



Digimarc® for Images
Professional Edition



Digimarc Case Study | Mixed Media Artist

Digimarc for Images Helps Artist Track Images and Discover Unauthorized Use



Douglas Auld

Douglas Auld is a Painter, Writer, Poet, Creative Director for Videos and Web Guy, all of which come back to being who he always wanted to be: an “artist”. For the past five years Doug has been building websites and exhibiting his paintings online as much as possible.

Doug learned that 86 of his images were being used without his permission. He was “flat out shocked” that so many of his images were floating around the Web without his knowledge.



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Overview

Artists struggling to profit from their creative efforts in the digital age need a reliable way to protect, track, and convey ownership of their work as it travels across the virtual marketplace without affecting its original appearance or the artist’s creative intent. The goal of Digimarc for Images is to deter the unauthorized use of digital images and preserve their commercial viability, so that artists who display and sell images online can keep their focus on the creative side of their work.

Whether you are a full-time professional or trying to turn your hobby into a side job, Digimarc for Images helps protect your creative content by permanently conveying ownership as images travel across the Web. Creative output is an artist’s most valuable asset; Digimarc for Images ensures that an artist’s creativity is permanently attributed to the artist.

Challenge

Digimarc for Images user Douglas Auld describes himself as an “artist painter, poet, creative director for videos, and a web guy.” His passion for art began at a young age and stayed with him through college, after which he became an art teacher. Later, he focused his creative skills on advertising and design, and eventually started his own firm, travelling across the country consulting for various clients. The many job titles he has held throughout his life have always been punctuated by a passion for art and the desire to become a full-time professional artist.

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Although artistic creativity played a role in his advertising and design firm, Doug eventually moved to Cape Cod with the intent of rekindling his true passion in life: art. His art represents both traditional and the modern influences; it is a nuanced form of expression involving photographs, computers, digital painting, computer tablet technologies, and hand-drawn embellishments, resulting in “a new level of mastering and producing paintings which [Doug believes] is on the cutting edge of a new painting methodology.”

Unfortunately, upon engaging the Internet marketplace, Doug “discovered the naked truth that people worldwide would rather steal images than pay for them.” Like many artists who display their work online, Doug initially attempted to protect his work with the most obvious and inexpensive solutions: visual watermarks. Although they may deter some efforts to appropriate an image, visual watermarks fell short for Doug because they distorted the appearance of the original image and were easily removed by sophisticated users.

Doug then attempted to use other “cloaking” methods, including the manipulation of ALT tags and portions of HTML code. However, this approach made his images virtually unsearchable with traditional search engines. For Doug, the cloaking solutions were still inadequate. They lacked the robustness to adequately protect his work from illegal use and distribution, and they made his work harder for potential buyers to find. It wasn’t until Doug read an article on Digimarc that he decided to give digital watermarking a try.

Solution

Doug needed a better way to convey ownership of his images and track their dissemination across the Web. While his previous attempts to secure his work online had been disappointing, Digimarc for Images, available pre-installed in Adobe® Photoshop®, offered a permanent, robust protection and tracking solution.

“Digimarc not only provides you with the best possible solution but implements them with you.”

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Digimarc for Images software embeds a visually imperceptible watermark into digital images. To the human eye, these watermarked images appear unaltered, preserving the original creative and visual intent. When images are scanned using the Digimarc reader, the watermark conveys important information such as copyright status, the owner's contact information, and direction to the artist's blog or website. Each watermark also carries a unique transaction ID, so artists can track the number of duplicates and the distribution paths of a particular watermarked image. Information contained in the watermark remains permanently attached to the image even as it undergoes alterations like reformatting, redistribution, editing, cropping, resizing, and compression.

After an image is digitally watermarked, it becomes a virtual beacon, traceable as it moves across the Web. Image owners can rely on the Digimarc Search Service to scan the Internet and determine exactly where their watermarked images are being used. The ability to trace and locate watermarked images enables artists and content owners to locate specific instances of unauthorized use and take steps to stop it.

Outcome

After signing up for Digimarc for Images, he was exposed first-hand to the true extent of illegal image use on the Internet. In his first Digimarc Search Service report, Doug learned that 86 of his images were being used without permission. He was "flat-out shocked" that so many of his images were floating around the Web without his knowledge. The fact that his images were appearing across the Internet on various websites and blogs wasn't in itself the primary problem; after all, artists enjoy the exposure and reach that comes with Web commerce. His main concern was to make sure his work was being properly attributed and that no one was profiting from his creative efforts.

Digimarc for Images enabled Doug to track his images and identify where unauthorized use was taking place. He now watermarks all of his images before posting them to his website and blog. In addition to the robust security capabilities of Digimarc for Images, he is very pleased with the service and individual help he receives from Digimarc. He states that Digimarc "not only provides you with the best possible solutions but implements them with you."

Getting Started

Digimarc for Images is sold as a subscription that is renewable annually. Digimarc for Images allows you to communicate copyright, ownership, and other information about your images with an imperceptible digital watermark that persists wherever they may travel across the Internet. **Give us a call today to get started – 1.800.344.4627.**

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