

MORE THAN A WEBSITE

Up and coming wildlife photographer Will Nicholls has already picked up several major awards and he turned to Zenfolio to provide him with a flexible website solution that could enhance his online presence

Photography is such a competitive business these days that every aspect of your business needs to be spot on, and success or failure will be decided by the complete package you're offering, not just the quality of your pictures. Although he's just 18, Northumberland-based wildlife photographer Will Nicholls has taken that fact on board already, and it's the prime reason why he's chosen to use Zenfolio as his website provider. His experience to date is vindicating that decision, and it's helping him to present his work to the world in the right way as he looks to make the move up to the next level.

Will's list of achievements already is

testament to his dedication, and it bodes well for his future career. In 2009 he won the title of Young British Wildlife Photographer of the Year in the BWPA competition, and he was runner-up in the same competition in 2010 and 2012. He's also been the RSPCA Young Photographer Awards Overall Winner and was runner up in the Young Outdoor Photographer of the Year competition in 2012. Quite a list of accolades, and when you see Will's outstanding images, perfectly showcased on a highly professional website, it's clear he has the online presence to compete with the best.

"At the moment my photography is funding itself," he says, "and it's also giving me the chance to travel to places around the world

in search of wildlife. In the future I aspire to become a natural history documentary presenter and cameraman. I've got a strong interest in wildlife and the natural world, and I intend to study zoology at university after my gap year.

"I will, of course, keep my photography and video work going because it's something I enjoy doing immensely and I couldn't give it up for anything. Hopefully one day I'll be able to follow in the footsteps of Sir David Attenborough and TV explorer Steve Backshall. I love to travel to the far corners of the Earth, and my dream is to make a television programme about an untouched and unexplored wilderness. Ultimately, one day I would love to discover a species unknown to science.

"To further my aspirations for a career in the television industry I'm undertaking a three-month solo expedition to the rainforest in Cambodia later this year. I'll be going in search of endangered wildlife such as the Red Shanked Douc Langur and the Malayan Sun Bear, and the ultimate goal of this expedition will be to produce a film that I can use to showcase my skills and to open doors to a competitive career path."

A strong aspect of Will's portfolio is his collection of images of red squirrels, and it's incredible how close he has been able to get to this shy and elusive creature. "I'm very lucky to have a small population of them living next to my house in Northumberland," he says. "I have spent thousands of hours with red squirrels, which has allowed me to study their behaviour and to use this to my advantage when capturing photographs of them. They have come to accept me as part of their environment in the woodland, which allows me to capture their natural behaviour on camera. I love to photograph red squirrels; they each have their own character and I strive to capture this in my images."

Setting up a website

These days a website is not an optional extra for photographers, rather it's a crucial portal to the outside world and it's incredibly important that it not only looks the part but that it's easy for the visitor to navigate. It also needs to be able to carry out a host of back up functions,

LEFT Red Squirrels can be found in the wild next to Will's home in Northumberland, and it's given him the opportunity to spend time with them and to get to know the individual personalities of these charming creatures



such as ecommerce and the hosting of a blog. Zenfolio offers all of this and more, and the cost for the complete package, with no start up costs or additional fees, is just £150 a year. This mix of great features and low cost was a key reason why Will chose to go use this provider when he was looking to take his next step on the road to becoming a professional.

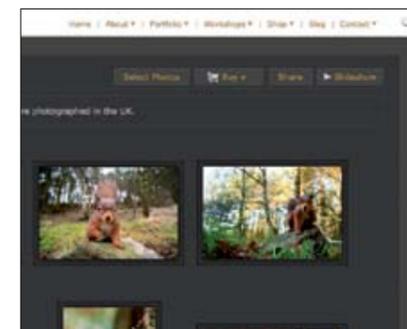
"Zenfolio have been excellent to work with," he says. "Their sites are built by photographers for photographers, and that's really reflected in the service that they offer. I think that my gallery is arguably the most important part of my website, and every single part of the interface on a Zenfolio website is built to showcase your images in the most professional way possible.

"For example, my Zenfolio website displays auto-dynamically resized images, which means that however small or large someone's screen might happen to be, they will see your images at the perfect size for them. There is also a built-in slideshow in your gallery, allowing customers to sit back and relax whilst watching your photographs rotate in a beautiful display.

"One of my favourite things about the interface is the sheer speed of it all. It's mind blowing that a photography website full of images can load so quickly. Because of this, customers are encouraged to browse your website in depth, because there are no lengthy loading times involved."

Taking account of the fact that online shopping has now become such an integral part of the modern world, Zenfolio makes sure that an integrated shopping cart is part of their offering, and it allows photographers to set their own prices for photos and for orders to go directly through to a Zenfolio approved lab (UK based One Vision Imaging) or through to a lab of their choice.

"The shopping cart is brilliant," says Will. "It's integrated into the gallery, meaning that customers can browse your gallery and view your images with the ability to buy them on the spot, removing the need for a separate



IMAGES Will Nicholls is a rising star in the world of wildlife photography and he's chosen Zenfolio to supply his website for him, being impressed by the quality of image reproduction and extras such as a shopping cart and blog. He's also found the Zenfolio team very friendly and willing to help.

shopping cart system on your website. The fact that the order then goes directly to a lab completely removes the hard work, and it allows you to sit back while your images make money for you."

Will is also a big fan of the integrated blog that his Zenfolio site includes, all designed to boost seo. "This is really good," he says. "There are lots of different layouts you can choose for it, my favourite being one that displays an image from each blog post with a title overlaid; it all looks really sleek and professional.

The blog also allows you to add your own keywords, title, metadescription and more, all of which is essential for achieving a high search engine ranking."

Another big advantage of the Zenfolio offering is the custom and consistent menu that is offered, which is provided without any need for coding. "This has allowed me to apply my brand to my entire website," says Will. "I only need to alter one theme to have the entire website replicate my changes, and it means

that editing and updating my website is simple and hassle-free. It's given me a cohesive, well-branded and seamless presentation online.

"For me it's the full package and, as someone starting out, I've found Zenfolio to be really responsive and helpful: I don't think I've ever dealt with a more professional and friendly bunch of people. If you have an issue you just send an email to their support team or open a chat window on their 'live chat' system and they are happy to help. When you're a busy professional that's just what you need, and it's helping me to make that next step up."

MORE INFORMATION

www.zenfolio.com

www.willnicholls.co.uk

zenfolio