

SquirrelPlex Executive Summary

In the short term, SquirrelPlex will become the next online creative social outlet. Users will have the ability to construct personal online gallery space to display and sell prints/videos/music. But that's just the tip of the iceberg - there's already quite a few solid websites out there that give you this capability, though perhaps none attempt to incorporate all facets of creative expression. In the long term, when SquirrelPlex becomes the next big website to go public for tens of billions of dollars, SquirrelPlex will become a network of multi-use facilities promoting urban growth, after-school art education, local business, and a non-profit approach to community building. I'll get to that part at the end. What makes SquirrelPlex unique and revolutionary is the SquirrelBin.

Squirrels, like artists, dumpster dive and "recycle" what we think is trash. A SquirrelBin is a recycling bin for digital artists (and may end up being used by physical artists to document the progress of unfinished works). While inside your gallery, visitors to your SquirrelPlex page will be able to see and buy copies of your completed, aka, "mastered work." They'll also be able to view, and if your settings allow, download files (For now, only Image/Video/Music file types are being considered, but in Beta that may be expanded depending on user demand) of unmastered material, or in most cases, junk. For now, music files will be limited to 2 minutes and video files limited to a minute in the SquirrelBins (if it's junk, I doubt it'll be any longer than that).

You may be wondering why I would want to upload my junk files (as a flash photographer, anytime the flash doesn't fire, the shot is either deleted instantly or saved to use as a layer), and the answer is simple: Just because it isn't what I wanted in that moment, doesn't mean someone won't take that image and use it as a base layer for another project. By having a sales system pre-integrated into the gallery space, if I wanted to, I could charge other users a download fee on my junk (though, only files free and licensed for the community commons will be entered in the weekly or monthly prizes for highest rated/most downloaded in each file type). Users will have the option to download a plug-in uploader that will be able to run within creative programs (like Adobe Creative Suite and Apple's Final Cut Pro) and allow users to simultaneously upload files as they are deleted from the program's work space. For a video editor like myself, this would help build anticipation from my fans while I'm simultaneously working. Users will also be able to do batch dumps within the uploader. When searching for SquirrelBin content, users will have the option to search by user, region, or file type. This will lead to more exposure for artists and drive users to their personal gallery space. Only users will be able to download SquirrelBin files, while anyone will be able to purchase gallery works.

The website will have a 3-tier user arrangement - Free, Pro, and Power User. With free accounts, users will be required to upload to their SquirrelBin in order to earn download credits (Ratio of upload:download TBD), their SquirrelBin files will delete after 60 days, their page will contain ads from other users, and they will have the highest commission % on their sales, but they will have full use of the site, equal access to said contests, and the option to purchase ads. The Pro users will pay \$10/month (\$100/year), have unlimited download credits, the option to disable ads, and a lower commission % on their sales. The Power user will pay \$100/month (\$1000/year), which includes a customizable ad/marketing strategy (ads included), the lowest commission % on sales, the ability to automatically download applicable files from the SquirrelBins of selected users, their fans will have the option to install a desktop downloader of the Power User's SquirrelBin (for those who want instant access to their favorite artist's trash), and the ability to see exactly who has downloaded their files (For Free and Pro users, this option can be added for a fee - the data will be stored by SquirrelPlex regardless for potential legal/licensing disputes). Power Users will not be eligible for the contests (they'd win automatically, and wouldn't have much use for the prizes).

SquirrelPlex will most likely be used for different purposes depending on the type of user account. The Free user will typically be an amateur, student, or physical artist who doesn't get much benefit from the paid accounts. For them, the gallery space will give them a place to show their

work, interact with fellow artists, make some money if they're good, and via the contests and their SquirrelBin, they could potentially get their 15 minutes of fame. Even if someone like Jay Z or Kanye West (definite power users) sampled a beat from a Free User, they'd still be required to at the very minimum credit the source user (and depending on the licensing options chosen by the user, royalties could be involved). It's also possible that some Free users may put their better work in their SquirrelBin just to win the contests.

On the other side of the spectrum, Power Users will be much smaller in number, but will use SquirrelPlex as another arm in a much larger promotional/marketing/sales machine. This will become yet another tool to connect with their fans and build their brand. Power Users will also probably be Creative Agencies and Broadcast/Television content producers. These users will not only use the site to maximize their outreach, but to source for supplementary content and fish for creative talent. In the middle are the Pro Users, and like it suggests, these users will typically be working professionals in the creative industry, and so their usage of the site would fall between the extremes of the Free and Power users.

Now that you can begin to imagine the website in a nutshell, I'll explain why I decided to design a website that could theoretically become more valuable than Facebook by 2020. The original vision for SquirrelPlex was not even a website, instead it was a vision of multi-use urban structures (spanning several blocks and 8+ stories). These complexes would feature local businesses (coffeeshops, restaurants, grocery store, tattoo shops, clothing stores, etc) on the first floor or two, non-profits above them (with every SquirrelPlex having an after school arts education program/classrooms), and residences above them. The entire complex would be built around a parking deck (a mixed lot that would function to serve the businesses/residents and also hold a small fleet of alternative/green transportation solutions like BioRide and an electric car rental company) which would span half the height of the complex and above that, the rest of the complex's center would be a Hollywood-size studio.

Why a studio, instead of perhaps a rooftop garden, you might ask. The after school art education program in each SquirrelPlex will be centered around the concept that filmmaking has a place for all artistic disciplines. These programs will utilize the studio system to teach kids not only art, but how to collaborate and work together to achieve a group vision (teamwork - something they might learn in sports, but is sorely missing in art education). In the fall, children will learn their chosen discipline, and in the spring, they will collaborate on short film projects. A studio of this size could also be used for rentals. This will become the backbone of an independent studio system designed to become the positive cultural influence Hollywood could never become.

It's a big idea, one that was partially inspired by Manchester's Plant Zero and my own dissatisfaction with Richmond's proposals for Shockoe Bottom. Given the size and scope of these massive complexes, I imagine it'll cost at least \$100 million for each one, and thus I decided to design a website that could theoretically be worth enough one day to finance 200-1000 of these physical SquirrelPlexes in cities all over the world, and if Richmond is integral to making this vision a reality - I'd like to stimulate growth in the city by building the HQ and first SquirrelPlex center in Richmond. Stick that in your pipe, and let's make this dream a reality that changes the world.