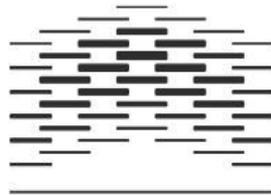




TALLINNA ÜLIKOOL



OSLO AND AKERSHUS
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
OF APPLIED SCIENCES



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA



Sandra Maria Gonzalez Garcia

**Proposal of a method for assessing the quality of stock
photography websites**

Master thesis
International Master in Digital Library Learning
2012

Abstract

The advent of the Internet, the advent of digital photography and the chance of digitalizing large volumes of photographs, negatives, slides or daguerreotypes revolutionized the field of commercial stock photography.

This new digital environment forced stock photography to adapt to the changing needs of its users. One of the main measures that these agencies were faced with these new needs of users was to create their own websites through which to offer their products to their customers. Paper catalogs were replaced by online catalogs, facilitating access and cost savings to users.

Stock photography business is constantly expanding, thus becoming more competitive. To stay in business and keep loyalty in customers, companies cannot stagnate and they need to improve their services every day to meet the demands of their users.

Currently, there are several methods for assessing the quality of websites in general, but there is still no method focused on stock photography websites. This study aims to collect basic tools and features that stock photography websites should include, taking into account the needs and expectations of their users.

To this end, the researcher conducted an observation and comparison of ten stock photography websites selected as a sample and she identified the main characteristics and resources of these kinds of websites. In addition, to obtain the views and needs of users, the researcher prepared two questionnaires.

The study focused on a single type of users of these companies (buyers of images) and a specific type of companies, so-called traditional stock agencies.

The findings of this research and the proposed site-evaluation method are intended to be useful for those professionals responsible for management or maintenance of stock photography websites. Furthermore, these findings may also be useful in the preparation of future methods focused on the needs of different types of users.

Keywords: stock photography, site-evaluation method, online catalogs of photographs, indicators of quality.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and support of the following people:

My parents. Thanks for your love and support in all my decisions, even when they were not the most successful.

My supervisor, Michael Preminger. I know I'm not a student easy of supervising and you made it. Thanks for your advice and your help throughout this long process.

My sister. Thanks for your enthusiasm and for sharing it with me.

Benja. Thanks for always being by my side even in the distance and put up with my oddities.

Leire, Eirik and Alfons. Because what makes a place be so special are the people with you share laughter and tears. Thanks for your friendship.

Roman. Thanks for putting a dash of eccentricity and lawlessness in the rationalism and established order.

My friends in Boiro and Barcelona. Thanks for taking care of me and want me back.

Rafael Pedraza-Jiménez. Thanks for your advice early and your guidance.

Professor Lluís Codina. Thanks for all the articles you have written on this subject and your evaluation method used as inspiration and reference in this study.

Thanks to HiOA. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to conduct my thesis in Oslo.

Thanks to the Universitat de Barcelona for allowing me to live this unforgettable experience.

Thanks to all those professionals in the field of the image that helped with their opinions to the right conduct of this work.

Thanks to professionals working in the development of translation tools such as Google Translate and WordReference. Thank you for allowing that language barriers were not an insurmountable obstacle. Without these tools, this thesis certainly would not have had the same result.

Thanks to all those who somehow contributed to the elaboration of this thesis and I apologize if I have forgotten some of them.

Table of contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
List of tables.....	vi
List of Figures.....	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the research	1
1.2 Statement of the problem and justification of the research.....	2
1.3 Research Questions	2
1.4 Aim and objectives	2
1.5 Methodology of research	3
1.6 Limitations of study	4
1.7 Thesis outline	4
Chapter 2: Literature Review	6
2.1 Introduction.....	6
2.2 Stock photography.....	6
2.2.1 What stock photography industry is	6
2.2.2 How and why digital stock photography arise	7
2.2.3 How a stock photography agency works.....	9
2.2.4 Types of stock photography companies	10
2.3 Types of users and needs	11
2.3.1 Customers of stock photography agencies	11
2.3.2 Information needs	12
2.4 Image search on the web	13
2.4.1 The problem of image retrieval on the web.....	13
2.4.2 Images-Seeking Behaviors	13
2.5 Main features of stock photography websites	14
2.5.1 Saving in investment.....	15
2.5.2 Quality of retrieved information	15
2.5.3 Information about copyright licenses	17
2.5.4 Information about releases	19
2.5.5 Image search for conceptual connotations.....	19
2.5.6 Lightboxes.....	20

2.6 Site-evaluation method	21
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology	24
3.1 Introduction	24
3.2 Type of research: Qualitative approach	24
3.3 Research population and sample	25
3.4 Research method.....	28
Stages 1 and 2: Definition of parameters and indicators	28
Stage 3: Testing the proposed site-evaluation method	29
Stage 4: Refinement	30
Stage 5: Re-testing the site-evaluation method.....	31
3.5 Data collection techniques	31
3.5.1 Analysis and Comparison	31
3.5.2 Online Questionnaire	32
3.6 Ethics in research.....	34
3.7 Limitations of the study.....	35
Chapter 4: Data Analysis.....	36
4.1 Introduction.....	36
4.2 Results of analysis and comparison of ten stock photography websites	36
4.2.1 Parameters	36
4.2.2 Indicators	37
4.3 Analysis of the responses of the two questionnaires	46
4.3.1 Users and their uses of stock photography websites.....	46
4.3.2 User feedback on the proposed parameters and indicators.....	49
4.4 Proposed method for assessing the quality of stock photography websites.....	74
4.4.1 Parameter 1 (P.1): Content	74
4.4.2 Parameter 2 (P.2): Registered users.....	81
4.4.3 Parameter 3 (P.3): Information Architecture.....	89
4.4.4 Parameter 4 (P.4): User Support Service	98
4.4.5 Parameter 5 (P.5): Search	112
4.4.6 Parameter 6 (P.6): Presenting results	135
4.4.7 Parameter 7 (P.7): Purchase	140
4.4.8 Parameter 8 (P.8): Download.....	145
4.4.9 Parameter 9 (P.9): Presence in Web 2.0 platforms.....	146
Chapter 5: Conclusions.....	152
5.1 Introduction.....	152

5.2 Summary of the main results of data collection	152
5.2.1 Type of user and reasons for the use of the services of stock photography websites	152
5.2.2 Recommendations for creating quality stock photography websites that meet the needs of their users.....	154
5.2.3 Resources and services of stock photography websites are not equal to its users	155
5.3 Implications for Further Research	156
References	161
Appendix.....	167
Appendix 1: Questions of the first questionnaire to users of stock photography websites	167
Appendix 2: Questions of the second questionnaire to users of stock photography websites	184
Appendix 3: Testing the proposed site-evaluation method	197
Appendix 4: Re-testing the proposed site-evaluation method	203

List of tables

		Chapter	Page
Table 2.1	Stages of development of parameters and indicators proposed by Codina	2	21
Table 3.1	Template prototype for indicators proposed by Codina	3	29
Table 4.1	Indicators identified in the Parameter 1 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample	4	38
Table 4.2	Indicators identified in the Parameter 2 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample	4	39
Table 4.3	Indicators identified in the Parameter 3 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample	4	40
Table 4.4	Indicators identified in the Parameter 4 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample	4	41
Table 4.5	Indicators identified in the Parameter 5 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample	4	42
Table 4.6	Indicators identified in the Parameter 6 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample	4	43
Table 4.7	Indicators identified in the Parameter 7 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample	4	44
Table 4.8	Indicators identified in the Parameter 8 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample	4	45
Table 4.9	Indicators identified in the Parameter 9 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample	4	46
Table 4.10	Main uses of the stock photography agencies by the users surveyed	4	48
Table 4.11	Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 1	4	50
Table 4.12	Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 1	4	51
Table 4.13	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 1	4	52
Table 4.14	Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 2	4	53
Table 4.15	Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 2	4	54
Table 4.16	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 2	4	54

		Chapter	Page
Table 4.17	Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 3	4	55
Table 4.18	Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 3	4	57
Table 4.19	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 3	4	57
Table 4.20	Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 4	4	58
Table 4.21	Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 4	4	59
Table 4.22	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 4	4	60
Table 4.23	Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 5	4	61
Table 4.24	Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 5	4	63
Table 4.25	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 5	4	64
Table 4.26	Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 6	4	65
Table 4.27	Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 6	4	67
Table 4.28	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 6	4	68
Table 4.29	Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 7	4	68
Table 4.30	Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 7	4	69
Table 4.31	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 7	4	70
Table 4.32	Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 8	4	70
Table 4.33	Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 8	4	71
Table 4.34	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 8	4	71
Table 4.35	Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 9	4	72
Table 4.36	Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 9	4	73
Table 4.37	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 9	4	73
Table 4.38	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 1	4	74

