

# The Marketing Potential of Graphic Design Products in Disruptive Era

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**Abstract** The presence of various portal marketplaces since the last few years has driven the massive growth of creative industries in Indonesia. Marketplaces portal has opened up millions of jobs for many people, including the profession as a freelance artists and designers. In the field of graphic design, a marketplace is devoted in providing various supporting needs for an audio visual display that called as a microstock. This article focuses on the development of the microstock business, its potential and challenges in the disruptive era that occurred in Indonesia. Using a case study research design, this article conducts a qualitative method. The results of the study shows that the development of the microstock business in Indonesia is influenced by many factors, including facilities, networks and changes in the pattern of the creation of graphic design works that aimed at commercial interests.

**Keywords** graphic design, creative industry, marketplace, microstock

## 1. Introduction

The fast growing of internet technology development has become an inseparable part and fills every aspect of the human life. Based on the Survey of the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) in 2017, it is known that the growth of internet users in Indonesia reached 143.26 million, equivalent to 54.7% of the total population in Indonesia. Internet has transformed the society into digital natives - a generation responsive to technology in using virtual space to express themselves, forming communities, networking, participate in various activities, and applying jobs.

Internet technology has confronted every individual in a situation where changes in various aspects of life, both economic, social, political and cultural occurs very rapidly. Compaction of the production time and consumption distance causes trends and tastes of the people to change in a short time, and this also encourages the emergence of ephemerality (Piliang, 2017). Every individual who is connected by the internet and establishes social interaction through virtual spaces, instantly requires the ability to acquire interesting information. The people needs for various multimedia elements (text, sound, images, animation, audio and video) that are used as supporting elements in expressing information, are not only needed by businessmen, government or academics, but also ordinary people who needs an attractive appearance to support the

display of their social media. The use of computers to present and combine multimedia elements with tools and connections, allows each internet user to navigate, interact, work and communicate. One thing that has developed most rapidly along with the increase in internet usage is everything that is based on visual graphics. *Millennials* access all the information needed in their life only through screens in their hands. Therefore, the stimulus produced through visual graphics become an effective tool to support the success of information delivery.

Not all individuals who conduct internet-based interactions are able to meet visual graphics needs. Therefore, most internet users need a stock of visual graphics that are used as a supporting elements in delivering various information. For people who do not have the capability to create visual graphic elements, they use a stock of visual graphics that can be downloaded through various marketplaces.

The presence of a variety of portal marketplaces since the last few years has contributed to the growth of the creative industry in Indonesia. The marketplace portal has opened millions of jobs for many people, including the profession as freelance artists and designers. The platform marketplace is able to provide new field for start-ups entrepreneurs in the creative industry to connect them with their consumers, and reach potential consumers with a wider spectrum not only domestically, but also overseas. In the field of graphic design, a marketplace devoted to provide various supporting

needs for an audio-visual display is commonly referred to as microstock. .

## 2. Microstock Business

In this information and technology era, various types of businesses needed high-quality images in the form of photography, vectors and bitmaps to support their marketing and promotional activities. But not all business people have the capacity in terms of capital or ability to be able to seek high-quality images that are needed, because of the cost in using professional photographers or designers is not cheap.

The microstock business aims for people to become agents to connect a photographer to end users through online access through cheap, high-quality royalty free images. Microstock can be considered to be a forum for creative industries to sell their works, but unlike online stores microstock uses a royalty system, which allows creators to earn income based on the total amount of their work that has been downloaded by other microstock users.

Microstock photography is a relatively new phenomenon. Internet and technological progress are two components that encourage the development of microstock, resulting in the increased availability of equipment on the other hand, of popular mobile devices. It provides an alternative for photography needs which is known since late 19th century (Uchanska, 2015).

The earliest and most popular microstock business is in photography. In the field of photography, many professional photographers and beginners tries to join the microstock business because of the consideration to everyone that owns a camera deserves the opportunity to upload his work. Regarding whether the uploaded image will make money becomes another thing that can be learned while exploring the microstock business. The number of people who upload photos and join in doing microstock business is indeed increasing and causing competition to be tighter. For example on the Shutterstock site, which is one of the top-level Microstock sites, it offers archives of 100 million images with 800,000 new images uploaded and added every week. Although the microstock business is getting tougher, it does not dampen the enthusiasm of the people to join and try their luck in the business.

