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PhotoPlus Expo: On 'The Wonderful World of Websites & More'

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Back in October, four high-profile creative buyers gave a fascinating panel discussion on photographers' websites (moderated by yours truly!) to kick off the 2012 PhotoPlus Expo.

Here's a recap of what we talked about and the four top tips to come out of this discussion:

The panelists:

- **Wieden+Kennedy Art Buyer/Producer** Michelle Chant
- **Bloomberg Markets Magazine Photo Editor** Manuela Oprea
- **Bank of America Art Producer** Elise Daher
- **JUICE Pharma Worldwide Production Director/Senior VP** Michael Kaminski

Tip 1: It's Okay to Have Multiple Specialties and/or Websites!



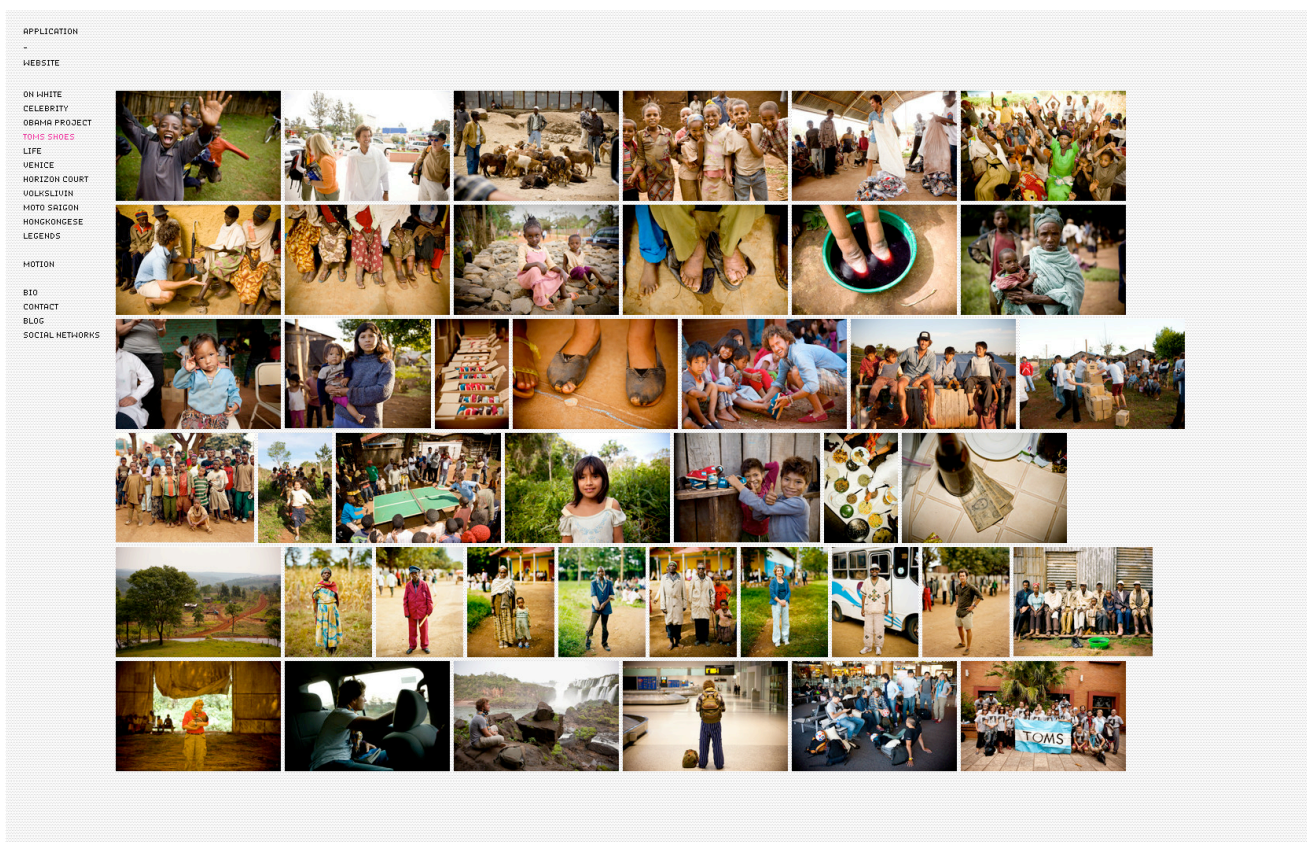
© [Keith Barraclough](#)

Keith Barraclough's website home page with multiple portfolios/specialties clearly labeled

Some photographers may have multiple specialties, and that's okay – providing you define them clearly. As Michael reminded us, lifestyle/tabletop photographers, for example, should have separate sections (or linked sites) to present each of their specialties.

If you have multiple specialties, be sure to present them clearly and in separate portfolios, or consider the possibility of multiple websites. Just the other day I was working with a client and this very topic came up. For him, it's an obvious choice because he has three different markets he wants to promote to, and they don't necessarily all work together.

Tip 2: They Like and Want Thumbnails!