		Chapter	Page
Table 4.39	Definition of the indicator “Photographs, illustrations and images on CD only”	4	74
Table 4.40	Definition of the indicator “Creative and Editorial images”	4	75
Table 4.41	Definition of the indicator “Rights Managed and Royalty Free collections”	4	76
Table 4.42	Definition of the indicator “CD collections”	4	76
Table 4.43	Definition of the indicator “Lightboxes”	4	77
Table 4.44	Definition of the indicator “Shopping Cart”	4	78
Table 4.45	Definition of the indicator “Photography trends”	4	79
Table 4.46	Definition of the indicator “New images”	4	80
Table 4.47	Definition of the indicator “Application for mobile devices”	4	80
Table 4.48	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 2	4	81
Table 4.49	Definition of the indicator “User Registration”	4	82
Table 4.50	Definition of the indicator “User Account”	4	83
Table 4.51	Definition of the indicator “Subscription”	4	84
Table 4.52	Definition of the indicator “Creating, managing and sharing lightboxes”	4	85
Table 4.53	Definition of the indicator “Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark”	4	87
Table 4.54	Definition of the indicator “Orders and downloads history”	4	88
Table 4.55	Definition of the indicator “Adding notes to each image in the lightbox”	4	89
Table 4.56	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 3	4	89
Table 4.57	Definition of the indicator “Language Selector”	4	90
Table 4.58	Definition of the indicator “Domain name easy to remember”	4	91
Table 4.59	Definition of the indicator “Global navigation system”	4	92
Table 4.60	Definition of the indicator “Customized content by audience”	4	93
Table 4.61	Definition of the indicator “Site map”	4	94
Table 4.62	Definition of the indicator “Most Popular Searches”	4	95
Table 4.63	Definition of the indicator “Most Popular Content”	4	96
Table 4.64	Definition of the indicator “Quick links”	4	97
Table 4.65	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 4	4	98
Table 4.66	Definition of the indicator “Search tips”	4	99

		Chapter	Page
Table 4.67	Definition of the indicator “Shopping and subscription tips”	4	101
Table 4.68	Definition of the indicator “Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading images”	4	103
Table 4.69	Definition of the indicator “Information about releases”	4	105
Table 4.70	Definition of the indicator “Information about licensing”	4	106
Table 4.71	Definition of the indicator “Technical information (formats, browsers, etc.)”	4	107
Table 4.72	Definition of the indicator “Useful information for photographers (contributors)”	4	107
Table 4.73	Definition of the indicator “Glossary of terms”	4	108
Table 4.74	Definition of the indicator “Suggestions and comments from users”	4	109
Table 4.75	Definition of the indicator “Contact details with experts in image search”	4	111
Table 4.76	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 5	4	113
Table 4.77	Definition of the indicator “Semantic clarifications”	4	113
Table 4.78	Definition of the indicator “Search by releases”	4	114
Table 4.79	Definition of the indicator “Search by type of image license”	4	115
Table 4.80	Definition of the indicator “Search by type of image”	4	116
Table 4.81	Definition of the indicator “Search by categories”	4	117
Table 4.82	Definition of the indicator “Search by concept”	4	117
Table 4.83	Definition of the indicator “Search by people attributes”	4	118
Table 4.84	Definition of the indicator “Search by technical attributes”	4	120
Table 4.85	Definition of the indicator “Search by location”	4	122
Table 4.86	Definition of the indicator “Search by specific events”	4	123
Table 4.87	Definition of the indicator “More images like this”	4	123
Table 4.88	Definition of the indicator “Similar images by selecting keywords”	4	125
Table 4.89	Definition of the indicator “Autocomplete search terms”	4	126
Table 4.90	Definition of the indicator “Search for a photographer”	4	128
Table 4.91	Definition of the indicator “Search by price”	4	128
Table 4.92	Definition of the indicator “Search by date added to stock photography”	4	129
Table 4.93	Definition of the indicator “Search by date photographed”	4	130
Table 4.94	Definition of the indicator “Search by collection”	4	130

		Chapter	Page
Table 4.95	Definition of the indicator “Search by color”	4	132
Table 4.96	Definition of the indicator “Search by image number”	4	133
Table 4.97	Definition of the indicator “Suggestion of a new search term”	4	133
Table 4.98	Definition of the indicator “Similar images to an image uploaded”	4	134
Table 4.99	Definition of the indicator “Redefinition of the search without deleting criteria previously selected”	4	134
Table 4.100	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 6	4	135
Table 4.101	Definition of the indicator “Different ways of sorting the search results”	4	136
Table 4.102	Definition of the indicator “Customizing the display of the details of the thumbnail”	4	136
Table 4.103	Definition of the indicator “Preview with all the image details”	4	138
Table 4.104	Definition of the indicator “Available actions icons”	4	138
Table 4.105	Definition of the indicator “To emphasize those images with restrictions or special conditions”	4	140
Table 4.106	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 7	4	141
Table 4.107	Definition of the indicator “Customizing price (RM)”	4	142
Table 4.108	Definition of the indicator “Information about the different prices available (depending on size, type of use, etc.) (RF)”	4	142
Table 4.109	Definition of the indicator “Customized license pack”	4	143
Table 4.110	Definition of the indicator “Different methods of payment”	4	144
Table 4.111	Definition of the indicator “Saved license for future purchases”	4	144
Table 4.112	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 8	4	145
Table 4.113	Definition of the indicator “Technical information”	4	145
Table 4.114	Definition of the indicator “Different ways of downloading the images”	4	146
Table 4.115	List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 9	4	146
Table 4.116	Definition of the indicator “Toolbar Web 2.0 applications”	4	147
Table 4.117	Definition of the indicator “Blog”	4	147
Table 4.118	Definition of the indicator “Microblogging platforms”	4	148
Table 4.119	Definition of the indicator “External services for video hosting”	4	149
Table 4.120	Definition of the indicator “Social Networking”	4	150

	Chapter	Page
Table 4.121 Definition of the indicator “Professional Social Networking”	4	150
Table 4.122 Definition of the indicator “Forum”	4	151

List of Figures

		Chapter	Page
Figure 2.1	Yahoo! Images' results for the search "pluto"	2	16
Figure 2.2	Semantic clarification on Getty Images website	2	17
Figure 4.1	Search for photographs, illustrations and cut outs on the Alamy website	4	74
Figure 4.2	Search for photographs, illustrations and images on CDs only on the Punchstock website	4	75
Figure 4.3	Search for Creative and Editorial images on the Corbis website	4	75
Figure 4.4	Search for Creative and Editorial images on the Getty Images website	4	75
Figure 4.5	Search for RF and RM image collections on the Jupiter Images website	4	76
Figure 4.6	Search for RF and RM image collections on the Superstock website	4	76
Figure 4.7	Search for RF and RM image collections on the Alamy website	4	76
Figure 4.8	Image collections on CD on the Punchstock website	4	77
Figure 4.9	Image collections on CD on the Corbis website	4	77
Figure 4.10	Lightboxes on the Getty Images website	4	78
Figure 4.11	Lightboxes on the Inimage website	4	78
Figure 4.12	Lightboxes on the Punchstock website	4	78
Figure 4.13	Shopping Cart on the Masterfile website	4	79
Figure 4.14	Shopping Cart on the Getty Images website	4	79
Figure 4.15	Shopping Cart on the Alamy website	4	79
Figure 4.16	Shopping Cart on the Jupiter Images website	4	79
Figure 4.17	Shopping Cart on the Inimage website	4	79
Figure 4.18	Shopping Cart on the Punchstock website	4	79
Figure 4.19	Photography trends on the Corbis website	4	80
Figure 4.20	Search for new images on the Masterfile website	4	80
Figure 4.21	iPad application on the Alamy website	4	81
Figure 4.22	iPad and iPhone application on the Masterfile website	4	81
Figure 4.23	Registration option on the Inimage website	4	82

		Chapter	Page
Figure 4.24	Registration option on the Getty Images website	4	82
Figure 4.25	Notice about additional services for registered users on the Corbis website	4	82
Figure 4.26	Registration's contributors on the Getty Images website	4	83
Figure 4.27	Registered user's personal page on the Getty Images website	4	83
Figure 4.28	Registered user's personal page on the Media Bakery website	4	84
Figure 4.29	Subscription plans on the Corbis website	4	84
Figure 4.30	Subscription options on the Superstock website	4	85
Figure 4.31	Management options of the lightboxes on the Media Bakery website	4	86
Figure 4.32	Addition of notes and lightboxes' editing on the Getty Images website	4	86
Figure 4.33	Emailing lightboxes on the Getty Images website	4	86
Figure 4.34	Sharing lightboxes between registered users on the Corbis website	4	87
Figure 4.35	Image downloading without watermark available for registered users on the Getty	4	87
Figure 4.36	Orders and downloads history on the Alamy website	4	88
Figure 4.37	Purchase history on the Getty Images website	4	88
Figure 4.38	Adding notes on each image included in the lightbox on the Corbis webpage	4	89
Figure 4.39	Language selector on the Jupiter Images website	4	90
Figure 4.40	Language selector on the Getty Images website	4	91
Figure 4.41	Language selector on the Corbis website	4	91
Figure 4.42	Domain name easy to remember on the Alamy website	4	92
Figure 4.43	Domain name easy to remember on the Getty Images website	4	92
Figure 4.44	Domain name easy to remember on the Media Bakery website	4	92
Figure 4.45	Global navigation bar on the Getty Images website	4	93
Figure 4.46	Global navigation bar on the Photos.com website	4	93
Figure 4.47	Customized content on the Alamy website	4	93
Figure 4.48	Customized content on the Corbis website	4	94
Figure 4.49	Customized content on the Corbis website	4	94

