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6 June 2007

Cover Story**Alamy**

Alamy claims to have the world's largest online collection of stock photography, with nearly nine million images available. With so much photography, new forms of distribution have become key, explains Alexandra Bortkiewicz, director of photography.

'Photographers are currently submitting high quality jpegs to Alamy in preparation for the release of AlamyUpload, which will allow contributors to submit directly via the internet and eliminate the need to submit images on CD, DVD and other media. This is still in final test phase but it will be eventually rolled out incrementally to all our contributors.

'We released our new search system, AlamySearch, in October 2006. It works on the premise of capturing the popularity factor of images, as indicated by our most active key customers. It's a move away from the traditional way of providing search results, in which the agency's editors dictated what images the customer saw. Our new system relies exclusively on client activity to objectively place the most popular image suppliers higher up the sort order.

'We're developing this approach to provide contributors with the tools and data to analyse how well their work is performing in the market place and see customer's responses to it. By answering questions about why a particular collection is not performing so well, it will perhaps allow them to see where to focus their efforts.

'Another area we're working on as part of this is the Annotation project, which will give contributors a more effective way of classifying and describing their images more effectively.

'We're trying to empower and enable photographers to shape how they perform on Alamy and, in a way, control their destiny within it. And likewise we're trying to give image buyers, the other important part of equation, with relevant and stimulating searches.'

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