there are many sites that say they welcome photos. How is fotocommunity different?

A. The quality of communication among fotocommunity members remains a key difference. It is higher than in any other online community of its kind. In addition to commenting on the photos, members interact with each other through internal messages, photo-mails, an internal chat, and in

numerous forums. Since fotocommunity was founded, members have written over 60 million reviews for approximately 11 million photos. Currently, fotocommunity receives approximately 200 million page views every month.

Another big difference with fotocommunity is the way in which people are invited to participate on the site. Unlike other sites where anyone can post as many photos as they wish, the number of uploads per week on www.fotocommunity.com is strictly limited. Those who wish to upload more than one photo per week pay for the service, and even then the number is limited. This restriction ensures that only the best possible photos find their way onto fotocommunity. Anyone looking for a place just to show vacation pictures should look elsewhere.



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Finally, fotocommunity members don't need to worry about copyright infringement. Profiteering off member talents is the antithesis of the fotocommunity mission. The site, built for a free and easy exchange among enthusiasts, will never sell a member's photos without explicit permission.

Q. How does the site work? What is involved in membership?

A. Registration on fotocommunity is free, although the number of photos each free visitor may post on the site is limited. A varying fee structure gives three levels of members increasingly advanced benefits, including the ability to post more photos in a shorter time period. In all cases, photos posted on www.fotocommunity.com are subject to review.

Just as the hundreds of social networking sites have achieved soaring popularity among targeted groups of teens to professionals, fotocommunity members use the site to exchange photos, news, and detailed information about their likes and dislikes. Comments, photo postcards, chats, text forums, and linked pictures and profiles all help the site foster a community feeling.

Q. What is a “typical” profile of a fotocommunity member?

A. In Europe, fotocommunity not only connects so-called “amateur” photographers, but also it has caught on as an important site for top photographic magazines and photographers to seed new ideas and evaluate the latest trends. Through photo galleries and contests, fotocommunity enables magazines to acquire high-quality images with far less effort than if they organized their own contests. Photographers, meanwhile, are happy to have fotocommunity act as a kind of handling platform for their published work.

Perhaps one reason for the interest in fotocommunity among all levels of photographers is the site's integral ability to act as a showcase for virtually every type of genre and interest. Trends like classic black-and-white photography or home-laboratory development projects have the ability to come alive on fotocommunity. The site is home to scores of artists, each with their own pictorial language as is the case with an architect and former art professor out of the Netherlands who come together on fotocommunity to construct an image montage from 10,000 individual photos.

Travel and sports photographers can find like-minded people just as easily as an office worker who creates macro photos out of flowers and insects or the cutting-edge hobbyist who

experiments with pinhole cameras. It's this diversity that keeps the fotocommunity fresh and exciting, even for longtime users. Members can choose to stay in their group or extend discussion beyond familiar parameters.

Q. What can a member of fotocommunity.com expect as a result of membership?

A. The majority of people who visit fotocommunity pay nothing at all: Viewing and commenting on photos, participating in discussions and loading one photo per week are all free on the fotocommunity site.

Subscribing members, however, do enjoy advantages over members with free accounts. Those who pay the Basic membership fee of about \$6 USD per month have the privilege of uploading ten photos per week and storing up to 350 photos online in fotocommunity. The slightly higher monthly fees of the Pro and World membership levels give account members access to exclusive channels as well as the ability to upload up to 30 photos per week and store up to 2,000 photos online. For more information about membership visit: www.fotocommunity.com/pc/pay.php

Q. So, is paid membership to fotocommunity more important than those with free access?

A. Not at all. Those who have registered for free make invaluable contributions to fotocommunity through their comments, discussions and uploaded photos. Even unregistered users who are mere site "observers" can play an important part of the community, because they tell others what they've seen.

Q. Is fotocommunity a virtual community only, or has the phenomenon spilled into the real world?

A. One of the best outcomes of fotocommunity has been the way in which fotocommunity members organize among themselves. Through regular meetings, field trips and workshops they are able to nourish real-life contacts that go beyond the Internet. More than 200 such user-initiated meetings take place every month in the German-speaking areas alone. Fotocommunity site coordinators are encouraged that similar type meetings will also be arranged in communities throughout the US as well.

The developers of fotocommunity continue to support and develop this culture by producing three-day fotocommunity festivals. Throughout Europe these special venues have provided the opportunity for literally thousands of fotocommunity members to come together under one roof. Through organized workshops on the industry's latest trends in photography, arranging photo field-trips and special festival exhibitions, members have the opportunity to meet in 2008 in March for the Vienna program, June for the Hamburg program and in August for the Lindau program, or at the World Convention at photokina.



The fotocommunity 4,300 sq. ft. booth and exhibition space is expected to draw over 10,000 global members to the photokina September 2008 in Cologne. Complete with an 'Action Stage', lecture program and all-day workshops in multiple languages, members will also enjoy a lounge area to meet, greet and network in person. The event will culminate in the fotocommunity World Convention Party.

For more information about the 'festivals' and World convention at Photokina view the Festival brochure. Visit <http://www.cjcstrategists.com/resources/fc/FestivalBrochure.pdf> (PDF 1.4MB)

Q. What other things can US members expect from fotocommunity.com?

A. The fotocommunity staff is constantly at work in the background to keep member communications running smoothly in the foreground. What's more, the users determine how the content is further developed. Experienced staff members see to it that members' requests are quickly adopted.

As a result, fotocommunity features an enhanced user interface that puts all site functionality on one screen with easy-to-use, easy-to-navigate bars and tabs that make browsing the site a breeze. US members who join at the World membership level for example can take advantage of a "world tab" to access photos by category from all over the globe with one click.

An all-new favorite photos bookmark makes it easy to designate and share their favorite photos with an all-new feature that makes specific information public to visitors of their pages. Members now have the ability to instantly connect photos and news from fotocommunity to their respective websites, as well. They now can showcase their talents and interests to the world in the latest slide-show format.

Also US members who join this year can look forward to a LinkedIn-style news feed that allows designated member buddies the ability to share recent photography-related interests and projects. They also will have access to an extensive database of headshots via sedcards.

Finally, US fotocommunity members, along with the rest of the world, can participate in the site's regular international photo contests. The latest contest will begin in February 2008 and is open to all members worldwide. For more information about contests visit:

www.fotocommunity.com/pc/pc/channel/57

About [fotocommunity](http://www.fotocommunity.com)

Founded in 2001, fotocommunity (fc) today is an Internet community of approximately 700,000 avid photographers and photographic enthusiasts and houses more than 10 million photos worldwide. As Europe's largest platform for those with an intense interest in photography, www.fotocommunity.de is a convergence of laymen, professionals and artists alike. With 200 million page views per month, fotocommunity is quickly becoming a global phenomenon. www.fotocommunity.com, with its English user interface, is increasingly popular, along with the Italian-language www.fotocommunity.it. A French-language www.fotocommunity.fr fotocommunity and Spanish-language www.fotocommunity.es fotocommunity were launched at the photokina, the world's largest photography exhibition, in 2006.

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