		Chapter	Page
Figure 4.50	Customized content for geographical location on the Getty Images website	4	94
Figure 4.51	Site map on the Getty Images website	4	95
Figure 4.52	Site map on the Photos.com website	4	95
Figure 4.53	Site map on the Alamy website	4	95
Figure 4.54	Most Popular Searches on the Superstock website	4	96
Figure 4.55	Most Popular Searches on the Punchstock website	4	96
Figure 4.56	Most Popular Content on the Getty Images website	4	97
Figure 4.57	Most Popular Content on the Photos.com website	4	97
Figure 4.58	Quick links on the Masterfile website	4	98
Figure 4.59	Quick links on the Getty Images website	4	98
Figure 4.60	Quick links on the Corbis website	4	98
Figure 4.61	Quick links for contributors on the Corbis website	4	98
Figure 4.62	Keywords guide on the Getty Images website	4	100
Figure 4.63	Search tutorial on the Getty Images website	4	100
Figure 4.64	Demonstration videos on the Getty Images website	4	100
Figure 4.65	Search tips on the Superstock website	4	101
Figure 4.66	Shopping tips on the Corbis website	4	102
Figure 4.67	Shopping tips on the Corbis website	4	102
Figure 4.68	Purchase tutorial on the Getty Images website	4	102
Figure 4.69	Information about subscription on the Photos.com website	4	103
Figure 4.70	Support service on the Media Bakery website	4	104
Figure 4.71	Live Chat on the Inimage website	4	104
Figure 4.72	Contact information in different geographical locations available on the Corbis website	4	104
Figure 4.73	Contact information in different geographical locations available on the Corbis website	4	104
Figure 4.74	Information about releases on the Alamy website	4	105
Figure 4.75	Information about releases on the Getty Images website	4	105
Figure 4.76	Information about licensing on the Getty Images website	4	106
Figure 4.77	Information about image rights and licensing on the Punchstock website	4	106
Figure 4.78	Technical information on the Superstock website	4	107
Figure 4.79	Tips for contributors on the Media Bakery website	4	108

		Chapter	Page
Figure 4.80	Useful information for contributors on the Corbis website	4	108
Figure 4.81	Glossary of terms on the Alamy website	4	109
Figure 4.82	Glossary of terms on the Superstock website	4	109
Figure 4.83	Comments from users on the Getty Images website	4	110
Figure 4.84	Comments from users on the PunchStock website	4	111
Figure 4.85	Picture research services on the Alamy website	4	112
Figure 4.86	Picture research services on the Inmage website	4	112
Figure 4.87	Semantic clarifications on the Getty Images website	4	114
Figure 4.88	Semantic clarifications on the Inmage website	4	114
Figure 4.89	Search by releases on the Search page of the Corbis website	4	114
Figure 4.90	Search by releases on the Homepage of the Alamy website	4	115
Figure 4.91	Search by type of image license on the Media Bakery website	4	115
Figure 4.92	Search by type of image license on the Masterfile website	4	116
Figure 4.93	Search by type of image (Creative or Editorial) on the Corbis website	4	116
Figure 4.94	Search by type of image (Creative or Editorial) on the Getty Images website	4	116
Figure 4.95	Search by categories on the Inmage website	4	117
Figure 4.96	Search by categories on the Photos.com website	4	117
Figure 4.97	Search by concept on the Getty Images website	4	118
Figure 4.98	Search by concept on the Jupiter Images website	4	118
Figure 4.99	Search by people attributes on the Media Bakery website	4	119
Figure 4.100	Search by people attributes on the Media Bakery website	4	119
Figure 4.101	Search by people attributes on the Corbis website	4	119
Figure 4.102	Search by people attributes on the Corbis website	4	119
Figure 4.103	Search by people attributes on the Inmage website	4	120
Figure 4.104	Search by technical attributes on the Corbis website	4	121
Figure 4.105	Search by technical attributes on the Corbis website	4	121
Figure 4.106	Search by technical attributes on the Jupiter Images website	4	121
Figure 4.107	Search by technical attributes on the Photos.com website	4	121
Figure 4.108	Search by location on the Getty Images website	4	122
Figure 4.109	Search by location on the Alamy website	4	122
Figure 4.110	Search by location on the Corbis website	4	123

	Chapter	Page
Figure 4.111	Search by specific events on the Getty Images website	4 123
Figure 4.112	Search for similar images on the Corbis website	4 124
Figure 4.113	Search for similar images on the page with image details on the Media Bakery website	4 124
Figure 4.114	Icon of similar images on the Getty Images website	4 125
Figure 4.115	Search for similar images on the page with image details on the Getty Images website	4 125
Figure 4.116	Search by similar images by selecting keywords on the Inmagine website	4 126
Figure 4.117	Search by similar images by selecting keywords on the Getty Images website	4 126
Figure 4.118	Search by similar images by selecting keywords on the Getty Images website	4 126
Figure 4.119	Autocomplete search terms on the Corbis website	4 127
Figure 4.120	Autocomplete search terms on the Inmagine website	4 127
Figure 4.121	Search for a photographer on the Alamy website	4 128
Figure 4.122	Search by price on the Media Bakery website	4 129
Figure 4.123	Search by date added to stock photography on the Corbis website	4 129
Figure 4.124	Search by date added to stock photography on the Media Bakery website	4 129
Figure 4.125	Search by date photographed on the Corbis website	4 130
Figure 4.126	Search by date photographed on the Alamy website	4 130
Figure 4.127	Search by collection on the Inmagine website	4 131
Figure 4.128	Search by collection on the Punchstock website	4 131
Figure 4.129	Search by collection on the Corbis website	4 132
Figure 4.130	Search by color on the Masterfile website	4 132
Figure 4.131	Search by color on the Punchstock website	4 132
Figure 4.132	Search by image number on the Corbis website	4 133
Figure 4.133	Suggestion of a new search term on the Corbis website	4 134
Figure 4.134	Possibility of searching for images similar to a file uploaded on the Masterfile website	4 134
Figure 4.135	Breadcrumbs on the Getty Images website	4 135
Figure 4.136	Sort by relevance and by date added on the Superstock website	4 136
Figure 4.137	Sort by regional relevance on the Corbis website	4 136

		Chapter	Page
Figure 4.138	Customizing options of the details of the thumbnail on the Getty Images website	4	137
Figure 4.139	Thumbnail details on the Getty Images website	4	137
Figure 4.140	Thumbnails details off on the Getty Images website	4	137
Figure 4.141	Thumbnail details customized on the Getty Images website	4	137
Figure 4.142	Preview with all the image details on the Corbis website	4	138
Figure 4.143	Available actions icons on the Getty Images website	4	139
Figure 4.144	Available actions icons on the Corbis website	4	139
Figure 4.145	The Getty Images website highlights the restrictions and special conditions of the images	4	140
Figure 4.146	Customizing price on the Corbis website	4	141
Figure 4.147	Form to request assistance pricing or purchasing images on the Corbis website	4	142
Figure 4.148	Online price calculator of RM images on the Media Bakery website	4	142
Figure 4.149	Table with the price list of RF images on the Getty Images website	4	143
Figure 4.150	Flexible license pack on the Getty Images website	4	143
Figure 4.151	Different methods of payment available on the Inmagine website	4	144
Figure 4.152	Different methods of payment available on the Getty Images website	4	144
Figure 4.153	Information about using a saved license on the Getty Images website	4	145
Figure 4.154	Technical information on the Superstock website	4	146
Figure 4.155	Toolbar Web 2.0 applications on the Getty Images website	4	147
Figure 4.156	Toolbar Web 2.0 applications on the Inmagine website	4	147
Figure 4.157	Blog on the Getty Images website	4	148
Figure 4.158	Blog on the Alamy website	4	148
Figure 4.159	Alamy profile on Twitter	4	148
Figure 4.160	Masterfile profile on Twitter	4	149
Figure 4.161	Corbis channel on Youtube	4	149
Figure 4.162	Inmagine profile on Facebook	4	150
Figure 4.163	Getty Images profile on LinkedIn	4	151
Figure 4.164	Forum on the Alamy website	4	151

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.2 Background of the research

According to Frost (2001), the stock photography industry is a global business that manufactures, promotes and distributes photographic images primarily for use in marketing promotions, packaging design, corporate communications and advertising.

The advent of the Internet, the advent of digital photography and the chance of digitalizing large volumes of photographs, negatives, slides or daguerreotypes revolutionized the field of commercial stock photography.

This important change has taken place mostly in the way of work of the agents involved in the running of stock photography. The first of these agents is the user who needs and looks for images (publishing companies, magazines, press, advertising agencies or television). The second of these agents are the agencies and intermediaries that provide its services and thirdly, the photographers who make possible the existence of this business with their works. The new digital environment forced stock photography to adapt to the changing needs of its users.

One of the main measures that stock photography agencies were faced with these new needs of users was to create their own websites through which to offer their products to their customers. Paper catalogs were replaced by online catalogs, facilitating access and cost savings to users.

Today on the Internet a large number of companies offering these services coexist in an environment where the two giants, Getty Images and Corbis remain as the dominant companies. However, this monopoly is being threatened with the emergence of the so-called Microstock companies that offer photographs of professional and amateur photographers affordable and tailored to the pocket of any user.

Traditional agencies (such as Corbis, Getty Images and Alamy) have been forced to extend their services and their prices in order to satisfy the needs of new kind of users that have emerged (mainly conducting a procurement strategy of Microstock companies).

Stock photography business is therefore constantly expanding, thus becoming more competitive. To stay in business and keep loyalty in customers, companies cannot stagnate and they need to improve their services every day to meet the demands of their users.

