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## **Alamy to Change Search Engine**

By: Julia Dudnik Stern

Alamy, a rapidly growing U.K. stock agency, announced plans to change its Web-based search engine in a recent email to contributing photographers. While it is designed to improve search functionality, current image suppliers may have to re-keyword images represented by Alamy.

Supplier-generated image information includes three fields: keywords (with a maximum of 856 characters), caption (128 characters) and description (3,000 characters). When an image buyer enters a search term, the Alamy engine searches all three fields. However, the planned change will “demote the relevance of the description field” and limit it to 2,000 characters.

In preparation for the launch of the new search engine, Alamy is working on a new set of contributor tools. CEO James West says the company is within weeks of releasing a beta version of its first customer search-reporting tool. Contributors will be able to review customer searches that returned their images, including statistics of views and clicks within such searches.

Comparative stats will also be available for other providers whose images were returned by the same search; actual images will not be shown.

According to West, a detailed preview of the new keywording schema will be released in days. West also notes that Alamy has taken precautionary measures so contributors who keyworded images under the old system are not disadvantaged. “We will be applying different relevancy weightings to fields, depending on which system they were keyworded under.” Whether this is a stop-gap measure or a long-term solution will become apparent after the new search engine launches in the middle of the year.

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