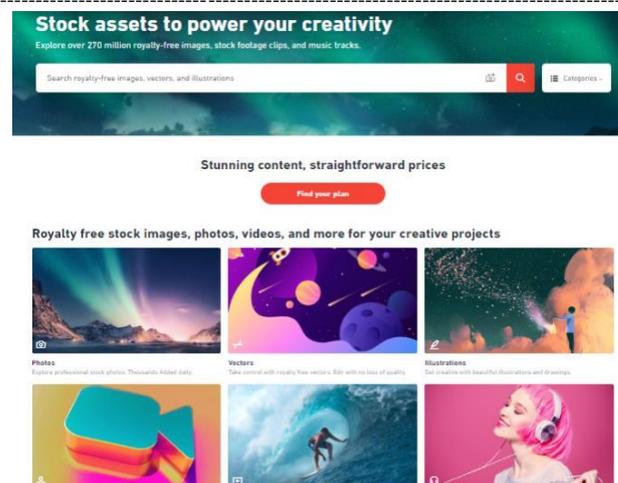


Image 1. Example of microstock portal Shutterstock

Stock photography is a term used for images that are not photographed for a specific client's use. Instead, the images produced for individuals to buy later from agencies that collect photos from hundreds of other photographers. Traditionally, stock photography agencies will provide their customers with a catalog of photos to choose from—either online or in print. And customers would flip through the pages looking for the photos that best match their needs. And the customers will pay the photographs with a diverse price range depending on the choices they have made (Great Escape Publishing, 2014).

## 3. Problem Statement

The microstock business is a type of business that is still relatively new but would definitely experiencing very promising developments. As a new business model in the information and technology era, it is necessary to conduct a study to see how the development, potential and challenges of the microstock business in Indonesia. It is expected that the findings in this article can become a discourse that educates the people inside the business and marketers of creative industrial products about the methods and marketing strategies of digital-based design art products.

## 4. Method

Using virtual ethnographic approach, this study is a qualitative study. Virtual ethnography is an online research method that adapts ethnographic methods to study communities and cultures created through computer-mediated social interactions (Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce, & Taylor: 2012). The choice of virtual ethnography as a research approach is based on the consideration that the technique used to collect data is done by utilizing internet-based communication. The technique used is in-depth interviews involving contributors of microstock businesses from Indonesia. In addition, searches of work documents that have been uploaded on several portals for microstock marketplaces are also conducted.

## 5. Development of Microstock Business in Indonesia: Opportunities and Challenges

Based on the results of interviews and document tracking, the study found that ten microstock contributors who were the speakers in this study, most of them were self-taught designers, illustrators and photographers. Only three out of ten contributors have a formal educational backgrounds in the fields of art and design. Generally, they have been in the microstock business for the past five years. The research results show that the microstock business has a very flexible working time. Thus it is very possible for them to do other work, besides running jobs as microstock contributors.

Through this study, it is known that there is one interesting finding in which the profession in the field of art and design is one of the profession choices that many *millennials* targeted. In Indonesia, the implementation of higher education in the branch of science of art and design grew along with the increasing demands of the industry, both of which had reciprocal relations. Art and design always support and sustain the industry and various other sectors such as science and technology (Nugrahani, 2014).

In the meantime, the trend of formal education in the field of art and design will also change along with the development of the creative industry. Many art and design developments were initiated along with their increasing awareness of the importance of art and design as selling points and the main weapon for achieving economic benefits. This is in line with the findings of the microstock business in Indonesia, where funding for development in the field of science and technology is given to facilitate marketing activities. Art and design are present as tools to sustain business and industry sustainability.

The existence of internet technology has opened up an access to achieve the goal of producing artwork and design in virtual spaces. The learning process of various kinds of knowledge and skills is closely related to the demands of the industry and the world of work. The ability to absorb a number of information combined with intuitive understanding of things that are relevant in each situation, making the millennial generation very productive in producing digital-based multimedia works. It seems that this is also in accordance with preliminary research conducted to see how the patterns of graphic design learning have experienced many shifts in the disruptive era (Nugrahani, Triyanto, & Wibawanto, 2019). *Millennials* realize that the creative industry in the information technology era, requires works of art and designs that are always renewable and versatile. They realize that being a graduate in the field of design art from formal education institutions alone is not enough to guarantee them to get a bright future. This is one of the factors that led to the birth of self-taught graphic designers who participated in the microstock business.

Based on the results of interviews with microstock contributors who were the speakers, it was found that being involved in the microstock business made them adaptive learners and always up to date on the trends needed by the market. These findings are in line with Piliang stated that *millennials* are fast, independent and adaptive learners (Piliang, 2018). They acknowledge that a high vision and aspect of innovation is needed in giving an aesthetic touch to each of his works, and this cannot be done instantly. Young artists and designers are required to have the knowledge and critical sensitivity to create brilliant creative ideas. Pepler in his research revealed brilliant ideas to be something that creative creators in the digital age must always strive for (Pepler, 2010; Nugrahani, 2014). According to them, this is a more effective process to become professional and creative artists and designers, rather than spending a lot of money to attend formal education in higher education. Therefore, in the future it is necessary to activate the institutions of art and design education to prepare graduates with competencies that are ready to compete and adaptive. This is necessary because it is believed that the microstock business will become a trend which is increasingly becoming work taken by designers, illustrators and photographers. symbols.

## 6. Conclusion

The development of microstock business in Indonesia is influenced by many factors, including facilities, networks and changes in the pattern of creating graphic design works aimed at commercial interests. Open instructional media has spawned self-taught designers who take on a massive role in the development of the microstock business in Indonesia. Targeting the needs of businesses to get quality but affordable image sources that can be used as supporting assets for visual-based promotional media, microstock businesses aim at opportunities to become agents to connect end users through online access to inexpensive yet high-quality images.

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