1.2 Statement of the problem and justification of the research

When designing a website, the type of audience that the web is addressed and the main information needs of this audience are two key factors that must be considered by the person responsible for the web design. The stock photography webpages are not just informative, but the main purpose of these sites is the sale of the products they offer. To achieve this purpose, it is essential to approach the web design user-centric, since “if a customer can't find a product, then he or she will not buy it” (Nielsen, 2000, p.9).

When designing a new website or improving an existing one, there are two basic manuals for web designers: Information Architecture for the World Wide Web written by Peter Morville & Louis Rosenfeld (Morville & Rosenfeld, 2006) and Designing Web Usability written by Jakob Nielsen (Nielsen, 2000). These two manuals provide recommendations on how to create websites that are usable, accessible and tailored to the needs of potential users. However, the tips offered by these authors are focused on creating websites in general.

Before beginning this study, the researcher carried out a process of exploration and inquiry for recommendations or methods to create top quality stock photography websites. However, this search did not produce any results. So the researcher found it interesting to create her own recommendations or guidelines to facilitate the work of the designers of such websites. This study aims to collect basic tools and features that stock photography websites should include, taking into account the needs and expectations of their users.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the specific recommendations or guidelines for creating quality stock photography websites that meet the needs of their potential users?
2. Are all resources and services offered by stock photography websites in the same level of importance for their users?

1.4 Aim and objectives

Aim

The main purpose of this research is to propose a method for assessing the quality of stock photography websites based on the expectations and needs of users.

Objectives

The objectives pursued by this research are:

- To find out the main reasons why users make use of stock photography as a source of image search instead of other sources.
- To find out the main features and resources of stock photography that users might find useful or essential.
- To provide to professionals involved in the management of stock photography websites a tool to help them to evaluate and improve the quality of services they offer.

1.5 Methodology of research

The researcher originally aimed to conduct a research based on a quantitative method. However, there were several reasons that forced her to change the research method. These reasons included the large amplitude of the study population of stock photography websites, the scarcity of resources and the reluctance of professionals contacted to collaborate on the project. Thus, the sample selection was carried out by selection of information-rich cases, instead of selecting a representative sample of the whole study population, rendering the method mixed, qualitative but with some quantitative elements in the data collection.

The research method used was therefore a mixed method and the research instruments used to collect data were participant observation and comparison of the websites selected as a sample and two questionnaires which were sent to users of these websites.

The researcher studied the specific characteristics of stock photography websites, the specific characteristics of the products offered (stock images) and the specific characteristics of their potential users (see Literature Review). Next, the researcher became a user of ten of these sites in order to carry out a thorough analysis and comparison of these websites. The results of this observation were an initial list of features, that the researcher called indicators. This name was proposed by Codina in his method (Codina, 2006b), which has been used as a model for the development of the proposed site-evaluation method. These initial indicators had only stood the test of the researcher, so it was necessary to put them in touch with “natural” users of stock photography websites in order to demonstrate their importance and usefulness.

For this purpose, the researcher developed an initial questionnaire to potential users of stock photography websites, in which she asked the respondents' opinion about the proposed indicators. In this questionnaire, the researcher also included a specific section of suggestions and improvements of the proposed indicators.

In this first form, one respondent suggested the researcher to differentiate between essential

indicators and additional indicators (or nonessential). According to this informant, there are a number of features and tools that all stock photography websites should offer their users in order to ensure success in the acquisition of their products. In addition to these key indicators, there are other less important indicators that add value to the website, but they are not indispensable for its proper operation.

The researcher followed the advice of this experienced user. She developed a second questionnaire and she sent it to the respondents who answered the first form. The aim of this second questionnaire was to find out what the key indicators are and what the non-essential indicators for the potential users of these websites. These responses and her own user experience helped the researcher to develop the “final” list of parameters and indicators proposed in this study.

1.6 Limitations of study

There are some limitations in this study which could be considered as the factors:

First, purposive sampling was used in this study and the size of the sample represents a limitation of this study. The researcher analyzed and compared only 10 stock photography agencies. Time constraints did not allow the researcher to study more websites.

Secondly, the whole population of users of stock photography websites is very wide. First, respondents in this research were not representative of all professional sectors of the image field which use the services of stock photography companies. And secondly, respondents worked in two specific cities, Oslo and Barcelona.

Finally, time constraints prevented to conduct a more thorough study of the indicators and the different degrees of importance of these indicators according to the needs of different types of users.

1.7 Thesis outline

This thesis consists of five chapters and it follows the APA citation style.

- This Chapter (Chapter 1) is a general introduction to the research. In it, the background and context of the study, the statement of the problem, the aim and objectives, the research questions, the methodology which was conducted and the limitations of the study are explained.
- Chapter 2 reviews the literature of previous research relevant to this research work.
- Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in the research. It describes the methodology approach which was conducted, the data collection method which was used, the sample selection and ethical considerations.

- Chapter 4 discusses the data analysis in this research and presents the findings of the analysis of the websites by the researcher and the findings of the questionnaire.
- Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the research results, the final conclusions and recommendations and suggestions for further researches.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews documented literature on various works related to the research topic of this study. It starts with the discussion of relevant concepts needed to find answers to the research problem.

This chapter begins with the definition of stock photography industry and the main reasons and needs that led to its emergence. It also defines the different types of audience of this business and their main needs.

Before the development of this research, a stage of investigation and review literature was conducted. At this stage various researches concerning the field covered by this study have been consulted. Among these researches, the work done by Perdices Castillo and Perianes Rodríguez (2011) became the main inspiration in the development of this study. In this work, the authors propose the basic features that any commercial stock photography website must offer its customers and users “on issues such as image retrieval, viewing on the screen and downloading depending on several editorial purposes”.

Another essential reference was the work of Codina (2008) where the author analyzes the current status of stock photography business and its main strengths over other image search systems.

Other research literature was carried out in parallel in order to identify methodologies of website analysis. Specifically, this study has been taken into account general methodologies for assessing the quality of websites. In this sense, the methodology proposed by Lluís Codina in his work “Metodología de Análisis y Evaluación de Recursos Digitales en Línea” (2006b), was considered the most suitable to serve as a model for the future methodology resulting from this research.

2.2 Stock photography

2.2.1 What stock photography industry is

Frost (2001) defines the stock photography as a global business that manufactures, promotes and distributes photographic images primarily for use in marketing promotions, packaging design, corporate communications and advertising.

The definition provided by Frost is very consistent with Robledano Arillo's definition (2002), who defines stock photography as archives that acquire and deliver photographic files designed to be useful for professionals engaged in the field of advertising, publishing, media

and graphic arts. This author also adds the use of catalogs on CD ROM and/or paper and the Internet as ways of dissemination of these iconic documents.

From a technical point of view, Codina & Palma (2006) define stock photography as a kind of database that contains the primary source (images) and also secondary sources (records with descriptions of the images). In this case, the authors make a distinction between the databases of images (among stock photography are included) and the search engines. They provide access to information in an “apparently” similar way to the databases, but they do not contain the secondary sources. The search engine, therefore, do not refer to a record, since they refer to the primary document directly.

López Yepes (2003) adds to this definition the following features: the documents held by stock photography are iconic (still images and real-time images for video, film, television, etc.), and the production company is the repository of the collections or at least, it works through a formal agreement with the owners of the images (the photographers, in most cases).

López Jiménez (2009), meanwhile, completes the definition of stock photography with the following features:

- The company that owns the stock photography takes responsibility for managing the copyright of artistic works that offer.
- The company takes the responsibility for the proper accreditation of each sold image.
- The company facilitates through web resources or skilled personnel the location of the right image for the customer.
- In some cases, the company guarantees the exclusive use of the image over a specific period of time.

2.2.2 How and why digital stock photography arise

Frost (2003) points out the emergence of the stock photography industry in its definitive contemporary form in the mid-1970s. Two U.S. Agencies, the Image Bank and Comstock (founded in 1974 and 1975, respectively), it shifted from a largely editorial orientation based on the supply of images for magazine and newspaper articles to an industry that almost exclusively served the needs of consumer advertising and corporate marketing. Its main commercial premise was that in a decade of economic recession, fiscal retrenchment, and tight advertising budgets, advertisers and their agencies would find it more cost-effective to “rent” ready-made images from archives than to commission photographers for specific assignments in the hope of producing the images they sought.

The logic behind the creation of stock photography on the Internet is the same used in electronic commerce, as Evans & Wurster (1999) have called the collapse of “Asymmetries of

Information". Digital networks are now making it possible for a very large number of people to exchange very rich information without the need for intermediaries (p.28)

The creation and implementation of online digital collections was accompanied by a number of transformations in the business model in order to meet the needs of the new model. Between these necessary changes, López Jiménez, (2009) stresses the digitization of the collections and the digital migration. This digital environment forced stock photo companies to adapt themselves, digitizing entire collections, creating websites, using search engines and work environments easy and friendly for its users and modernizing rights management systems (Levine, 2007).

The reasons that prompted the emergence of contemporary digital stock photography agencies were several:

Demands of advertising and editorial industry

The paradigmatic structures and values of stock photography were established and the first transformation was the exclusive dedication to the production of stock for the advertising industry. Thus, the companies became advertising's image-producing arm (Frost, 2003).

