

Search goes on

Alamy is testing an improved search engine technology that it says will move images from the best collections to the top of search results. It has applied for patents on two technologies that it says make the new search approach unique in stock photography.

AlamyRank (patents pending) is being tested with a sample of customers. It will reward contributors that provide the best work and the most effective keywording to describe their work, while penalising those that fall below standards or use inappropriate keywords in the hope of getting work seen more often.

A second software package called the Diversity Algorithm (patents pending) will ensure that no one supplier dominates any particular search. It disperses the images so that buyers see work from many different sources before seeing more work from the top-ranked suppliers.

"We are moving further away from a traditional agency system to one where photographers can manage their own collections based on feedback directly from the market. We expect search results will improve as our suppliers respond to information from the marketplace," explains Alamy CEO James West.

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