



# USING THE FLICKR API

Queensland State Archives

## Capturing records from Flickr

If you want to export content from Flickr, a simple way to do this is to use the Flickr API, called the Flickr API Explorer. You can access it through your usual browser. If you query or call the API, you get formatted results that you can copy and paste into documents that you can then save into your internal recordkeeping system.

The Flickr API is very flexible and provides excellent functionality for exporting information about your Flickr photos. But note that it doesn't export the photos themselves.

## Using the API

To access the Flickr API, go to this page:

<https://www.flickr.com/services/api/>

Flickr provides a range of pre-formatted queries for you to use. They are listed under **API Methods** on the righthand side of the API home page. All you have to do is click on the URL of the query you want, input the relevant information, and call the results.

## Useful API calls

If you want to capture recordkeeping information from Flickr, perhaps the most useful call you can make is **flickr.photos.search**. The template form for this call is here:

<https://www.flickr.com/services/api/explore/flickr.photos.search>

## Using the Flickr API

It looks like this:

The screenshot shows the Flickr API search interface for the `flickr.photos.search` method. At the top, there are navigation links for "Sign Up", "Explore", and "Upload". A search bar and a "Sign In" button are also present. Below the header, the title "The App Garden" is displayed, along with links for "Create an App", "API Documentation", "Feeds", and "What is the App Garden?". The main content area is titled "flickr.photos.search" and contains two sections: "Arguments" and "Useful Values".

**Arguments**

Name	Required	Send	Value
user_id	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
tags	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
tag_mode	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
text	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
min_upload_date	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
max_upload_date	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
min_taken_date	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
max_taken_date	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
license	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
sort	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
privacy_filter	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
bbox	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
accuracy	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
safe_search	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
content_type	optional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Useful Values**

Recent public photo IDs:  
14882325900 - Daithidhuing-f1a32  
14882326307 - image  
15046892221 - Tattoos Design Dallas Cowboys  
Tattoo Picture Designs

Popular public group IDs:  
15978849@N00 - Black and White  
1577604@N20 - Group with Experience  
34427489792@N01 - FlickrCentral

You can use this template to search for many different kinds of information in Flickr. For example, if you want a list of all the photos in your Flickr account, all you have to do is enter your user ID in the **user\_id** box at the top of the page, then scroll down and click the **Call method** button (not shown above).

If you don't know your user ID, you can easily find it by using the `flickr.urls.lookupUser` query. Simply navigate to this page:

<https://www.flickr.com/services/api/explore/flickr.urls.lookupUser>

and enter the full URL for your Flickr homepage in the **value** box for **url**. Click the **Call method** button and wait for the results. They will look like this (the Queensland State Archives Flickr account has been used as an example):

The screenshot shows the Flickr API lookupUser interface. At the top, there are navigation links for "Sign Up", "Explore", and "Upload". A search bar and a "Sign In" button are also present. Below the header, the title "The App Garden" is displayed, along with links for "Create an App", "API Documentation", "Feeds", and "What is the App Garden?". The main content area is titled "flickr.urls.lookupUser" and contains two sections: "Arguments" and "Useful Values".

**Arguments**

Name	Required	Send	Value
url	required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/> https://www.flickr.com/u/

**Useful Values**

Recent public photo IDs:  
15026935066 - 2014 Seahawks vs . Bears Pre  
Season Game  
150468974081 -  
15049576782 - #lol#littlecooler

Popular public group IDs:  
15978849@N00 - Black and White  
1577604@N20 - Group with Experience  
34427489792@N01 - FlickrCentral

**Output**:

Sign call with no user token?  
 Do not sign call?