The first digital stock photography emerged because of the new demands of a society that required more iconic documents and a better quality of viewing them. These demands came from professionals in the field of advertising, magazines and editorial houses that required iconic material to illustrate their works.

These professionals had difficulties trying to solve issues such as where to get the image or how to take the necessary steps to obtain permission from the authors or heirs of the rights to publish them. It also added to these issues, the inconvenience and expenses involved having to move the creative team to the place chosen to take the picture. In addition it was necessary also to have a proper photographic equipment to achieve a picture with the minimum quality required (López Jiménez, 2009).

Technological advances

Abbot Miller (1999) point out technological advances as an important factor. By the early 1980s nearly all agency photographs were color transparencies, which meant that an original would have to be sent out rather than a print generated from a black and white negative. Most transparencies would be damaged after only five trips to a printer or color house, limiting the lifetime, circulation potential, and profitability of a single image. In 1985 Kodak introduced high-quality duping film, which allowed photographers to make limitless dupes of pictures. A typical international agency will now make an average of 125 copies of a single photograph for circulation to sibling agencies in over 15 different countries.

With this potential for duplication of images, in the early 1980s the first “modern” image catalogues began to be produced. Unlike earlier catalogues, which merely indicated the type of variety of images available, the new catalogues provided a record of the entire archive. Instead of making research requests, clients could ask for a specific picture.

The volume and waste of the catalogues may shift as they were replaced by photo-CD and on-line services.

Copyright Law

Magazines, which traditionally employed staff photographers whose work was the property of the publisher, gradually eliminated these positions in favor of freelance photographers who could sell their out-takes (Abbott Miller, 1999). This potential was reinforced by the 1976 Copyright Act in the US which went into effect on January of 1978. This law stated that a photograph is the property of the photographer: thus, a client who hires a freelance photographer is paying only for “use” of that property. As a result, photographers had much more control over the use and re-use of their images and it became much easier for them to license multiple rights to a given image (Pickerell, 2006; Copyright Act of 1976, 2012).

Changes in the production values

The second major change in the sector occurred in the production values. Stock photography companies had to create a new market for stock images (professional cultural mediators in the advertising industry), a pool of high-quality images that were produced specifically for stock and a cadre of top photographers to create these images. (Frost, 2003)

2.2.3 How a stock photography agency works

According to Frost (2001), to understand how the business works, it is best to focus initially on the individual stock photography agency.

Traditionally, the agency acquires licenses to sell the reproduction rights of photographic images in return for giving photographers a percentage of the revenue generated from these sales. These images are kept in “stock” by the agency, duplicated, filed and cross-referenced according to general categories (“People”, “Lifestyle”, “Nature”, etc.) as well as according to keywords and “plain language” descriptions of content.

In the most common scenario, the stock agency did not own the copyrights to the images it promoted. It simply acquired the license to sell the reproduction rights in return for giving the photographers set percentages of any sales revenue (Frost, 2003). The images for which the agency had acquired reproduction rights would then be stored in the agency archive, filed according to denoted subject matter and cross-referenced for associative “conceptual”

meanings. The agency would market a selection of the images to prospective clients through printed catalogs, and clients would receive any purchased images in the form of print or slides.

This system is called “rights-protected”, “managed rights”, or even “traditional licensing” stock photography, and according to Frost (2003) it has proved mutually beneficial to agencies, photographers, and clients. This system benefits the agencies, since they avoid the production expenses, and they gain access to vast reservoirs of content that they can sell over long periods.

This system also benefits photographers since they pay for image production, but bear very little of the burden of marketing and distribution, and they receive regular income from multiple sales without forgoing copyright.

Finally, clients are also benefited since they are able to acquire, extremely quickly and relatively cheaply, the images of their choice while evading the organizational and financial quagmires of assignment photo shoots and the danger of disappointing results.

Today, the vast majority of stock searches and transactions are made online and the business is dominated by two mega-distributors (Getty Images and Corbis). These companies have been consolidating the industry through aggressive marketing and continuing acquisitions of major collections (Allison, 2006).

2.2.4 Types of stock photography companies

Although there is increasing competition in the market, there are two stock photography companies that monopolize the international scene, Corbis and Getty Images (Levine, 2007; Piclet, 2011). In the '90s, Getty and Corbis revolutionized the photo industry, snapping up the small agencies that dealt in film, digitizing their libraries, modernizing search and rights management systems, and selling their backlists online. (Levine, 2007). They are the most important in the volume of images (million online digital images on every possible subject - history, sports, nature, fashion, music, science, etc.-, and they have hired thousands of photographers scattered around the world). In addition, Getty Images and Corbis are also the most important for their turnover (offices and agents in different countries, serving all types of clients: advertising and marketing, magazines, books, television, film world, Internet, etc.) (Perdices-Castillo & Perianes-Rodríguez, 2011). These two companies are the most representative of those commonly called Macrostock agencies (Codina, 2008).

According to Levine (2007), there are therefore two kinds of stock photography agencies:

- Macrostock: High priced and exclusive stock photography, also known as traditional stock photography (these companies have Royalty Free and Rights Managed image licenses)
- Microstock: Low priced and inclusive stock photography (these companies only have

Royalty Free image licenses)

Thanks to the Internet and digital cameras, thousands of semiprofessional photographers are now selling their shots through so-called Microstock websites to customers around the world. Traditional photographic stock companies charge several hundred to several thousand dollars per image. Microstock prices can be as low as 25 cents, and payments to photographers are even lower, often not much more than pennies per sale (Taub, 2007).

The essential difference lies in the price of the images, the licenses they have and the chance of having the exclusivity of the images (Codina, 2008).

2.3 Types of users and needs

2.3.1 Customers of stock photography agencies

Codina (2008) distinguishes two large segments of users in the field of imaging, which use the services of traditional stock agencies: Creative and Editorial sector.

Creative Sector

Within this sector the following types of professionals are included:

- Advertising and Public relations
- Graphic Design
- Departments of Communication of private companies or Public administration
- Audiovisual production companies that focus their activities in the production of fiction

According Codina, images of this sector have a number of general characteristics:

- They often express concepts and ideas, and do not express specific facts.
- The images have the capacity to represent relatively abstract things like success, fear, science, teamwork, etc.
- They have a high quality.
- They are not necessarily located or in a place or a specific date.

Editorial Sector

Within the Editorial sector the following types of professionals are included:

- Press, daily and non-daily
- Publishing houses

- Audiovisual production companies that focuses their activities in the production of today's news and documentaries

The main characteristics of the editorial image are:

- They are related to current events or events that were current at any particular time.
- They are always linked to a place and a date.
- They do not always have good quality, although its value as evidence is often more important than this lack and they can become highly exclusive.

Pickerell (2006), meanwhile, stands out as key customers of stock photography agencies the following professional groups: book publishers, specialty publishers, magazines, advertising agencies, filmmakers, web designers, graphic artists, interior decor firms, corporate creative groups, and other entities that utilize photography to fulfill the needs of their creative assignments.

2.3.2 Information needs

Devadason & Pratap Lingam (1997) point out that information needs can be affected by a number of factors such as the range of information sources available; the uses to which the information will be put; the background, motivation, professional orientation and other individual characteristics of the user; the social, political, economic, legal and regulatory systems surrounding the user; and the consequences of information use.

According to these authors, when looking for particular information users are influenced by the environment. Among these possible influences, they highlight the following:

- his culture that sets values and policies, and other influences and attitudes;
- the political system that can promote or inhibit activity and information flow;
- the legal and economic systems that impose legal and financial restraints on access to information;
- formal information systems such as libraries and information centers;
- membership group(s) such as professional societies that control "official" information channels;
- reference group(s) composed of individuals with similar specialization or interests but who are not necessarily in the same membership groups;
- invisible college(s), gate keeper(s) a type of reference group sufficiently distinguished by its membership criteria and communication patterns to warrant separate identification;
- formal organizations such as his employing organization;

- his work team, a sub system of the organization that is distinguished because of interpersonal characteristics; and
- himself, that is his cognitive system, motivations, attitudes etc.

2.4 Image search on the web

2.4.1 The problem of image retrieval on the web

We are many users who have experienced at some time the feeling of frustration when facing a process of image retrieval in a voluminous collection.

There are several reasons that can lead the user to this frustration. Robledano Arillo & Moreira González (2002) include the following reasons:

- The user does not always understand how to interact with the system, and many times he/she feels that the possibilities it offers are not allowed to arrive in a reasonable time to the information they need.
- It is possible that the image retrieval system has insufficient search paths, or that these pathways are not been exploited sufficiently due to budgetary, conceptual or technical problems in the time of system design.
- The absence or shortage of information about how to use the system.
- The user may not understand the search terms that are at their disposal to make it easier to refine the search.

Other reasons may be gaps in knowledge on the subject area in which the user performs a search or even in specific aspects of technique and form of photographic expression.

2.4.2 Images-Seeking Behaviors

Morville and Rosenfeld (2006) identified four different behaviors in seeking according to information needs of users (p.34):

- Known-item seeking: when user know what he/she is looking for, what to call it, and where to find it.
- Explanatory seeking: when user is hoping to find a few useful items in his/her traps. In this case, the user is not exactly sure what he/she is looking for. In fact, whether he/she realizes it or not, he/she is looking to learn something from the process of searching and browsing.
- Exhaustive search: when user is looking for everything on a particular topic, hoping to leave no stone unturned. In this case, the user often has many ways to express what

he/she is looking for, and may have the patience to construct his/her search using all those varied terms.

