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Here at Buffer, we think a lot about visual content. We have shared our own research on the importance of images in Twitter posts for more social sharing. We've learned tools that help anyone create visual content. Our social media management tool involves posting images because we know how important it is to attract your followers and fans. But there is one question that we get asked quite often: Where can you find free images that are of high quality and cleared for use in blogs or social media content? This is a question with a lot of different answers and reservations. Almost every image created over the past 30 years is still copyrighted, a protection that gives virtually every author the exclusive right to use or reproduce their work. But you can find a photo of the public domain, use a Creative Commons image that may require attribution, or even create your own image from scratch. In this post, we will share more than 20 different sources and tools for free images, covering search site images, create your own image tools, and more. (Related: If you are interested in learning how to choose and use such images, you can like our complete guide to using stock images in your marketing.)

Understand these terms before using any free imagesA few things to know before we are launched. The following terms will come often as we discuss free image sources. Read the terms of each site you're trying to let you know exactly when and what type of assignment is required. What is Creative Commons? Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that allows you to share and use creativity and knowledge through free legal tools. There are different types of Creative Commons licenses that range from allowing any type of use without attribution to allowing only certain applications and no changes. What is the public domain? Works in the public domain are those whose copyrights have expired, lost or are not applicable. Finding something on the Internet does not mean that it is in the public domain. What is royalty free? Royalty-free images are not necessarily free. In most cases, you will have to pay a one-time fee to get the rights to use the image. Then you can use it as many times as you like. Free in free means only that you don't have to pay royalties to the owner of the image every time you use it. For a comprehensive reading on royalty without images, check out this guide to Amos Struck.24 sites to find free images for Marketing To better help you evaluate these sites, I performed the same search if possible on each using the term happy people. 1. UnsplashUnsplash - Free image searchUnsplash has its own license, which essentially allows you to use the images for free, anyway you like, except to use them to create a competing website. (We are huge fans of Unsplash here in Buffer!) 2. Explosion (by Shopify)Burst - Free Image Search Built by ShopifyBurst is a free stock photo platform for Shopify entrepreneurs. Images are both free free without royalties. (Burst has a cool section of business ideas, with tips and high-resolution images to start your business.) 3. PexelsPexels - Free Image SearchPexels also has its own license, which says what you can and can't do with images. You can use and modify images for free for both commercial and personal use without attribution. PixabayPixabay - Free stock photosImages on Pixabay are licensed under Creative Commons zero (CC0), which means you can use images without asking permission or giving credit to an artist (although this is always appreciated). Pixabay gives a soft reminder to check that the content depicted in the images does not violate any rights5. Free ImagesFree - Stock PhotosFree Images provides more than 300,000 free stock images under its own license. The license allows a very wide range of applications, although it does list several cases of limited use (which are quite common for most free image sites).6 KaboompicsKaboompics - Search for photos by colorKaboompics uses its own license, which is similar to Creative Commons except that you can't redistribute your photos. There are two things that I love about Kaboompics: first, it allows me to search by color, and two, it provides an extra palette of colors in the photo.7. Stocksnap.ioStocksnap uses a Creative Commons CC0 license for free, so its photos are free to upload, edit and use for both commercial and non-commercial projects.8 CanvaCanva - Free Photo search and image editorCanva is an online graphic design tool that also offers free photography promotions. One of the advantages of using Canva is that you can quickly turn an image into a custom graphic to use on social media or blog.9. Life of PixLife of Pix - Free and premium photosLife of Pix lists free high-resolution photos and Adobe Stock partners for additional (paid) drains. GratsographyGratsographyGratsography also has its own free photo license, which allows you to do almost anything you can think of. FlickrFlickr Photo LibraryFlickr is an image hosting platform where you can find images that can be used and modified for commercial purposes. Select Commercial Use and Allowed Fashions within the Any License filter to find these images, and be sure to check the license for each image as you distinguish them. Jopwell Collection Community PhotosThe Jopwell Collection contains several albums with hundreds of images featuring people in the Jopwell community. Images can be uploaded and used as long as you noticeably attribute Jopwell. (You can read the history of this collection here.) 13. WOCinTechWOCinTech Image Collection on FlickrThis is an album of photos of women of color in technology, started by Christina and Stephanie, founders of #WOCinTech Chat. Images can be used as long as you #WOCinTech chat or or (While the team doesn't update the album anymore, there are over 500 images to choose from!) 14. CreateHER StockCreateHER Stock - Hand-picked list of images depicting women of colorCreateher Stoke team manually curated more than 200 high-quality images of women of color, which can only be used for personal use. (Check their licenses here.) You can also receive new free images every month when you sign their newsletter. Death StockDeath in stock - free to use photos by email every monthUnlike most of the websites mentioned in this post, Death in Stock has no gallery of images. He sends you 20 new photos every month when you sign up for his newsletter. Getty ImagesGetty Images - Free use of image embedsIt may come as a surprise to you (as it was for me). You can use images from Getty Images on non-profit websites for free by embedding them. Downloading an image and uploading it to your site is still a no-no-you have to paste it. Sticking a little more intrusive than just adding a photo to your post - the embed saves your own frame, share buttons, and branding. However, for many blogs, this option is worth looking at in.17. PicJumboPicJumbo - Free and premium imagesPicJumbo offers a variety of free images for any kind of use- free without registration required. You can also get new free images by subscribing to their newsletter. (If you have a budget to spare, don't check out your premium photo collection such as this, which looks amazing to me! it even has vertical images for Story content.) 18. CrelloCrello - a free image creation tool used in Canva. Crello is a free graphic design tool from Depositphotos that has many free images to use.19. DepositphotosDepositphotos - images, vectors and videoDepositphoto offers a sample of free images, vectors, editorial content and videos that is updated every week. 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Facebook posts, Instagram posts, tweets, and moreIt's also worth noting that you can embed Facebook posts, Instagram posts, tweets, YouTube YouTube videos Even the Slideshare deck for your blog. Pinterest boards are a little harder to embed, but this can be done by using your builder widget and copying and inserting code into your blog. (For WordPress users, I noticed that I should publish a blog post while in Text Editor mode after inserting code for this to work.) Often, readers can interact with embedded publications more deeply than static content by following users, liking or commenting on posts. Consider replacing screenshots with embedded posts so readers can interact with your examples. Schedule images with Buffer!Thanks so much to read all the way to the end of the blog. As a thank you, I wanted to share the excellent feature we built at Buffer to help you share your images as quickly as possible. Whenever you share your blogs or marketing websites with Buffer (either through a dashboard or browser extension), we automatically select images from these websites and offer them to you for social media posts. You just have to click on your favorite image to add it to your social media post. (Note: When sharing images with other people's websites, it is always advisable to check with the website owner or image first.) What are the free image sites I've missed? Which tools do you like most to search for or create images? I would like to keep the list growing in the comments! If you're looking for background music for your videos, you might like our collection here. In here.

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