

BLUESCAPE



Time and Time Again **2022 Study Finds Image Search Is Still a Pain**

Why is finding the right stock image so difficult?

To find out, Bluescape commissioned an independent research study to understand creative professionals' frustrations and challenges with stock image search. This study, conducted by Cascade Insights, included 201 quantitative surveys with creative professionals. Additionally, the survey provided respondents opportunities to identify areas for improvement around image search.

While more stock images are being uploaded now than ever, finding the right one isn't any easier. In fact, searching for the right image is one of the most tedious experiences a creative can have: 70% of image search users are frustrated with how long it takes to find an image.

“Image search is one of the most stressful, time-consuming things. It’s a hunt for a diamond in the rough.”

— Director, Marketing & Advertising

This is why you'll see the same old stock photos over and over, like the dartboard or the "brainstorm on a whiteboard." Creatives simply give up on finding the right stock image because it's too difficult, it takes too long — or both.

An unfortunate consequence of the stock photo predicament is that content suffers: 95% of stock image search users have felt that their content is of lower quality due to the difficulty of finding images.

Compromising on the right imagery is out of step with how stock image search users feel about visual content. According to a Venngage study, 49% of marketers rate visual marketing as very important to their marketing strategy, and 82.2% of marketers publish content containing visuals at least twice a week.

Clearly, stock image search users are committed to producing engaging visual content, even if the tools at their disposal hamper them. But what if there's a better way?

An Abundance of Images, But Not in One Place

There has been an explosion of both services and content in the stock image market. Since Getty Images first opened its doors in 2005, more than 100 stock image agencies have followed in its footsteps. And this growth is expected to continue: the stock image market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 6.95% by 2027.

"I wish I didn't have to run several searches at different places for the same thing and always feeling like I might be missing something perfect somewhere."

— VP, Marketing & Advertising

This growth in stock image services is reflected in ballooning stock image libraries. Getty Images has close to a half million contributors, and Unsplash alone adds over 100,000 new photos every month. There are an estimated 350 million stock images in circulation today.

By these metrics, creatives should be spoiled for choice. But this abundance of photos has created a problem: the endless row of browser tabs filled with stock images from different libraries and searches. Our survey revealed that image search users typically use three different sites as part of their image search.

Because it is impossible to search multiple stock image libraries in one place, an image search often requires performing multiple searches in different image libraries.

65% of image search users have wasted time after accidentally closing an image search window or tab.

86% of image search users wish they could search multiple image sites with one search.

As a result, it becomes extremely difficult to keep track of searches, and closing the wrong tab or window can result in a lost search — and subsequently requiring a new one.

All told, the problem is less that the right photo doesn't exist, but rather that finding it is exceptionally difficult.

Finding the Right Image Takes A Really, Really Long Time

“It takes quite a while to find the right imagery. Think hours, rather than minutes. We have extremely high standards to find stock imagery that doesn't look like stock.”

— VP, Marketing & Advertising

For creatives, the pain and wasted time associated with image search often feels like it's just part of a job — a sunk cost.

Worse still, this affects everyone searching for a stock photo, across all industries. No one is immune from photo search purgatory.

In addition to the difficulty of searching across multiple stock image libraries, finding a high-quality stock image often requires multiple searches. 99.5% of image search users need to search for images again to look for better options, with 51% doing so often or very often.

79% of image search users have delayed a deliverable due to difficulty finding the right image.

Not only is searching for quality imagery difficult, nearly every image is lost before it's found again. 96% of image search users have needed to search again for an image they previously found, with 29% often or very often needing to do so.

And, once the right image has been found, 80% of image search users struggle to find the correct file type for the image they've found.

Overall, image search is a painful, inefficient, time-consuming process. And the time lost to image searching is time taken away from more productive creative and marketing tasks.

Existing Image Storage and Collaboration Tools are Stuck in the Past

“Right now, I search, save, and drop into Dropbox for my team. A more efficient solution might be a one-stop place to find, save, and share instantly with my design team.”

— Director, Media

While other knowledge workers have gained better and more efficient collaboration tools, when it comes to saving and selecting images, creatives have not felt the same love. There has been very little development in collaborative image search.

Tools such as Microsoft Word and Google Docs allow writers to write and edit text collaboratively in real time. Work management platforms such as Asana help teams and project managers stay on top of complex projects and processes.

70% of creatives use email to share images with team members — but 35% dislike doing so, the most disliked solution for sharing images.

However, when it comes to curation, discussion, and approval, there's no easy way for creative teams to review candidate stock images. Creatives still have to settle for tools they've used since the 2000s: email and file sharing.

Our survey respondents used an average of 2.5 different methods to share images with team members. 85% of respondents use a shared drive such as Google Drive or Dropbox to share images.

