

Fotofast launches new state-of-the-art website

June 5, 2014

To mark the launch of his all-new Fotofast website last week, Australian photo retailing pioneer Phil Gresham shares insights with Photo Counter readers gained on his 20-year online journey...

The domain name, fotofast.com.au was registered in 1994, with the first website going live in March '97. At the time it seemed to be the thing to do, but with so few existing and potential customers on-line, the value was debatable. However it did generate discussion and set us up for the coming tsunami – 'that digital thing'.

The screenshot shows the Fotofast website homepage. At the top left is the Fotofast logo with the tagline 'more than just photos'. Below it, it says 'Printing Brisbane's Memories since 1990'. A large red banner in the center reads 'STOCKTAKE SALE 25%-40% OFF JUNE 2014' with a 'click here for details' link. To the right of the banner, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest, and a 'GET NEWSLETTER' button. Below the banner, there are six categories of products: Photo Gifts (a mug), HD Metal (a photo collage), Passport Photos (a passport photo strip), Prints (a stack of photos), Canvas (a photo on canvas), and Lab Services (a roll of film). At the bottom, there is a 'CONTACT US' section with the address: 101 Adelaide Street, Brisbane City QLD 4000 Australia. It also lists phone numbers (07 3229 5083 and 07 3211 3550), an email address (sales@fotofast.com.au), and an information email (info@fotofast.com.au). The 'OPENING HOURS' section lists: Mon: 8:00-11:00, Tue: 8:00-11:00, Wed: 8:00-11:00, Thu: 8:00-11:00, Fri: 8:00-11:00, Sat: 8:00-11:00, Sun: 8:00-11:00. It also notes 'Closed on all Public Holidays'. The footer includes 'copyright 2014© Fotofast' and 'POWERED BY dakis'.

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The latest version of Fotofast website is characterised by simplicity – an uncluttered home page, with ease of navigation, lots of relevant content and importantly, ease of ordering. (See the end of this feature for a chronology of the Fotofast.com.au homepage.)

A long and winding road

In '97 Fotofast was at the 'bleeding edge', with the first Pakon scanner system, for scanning 35mm film and later APS film. There were options to save to 1.4mb floppy disk or even send it to the web. But try opening a 1.4mb floppy disk today – we all know what happened to that system. The website where the uploaded images were hosted in the US went under in 2001, along with the burst of the Dot Com Bubble, and all images were lost.

In 2002-03 an OnPix system was installed (at great expense), as a solution for hosting event photographer's work and printing online orders. Again the return on investment was debatable. Dr Glenn Omura in 2004 warned us about the CEP (camera enabled phone) that was coming and suggested that we should get 'onboard'. Fotofast registered 'fonefoto.com' but due to the lack of take up and poor image quality, it didn't progress. Once again we were too early.

In February 2007, Fotofast 'rebadged' Chris Wilkinson's (firstretailgroup.com) Photo Plus Wellington NZ website. Chris was a pioneer in the field of the independent photo retailer's presence on the web. We were starting to spend less for being online, but that was offset by the amount of time spent working on content and graphics. In June of the same year Fotofast started producing photo gifting in store, after dabbling with an outsourced kiosk-driven solution. After realising that our customers wanted their product – now! (not in 5-10 days time) the search began for a cost-effective online solution.

The 'Long Tail' era

What we required was a solution where we could have our own unique range of templates for a large range of products. We also wanted to be in complete control, where we could think of a product or template in the morning and be online by lunchtime. The 'Long Tail' theory was in vogue (offer a broad range, most of which you might sell only a few – but at a good margin) and seemed the right way to go. In June 2009 we met the Dakis guys at an IPI meeting in Las Vegas and they had all the answers we were looking for, including a complete makeover for our website. In a very short time we had both a great looking website and an online solution for prints and gifting. For us to produce something similar, in-house or elsewhere, would not have been possible for a single-site business in 2009.

Three years ago we added Dakis kiosks; they mirror our online sales and we can assist customers in store with ordering, at the same time training them for online ordering with us.

Dukin' it out with the Big Boxers

Today's photo businesses are increasingly challenged and we need to offer something unique. The 'big box guys' (some having multiple skins) are constantly offering discounts of 40-70 percent and cheap shipping. To compete with this there is a need to offer unique templates, a very fast service and a great user experience. It's a return to the 1-Hour photo model when we could charge more for a fast service personal service. No matter how easy the process, there are still constant phone call requests for help and our new catch phrase on our website is: *'The answer is YES! We can make or modify something for you, just ask, that's our difference.'*

The new site has 30+ extra landing pages and it will be continually updated with relevant content, to greatly increase SEO ('search engine optimisation', or getting on the first page of a Google search) on every product or service offered. Type into Google the words – 'collage canvas' (over 26,000,000 results) where until very recently, Fotofast was on top of the organic search. The Dakis team first made us aware of this when they searched during a presentation in Canada. Currently snapfish.com.au is on top – but can they compete on quality, service, and speed? And do they offer 200+ collage canvas options? We doubt it. Gone is the 'Long Tail' model, replaced with a model that presents less actual products but more templates and options.

We are told that the latest model for today's websites is simplicity. An uncluttered home page, with ease of navigation, lots of relevant content and importantly, ease of ordering. Fotofast's old website had a very busy home page with landing pages varied in layout style...

