

Guidelines on 'Manipulation' of Photos

Why not manipulate?

It is very important that AI maintains a reputation for not manipulating images irresponsibly - both to protect the integrity of our materials, and to encourage professionals to continue to work with us and supply us with images. It is also illegal to do it without permission.

AI policy on manipulation :

1. AI will not manipulate image content in any image it owns, acquires or uses.
2. AI will only manipulate image format when strictly necessary, and then only with the owner's prior permission, and in the following ways:
Reasonable, proportional, reduction or enlargement of the entire image for layout purposes
Reasonable cropping of 'non-significant' parts of the image (eg; sky, foreground with no subjects, borders without significant features)
Reasonable colour 'correction' (not colour changing) for reproduction purposes (for example by using Photoshop: 'auto levels')
3. In special circumstances AI may copy and reproduce part of an image it owns (for example: an individual portrait from a group, a detail from a landscape) In such circumstances the original will not be altered and the copy will be treated as a separate image.
4. In very special circumstances AI may clean or repair a copy of an image it owns - by removing marks which are intrusive (ie which were not present on the original)

What is 'manipulation' of an image?

'Manipulation' is used here to mean any altering of the content, or format, of an image by physical means - including, eg;

Cropping

Stretching

Correction of colour, contrast, brightness

'Re-touching' or 'Cloning' to affect the content

Removal of marks, stains, spots, by 'cloning' or copying and pasting

Changing the resolution or size of a digital image

'Original' is used here to mean the first generation of any image acquired by AI

Is 'manipulation' illegal?

The alteration of an image or any part of it without the owner's prior consent is an offence under the Copyright Design and Patents Act 1988.

In Copyright legislation all photographs, irrespective of quality, are regarded as 'artistic' works - they do not have to be registered. Any snap taken by anyone is protected.

A Note on 'Acceptable' manipulation

In the course of acquiring and publishing images, some types of manipulation are considered generally acceptable - by the majority of professional Photo agencies, Photographers, Publishers, Printers, etc.

These are seen as enabling a necessary part of the reproduction and publishing process, and include:

Reasonable reduction or enlargement of a whole image for layout purposes.

Reasonable colour 'correction' (not colour changing) for repro purposes (for example Photoshop : 'auto levels')

Reasonable cropping of 'non-significant' parts of the image (for example; sky, foreground with no subjects, featureless, borders)if allowed by the owner (Pleas note some owners, for example; Rex, Magnum, will not allow any manipulation at all without prior written consent)

However, if you are intending to do any of the above it is most important that you establish the position and consent of the owner/supplier when obtaining the image.

Summary of Guidelines on Image Manipulation:

- Never manipulate image content
- Only crop or correct when strictly necessary, within reason and with prior permission
- Do not 'stretch' images to fit layout, or make and use low quality low resolution copies
- Always inform the owners/suppliers of details of your intended use when acquiring an image
- Always seek permission from the owners/suppliers for any manipulation of a supplied image
- If in doubt seek advice/help from Audiovisual Resources:
audiovis@amnesty.org or Tel: + 44 207 413 5893 / 5585 / 5934)

Wayne Minter 6 June 2002

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