

Standardized Terms of Use Initiative
Training File:
STOUI – What it's All About

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

STOUI is a Grassroots Movement Sponsored by:
Digital Scrapbook Designer Professionals
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What is STOUI ?

STOUI is the acronym for *Standardized Terms of Use Initiative*. This is a grassroots movement by people like you and me, to create standardized TOU policies that will ultimately better serve the digital scrapbooking industry as a whole.

Digi-scrapping is a subculture born from within the huge scrapbooking industry. It started to become a way of life and launched many careers in 2003. With any new industry, standards within the field give definition to expectations and assist buyers and sellers, alike. In the case of digi-scrapping, our standards have come about as a natural course of action. For example the 300-ppi and 200-ppi standards have developed naturally in an effort to keep print quality at a high level to meet the customers' needs.

Quest for Standardized TOU

There's another issue at bay that needs to be standardized - Terms of Use contracts (commonly referred to as TOU's). After hearing a lot of grumbling about the confusion and lack of direction in so many TOU documents, a group of professionals in the industry, invested some time in studying the matter further. The quest was to find out if this was as big an issue as it appeared to be on the surface and if so, then learn exactly what it was people wanted to see changed.

The DSD-Pro business team found TOU discussions in numerous community forum sites and gathered statements for comparison and deliberation. The team hosted three survey discussion group settings and presented various options to resolve the concerns voiced by all involved. The survey participants were represented by a diverse group of people representing designers, scrapbook professionals who create commissioned scrapbook art for others, and seriously scrappy hobbyists. You can read more about the path we took for research and design on our website in the Study History pages (<http://dsd-professionals.com/stoui/stoui-whats-it-all-about/study-history/>).

The research results indicated that the concerns were not limited to only a few people. Although there were minimal concerns wrapped around the TOU dilemma, there were a lot of scrappers who shared the same concerns. The problems were rather small and actually fairly easy to come up with do-able solutions - primarily because every group discussing this had the exact same idea for fixes. The heaviest discussions wrapped around the need for "cleaner" TOU's.

The Problem People were Reporting:

1. Confusing, lengthy, boring TOU's that were difficult to understand.
2. Unannounced changes to TOU's presented after the purchase - with an expectation that customers follow the changes.
3. Large graphical TOU's that caused more confusion than the textual TOU's.
4. Unsecured TOU's delivered through plain text files being changed by customers.

What Designers and Customers Asked For:

1. A standard set of small, graphical elements to display on each TOU indicating what is allowed and what is not. Something similar to what's available through the "Creative Commons" program. Something that ALL digi-scrap outlets could adopt and not just commercial stores.
2. A website to teach customers and sellers about the legalities of TOU's to include the importance of presenting the full TOU prior to purchase and not changing the contract AFTER it was sold.
3. An inexpensive, easy-to-use tool for creating secure TOU's.

Mission Accomplished!

Our 5-member team went to work alongside the survey discussion groups and accomplished all three goals. After several attempts to please designers, scrapbook professionals, and customers alike:

- a set of graphical icons was developed to attach to common TOU terms and policies
- a process was developed and training material prepared for creating secure TOU documents
- a website (this website) was created to distribute the information and serve as a central point for further discussion

Time for Action

The DSD-Pro team did not come up with this idea by ourselves - nor do we make any money from this cause. The Standard Terms of Use Initiative was launched to help better serve everyone involved in the digital scrapbooking industry. Digital art designers, professional scrapbookers, and hobbyists are the three main groups that will be pivotal to the acceptance and adoption of new standards and policies.

Now begins the process of getting the word out and encouraging designers everywhere to adopt the program. It is with this website that we hope to move the effort into the forefront of the digital scrapbooking community, train designers, teach customers, and provide support in any manner that we can. With your help, we will be able to improve the exchange processes for digital scrapbooking art - which you've been asking for!

Here at *Digital Scrapbook Designer Professionals*, we are happy and proud to be the sponsors of the movement. However, it can only be accomplished through the dedicated support of everyone in the industry. Find out how you can help (<http://dsd-professionals.com/stoui/stoui-whats-it-all-about/you-can-help/>) and pick up the free STOU icons. Stay informed and get your name on the supporters list too by filling out the request form located on our blog (<http://dsd-professionals.com/stoui/blog/>).

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