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CSCI 110.004

04/07/08

<center>Flickr vs. Phanfare</center>

Web-based photo management services allow you to archive your own photographs. While each service offers different privileges and features, it is safe to say that they all provide a basic method of organizing photographs. Several services enable the exchange of photographs, allowing access to other's collections for personal use. The photo management services examined include Flickr and Phanfare. Flickr is a web-based service that allows you to store, share and comment on photographs. Phanfare is multifaceted, using a desktop application to upload pictures and a web server to display them (Metz, "A Photo..."). In comparing and contrasting Flickr and Phanfare, the focus was on ease of use, speed, help services, initialization, file management, availability, usability and exclusive features. After carefully evaluating each service it appears that Flickr is the better choice of photo management services.

Overall, Flickr proved to be easier to use than Phanfare. In terms of ease, Flickr has fewer routes and links than Phanfare. Phanfare requires users to navigate through unnecessary things, making desired processes drawn out and frustrating. Flickr provides more direct routes, making is easier to use than Phanfare. Flickr's upload process is similar to the process required to upload a file to an email. The website features a dropdown menu with an upload application that allows you to upload existing files and, "Add titles, tags and descriptions all at the same time," (Bradley). Also, Flickr's user-friendly taskbar and simple website layout make it easy to navigate. The process for uploading pictures to Phanfare is simple, but requires a few more steps. Uploading pictures to Phanfare requires, "[Dragging] and [dropping] photos onto the desktop client to create a slick virtual album," (Metz, "A Photo..."). From there, the albums can be uploaded to the site. Phanfare's website design was more elaborate, sometimes making things complicated. Similarly, Phanfare is not as well organized as Flickr, making it less easy to

maneuver. Despite its few imperfections, Phanfare offers quality help services, as does Flickr. Both websites have e-mail available in case there are any questions or problems with particular features. Flickr and Phanfare also have website guides, walkthroughs pertaining to individual applications, making the process easier. In fact, Phanfare has a toll-free number at which customers can speak with a representative (Jefferson). Flickr has a help blog as well as an FAQ section. At the blog, users can have questions answered by users and website administrators. Phanfare's excellent customer service is likely a result of recurring problems. Phanfare's help services are probably used more often than Flickr's website guide because, as stated before, Flickr is much easier to navigate and understand. Furthermore, the speed of Flickr was considerably better than that of Phanfare. The most significant difference were in upload and initialization time on each website. As stated previously, Phanfare's upload process entails a downloaded desktop application. The use of the program proved to be slow, taking proficient time to perform tasks. Flickr proved to be much faster in speed than Phanfare. Overall, Flickr is the better website for ease of use, and speed. Both websites are matched for efficiency of help services, although Phanfare likely gets more problem emails than does Flickr. While Phanfare is manageable, Flickr is easier and more understandable.

When considering the more technical aspects of both Phanfare and Flickr, the differences were surprisingly drastic. In terms of initialization, Flickr and Phanfare's memberships and login processes are somewhat different. Flickr offers a free membership using a yahoo account to setup. Creating an account and logging in is quick and simple. In comparison, Phanfare costs $54.95 a year or 6.95 a month. Initialization was very time consuming and confusing, as Flickr is based online, while Phanfare's organization program must be downloaded (Metz, "Five..."). In investigating each website's approach to file management, Flickr provides 100 MB of available file space per month. For $24.95 a year, you can buy a pro membership, "That gives you unlimited storage space," as well as video (Bradley). In contrast, Phanfare provides 1.00 GB of file space a month (Metz, "Five..."). After exploring both website's organization methods, they seem equally efficient, using albums and other tools for photograph organization, though, Flickr

has, "The most advanced sharing features," and tools (Helm). In terms of availability, Flickr is more available and there were no problems logging in or accessing the website. When trying to access Phanfare however, sessions continue to time out, making it very frustrating and difficult to access the site. Flickr's initialization, file management and availability seem to be more efficient than that of Phanfare's. With Flickr's expansive market, it is a shame that Phanfare has not attempted to make some improvements to their website, as it could attract more users. It is unwise of Phanfare expect customers to pay anything for less than satisfactory service.

Although each website has certain features not found on the other, Flickr proves to be better in usability and features in general. Both websites are well organized and well laid out when taking usability into account. Some of the features found on Flickr are the other language options on the homepage, the "Take the Tour" button, which is well sized and easy to find, and the integrated search engine, which is a big help when exploring an unfamiliar website. Flickr's advanced sharing makes several special search tools available. Among the tools are "Spell it Out", "Tagnautica" and "Flickr-Vision". The "Spell it Out" feature searches Flickr for pictures of letters that can be used to write messages. "Tagnautica" offers a way to search through photographs based on their tags. "Flickr-Vision" puts you in touch with people around the world (Johnson). In contrast, Phanfare provides exclusive sharing features as well. Unlike Flickr, Phanfare enables members to send photographs from their phone to their PC. Users can also upload video to their personal pages, a feature not available with a basic Flickr account (Metz). Furthermore, Phanfare's home button was easier to find since it was larger and more obvious than the one on Flickr. Although, Phanfare provides a "Protect" option, the "Take a Tour" button is under the "Learn More" button, which is small and is located at the bottom of the page. The "Download" button is also located at the bottom of the page, making that and the "Take the Tour" button difficult to find. Both websites have exclusive features that are efficient, but Flickr's features lend it to being more user-friendly.

After having researched both websites, it is clear that Flickr is the better choice of services, especially in considering its advanced sharing features. While the research may appear

biased, any person researching Flickr and Phanfare will surely recognize that Flickr is by far the best. The ease of use and free membership should be enough to get anyone to choose Flickr over Phanfare. It is likely that one's decision would not even require in depth research or comparison, as simply "skimming the surface" would enable one to recognize that Flickr as the better choice. With its high speed web-based photo management service, Flickr makes it easy to upload and organize photographs. Flickr also provides a website guide and help services to help its members navigate through the website in a fast and efficient manner. In addition, Flickr provides a free membership with a good amount of file space. Flickr's unique features make it a popular choice among the various web-based photo management services. Flickr is being recognized for its versatile sharing abilities and has been chosen by the Library of Congress to make its 14 million photographs accessible to the public. The Library of Congress hopes to make its archives available to the public and will soon begin posting them to Flickr (LC). However, both Flickr and Phanfare could benefit from additional features. It would be advantageous for Flickr to make prints and video available. Suggestions for Phanfare would be providing more sharing tools, being better organized, integrating its desktop application to the website and perhaps working on the website glitches, as they posed several problems. After careful investigation of Phanfare and Flickr, Flickr established itself as the better choice for photo management services.

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