

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.



Phil Gresham, Fotofast.

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

# THE FOTOFAST.COM.AU CHRONOLOGY

## May 2014 - too much information:



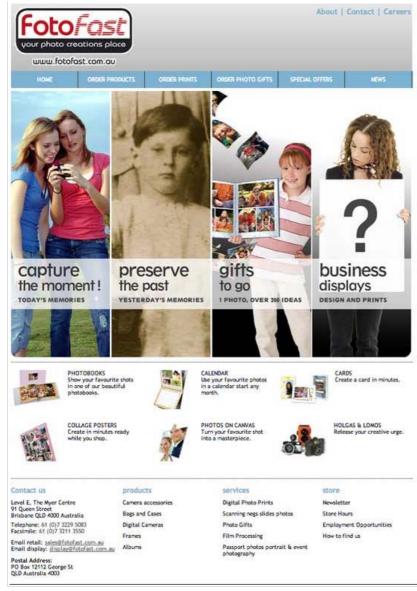
Newsletter

Manfrotto

Introducing the Professional Bags



October 2009:



January 2008:



February 2007:



March 2004 - the OnPix version:



The original, March 1997:





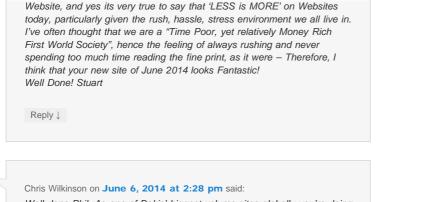
3 THOUGHTS ON "FOTOFAST LAUNCHES NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART WEBSITE"



pm said:

# Stuart Holmes - Independent Photo (IPS) on June 6, 2014 at 1:39

Hey Phil, It's really nice to see the progression from 'Year to Year' on your



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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