But these image storage and sharing methods require complex multi-step processes: copying and pasting or downloading an image, uploading it to a relevant folder, and sharing links just so others can download the same image. It's a clunky user experience.

While digital asset management (DAM) tools solve some of these problems, they are often expensive and creatives still have to go through the image search/download/share/approve/upload process.

When asked about how much creatives enjoyed each step of the image search process, "locating saved images" was the most disliked step, with 37% of respondents disliking it. Unless image organization is very rigidly enforced (which is unlikely), stored images are simply destined to get lost, and already beleaguered creatives have no single repository of saved images to turn to.

In Its Current Form, Image Search is a Roadblock

Image search doesn't exist in a vacuum: finding the right image is often just one step in a larger creative workflow. And while image search seems like a trivial task, the time wasted on image search and approval holds up all the other work that needs to get done.

To make things worse, the status quo of image search works against creative ease and productivity. While creative work is best facilitated by a sense of flow, seamless collaboration, and control over the task at hand, image search introduces distraction, uncertainty, and friction. The current image search experience impedes — rather than enables — creative work, and creatives suffer for it.

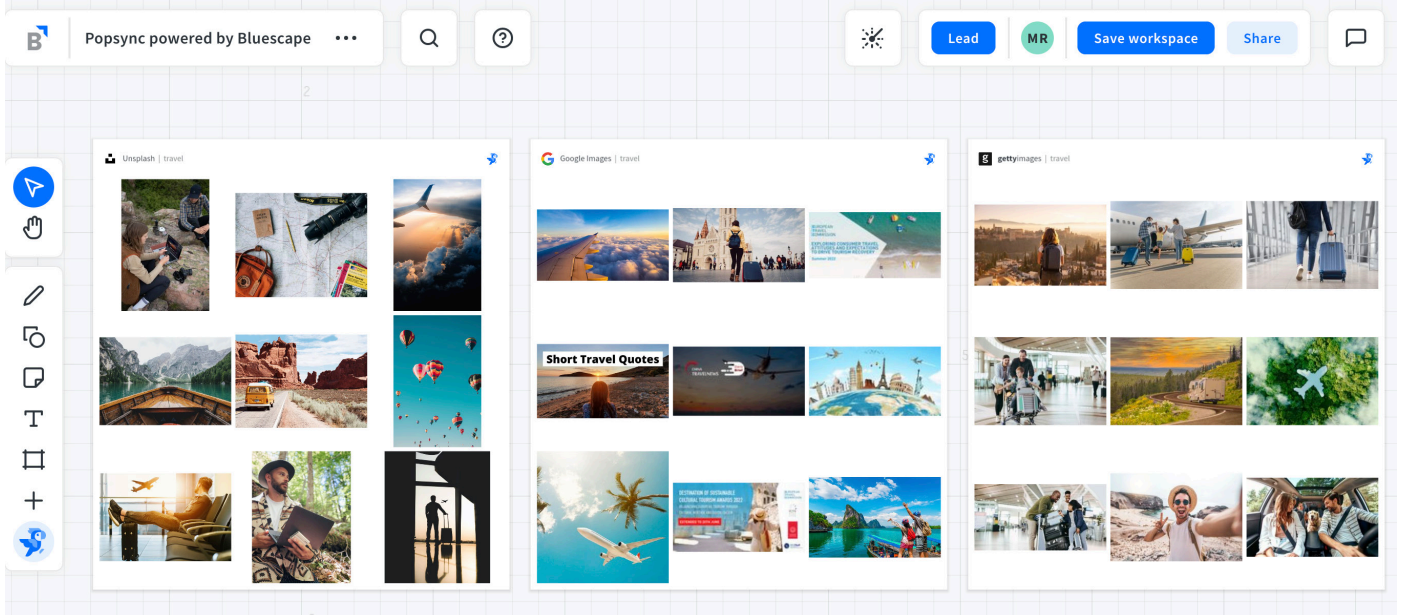
"I love the idea of a good DAM system, but they're usually absurdly expensive and I can't get the company to get licenses. So we use DropBox. If any one site had enough images to ensure I'll find what I want, and it lets me create a collection to share VERY easily, I'd do it. So far, nothing is perfect."

— Director, Marketing & Advertising

75% of image search users have delayed a deliverable due to getting an image approved.

Popsync: Image Search 2.0

In light of the challenges creatives face when searching for stock images, Bluescape has launched Popsync, a new collaborative image search feature and online tool. Popsync is designed to dramatically simplify stock image search, as well as accelerate collaboration with content.



One Search, Multiple Image Libraries

Popsync searches multiple stock image libraries simultaneously, with one search. Each library's images appear side-by-side in a collaborative Bluescape workspace, enabling a user to rapidly search and compare libraries in a single browser window.