- Re-finding a piece of useful information that user has found upon before.

According to these authors, users don't always know exactly what they want. Users often complete their efforts at finding information in a state of partial satisfaction or outright frustration. Or, during the process of finding, they may learn new information that changes what they are looking for altogether (p.32)

Yoon (2006) identified in his study three stages of the image search process by users:

Initiation refers to the stage where the users have some needs in mind before a search, whereas the representation stage is where users represent their needs through “search terms” which would be processed by an image retrieval system (or an image search engine). At the selection stage, the users select an image from a set of images returned by the image retrieval system in order to fulfill their initial needs.

These three stages defined by Yoon are closely related to the user classification identified by Datta et al. (2006). These authors proposed a classification of types of users based on their intention to find an image on the web. According to these authors, users can be:

- Browsers. This is a user browsing for pictures with no clear end-goal. A typical browser jumps across multiple topics during the course of a search session.
- Surfers. A surfer is a user surfing with moderate clarity of an end-goal. A surfer's actions may be somewhat exploratory in the beginning, with the difference that subsequent searches are expected to increase the surfer's clarity of what he/she wants from the system.
- Searchers. This is a user who is very clear about what he/she is searching for in the system. A searcher's session would typically be short, with coherent searches leading to an end-result.

2.5 Main features of stock photography websites

Search engines like Google and Bing are able to locate, index and incorporate images to their results from long ago. However, “they are not a solution for image search if the user is interested in going beyond a recreational or personal use” (Codina, 2008).

Instead of these resources, professionals working in the field of communication, advertising and graphic design, just making use of the services of stock photography websites, in order to reach the most appropriate image for their project.

The literature review has helped to define in this research, some of the main characteristics and/or resources that provide with added value the stock photography websites, compared to other sources of image search. Some of these features are showed below:

2.5.1 Saving in investment

Abbot Miller (1999) mentioned that before the emergence of contemporary stock photography agencies, magazines and media traditionally employed staff photographers. Codina (2008) and Marcos Recio et al. (2011) also mention in their works the hiring of photographers as a regular activity by companies in the field of advertising and media. But today only a handful of media companies can afford it, while the alternative of finding and buying images in stock photography websites is almost within reach of any media (Codina, 2008).

In general, most of the professionals in advertising and media prefer to work with photographers instead of going to image archives, but then in reality much of the campaigns make use of photographs already taken, as José Luis Moro says in the magazine *El Publicista* (2007): “In an ideal world I would prefer photographers, because there is always more creative freedom than having to start from something that was done. However, in practice, given the usual time constraints and low budgets, working with stock photography is an increasingly attractive option”.

Marcos Recio et al. (2011) are in agreement with the influence of budget and time constraints set out by Moro. According to these authors, to take a good picture requires to have an excellent human and technical team, who can interpret the ideas of the creative team and who knows the characteristics of the industry (advertising, media, etc.). However, this inversion is high and not all the companies have the sufficient budget. Hence, the quick expansion and success of current stock photography agencies.

2.5.2 Quality of retrieved information

Codina (2008) stands out the quality of the retrieved images as one of the main advantages of using stock photography versus search engines. The literature review has helped to collect in this section the most significant aspects of stock photography that give quality to retrieved results.

Different images as a result of the search

Stock photography websites incorporate resources and tools to help the users to refine their search. Search engines also have these resources, such as filters by date, color, size, type or subject. However, according to Lara Navarra & Martínez Usero (2004, p.16), these tools for

limiting the search don't work as expected. The list of images retrieved by a search engine often doesn't meet user expectations. These authors point out the “high percentage of repeated or even inactive results (they don't physically exist on the network but they still remain indexed)”, as one of the most common mistakes of the image search engines.

Filters by images' attributes and semantic clarifications (in order to avoid the noise in the results and the waste of time)

Once the user enters a query into a search engine, he/she accesses to the document directly. Stock photography websites contain (or provide direct access to) collections of original documents and their respective description. Therefore, they contain secondary sources (references) and primary sources (i.e., the document itself) (Codina & Palma, 2006).

However, search engines do not have secondary sources; therefore they have no metadata of the original documents. Thus, in the case of search engines, there is no Information Processing Analysis, indexing documents, etc. For this reason, as pointed out by Codina & Palma (2006), once the user makes a query on a search engine, the system usually returns the user a lot of noise or, otherwise, it can also generate data loss.

In the case of stock photography websites, the system allows the user to refine the search according to different attributes of the image, for example, the characteristics of the people shown in the photograph. The system allows filtering by attributes of the people shown in the image (number of people, gender, age, and ethnicity), technical attributes of the image (point of view, composition, and style), people and specific events, location, etc.

In the case of search engines, the system does not allow the user to specify the search by specific filters, since the images have not been subjected to an Information Processing Analysis. For this reason, in the list of the results retrieved by the search engines, the system returns many images that are not related to the search term. This is what Codina and Palma refer when speaking about noise in search results.

Most of the time, the traditional image search engines such as Google and Yahoo!, return a large quantity of search results. In this way, web users see the need to go through the list and look for the desired images. Cai et al. (2004) consider that the selection of the right image is a “time consuming task since the returned results always contain multiple topics and these topics are mixed together”.

Figure 2.1 show the results returned Yahoo! Images, after entering the search term “pluto”. Clearly, the search results of both image search engines contain two different topics: the dwarf planet called Pluto and the dog named “Pluto” in Disneyworld. The system doesn't know what the user is really looking for. In fact, all these results are related to the query. However, the results of Pluto about solar system may be noise to the user who is looking for dog Pluto. In order to avoid this noise, stock photography websites offer the user “the chance of disambiguating polysemous terms, before returning the list of results” (Perdices

Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez, 2011).

Figure 2.2 shows one of the support options that many stock photography agencies (Getty Images, in this case) provide their users in order to avoid the ambiguity in terminology: “the semantic clarifications” (Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez, 2011). Thus, in the case of stock photography websites, before returning the list of the results, the system requires the user to specify the exact term search. This tool prevents the mixture of topics in the list of results and consequently, it also saves user's time.

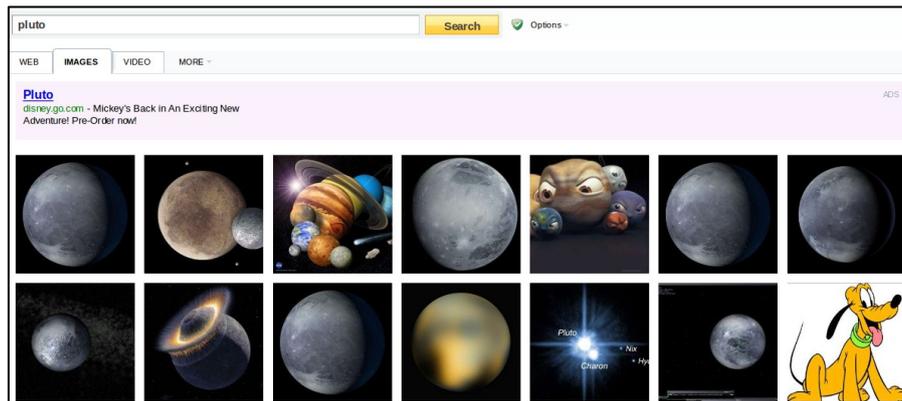


Fig. 2.1 Yahoo! Images' results for the search “pluto”

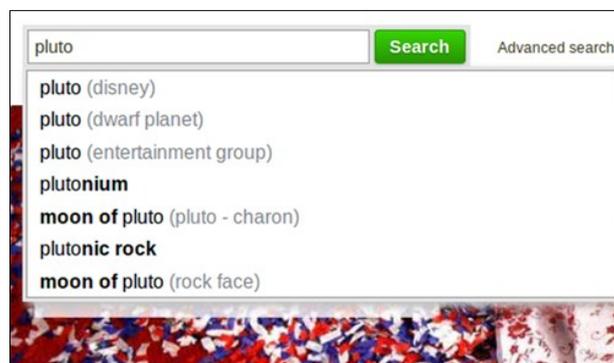


Fig 2.2 Semantic clarification on Getty Images website

2.5.3 Information about copyright licenses

“Search engines perform an agnostic search. This means that when a search engine returns a series of images in response to a question, it does it ignoring any property rights of these images” (Codina, 2008).

Copyright is a form of protection granted by law for original works of authorship fixed in a tangible medium of expression. Copyright protects original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works, such as poetry, novels, movies, song, photographs, computer software, and architecture (United States Copyright Office, 2012).

It is “the right to copy”, but also gives the copyright holder the right to be credited for the work, to determine who may adapt the work to other forms, who may perform the work, who may financially benefit from it, and other related rights (Copyright, 2012).

There are a number of benefits to rights management. For the photographer (as a copyright owner), it enhances control over intellectual property. Keeping track of the “who, what, where and when” of usage rights granted makes it possible to track use of an image, to identify infringing usages, and so to recover revenues. For the stock buyer, licenses granted for an image allows them to determine if there have been competitive uses, and it also allows the possibility of licensing an “exclusive” within their industry or a territory (Sanger & Reid, 2006).

Today, there are two ways that stock images are licensed: Rights Managed and Royalty Free.