[Back to the flickr.urls.lookupUser documentation](#)

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<rsp stat="ok">
<use id="#60455048@N02">
<username>Queensland State Archives</username>
</use>
</rsp>
```

## Using the Flickr API

The user ID is the first piece of information returned. The ID for the Queensland Archives Flickr account, 60455048@N02, is circled as an example.

Now that you have your user ID you can use it to search for photos in your account using the **flickr.photos.search** call. Here is an example search for all photos in the Queensland State Archives account:

**flickr** Sign Up Explore Upload

Output: XML (REST) ▾

Sign call with no user token?

Do not sign call?

Call Method... ▾

[Back to the flickr.photos.search documentation](#)

```
xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" >


state="ok"



photos_per_page="5" page="1" perpage="100" total="559">
    photo id="452800690" owner="604550488n02" secret="310dd2615c" server="390" farm="3" title="Le
    photo id="14463381186" owner="604550488n02" secret="54bfcde0e" server="291" farm="3" title="St
    photo id="14464021742" owner="604550488n02" secret="e722c2cde" server="89" farm="3" title="St
    photo id="14464021743" owner="604550488n02" secret="d70711629cf" server="207" farm="3" title="T
    photo id="14464021744" owner="604550488n02" secret="1137f1111" server="207" farm="3" title="T
    photo id="14465980862" owner="604550488n02" secret="6e475e419" server="93" farm="3" title="U
    photo id="14479710530" owner="604550488n02" secret="3248f0a41d" server="566" farm="3" title="U
    photo id="14479882057" owner="604550488n02" secret="723c109a" server="185" farm="3" title="St
    photo id="14463337132" owner="604550488n02" secret="47bd1d903a" server="87" farm="3" title="St
    photo id="14463339655" owner="604550488n02" secret="3c113c797" server="89" farm="3" title="U
    photo id="14479685489" owner="604550488n02" secret="2d24f497e17" server="387" farm="3" title="U
    photo id="14479685489" owner="604550488n02" secret="15045294ed" server="86" farm="3" title="U
    photo id="144796852677" owner="604550488n02" secret="15045294ed" server="86" farm="3" title="U
    photo id="14479685232" owner="604550488n02" secret="ce539e7284" server="449" farm="3" title="U
    photo id="14463116571" owner="604550488n02" secret="4c3d3194" server="93" farm="3" title="St
    photo id="14463341040" owner="604550488n02" secret="63397037ea" server="190" farm="3" title="St
    photo id="14463341040" owner="604550488n02" secret="63397037ea" server="190" farm="3" title="St
    photo id="14466534135" owner="604550488n02" secret="b5a1c32b3" server="547" farm="3" title="St
    photo id="14479648460" owner="604550488n02" secret="a2f69ff203" server="384" farm="3" title="St


```

URL: <https://api.flickr.com/services/feeds/>?method=flickr.photos.search&key=5307ea81165826b5c1d89471b0832a&user\_id=6045504840N20&format=rest&api\_sig=18701c09d0156ad2c6311dbf1d59c95

Note that the search results are automatically paginated. By default, only 100 results appear on each page. You can increase this to 500 by entering 500 in the **per\_page** box in the query. If your query returns more results than can be returned on one page, you will have to repeat the query as many times as there are pages, adding the required page number to the **page** box for each query. For example, this is page 2 of the results for the query against the Queensland State Archives Flickr account (**per\_page** number has been left at 100):

**flickr** Sign Up Explore Upload Search Sign In

extras optional

per\_page optional

page optional  2

Output: XML (HESCI)

Sign call with no user token?

Do not sign call?

**Call Method...**

[Back to the flickr photos search documentation](#)

`<?xml version="1.0"?><?php header("Content-type: text/xml"); ?>`

