Conference Paper

Online Marketplace Characteristics for Freelance Designers

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Abstract

Marketplace is one of the choice places for designers to market the products they create. Online Marketplace is a networking site or application on a gadget that provides online trading facilities from various sources. In the marketplace, application owners or website networks only provide facilities for users to display products sold. In addition, the marketplace owner also provides facilities in the form of bridging online transactions between sellers (designers) and buyers. In utilizing the marketplace, designers must know the needs and desires and design market trends. Because with accurate data related to needs, trend design will greatly help designers to create design products that are suitable for the market. Not only the idealism of designers in making works, but also still relies on dynamically changing demands.

This study intends to determine the design trends that are in accordance with the desires and needs of the graphic design market so that they can help designers determine the making of works sold in the marketplace. This study uses a qualitative research approach to explore all phenomena that occur in the world of online design marketplace. Through this qualitative approach, researchers will understand social reality, see what conditions exist in the sale and purchase of design products and design trends that are popular in society. This qualitative approach is sought to be directed at identifying the trend design and style design that designers need for the basis of making designs that can be sold in the marketplace.

Keywords: Online Marketplace, Design Marketplace, Freelance Designer

1. Introduction

Marketplaces —also known as market halls, market sheds, or market districts— have always played an important role in the history and development of cities around the world (Ali, 2017; Brown, 2002). In its development, the marketplace is not just a building. The development of technology makes the marketplace can now stand in the digital world, popularly called the online marketplace.

For freelance workers, including freelance designers, the online marketplace is an effective and efficient place to market the products they create. Online Marketplace is a networking site or application on gadgets that provides online trading facilities from

various sources. To take advantage of the online marketplace, designers must know the needs and desires and design market trends and competition.

This research specifically focuses on vector-based design products. This is because vector-based products are popular and technically, designers are easy to make (Hermanto, 2019). In addition, vector-based design products are popular because they are easy to use and editable. The results of the design in the form of vector files also do not blur when enlarged in size.

2. Method

This research uses the observation method to find out the phenomenon of the online marketplace, determine the competition and the number of marketplaces that are currently active. Then proceed with the interview method to the freelance designers as the main actors, as well as experts in the field of online marketplace.

Observations have been carried out to find out more about the phenomenon of the level of competition of freelance designers. In addition, also to find out tips and tricks for entering and surviving in the online marketplace. This will greatly help freelance designers in preparing themselves before entering the job.
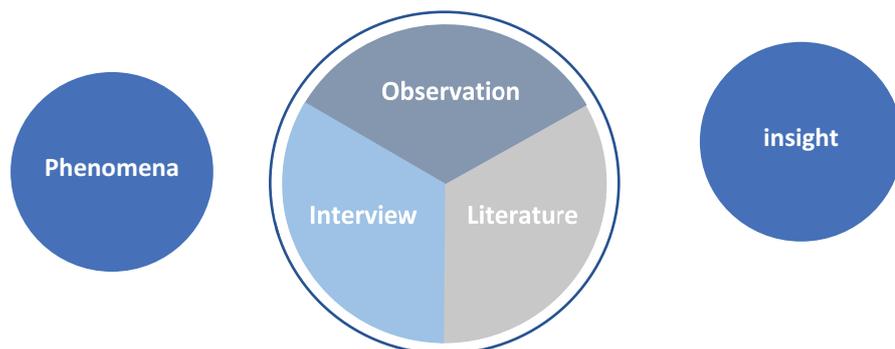
2.1. Types of Online Marketplace

Research results show that there are 3 types of online marketplaces that currently exist in the digital world, including Artwork Graphic Design Marketplace, Graphic Design Competition / Contest Site, and Portfolios Showcase Graphic Design Web.