This solves a major pain point faced by creatives: not being able to search multiple libraries with one search. With Popsync, creatives can save time and avoid the frustration of digging through endless browser tabs by seeing all their stock image search results in one glance.

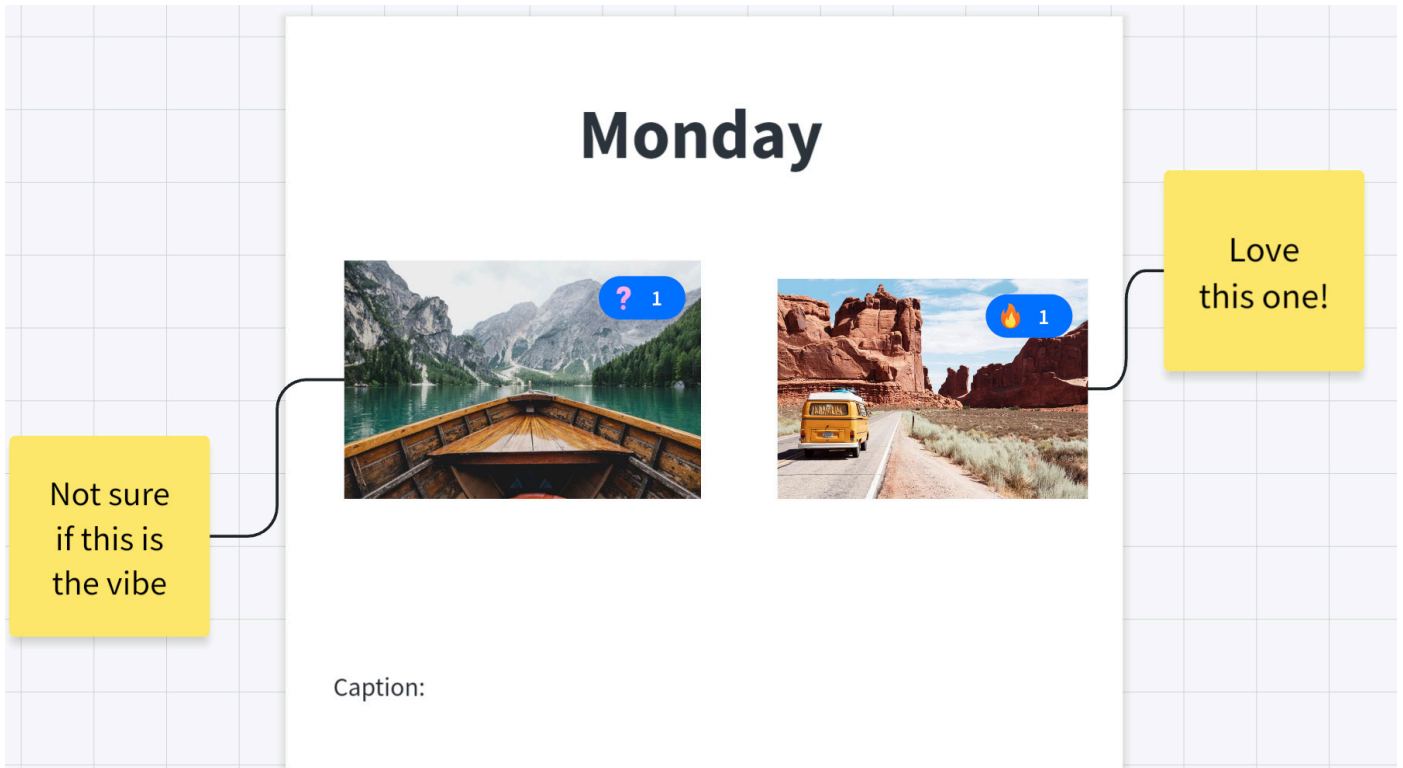
Currently, Popsync searches the following stock photo libraries:

- Getty Images
- Google Images
- Unsplash
- Pexels
- Pixabay
- VistaCreate

Additionally, if you have a Getty Images account, you can securely sign in to your account in Popsync. You can then search and access images available to you through your subscription — and compare them immediately with search results from other libraries.

Bluescape plans to add more stock libraries in the future, as well as the ability to search cloud storage providers and enterprise DAM systems. [Learn more here](#)

Monday



Not sure if this is the vibe

Love this one!

