

Standardized Terms of Use Initiative  
Training File:  
**The STOUI Study Process**

Written by:  
Cindy Angiel (aka Paint Chip)  
Consultant to Digi-Scrapbooking Entrepreneurs



<http://dsd-professionals.com/stoui/>

STOUI is a Grassroots Movement Sponsored by:  
Digital Scrapbook Designer Professionals  
<http://dsd-professionals.com>

The Standard Terms Of Use Initiative (STOUI) was launched as a grassroots movement by people like you and me - to create standardized terms of use policies for the digital scrapbooking industry. This document offers a description of how things have developed with this initiative.

---

### **The Course of Research and Development:**

---

After hearing a lot of grumbling about the confusion and lack of direction in so many TOU documents, we set out on a quest for what people wanted to see changed. The DSD-Pro, 5-member research team wanted to know what was being said in community forums, MSN and Yahoo groups, on WIKI's and anywhere a discussion of the same subject was being shared. Surprisingly it wasn't hard to find these discussions. We discovered four, the first week of our research. Verbiage in each of these chatters were focused on the same type things.

---

### **We Formed a Discussion Group**

---

Using the basic information gathered from the online groups and forums we put together a survey and presented to a diverse group of people involved in the industry at different levels. Some were hobbyists just entering the market place, others were well versed in selling their art. The group also included scrappers involved with creating albums for others as well. The 54 survey participants were represented by 17 designers, 9 scrapbook professionals who create commissioned scrapbook art for others, and 28 seriously scrappy hobbyists.

---

### **Conversations Centered Around 4 Main Concerns:**

---

- 1.** Confusion over too many different definitions for similar terms and phrases found in TOU's resulting in lengthy, TOU's that were sometimes hard to decode.
- 2.** TOU's in purchased kits being different than the TOU's listed on the websites or being changed after the sale (by sellers)
- 3.** Large graphical TOU's that caused more confusion than the textual TOU's. Pretty, but usually erased to save disk space for hobbyists – and dial-up users don't like them at all.
- 4.** TOU's delivered in text format are being changed by customers and designers can't prove they didn't go out that way. Need a way to protect the files from hackers.

---

## **Resolution Recommendations:**

---

- 1.** Standardize TOU's in a way that make it easy for customers (hobbyists or other professionals - like S4O's) to see and clearly understand the terms BEFORE purchasing products and use graphics to indicate the rights given to users.
- 2.** A website to teach customers and sellers alike that the TOU's are legal contracts between both parties. As such, it's important to show the TOU with full disclosure up front and not allow changes from what is originally presented/purchased.
- 3.** Develop a tool so Digi-artists could include a properly written TOU and deliver it in a secure (non-changeable) format.

Armed with this information, our team put together a set of 4 icons (commercial, S4O, Personal Use Only, and one for designers to use for designing further). We also established standard TOU statements that could be tweaked by individual designers to meet their needs. These were put together in a software product that would produce a secure file. Presenting this to the survey group proved to be interesting.

---

## **Presentation Discussion Results**

---

Surveys were again answered and a heavy discussion followed the presentation. It was obvious our team was on the right track - but didn't quite hit the mark.

- 1.** Icons were too general and didn't meet enough of the needs for designers, Scrapbook professionals, nor customers. They sent us back to the drawing board with request for icons showing copyright symbol, designer credits, and something to indicate when there were "number of uses" stipulations in the TOU, as well as a set to show when something wasn't allowed, so there'd be no confusion.
- 2.** The software product was easy to use, but would maybe not be accepted or adopted by designers if they were required to use it. Either because of cost, learning curve, or just another software item they had to pull out in order to get their art ready to go to market. The group was looking for an option that would already be available to as many designers as possible and not reliant on a single software product.
- 3.** The standardized statements worked well, but by the time they each gave them their own touch, everyone was as confused as before. It still didn't meet the needs. Designers still need full flexibility in their TOU's. It was agreed upon by every member of the discussion group that trying to make standardized statements a part of the initiative, would be a change too big for some people and that it may keep too many designers from participating. Thus – leaving the industry in the same state of confusion. Participants felt the icons would do enough to clarify and not restrict the designers too much.

---

## **Back to the Drawing Board**

---

With the new recommendations in hand, the DSD-Pro Team went to work on plan B. Well actually it was the team's plan D. But who's counting? Each attempt was viewed as another step in the right direction and never as a setback when things didn't go as planned.

The team dumped the software completely, and opted to create training tutorials for designers to teach them how to turn any document into a secure PDF file. Because Adobe Acrobat Reader is free software, readily available to the web-masses, and familiar to the majority of the customers.

New icons were developed to include **1)** enough to meet the new requests – but keeping the set to a minimum, **2)** color coded and clearly marked to make them easier to understand and remember their meanings without having to refer to a chart, **3)** a streamlined look that would not detract from the kit elements or patterned papers, etc.

The team opted to make a part of the initiative suggestions for simplified TOU terminology and design, but not to offer a specific solution, since flexibility involved not ever being able to meet everyone's needs.

---

## **Presentation #3 Resulted in a Green Go Light**

---

Returning to the survey discussion group, with the new icon sets, training ideas, and theories on ideas for launching the official initiative... went much smoother the second go around. There remained two areas of concern. Neither of which DSD-Pro will address on an official bases or at least not as a part of the Standard Terms Of Use Initiative. The areas in concern involve the meaning of the terminology for Scrap-for-Hire (S4O / S4H) professionals and what exactly does the word "commercial" refer to. However we did change the S4O icon to reflect professional scrappers and/or crafters. Hoping that will meet most designers needs who sell to professionals who create scrapbooks for their clients.

---

## **Moving Forward**

---

With no need to test any software product and a set of icons developed that met the needs of our survey group, the DSD-Pro team opted to launch the STOU website 3 weeks earlier than planned. Admittedly, with the rush to launch early, a few things are not 100% straightened out with the initial site launch. The official advertising is scheduled for mid October.

This STOU website represents the first public presentation of the Standardized Terms Of Use Initiative (STOU) and is the central location to pick up STOU training materials and free STOU downloads.

**COPYRIGHT:** This document is copyright protected by Cindy Angiel

**DISTRIBUTION RIGHTS:** You may redistribute this document under the following conditions:

1. It must be distributed in its entirety, without any changes.
2. It must be distributed free of charge.
3. This document may be included in packaged items that are for sale ONLY if there is no implication the purchase is necessary to obtain this document.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Contact Cindy Angiel at: [paintchip@dsd-professionals.com](mailto:paintchip@dsd-professionals.com)

OR

Visit our website at:

<http://dsd-professionals.com/stoui>

