

WinkFlash Steps in to Rescue ClubPhoto Pics

May 9 2007, By Carol Mangis

WinkFlash, a photo site, has acquired the users' photo albums at ClubPhoto, a defunct competitor. Winkflash is making a good-faith effort to restore them to their proper owners.

I was a ClubPhoto customer--I liked that you could upload high-res files and order large prints--and had uploaded quite a few pictures to the site over the years.

I hadn't visited there for a while, though. A couple of weeks ago, I got an e-mail from an AppScout reader who told me the site was gone. I surfed over, and sure enough, ClubPhoto had disappeared. (Note to ex-ClubPhoto people: You could have been kinder to your customers. No, make that should have been.)

Recently, though, a new message appeared at the old ClubPhoto URL. WinkFlash, another photo site, has acquired ClubPhoto users' albums and is making a good-faith effort to restore them to their proper owners.

I shot them an e-mail, and got a call from Darrell Lucente, WinkFlash's owner. He told me his company had negotiated a deal with ClubPhoto before the site went away, but the site was taken down before he could get his offer out there. He was initially skeptical about whether he could actually restore the albums. WinkFlash bought ClubPhoto's servers and had to hack into them to get to the approximately 40 terabytes of data. So it's not guaranteeing each album will be restored--but so far, says Lucente, restoration is going smoothly.

In order to get your photos back, first go to www.clubphoto.com. A link there takes you to a login screen at WinkFlash; there, you sign in with your ClubPhoto username and password.

A message tells you restoration may take about 2 weeks. I just did this; I'll update the post when (and if) I get my albums back. I'll probably create some new albums at WinkFlash and try the printing service out, too.

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