1. Artwork Graphic Design Marketplace (Microstock)

Microstock appeared around 2003. It's nothing new for designers, content creators, and photographers. Microstock is a place for designers or creative industry players
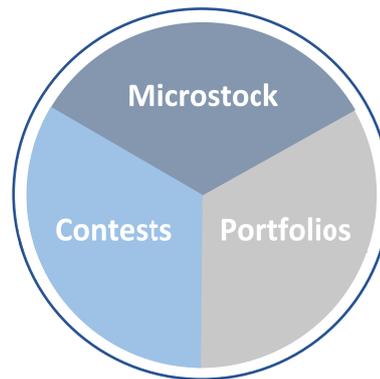
Figure 1: The Kind of Online Graphic Design Marketplace in Digital Era

to sell their works (Ravasi & Lojacono, 2005). Unlike online stores, microstocks use a royalty system. So the content creator or designer will be paid based on the total amount of their work that has been downloaded by other microstock users.

Microstock is an online business to get extra income from microstock companies / agencies. This company is popularly known as Microstock Site Companies or Microstock Agencies. This company provides various design elements such as illustrations, photos, vectors, and videos in the form of free royalties (FR). Or more accurately referred to as image banks.

Artist / Mocrostocker (commonly called a contributor, a person who contributes to sell their pictures at a microstock company) sells their work in the form of photo images, illustrations and footage to the Microstock Agency and gets a commission in the form of US Dollars. Anyone can join this business be it a beginner, professional or just a hobby of photography if it meets the terms and conditions that have been proposed by the agency.

The agency can sell an image many times not exclusively to one buyer, so profits will continue to be obtained as long as the stock image is downloaded or purchased by Microstock users. Royalty Free means the Buyer / downloader can use the image several times in various media without violating the rules, but still may not resell it and the copyright is still owned by the Artist / Contributor Mocrostock not the agency's property.

The way it works is more or less like this:

- You are an Artist interested in becoming a microstock contributor and registering (Free),

- The agency will ask you to upload some images to review whether or not you qualify as a contributor,

- After approval, you can immediately upload an image for sale,

- Once your images are online at the microstock company, visitors will download the images and you will benefit from the images downloaded.

Some microstock that are active until now include:Graphicriver

1. Shutterstock

2. IconArchive

3. VectorStock

4. CreativeMarket

5. Vexel

6. Vecteezy

7. Flaticon

8. iStock

9. DryIcons

10. TheNounProject

11. Freepik

12. Dreamstime

13. Adobestock

14. 123rf

2. Graphic Design Competition/Contest Site

The internet can be a positive thing when we are able to use it properly. At present the internet has become a difficult or even inseparable part of human life, both on a small scale and a large scale, as it relates to the industrial world and personal lives of users personally (Bruseberg & McDonagh-Philp, 2002).

the needs of the industrial world about graphic design make humans create websites for design contests. website design contest or competition is a site for users of design services to meet design needs (Cornish, Goodman-Deane, Ruggeri, & Clarkson, 2015). they make contests and then by shared web contest to be contested by freelance designers. the winner is the best design and in accordance with the provisions and is

suitable for the company that holds the competition. The company is usually called a Contest Holder (CH).

The online design contest is a site where International Designers gather to compete and showcase their work with the aim of getting cash prizes. Not only for the main winners, but sometimes the CHs also give prizes for the winners 2 and 3. There are even contests where all members get a part even though this may rarely happen.

Some other important things from online design sites that must be considered are related to existing terms and conditions. As a limitation of the minimum age of the designer as evidenced by national ID card, must have a certain account from a particular bank. These conditions must be met so that the designer can obtain an account at the Contest Site and be able to enter the competition.

Some websites as a design contest provider are:

1. 99designs

2. CrowdSpring

3. DesignContest

4. 48hourslogo

5. ZillionDesigns

6. Designonclick

7. Sribu

8. Designhill

9. DesignCrowd

10. LogoArena

11. LogoMyWay

12. Hatchwise

13. LogoTournament

3. Portofolios Showcase Graphic Design Web

Through the internet, designers can display their work that can be enjoyed by others from all over the world. From this need then emerged a website to display design work that can be used as a reference by others. This is called an online portfolio (Stones & Cassidy, 2010).

