

Study analyzes search for information in stock photography agencies

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Research carried out at Universidad Carlos III in Madrid analyzes the search and visualization systems used by commercial stock photography agencies. Credit: CORBIS

Stock photography agencies, and not just those companies that dominate the digital photography market, are at the forefront of information search tools.

"Their search, visualization and information downloading systems are extraordinarily versatile from a professional point of view, and they are extremely useful for their clients", comments one of the authors of the report, Professor Antonio Perianes, of UC3M's Library and Information Science Department (Departamento de Biblioteconomía y Documentación). In fact, he goes on to explain, they are leaders in

contributions to Web Semantics thanks to the enormous quantity of taxonomic work that is used to make terminology less ambiguous or to introduce specific metadata (GPS coordinates), that allow for searches based on feelings, ideas or predominant colors, something that would have been implausible just a few years ago.

The study done by these researchers, which was recently published in the scientific journal '*El Profesional de la Información*' (The Information Professional), analyzes this type of search and visualization system to establish the profile and basic characteristics that any commercial image bank must present to its clients, regardless of its size. "We have attempted to establish the minimum necessary requirements that a search program of these characteristics must contain in order to make the most of the materials that are properly described and stored in the system, making it easy for clients and users to locate and use them", the researchers explain.

This study attempts to fill the void that exists in specialized literature with regard to stock photography agencies and their technical characteristics. "It is surprising to see more articles on this type of organization in the economic press than in academic or professional journals, in spite of their high annual net sales", states Professor Perianes. "Moreover, the importance of the digital photography market cannot be overlooked, not just due to its high net sales figures, but also because of its performance on the market, which is very similar to that of other products, as diverse as beer or pharmaceuticals".

One of the characteristics of digital image recovery systems is precisely this possibility of automating certain tasks. Thus, a set of images must be able to easily inherit the descriptions and/or metadata that are common to all of them. In the same way, and from the perspective of the visualization of the results on a screen, it is also essential that the generation of miniatures be automatic. Neither of these requirements is

very complicated from a technical point of view when they are being incorporated into image bank management systems, given that there are many photographic treatment programs that already handle this type of task. However, the absence of these aids can cause serious problems, both for system managers and for their clients.

More information: Image retrieval and visualization systems in stock photography agencies, Luisa Perdices Castillo, Antonio Perianes Rodríguez, PROFESIONAL DE LA INFORMACION Volume: 20 Issue: 4 Pages: 439-443 [DOI: 10.3145/epi.2011.jul.11](https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2011.jul.11) . Published: JUL-AUG 2011 IDS Number: 820EO ISSN: 1386-6710

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