A Snapshot of Online Image Theft (Infographic)

Thanks to social media and blogs, image theft is a major issue.

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All too often, people steal other people's photos and images without even knowing. Of course, many use other people's images knowing that it's unethical and wrong, but in many cases, it's also downright illegal. Whether someone's aware of it or not, as a photographer, professional or hobbyist, it's up to you to go the extra mile to protect your images.

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According to a 2016 survey, 64 percent of professional photographers said they'd had their works stolen more than 200 times, reports Berify. Forty-four percent of hobbyists also said they'd experienced theft. And for every professional photograph stolen and used illegally, photographers and photo agencies lose around $446. So who's to blame for the lost money and stolen images? Thanks to platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest and Tumblr, bloggers and social media users do the most photo-stealing, followed by commercial businesses and individual professionals.

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Unfortunately, image theft is a widespread problem. Compared to any other country, China has the highest number of cases of

digital image copyright infringement, with France coming in second and the U.S. in third. Within the U.S., California specifically has the highest number of these cases – the state makes up one-third of the country's infringement cases.

To avoid contributing to the problem, next time you want to use someone's image, make sure you're allowed to. While all original work is protected by copyright law, whether it's registered or not, every image might have its own level of permission, so it's important you do your research first.

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To learn more about online image theft today, check out Berify's infographic below.

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