```

<rsp stat="ok">
<photos page="2" pages="5" per_page="100" total="559">
<photo id="14545808416" owner="604550488002" secret="a672f0e342" server="3912" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14545808416_3912_100x100" />">
<photo id="14567198934" owner="604550488002" secret="b5179a6edc" server="2903" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14567198934_2903_100x100" />">
<photo id="14567199945" owner="604550488002" secret="d9a0a0a000" server="2915" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14567199945_2915_100x100" />">
<photo id="14582262627" owner="604550488002" secret="4db4ec30b8" server="3854" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14582262627_3854_100x100" />">
<photo id="14582289439" owner="604550488002" secret="7d8ec19a8e" server="5516" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14582289439_5516_100x100" />">
<photo id="14445498241" owner="604550488002" secret="9bdfc7e77b" server="3837" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14445498241_3837_100x100" />">
<photo id="1444775174" owner="604550488002" secret="ea54d1bae5" server="3901" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="1444775174_3901_100x100" />">
<photo id="1444775114" owner="604550488002" secret="729724e282" server="2921" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="1444775114_2921_100x100" />">
<photo id="142622410" owner="604550488002" secret="a621e1bd6d" server="2339" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="142622410_2339_100x100" />">
<photo id="14262240957" owner="604550488002" secret="a621e1bd6d" server="2339" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14262240957_2339_100x100" />">
<photo id="1544024214" owner="604550488002" secret="c704d119e9" server="3271" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="1544024214_3271_100x100" />">
<photo id="14254879027" owner="604550488002" secret="d79d9325f2" server="5544" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14254879027_5544_100x100" />">
<photo id="14440203694" owner="604550488002" secret="cc0c12a26a" server="3085" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14440203694_3085_100x100" />">
<photo id="14441492033" owner="604550488002" secret="f569b8bea0" server="2337" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14441492033_2337_100x100" />">
<photo id="14416192655" owner="604550488002" secret="d0aca6dc0" server="2900" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14416192655_2900_100x100" />">
<photo id="14439970742" owner="604550488002" secret="2ed0da946b1" server="5118" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14439970742_5118_100x100" />">
<photo id="14412192916" owner="604550488002" secret="eb0d40b1a0" server="2901" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14412192916_2901_100x100" />">
<photo id="14254705930" owner="604550488002" secret="979cf1a42" server="3860" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14254705930_3860_100x100" />">
<photo id="14437958661" owner="604550488002" secret="3b9617eb5" server="3063" farm="4" title="<img alt="Photo thumbnail" data-bbox="14437958661_3063_100x100" />">

```

URI: [https://api.flickr.com/services/rest/?method=flickr.photos.search&tags=cat&per\\_page=100&page=2&format=xml&api\\_key=14440203694&secret=cc0c12a26a](https://api.flickr.com/services/rest/?method=flickr.photos.search&tags=cat&per_page=100&page=2&format=xml&api_key=14440203694&secret=cc0c12a26a)

Note the number 2 in the **page** box and also the information in the results query telling you that this is page 2 of 6 in the results list. Entering 3 in the page box and re-running the query will return page 3 in the list, and so on.

## Adding conditions to your call

The default query returns only a limited set of information for each photo. You can ask for further information by adding conditions to the **extras** box near the bottom of the form. Make sure you put a comma between each condition in the list. Some useful conditions are: **date\_upload**, **description**, and **views**.

Note that the **date\_upload** is returned as a UNIX timestamp. You can convert this into a normal date format by using one of the freely available timestamp converters, for example:

<http://www.unixtimestamp.com/index.php>

You can also tailor the search results by date, both the upload date and the date the photo was taken. Simply add the date limits you want into the **min\_upload\_date** and/or **max\_upload\_date** and/or **min\_taken\_date** and/or **max\_taken\_date** boxes in the template. The dates should be entered in this format: YYYY-MM-DD.

Further information on using and tailoring the **flickr.photos.search** query is available here:

<https://www.flickr.com/services/api/flickr.photos.search.htm>

## Saving calls

If you want to save the content you've called through the Flickr API, you have to manually copy and paste the results into a separate document, like .txt. Note that you can only copy and paste one page of results at a time.

## Further information

More information on the Flickr API can be found on the Flickr website:

<https://www.flickr.com/services/api/>