This all changed early last Saturday morning. Skype brought the Montreal Dakis expert to us in Brisbane, Australia. Many hours of web design had been spent over the previous month, creating drop down menus and links, making for easier navigation. This is evident on PC or Mac but especially so for iPhones and Androids, check it out: fotofast.com.au. (Note – mobile site is still being tweaked. Nonetheless, Phil says, '71 6x4 prints came through this morning.')

Editor's Note. To find out more contact the local Dakis expert IPI's marketing manager, Bruno Pollito, bruno@iphoto.net.au
- Phil Gresham, Fotofast



Phil Gresham, Fotofast.

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Contact us

Level E, The Myer Centre
91 Queen Street
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Telephone: 61 (0)7 3229 5083
Facsimile: 61 (0)7 3211 3550
Email retail: sales@fotofast.com.au
Email display: display@fotofast.com.au
Postal Address:
PO Box 12112 George St
QLD Australia 4003

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Welcome to Fotofast - We're proud to be Brisbane City's most popular and complete imaging store with all your photo needs right here in the one handy location since 1990, locally owned and operated. From digital prints of all sizes and varieties through to cameras, frames, albums and photo creative products we'll help you get the most from your photography creating products to record your treasured memories and moments for generations to come.

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It's not a photo till it's printed! Don't risk losing precious memories by leaving them on your computer. Learn the best ways to preserve your memories [here](#)
Find out why Francis Ford Coppola is a man at a loss.

COLLAGE PRINTS make GREAT GIFTS! [More info](#)

Australia's largest range of photo creative products over 50 gift ideas produced in store - see our new price list for details

Order Photos Online
We're here 24/7 to receive your photos for printing for pickup at store or by mail [here](#)

Put your photo on just about anything - with our fast service, all produced right here at Fotofast
We can put your favorite photo on t-shirts, mugs, stubble coolers, mouse pads, ceramic plates, Christmas ornaments, clocks, jig saw puzzles with over 50 (and growing) fun and unique products [here](#)

Fotofast - your friendly one stop photo place

Display Posters and Graphics
Fotofast Display can handle all your point of sale, trade show or in-store merchandising needs. Our dedicated graphics team know just what it takes to produce images that sell - which is why we're preferred suppliers to many of Australia's most successful retailers. See how we can help you promote your products and services [here](#)

New Products - Change your photos into a work of art
Now we can create a masterpiece from your photos changing them to oil paintings, water colours or a shadowpix - looks like an Apple iPod ad [here](#)

Valentines Day Ideas

Photos on Canvas SALE

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February 2007:

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Welcome to Fotofast - Your photo place. We're proud to be Brisbane's most popular imaging store with all you need here in one handy location. From digital prints through to cameras, frames and albums we'll help get the most from your photography.

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Ideas with your pictures

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Are you ready for the Summer Holiday's yet? Fotofast stocks all you'll need to get perfect pictures. Call in and see our friendly team today.

print your memories

Phone Photos. We can print photos straight from your camera phone! All our kiosks can accept pictures by Bluetooth, Infrared or you can use the phone's digital memory card. It's fast, fun and a great way to share memories with mates!

Online Photos. Make the most of your day with our new online print software! Simply download then select and edit pictures from your home or office. Once you're done the order is sent straight to Fotofast for printing.

business users

Display Prints and Graphics
Fotofast Display can handle all your point of sale, trade show or in-store merchandising needs. Our dedicated graphics team know just what it takes to produce images that sell - which is why we're preferred suppliers to many of Australia's most successful retailers. To see how we can help you email our Display team [here](#)

Total Imaging Solutions.
Need a company that can handle all your imaging needs? Fotofast are able to provide everything from cameras through to large format graphics. If it's anything to do with imaging we're the ones to talk to. Email our [support team](#) with your requirements today.

are you a MEMORY KEEPER?

FRAME IT!

NEW RANGE IN-STORE NOW

OnPix Imagen

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March 2004 - the OnPix version:



The original, March 1997:



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3 THOUGHTS ON "FOTOFAST LAUNCHES NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART WEBSITE"

Stuart Holmes - Independent Photo (IPS) on June 6, 2014 at 1:39 pm said:
 Hey Phil, It's really nice to see the progression from 'Year to Year' on your

Website, and yes its very true to say that 'LESS is MORE' on Websites today, particularly given the rush, hassle, stress environment we all live in. I've often thought that we are a "Time Poor, yet relatively Money Rich First World Society", hence the feeling of always rushing and never spending too much time reading the fine print, as it were – Therefore, I think that your new site of June 2014 looks Fantastic!
Well Done! Stuart

Reply ↓

Chris Wilkinson on [June 6, 2014 at 2:28 pm](#) said:

Well done Phil. As one of Dakis' biggest volume sites globally you're doing us all proud down-under with best practice and a range that challenges even the biggest of the pure-play photofinishers. And yes, no-one wants to know about detail any longer – thankfully. 'Top-line' info is what it's all about and the new site demonstrates that perfectly.

Reply ↓

Paul Boniface on [June 6, 2014 at 2:33 pm](#) said:

Well done Phil & your team An industry leader with fore site I have admired for years Congratulations Paul

Reply ↓

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