Rights Managed (RM) refers to a copyright license which, if purchased by a user, allows the one time use of the photo as specified by the license (Rights Managed, 2012). Rights Managed licensing is priced on use, so the particulars of the use -such as medium, territory and duration- all are considered in determining the license fee. RM is based on the simple pricing logic that big uses pay more, and small uses pay less. So, a national advertiser pays more to feature an image on their billboards than a local business pays to use it in their store display (Sanger & Reid, 2006).

Royalty Free (RF) refers to a copyright license where the user has the one-time right to use the photo without very many restrictions. Licenses vary by each site so it is important to read the License Agreement prior to licensing. Unlike the case with the Rights Managed license, the user can use the image in several projects without having to purchase any additional licenses (Royalty free, 2012). RF images are most commonly priced by file size. Newer variations, such as subscription and Microstock, have offered deeper discounts to buyers, reducing the price per image (Sanger & Reid, 2006)

Stock photography websites allow their users to filter the results taking into account the type of license. However, if instead of looking up an image in a stock photography, the user performs the same query in a search engine, the type of information that he/she obtained from each of the retrieved and selected images is different. In the case of search engines, the system does not return the user any details about the license or image rights. The only information the user gets is a warning that the image may be subject to copyright.

Stock photography "establish a clear legal and contractual framework between the user, the use of the image and the owner of the copyright of the image" (Codina, 2008). Meanwhile, the search engines do not offer users any support in legal issues. Thus, if the user of a search engine is interested in using an image for commercial purposes, he/she must apply directly to the administrator of the website where the image appears. Thus, the user can know the conditions of use of the retrieved image.

It should be noted at this point that sometimes it is impossible to contact the person who owns the image rights; since he/she does not provide contact details on the website that hosts the image. In other cases, the retrieved image by the search engine is included in a website that, in turn, obtained the image from another website; so it is very difficult to contact the owner of the rights.

2.5.4 Information about releases

A release is a brief contract that clearly indicates that a person or property owner has granted the photographer their permission to use their likeness or property in an image to be used for commercial purposes. Once signed by both parties, this legally binding document serves to protect those involved in the licensing process that the proper authorizations have been granted (Allison, 2006). There are two kinds of releases: Model Release and Property Release.

A Model Release says that the person being photographed has given consent to be photographed and to the use of the images captured by the photographer (American Society of Media Photographers [ASMP], 2012), whereas a Property Release says that the owner of a certain property, such as a pet or a building, has given the photographer consent to take and use images of his/her property. It is not necessary one release for public property, but for images of private property -and particularly of objects that are closely identified with specific people- the photographer will be safer if he/she gets a release (ASMP).

When a user gains access to a stock photography and selects any image, the system provides him/her all the details of the image, such as title, type, photographer, collection, size, keywords, availability, license type and release information.

2.5.5 Image search for conceptual connotations

Barthes believed that an image produces and is associated with certain ideas. According to Barthes' theory (1977), image messages are composed through denotation and connotation. Denotation is the literal meaning or reference of a sign, whereas connotation is the meanings suggested or implied by a sign. For instance, Mickey Mouse denotes a specific cartoon character, while Mickey Mouse connotes "Disneyland, 'happiest place on Earth', childhood, etc."

Stock photography websites allow the users to perform a search according to different attributes of the image. Among the search and filter criteria that include stock photography websites, we can mention technical attributes of the image, such as color, orientation, size, point of view, etc.; characteristics of people in the picture (number of people, gender, age, ethnic group, etc.) and, finally, connotative aspects of the image (subjective attributes).

This conceptual connotation becomes a resource that provides stock photography added

value compared to other sources of image search (such as search engines) (Codina, 2008). According to this author, the possibility of assigning a specific conceptual connotation to an image can only be achieved through the use of controlled vocabularies. Thus, natural language indexing used by the search engines makes it impossible to provide the image this meaning.

Machin (2004) considers that this option to search by conceptual themes is “the true *raison d’être* of stock images”. In fact, one of the photographers interviewed by this author stands out as “the most important thing about stock photography images that they evoke moods and concepts” (p.16). Machin categorize conceptual search terms included in stock photography into two main categories:

(a) mental states,

(b) themes expressing core values associated with the people, places and activities shown.

The author divides this last group in the following subgroups: goals and motives (such as friendship, love, curiosity, freedom, satisfaction, etc.); positive characteristics of people, places, things and/or activities (such as determination, elegance, harmony, sensuality, etc.); negative characteristics of people, places, things and/or activities (such as greed, vanity, aggression, etc.); positive mental states (content, nostalgia, cheerful, etc.); and negative mental states (fury, fear, suspicion, hysteria, etc.).

Greisdorf & O’Connor (2002) asked participants to assign given terms to images as well as to generate descriptive terms on their own for the images. The results of both tasks demonstrated that connotative messages are important characteristics of an image. These lines of research support the idea that connotative messages could be one of key elements in enhancing user satisfaction in image retrieval.

2.5.6 Lightboxes

Struck (2011) defines lightbox as a place in stock photography websites where users can save the images they are interested in, and later, go back to decide if they want purchase a license for it. Lightboxes allow users to take some time to review the images, compare the images and examine them thoroughly before purchasing a license. They allow users to separate the ones they are interested in from those they don’t need.

This author stands out the presentation to others as another use for a lightbox. User can compile a gallery of images after he/she has filtered through everything else, and have a discussion based on the images in the lightbox. Along the same lines, if the user works remotely with other coworkers, he/she could compile those images into a lightbox and share the lightbox with a contact via email. By being able to narrow down the images prior to others taking a look saves time and money for the company.

Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez (2011) also noted the importance of the lightboxes in

such websites. Besides, these authors point out the most important features that lightboxes should offer. These features are the following:

- to name these collections,
- to add notes,
- to move images from one lightbox to another,
- to print them (such as photo contact sheet),
- to send them by e-mail to other users (as a URL),
- to share them with other users,
- to send them directly to the purchase area.

2.6 Site-evaluation method

The evaluation of digital resources is a discipline of Information Science that was born in the 90's when the Web was established in a credible and valuable resource for academics and professionals (Codina, 2006c). However, according to Codina, these valuable resources have always shared a place in the Web with fraudulent (a), very little interest (b) and riddled with errors(c) websites. Therefore, as noted, at some point in the nineties, a new need emerged in the field of digital content: the need to develop methods that allow determining which sites deserve to be part of directories or databases with quality digital resources.

The proposed analysis presented in this study has been performed using the general method for the evaluation of digital resources and websites with digital content, proposed by Lluís Codina (2006b) in his work “Metodología de Análisis y Evaluación de Recursos Digitales en Línea”. The site-evaluation method proposed by Codina focuses on the identification of parameters and indicators. Parameters answer the question “what do we want to evaluate?”, whereas indicators answer the question “how do we evaluate this parameter?”

Codina defined four stages for the development of parameters and indicators. These stages are:

Stage	Activities	Result
1. Analysis	1. Definition of the objectives of the evaluation and the objectives of the potential audience. 2. To determine the specific characteristics of the kind of websites that will be evaluated, taking into account the audience and the objectives of the websites. 3. Study of the most typical features of the websites to be evaluated.	List of parameters to be evaluated.

Stage	Activities	Result
2. Design	1. Definition of the most significant components of the parameters. 2. Definition of the title, statement, method of examination, procedure and mark scale for each indicator.	List of indicators for each parameter. Full record of each indicator.
3. Test	Application of the site-evaluation method to a small group of websites. It may be sufficient to apply the analysis from one to five sites.	Table of results of the evaluation.
4. Refinement	1. Study of the adequacy of the indicators and parameters to the objectives pursued taking into account the initial results. 2. Definition of the difficulties of measuring the indicators. 3. Definition of the degree of subjectivity in the indicators, etc. 4. Suggestions to improve or modify the indicators.	Refined list of parameters and indicators.

Table 2.1: Stages of development of parameters and indicators proposed by Codina

The development of a method is based on other methods. In developing his method, Codina followed a number of steps as mentioned in this work “Evaluación de recursos digitales en línea: conceptos, indicadores y métodos” (Codina, 2007).

First, the author conducted an in-depth evaluation of the most significant agencies in the environment of Information Science. Among these agencies the author mentions ADAM (www.adam.ac.uk), ARGUS (clearinghouse.net), BUBL (www.bubl.ac.uk), Resource Discovery Network (www.rdn.ac.uk) and SOSIG (www.sosig.ac.uk).

Secondly, Codina proceeded to conducting online research to locate relevant documents on the matter. Most of these studies used as reference included proposal of lists of parameters and indicators to be considered in the evaluation of digital resources. Among the works cited as reference, Codina highlights the works written by Smith¹, Yourdon², (.), Belcher et al.³ and Alexander & Tate⁴.

Thirdly, Codina included in this group of indicators the most important requirements of “Information Architecture”. For the development of these indicators, the author took as reference the work Information architecture for the World Wide Web written by Rosenfeld and Morville (1998)⁵.

¹ Smith, A. (1997). Criteria for evaluation on Internet information resources. <<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/~agsmith/evaln/index.htm>>),

² Yourdon, E. (1993). *Análisis estructurado moderno*. México: Prentice-Hall Hispanoamericana, 735 pp

³ Belcher, M. et al. (1999). *DESIRE information gateways handbook*. <<http://www.desire.org/handbook/>>)

⁴ Alexander, J.E. & Tate, M.A. (1999). *Web wisdom: how to evaluate and create information quality on the web*. Mahwah (NJ): Lawrence Erlbaum

⁵ Rosenfeld, L. & Morville, P.(1998). *Information architecture for the World Wide Web*. Cambridge: O'Reilly, 204 p.

