

To Pin or not to Pin? That is the question.

I admit it, I love [Pinterest](#). Part of my daily ritual for the last few months has been to browse my favorite photography sites looking for inspiration. Then a post in one of the photographers groups I belong to made me stop and think.



The photographer in question stated that:

“I cannot support a social media site that does not respect photographers rights.”

Quite frankly I was taken aback. My thoughts went;

*Surely she’s misread their **Terms of Service**. I’m not stealing your photographs, I’m simply looking at and sharing, in a controlled environment which ones I like.*

I reasoned, Pinterest couldn’t work if they were violating your rights.

I thought nothing more of it until this week, when on another forum, the subject came up again. This time there was an interesting long and detailed blog attached to the post. You can read the blog post here: <http://tinyurl.com/PinterestBoards>.

This blog also suggests that *Pinterest Etiquette* says that you don’t pin your own work. [Click here to read the Pinterest Etiquette Guidelines](#). I read this carefully but can see nothing that says or even suggests you can’t pin your own work. Infact, Pinterest has a page devoted on how to set up your Brand! You can find [Brand Best Practices](#) here.



Then I did something I should have done in the first place, I went and read the [Terms of Service](#) for myself. (Yes I know we all should read them fully at the time we sign up but how many people actually do?)

Terms of Service

The [Terms of Service](#) have actually changed since I originally signed up by the important parts can be found in part 1. ii

“To third parties. Pinterest values and respects the rights of third party creators and content owners, and expects you to do the same. You therefore agree that any User Content that you post to the Service does not and will not violate any law or infringe the rights of any third party, including without limitation any Intellectual Property Rights (defined below), publicity rights or rights of privacy. We reserve the right, but are not obligated, to remove User Content from the Service for any reason, including User Content that we believe violates these Terms or the Pinterest Acceptable Use Policy. It is important that you understand that you are in the best position to know if the materials you post are legally allowed. We therefore ask that you please

be careful when deciding whether to make User Content available on our Service, including whether you can pin or re-pin User Content on your boards.”

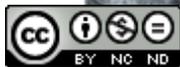
OK, so the onus is on me as a Pinner. This is good news!

I repopulated my boards using only my own and my daughters works then adding friends work, and finally repining those images with a [Creative Commons](#) license, from [Yahoo](#) and [Flickr](#). (The amazing photographer [Trey Ratcliff](#) of [Stuck in Customs](#) has [his own boards](#) (with a [creative commons license](#)) on Pinterest so I have been quite happily repining his work.

Creative Commons

Creative Commons allows others to use your work with some restrictions:

Here is an example of a Creative Commons image. You may use it for any non-commercial use as long as you attribute me as the photographer and link back to this website.



Dino Skull by [Lyn Tuckwell](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](#).

Based on a work at www.cameraphotoart.com.

Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at <http://www.cameraphotoart.com>.

There are different levels of Creative Commons is a different form of copyright stating what you can and can't do with an image, a piece of music or other creative work.

So what you say is the flip side of the coin? What about all those photographers who didn't want their images pinned. Well they have two choices first of all they can take one of two small pieces of code available from the Pinterest website telling people that they do not want their images pinned. [You can find the code here](#). Secondly they can report the misuse of their images to Pinterest. If your image has been used without your permission [click here for the procedure](#).

I see both sides of the argument but of all the sites out there, I still think that Pinterest is the most innocuous and the best for positive feedback. Pinner, for the most part, are looking for inspiration and photos that make them feel good. If my photo or artwork fits that slot I've only won as long as all the Pinner is doing is sharing.

The problem of course comes when someone abuses the system and, as we all know, people will abuse the system. If someone wants to steal your images they will; Flickr proved that.

I believe the big picture (*excuse the pun*) being missed here is the huge opportunity for photographers to show their work to people who would otherwise not only not have bought from them anyway but would not have known of the photographers existence.

There is a reason why Pinterest has taken off. In North America one of the fastest growing hobbies is scrap-booking. (Right behind Genealogy and Ornithology /Birdwatching). Pinterest is simply a form of scrapbooking on line. What's your opinion? Leave your comments below.

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- And hey it is OK to Pin this ☺