Caption:

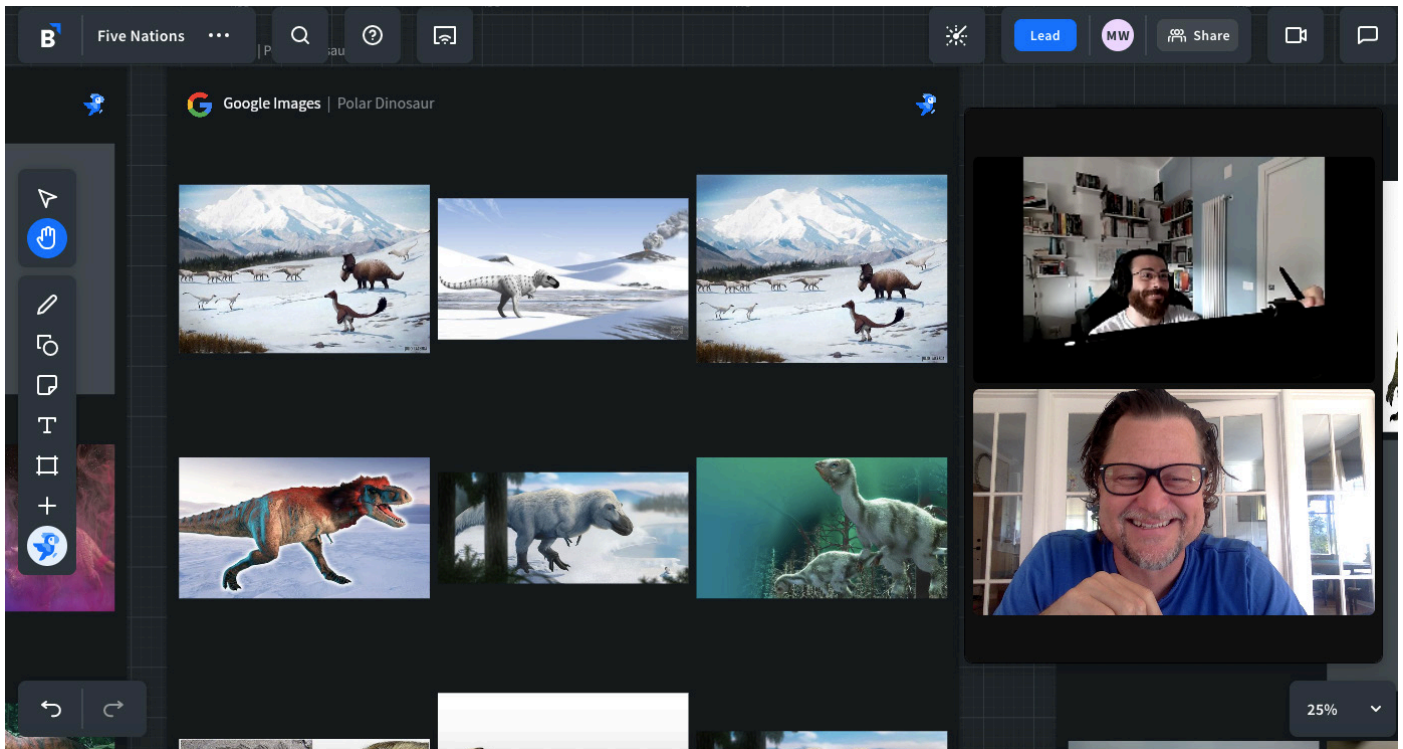
Share Curated Searches, Not Files

Once a stock image search has been performed, you can curate images within the Bluescape workspace for review and final selections with your team. This could take the form of a mood board, storyboard, a content calendar, or even a simple whiteboard. Furthermore, different canvas size options allow you to simulate common screen or print media sizes.

Pin appealing images, mark them up with a pen, comment on them with notecards, or react to them with emojis. Bluescape's workspace provides the tools you need to fluidly share thoughts and ideas with your team without having to go to another tool like email, your DAM, or Slack.

Share your workspace with your team and collaborate in real-time, even via video conferencing. Because all your curated images and ideas are laid out in one workspace, conversation can stay focused on picking the right image, without wasting time searching for files or through emails.

Considering the 70% of creatives who use email to share images — and the one-third of image search users who wish they could more easily share images with their team — Popsync's workflow significantly eases image sharing and collaboration for many creatives.



Put Your Images to Use

When you're ready, download your selected images directly from your Bluescape workspace, or share your workspace with a client.

Save Time and Produce Better Content With Popsync

The image search status quo requires too many compromises from creatives. As a result, the world's content is less engaging, less interesting, and not as powerful as it should be. It's critical for creatives to adopt new tools that facilitate good work and not get in the way.

By placing a universal image search engine and collaborative workspace together in one tool, Popsync by Bluescape helps creatives save time by finding high quality images quickly and conveniently. And by saving time, creatives get to focus on what they do best: being creative.

Try [Popsync by Bluescape](#) now, then check out the [DAM and cloud storage integrations](#) that will make your search—and your life—easier.