

Finding Clipart Online

GPX Magazine June 2021

An internet search has replaced much of our industry's legwork when it comes to finding an image or client's artwork. While in the past we might have referred to a clipart library, or even expected the customer to have some form of their logo in a semi-production format. Today, most conversations about artwork are expected to start and end with "just get it off my website".

The most obvious hurdle when working with artwork sourced online, is its legality. Because this can also be so obviously addressed, we will skip most of the specifics to simply say: "do not take anyone's art, efforts, or logo without express written permission by authorized person(s)". Knowing that the internet is full of alternative sources, or you have confirmed the client's ownership, we'll continue.

The importance of getting as much information as possible from your customer or prospective customer is obvious. It is paramount that you also *give* as much information as possible too. Use this conversation, whether virtual or in person, as an opportunity to tell them how important the detailed information from them is, and what your design process truly entails. Here are some talking points and follow-ups:

- Where can I find your artwork? / That image is not production ready.
- What colors are most important? / Some processes charge by number of colors. Colors often look different when processed. Screens show millions of colors, while (production process) uses hundreds.
- What size are you wanting this? / That is much larger than we see on your phone/computer screen.
- Do you have the Font? / We will re-type your text in a similar script type.

Notice how you are informing the customer with questions and guiding them with your follow-up statements. All the while nudging them to understand that what you do is not as simple as "copy-paste-print". You may-not want to waste your time explaining Digital vs Vector to your customer. A friendly "yes we can do that" followed by the above conversation, then ending with the value you bring should suffice. Do give effort to explain what your time, expertise, & unique equipment is worth and how they relate to your price-point. Just make sure that their expectations are on par with your technical and production abilities.

If you can *easily* find what you need in a quality production ready format, go for it. A clipart book is near-useless when considering the time it may take you to flip-pages, correspond with disks & drives, then import & adjust... Technology and the internet have come a long way in just the past few years, but you do need a basic understanding of design software and a bit of editing skills to work with any form of stock-art.

Look at each image and its graphic elements as pieces. Background, foreground, primary art, secondary elements, & text area(s). Each of these can be found or created separately, then put back together. Yes, I said "created". Do not be afraid to draw simple design pieces. Your design software surely has many-a-tool to simply make stars, ovals, shields, & other basic/common shapes. It may take more time to find

then convert to a production format, some simple parts of your image, than to just draw it. Don't be afraid, you can do it. A little design practice will help you for years to come. Your graphics proficiency is a ***force multiplier*** for your business.

Now, let us get into some specifics & recommendations from me, your favorite Corel Trainer 😊!

Regarding your search tool itself. Surly I am not the first to tell you that "google is king". I may be the first to let you know that there are options when working with this internet overlord:

- Beyond adding words to your search, such as "vector" or "blue", click near the text you typed on the 'Tools' or 'Settings' button. You will find a plethora of filters for your search. When looking through such a massive instrument as the internet, your biggest hardship will be to limit your results specifically for what you need.
- Adjust your search based on Size, Color, Type, and importantly: Rights / Licenses. *note, be careful as online postings of images may not be perfectly accurate for free-to-use etc.
- The type of file you want differs greatly based on the image, or the portion of the image that you are trying to find. As PNG files slowly replace JPEGs, we are less apt to run in to large white squares behind every graphic.
 - By saving the image to your computer (save-as), instead of the typical copy/paste directly into your design software, you will avoid much of these solid unusable and irrelevant backgrounds. Though the file itself, even a PNG, may indeed have a square around it, verses a transparent background.
 - In your settings, near the search text you typed in, you will find some Advanced Search options, including 'Safe Search'. This relates to objectionable and mostly adult content. Your searches are naturally being filtered this way, often to our benefit, but can restrict a great-deal of the quality results we may want, and can use. Please remember to turn these function(s) back on if your computer is used by youngsters or sensitive persons.
- You may be able to naturally narrow your search results by adding some out of the box words to your search. For example, if you know that you will be removing the background with let's say a color-masking function, then adding the word(s) "snow" or "water" or "silhouette" to your search may give you the image you need with easily removable inner or outer section(s).
- DuckDuckGo is a search engine that I often recommend. It uses google's base algorithm and search results but does not prioritize (as much) based on corporate imbursements. Try it. Search for a product blank or an unbranded image on DuckDuckGo. It will automatically provide a relatively private search and tracker blocking. Meaning that neither someone else's searches, nor social media, nor email history etc. will change the results you get (as much).

Your computer likely has, while your design software no doubt includes a screen-capture function. CorelDRAW's graphics suite calls it "CorelCAPTURE". This tool can make things incredibly easy for you. Too often our clients dismissively say, "just get my logo off my website", and we try not to roll our eyes in response. Anyways, Capture tools can help big-time. In CorelCAPTURE specifically, you can adjust:

- where you'd like to capture; an entire screen, window, menu, or highlighted area.

- You can choose what resolution (DPI) you need the image in, and in what size (dimensions).
- You can also adjust how the image is saved onto your clipboard (copy/paste/Ctrl+V) and/or in a specific file format, such as a JPEG on your desktop.

We've come a long way since the 'PrtScr' button, though that Windows function alone may be the bit of help you need. To access your clipboard, which is everything that has been recently copied, use the keyboard shortcut by holding down the Window key next to your Fn &/or Alt keys, and then hit the V key.

Notice that all of the methods, techniques, and advice I've given in this article are completely without cost. "Finding Clipart Online for Free" may be a better title. In concert with a good bitmap to vector tracing software, and some basic design knowledge, the internet can be your easy and inexhaustible source for art. We live in an amazing time, with near-infinite resources, literally at our fingertips. Get more use out of the awesome assets we all take for granted with a little bit of practice, some perspective, & quality Training.