There are many benefits that can be obtained by creating an online portfolio. In addition to his work that can be seen and appreciated by others, arts workers can also expand their networks and obtain projects or jobs that might have been sought after. Various ways can be done to exhibit works online. One of them is by utilizing online portfolio sites that provide full features to create galleries.

Online portfolio sites that provide facilities for free are the best alternatives for those who want to minimize costs. This choice is clearly more efficient in terms of cost than if you have to create a website with your own domain. More than that, designers can join the creative community and can see many works of art produced by other designers or artists from around the world. The facilities provided by the online portfolio sites are also complete and easy to use.

Portfolios showcase for graphic designer

1. About.me

2. Behance

3. DeviantArt

4. Dribbble

5. Artstation

6. Carbonmade

7. Pinterest

8. Flickr

9. Creattica

10. Tumblr

11. Kreavi

12. Uplabs

2.2. Traffic on The Online Marketplace

From the middle of 2016 until this post was written, the traffic that generated the most visitors to this blog was about Shutterstock. That is also the reason there is a significant growth of contributors, especially Shutterstock in Indonesia. Judging from the referred account contributors, which have almost reached 1000 people over the past two years.

Some of the online marketplace sites listed below are ranked based on the Microstock Poll Result on the microstockgroup.com website plus additional data such as the Alexa Rank and Domain Authority, MOZ Rank and Page Authority.

TABLE 1: Rank of Website Popularity in Online Marketplace

Situs	Alexa Rank	DA	PA	MOZ Rank
Shutterstock	290	92.00	80.55	6.55
Fotolia (sekarang Adobe Stock)	3.815	28.45	36.52	4.16
Alamy	3.455	67.38	52.74	4.69
123RF	1.516	82.37	69.70	6.43
Depositphotos	1.841	71.53	76.43	6.29
Dreamstime	1.348	86.26	64.93	5.95
Bigstock Photos	10.195	75.04	61.14	5.71
Canstock Photo	10.859	73.36	55.13	5.58

Alexa Global Rank above can be changed at any time, so we can immediately check on the Alexa website to obtain an updated position. Simple conclusion if you look at these numbers one of them is an online marketplace with an Alexa ranking under five thousand is still recommended because it has a large global traffic.

DA or Domain authority is a website metric which is a measure of trust of a site or website based on referrals originating from search engines and users.

PA or Page authority is a ranking of ranking on websites or blogs that are seen or found in search engines. The range of numbers on the page authority is usually from 0 to 100, the higher the PA value of the blog or website, the possibility of being able to appear on search engines is very high (Sørum, Andersen, & Vatrapu, 2012). Not only that, these numbers also relate to the relevance of the content on the website or blog and also the links on one page to another.

2.3. Tips and Tricks to Enter The Online Marketplace

After digital observations, interviews with online marketplace experts and freelance designers as well as by looking at contest related blogs, articles, forums and questions (FAQs) asked by freelancers to find out some important tips and tricks. By following

these simple tips, we will definitely survive working in the online marketplace, be it on Microstock, Design Contest, or on the Portfolio Site. Some points that must be prepared are:

1. Find and Pick the Right online marketplace

   99Designs said You'll be more successful with design contest when you lean on your strengths. Most of the beginner freelancers pick the contest for price in the chance of making more money in a day. This is common mistake, you need to understand that if the contest have a big price money then the client definitely have some big or specific requirement for their logo design, will you able to fulfill client's need?

   As a beginner, don't waste your time chasing price money, find out the right contests to enter as per your skills.

2. Know Your Strengths

   Every designers are master in a specific design style/type. There are many design styles or types available i.e. lettering logo design, 2D logo designs, Web 2.0 logo designs, 3D logo design, vector logo design, bold and strong logo designs, freehand logo designs, cartoons logo designs etc.

   You know your favorite style and you're master in? Working on a project as per your skills or style, you have a better chance to win the contest.

3. Check into the Latest Design Style

   First impression is the most lasting! You have good design skills, enter into the latest contests with low entry number and submit your first entry as soon as possible. After submitting your first entry its time to build a relationship with client.

