

# Photos on Amazon and eBay disappeared due to Photobucket's new request

Thousands of photos illustrating products sold on Amazon and many other buying and selling sites disappeared after Photobucket photo sharing service changed terms of use.

Besides Amazon, ebay and Etsy are also affected, along with many other forums and blogs. The cause of the problem is that Photobucket requires new payouts to allow images to be stored on their host embedded into a third-party site.

Many people are not aware of this change, leading to some of them accusing the company of blackmailing them. Photobucket, based in Denver, is currently asking for \$ 399 (£ 309) annually for those who want to continue using them for a third-party host site. This action has caused a reaction on social networking sites.

## Change terms

Photobucket has been available since 2003 with more than 100 million customers and more than 15 billion photos on the server. One thing that makes this service appealing to salespeople is that the free advertising accounts can be used to download product images. On June 26, they gave a short note advising users to take time to review the updated terms. This note contains about 500 words saying that free accounts will not be linked with image links to third party sites.



The image shows a composite graphic. On the left is a dark grey rectangular box with white text that reads "PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ACCOUNT TO ENABLE 3RD PARTY HOSTING". Below this text is a circular gauge with a needle pointing to "100%" and the label "3rd Party Hosting Usage". At the bottom of the box, it says "FOR IMPORTANT INFO, PLEASE GO TO: [www.photobucket.com/P500](http://www.photobucket.com/P500)". To the right of this box is a product advertisement for "Meijunter 5\*Filter Lens-Gear(Pad)+External USI" by Meijunter, priced at £87.17 + £1.85 delivery.

*The image is replaced with an account upgrade notice*

Many users only recognize this change when embedding the image and seeing the image replaced by the Photobucket account notification that needs to be upgraded. Retro 2 Go store, selling on eBay, is one of the most affected places. 'A short note is absurd. I deleted my account and never used Photobucket again '.

## **Hold to 'blackmail'**

Some sellers refused to pay and adapt to this change by downloading product images with Photobucket's rival service. But the new policy also affects social media posts, blogs and forums related to Photobucket. One of them is Stampboards, a forum with more than 17,000 members discussing postage stamps and sharing pictures about them. 'They are blackmailing,' said Glen Stephens, the administrator of the site, and said it would not pay.

A marketing company said it was understandable when Photobucket wanted to rely less on advertising, but did not agree with the fee and how they made the change.

'I was very surprised,' said one blogger. 'There was no announcement, the email said it would happen, and more importantly, there was no explanation.'

One expert said that people should also recognize the threat when relying on a free photo hosting service. 'Any similar hosting site relies on advertising to provide free services and they can only continue when there is enough money to enter.' 'So if you save all the pictures on such a page or application, don't know how they make money to maintain their activities, sooner or later it turns out to bite you.'

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