



# SOFT BISTRO

**BIGSTOCK** by shutterstock

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Images ▾

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Royalty free image by Anna Omelchenko

### CASE STUDY

# BIGSTOCK

Bigstock is fast, easy-to-use marketplace for quality stock images. It offers over 37 million royalty-free photographs and illustrations from talented photographers and artists around the globe, available for almost any purpose.

# BIGSTOCK

"I'm a creative thinker who enjoys creating something from nothing, finding a need and filling it as best I can. When in 2004 I decided to create an international stock photos website rivaling iStock, I partnered with SoftBistro and gave them complete freedom of action. The result exceeded all my expectations. SoftBistro is a value-add from day 1 and we are thrilled to have them as a partner."

Tim Donahue  
Founder

[softbistro.com](https://softbistro.com)

## Goal

Way back in in 2004, our client Tim Donahue came up with an idea for an online royalty free, international microstock photography website selling images via a credit-based system. The goal was to create a successful stock photo site able to compete with the already existing iStock. In order to achieve this, Tim chose SoftBistro as the reliable technology partner to help develop BigStockPhoto from scratch, concept to production.



## Challenge

As a true visionary, Tim is very result oriented, so despite his strong background in IT, he didn't have any preferences regarding solutions or technologies to be used in the project. Tim set up the goal and gave us carte blanche to make it happen. Our team enthusiastically accepted and started identifying the challenges to be solved:

### Selecting the right technologies

The technologies existing in 2004 were limited to use and didn't have good documentation. Our task was to review and analyze the options, select the best ones for our purpose and develop our own modules where necessary

### Accelerating Search Engine

As the number of photos in our database was quickly and dramatically increasing, the search engine became slower. It had to be fixed.

### Ensuring good User Experience

One of the main issues to be solved was finding the best way to posting images to the site. Initially, images were added to a single folder, which was very inefficient for both users and moderators. Moreover, we couldn't keep more than 32,000 images in one folder.

### Granting user rights and permissions

Another challenge was to identify and create a group of users who have rights to upload images to the website. On top of that, we had to solve a number of minor issues with browser compatibility.



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### People Meeting Corporate Working Technology Startup Concept

Stock Photo ID: 110200379

Copyright: Rawpixel.com

Release: Signed model release filed with Bigstock.

1 Month Subscription

Credits

Available Sizes

Download any size at one price

<input checked="" type="radio"/> 5 images per day	7 DAY FREE TRIAL	\$0
<input type="radio"/> 10 images per day	\$0.33 / image	\$99
<input type="radio"/> 50 images per month	\$1.58 / image	\$79

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## Solution

Upon close examination of all existing technologies, we selected PHP and MySQL as the most advanced ones, best matching our needs. On their basis, we developed our own modules for the PayPal API and MVC.

To solve the problem with browser compatibility and to optimize the inquiry process, we eliminated all possibilities for an invalid inquiry. As a result, it also sped up the processing time.

To ensure good user experience and solve all issues with posting images to the site, we created a directory tree, meaning that images were grouped by categories, which in their turn were divided into subcategories and so on. This was done using a template engine called Smarty.

For selecting a group of users who can upload images to the website, a special test was created. It contained a number of questions to identify the best uploaders.





## Result

As a result of dedicated work and creative efforts from our team, in one year BigStock became one of the most successful international stock photo websites in the world, ensuring high value of the company's shares and business growth.

In 2005 PayPal named BigStockPhoto as one of the most developed projects in the US market, and in 2009 it was purchased by Shutterstock, a leading provider of digital imagery licensing, operating in more than 150 countries and 20 languages.

## Technology

- PHP4
- MySQL
- native JavaScript
- SMARTY template engine

## ABOUT SOFTBISTRO

SoftBistro is a boutique software development studio of 100+ software engineers specializing in Java, RoR, PHP, iOS, Android, DevOps, BI/DE, and IT services.

Our goal is to help companies disrupt markets and revolutionize industries by serving innovators of different sizes: from start-ups in Silicon Valley to publicly traded Shutterstock, Chegg and Freelancer; from large educational institutions like California State University to governmental and nonprofit organizations.

We're based in Silicon Valley, NYC, and Seattle with two development centers in Lviv and Khmelnytskyi "K-city" Ukraine

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