   Generally, ask for feedback or more about his/her business! It makes a good impact on client's mind and it looks like you're serious about this job. As long as the client respond back to you, you have more time to do more research and submit your second entry.

   There are simple terms, the first stage is an "Idea" stage. If the client likes your design idea, you will be selected for the second round for enhancement of design without creating more different designs. You will be able to enter, focus and win more design contests. Submitting in late means you have a lower chance of being noticed by contest holder.

4. Pay Attention to the Brief

You have to understand the contest holder's needs and wants. Read the contest brief thoroughly. Every client have different requirement and feels for their design and there always will be some design contest rules to follow in participating online design contests.

Check out the job description for client's industry, design style, color preference, competitors and any further details that you think is important to beat the best. If there is lack of information provided my contest holder, don't be afraid to ask question before jumping straight into the design process. Be humble and make connections with the contest holder. They are here because they are looking for the best custom logo design services and solutions.

5. Gather the Information

After paying the close attention to the brief, make a quick research. Check out the logo design inspiration sites or use Google search to gather all the information and material that fulfill the clients requirement. Start drafting your first entry with 1 or 2 designs with different perspective.

In order to participate in more competitions, don't spend more than 1 or 2 hours for each contest submission. 2 Hours is enough to give up for the chance of winning $100-$300.

6. Explain Your Artwork

The contest holder also needs to understand the complete context of your design. Don't submit your entries with 1 or 2 lines like "Please take a look at the design and submit your feedback." in the description box.

Explain your design process, artwork and try to communicate with the client. So like what idea you have in your mind, where the idea came from, what are your suggestions as a designer, will it work or not etc.

7. Attract with Presentation

Irfan AK — Digital & Content Marketing Expert, well said in his article on "How To Play And Win A Logo Design Contest?" posted on Medium that the simple and effective technique to grab the buyer's attention for your logo design is way to presenting designs.

"There are multiple entries in a logo contest and after a while due to same thumbnail size, all start to look similar to the buyer. By garnering your logo design with a colored border it get the much needed attention."

You can also incorporate the business card template or branding material to make your design pop up.

8. Differentiate You Designs

Most of the time the client select or favors a design submission on early stage, and designers start submitting similar designs in the hope that their design also be selected. There is only 10% chances your similar design will be if you can beat the best.

You need to think, why client favors your similar design if someone already did a great job? Maybe client finalized one concept and waiting for more submissions with different concepts. Sounds different?

When other designers creating similar designs concepts then it's the right time to differentiate your design. Don't be a part of the crowd!

9. Time to Quit

Sometimes you see that your design submissions aren't going well. For any reason, you're getting three or four star rating or may be worse on the first stage. There are other designers doing a great job than you. At that point, you need to take a look at the brief once again and try to change the designing strategy.

Or if you're doing poorly in the design contest then quit immediately. Don't waste more time to design more concepts. You can put the same amount of time in entering the 2 more new contests. You knew that that was the right time to quit so don't feel bad about quitting.

10. A Pro Tip

Never stop learning. There are a lot of new articles that will absolutely teach you how to be an effective logo designer and how to win a client. That's all folks, that are the best design contest or competitions sites by us. If we miss out your favorite one or get slipped from a point just put your comments down.

3. Conclusion

Different types of online marketplaces have challenges, strengths, weaknesses, and potential for each other. This must be understood by freelance designers. At Microstock, there are many advantages including the aura of low competition from the designers. In addition, the system of royalty allows designers to enjoy longer work. The weakness

of microstock is that there are many designers who are contributors to make meeting the needs of a loose design.

The advantage of the design competition / contest is the fast time span from execution to announcement of the winner. The prize of this contest is also higher when compared to microstock. But the drawback is that designers must be smart in reading briefs from contest holders. Short time also forces designers to think and act quickly with results that should amaze CH.

In the Online Portfolio, designers freely express their work and display it. This can be a design reference for other designers. The weakness of the web design portfolio is that it is slow to attract consumers because the design consumer must first sort out the designer in accordance with the style and desires of consumers.

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