

AOP Open Letter to Adobe

May, 2024

Dear Shantanu Narayan,

It's evident that Adobe has lost its integrity.

In pursuit of greater profit, Adobe has renounced the professional lives of millions of photographers and image-makers.

From its beginnings in the early 1980's in John Warnock's garage, to becoming a bedrock of the professional creative community, Adobe, the company you head up, was fundamental in its presence in the lives, both working and personal, of photographers and image-makers since the creation of Photoshop in 1987. We say, 'was', because since generative-AI erupted into the world, Adobe are selling as much snake-oil to the creative community as many of the relative generative-AI newcomers are. In our opinion far worse, as Adobe are trying to have their cake and eat it too through the mechanism of the [Content Authenticity Initiative](#) and their presence in the [Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity](#) (C2PA). Both these provide useful deflections for Adobe as a supposedly ethical business promoting a provenance solution for images, whilst allowing the company to continue to undermine human authors with its generative-AI products.

Not only have Adobe changed the terms of service for access to the software, so that the human-authored works of Adobe stock contributors can be exploited to train Adobe's own generative-AI platform, Adobe has systematically trashed the same creative community that has supported the company for so long; Adobe's recent '[skip the photoshoot](#)' tagline attached to a set of Adobe's marketing materials is testimony to this, as is Adobe's use of the phrase, '[skip the shoot – get the shot](#)', used in 2020.

Our professional members have invested millions of pounds of their own money into Adobe's business and built their workflows around Adobe's tools, to the point where Adobe has *almost* become indispensable... *almost*, for there are alternative products, and should you persist in pulling the rug from under the feet of those that have bought Adobe products for so long, you will find that one day, these same creatives will walk away.

Your headlong rush to join the [GAMAM](#) group of Big Tech businesses, no doubt motivated by your shareholders has set Adobe on a path at odds with the global creative community. There is a growing sense of anger and mistrust in companies that insist that providing technological solutions, for which there are no problems, is a good use of resources. It is becoming increasingly clear that, in this instance, visual creators and the artistic works they pour their heart and souls into creating, 'are the product'.

Like many others, we call on you to do better, support *all* human creative authorship, which includes photographers and image-makers, in meaningful and tangible ways and respect those who have facilitated the growth of Adobe's business from its beginnings in a garage to the current day.

Isabelle Doran
CEO, Association of Photographers