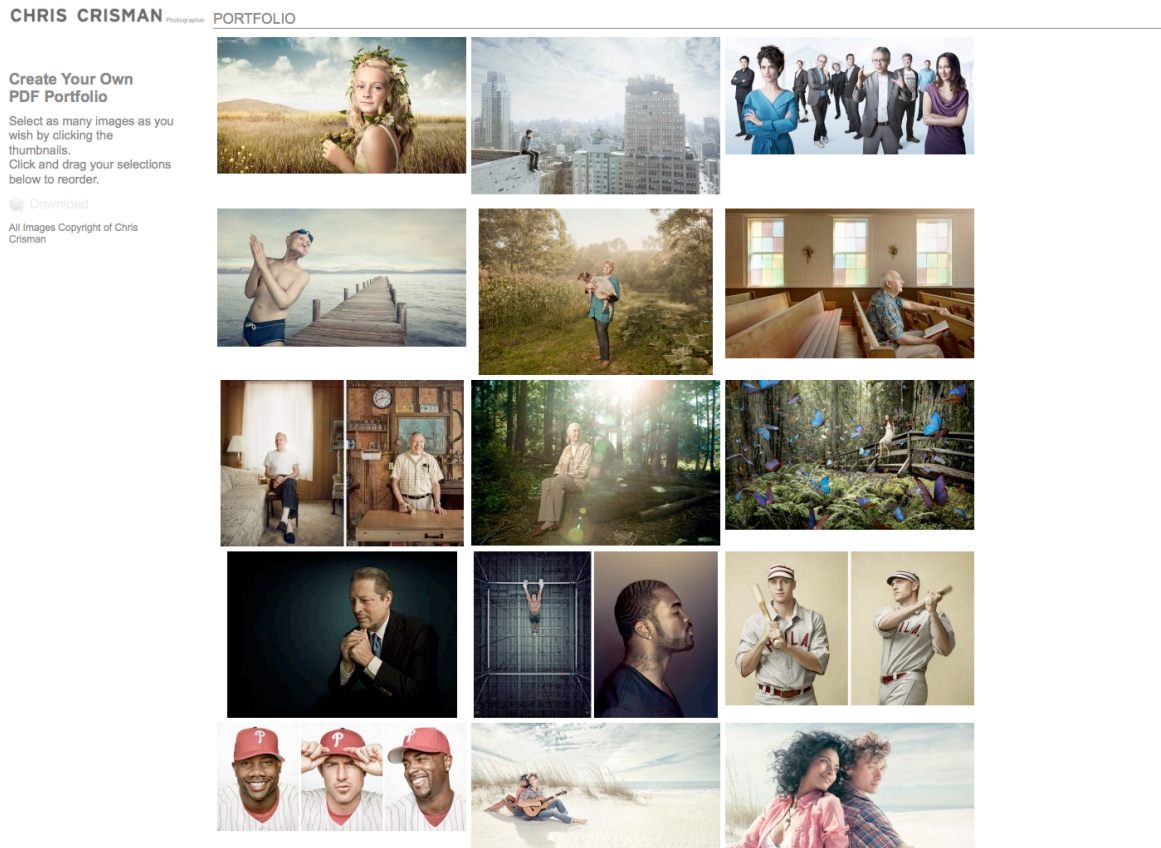
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All four panelists agreed that they like, in fact want to see, thumbnails. As Elise commented, it is a helpful reference for them, especially when they don't have much time.

Michelle went even further by saying she really likes the websites that show the thumbnails as a grid in the center of the screen, and that are large enough that it's almost like looking at a mini-portfolio and she can pick out specific images she'd like to enlarge.

Tip 3: They Need to Be Able to Create Custom PDFs!

In this instance, the panelists don't just want – it's more a case of need when it comes to creating custom PDFs from your website (like Chris Crisman's below). Remember, we always have to consider the other person and not just ourselves, so they need to be able to point their art directors (or clients) to a few specific images they feel illustrate what they're looking for.



© [Chris Crisman](#)

According to Michael, they need to be able to create a PDF file of selected images (from possibly multiple portfolios) on the fly. And as Michelle added, it simply takes too long to take screen grabs of what they like, so they need something quick and easy. She also told the audience to not be scared about art directors using their images – it's a good thing if they use your image for their comp!

Tip 4: Label Your Image Files and URLs!

Continuing on, Manuela reminded us of the importance of naming/labeling your image files. "Image-01," "Image-02" and so on simply isn't going to cut it. The image URL should include metadata that identifies it more adequately, so if potential clients like Manuela want to refer to a specific image when speaking with their bosses, they can do so.



© [Chris Crisman](#)

*Image example of Chris Crisman's "downloadable" low-res jpg with clear image URL & caption:
"crisman_flower_girl_portrait_010_final"*

Michael further reiterated how all images should be named/meta-tagged for the best results on search engines, as well as when art buyers want to share single images with art directors.

Panel's Sincerity Strikes a Chord

I asked photographer Keith Barraclough, who attended the panel discussion, for some feedback and thoughts. Although Keith has heard many panels over the years, what he really appreciated was the sincerity of this particular group. They didn't just give answers, he said, but they built off what each one was saying, instead of all saying the same thing.

They gave honest but constructive advice when we reviewed a few of the audience members' websites, but more importantly, they not only gave practical advice, they explained why they need things a certain way. For Keith, what they said resonated simply because they made sense.