The aim of the group of parameters and indicators presented in Codina's method was to provide quality criteria for websites or publications that within the social and cultural field in a broad sense: media websites, university websites, online publications in the art field, culture and science, museum websites, etc. This method sought to provide quality criteria to those sites.

Codina (2006a) states that “if we use very efficient and detailed criteria for assessing the quality of a site, then this evaluation becomes problematic due to the costs of its implementation”. Therefore, depending on the context and objectives of the institution interested in applying the methodology, some different levels of completeness must be applied. For instance, if a company wants to test the effectiveness of customer support system of its website, it will need to use only those indicators that focus on the evaluation of this aspect. Likewise, if a company is interested in comparative analysis of a large number of websites; in this case, the selection of the entire set of parameters and indicators applied may be useful.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the study of the methodology that was used in this research to answer the research question. It analyzes the type of research having been conducted, the sample which has been selected, the method research and the techniques of data collection. In addition, ethical considerations and research limitations are also explained in this chapter.

3.2 Type of research: Qualitative approach

In social science research there are three different research approaches: qualitative, quantitative and mixed. Marvasti (2004) pointed that quantitative research involves the use of methodological techniques that represent the human experience in numerical categories, sometimes referred to as statistics. Otherwise, qualitative research provides detailed description and analysis of the quality, or the substance, of the human experience (p.8). On the other hand, “mixed methodology combines the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research, providing both an in- depth look at context, processes, and interactions and precise measurement of attitudes and outcomes” (Lodico, 2006, p. 282).

For this research, the researcher decided to use a qualitative approach, since the main aim of the research is to propose a method for assessing the quality of stock photography websites. The definition provided by Marvasti of qualitative methodology fits the purpose of this research, which uses as its main data collection instrument the description and analysis of human experience, in this case, in the use of stock photography websites.

According to Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2011), the questions asked in this type of research usually begin with words like *how*, *why* or *what*. (p. 4). At the beginning of the study, all questions asked by the researcher began with these interrogative words:

- How do stock photography work?
- What are the main features offered by these websites to their users?
- What are the features offered by stock photography that users believe more useful?
- Why do users make use of stock photography websites as a source for image search instead of other sources?

According to Maykut & Morehouse (1994, cited by Pickard, 2007) “when human experience and situations are the subject of the research, then the human as instrument is the only instrument which is flexible enough to capture the complexity, subtlety, and constantly changing situation which is the human experience”. In this study the human factor becomes

the main source of information used by the researcher to collect the data; hence the qualitative methodology is the most appropriate choice for this research.

The methodology of this research was carried out taking in six stages: the literature review, the analysis of a sample of ten stock photography websites, the definition of parameters and initial indicators to measure quality, the development of two questionnaires to find out the users' needs, the definition of the “final” list of parameters and indicators and the test of the site-evaluation method proposed in two stock photography websites.

3.3 Research population and sample

In any research, the sample selection becomes a key process for the proper conduct of the investigation. According to Pickard (2007), sampling is used when it is not possible or practical to include the entire research population in the study. She defines sampling as “the process of selecting a few from the many in order to carry out empirical research” (p. 59).

There are two types of sampling techniques: the probability sampling and the purposive sampling. This study is based in a purposive technique, because the purpose of the research is not “provide a statistical basis for generalizing” (p. 64), as happens in the case of the studies which use the probability sampling. Patton (2002, cited by Pickard 2007) defines the logic of purposeful sampling as the selection of *information-rich* cases for study in depth. He defines these information-rich cases as “those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance of the purpose of the research” (p.64).

In this study, the wider population is composed of stock photography websites. However, the study does not analyze all stock photography websites with presence on the Internet, but it focuses on those websites belonging to a particular type of companies that are part of the stock photography industry, that Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez (2011) called “stock photography agencies” and Frost (2003) called “traditional stock agencies”. The companies that own these websites are characterized by the following attributes (Codina, 2008).

- They are companies that have large collections of images (over tens of millions of images, in some cases),
- The images that they offer are characterized by high prices (from tens to hundreds of euros)
- They offer images with the two types of commercial licenses (Royalty-Free and Rights-Managed)
- They include content aimed at the two types of sectors in the field of imagery: Editorial and Creative sector.

On the other hand, those websites involved in specialized contents are also not included in the research population (such as stock photography websites that are specialized in images

of specific locations, sports, travel, etc.).

Once the research population was defined, the next step for the researcher was to define the sample. Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2011) consider very important the fact of working with small samples so get in-depth understanding of the situation (p.45). Following the advice of these two authors and considering that the research population is not very wide (since it focuses on a part of the stock photography industry and not on the whole industry), for this study a sample of ten websites has been selected.

To defining the ten websites that compose the sample of this study, the following steps were carried out:

1. At first, it was considered looking for works or studies that could include rankings of stock photography websites according to website quality. However, this search did not achieve any positive results; so it was decided to change the strategy and taking into account the audience of the websites for the sample selection.

2. For this selection based on audience data, the Traffic Rank of *Alexa The Web Information Company*⁶ has been selected as the main source of information.

Alexa makes its worldwide popularity rankings of the most visited websites by making inferences from data collected from users who have installed Alexa toolbar in their browser. It is a tool that records the number of visits received by a website.

To determine the most popular stock photography websites at the discretion of Alexa rank, the following query was performed:

Inside the Top Sites section, a search by category was selected. Within all categories retrieved by Alexa, "Business" was the one that best fit the type of websites under analysis. Within the category of "Business", the following subcategories were selected: "Arts and Entertainment" – "Photography" – "Stock" – "Companies". The results of this filtering, mixed stock photography companies that included general content with stock photography companies that included specialized content (for example, stock photography companies specialized in travel pictures, science, history, sports, etc.).

The research population does not include these last-mentioned websites, so that those sites with specialized content that are included in Alexa ranking have not been taken into consideration in the selection of the sample. Among the 20 first results from Alexa, there are three stock photography websites that meet the requirements for the selection of the sample. They are the following:

- Getty Images: <http://www.gettyimages.com/>
- Alamy Stock Photography: <http://www.alamy.com/>
- Masterfile Stock Photos: <http://www.masterfile.com/>

⁶Alexa The Web Information Company: <<http://www.alexa.com/topsites>>

3. The meager results obtained by reviewing the Alexa ranking, led the researcher to seek new sources of information.

The search term “stock photography websites” was entered into Google. The first results of the search showed directories or indexes of stock photography websites. However, these companies appeared sorted by alphabetical order, and this criterion was not taken into account in the definition of the sample. For this sample selection, the researcher was interested in finding a directory whose sort order was based on annual turnover or the amount of resources (images, in this case).

The list of results returned by Google included a directory that was appropriate to the needs of the study. This directory named Budget Stock Photo⁷ includes different lists with the most important stock photography websites. The website compiles extensive listings of free and low cost stock photo agencies as well as listing some of the big names in the full price marketplace.

Among the top ten traditional stock agencies⁸, Budget Stock Photo highlights the following companies in terms of more income and more hosted images:

1. Getty Images: <http://www.gettyimages.com/>
2. Corbis: <http://www.corbisimages.com/>
3. Alamy: <http://www.alamy.com/>
4. Superstock: <http://www.superstock.com/>
5. Media Bakery: <http://www.mediabakery.com/>
6. Jupiter Images: <http://www.jupiterimages.com/>
7. Photos.com: <http://www.photos.com/>
8. Iclipart: <http://www.iclipart.com/>
9. Clipart.com: <http://www.clipart.com/>
10. Punchstock: <http://www.punchstock.com/>

Iclipart and Clipart.com are two websites that include mostly drawings and clipart, so they were excluded from the final sample because they did not conform to the essential characteristics of the research population. Instead of them, the two stock photography websites were next on the list, were included in the final sample: Inmage and Masterfile.

The final sample consisted, therefore, of the following ten stock photography websites:

1. Getty Images: <http://www.gettyimages.com/>
2. Corbis: <http://www.corbisimages.com/>
3. Alamy: <http://www.alamy.com/>

⁷Budget Stock Photo: <<http://www.budgetstockphoto.com>>

⁸Ranking of Traditional Stock Agencies: <http://budgetstockphoto.com/full_price_agencies.html>

4. Superstock: <http://www.superstock.com/>
5. Media Bakery: <http://www.mediabakery.com/>
6. Jupiter Images: <http://www.jupiterimages.com/>
7. Photos.com: <http://www.photos.com/>
8. Punchstock: <http://www.punchstock.com/>
9. Inmagine: <http://www.inmagine.com/>
10. Masterfile: <http://www.masterfile.com/>

3.4 Research method

According to Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2011), when selecting a research method or methods for a particular project, is indispensable to have a tight fit between the purpose and the method selected (p.5).

The purpose of this research is to propose a method for assessing the quality of services provided by stock photography websites. The researcher decided to use the mixed method as research method, since it is the one that best suits the purpose of the study. The research method used in this study is therefore mainly qualitative, but it has with some quantitative elements in the data collection

According to Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2011), some research projects cannot be adequately completed using only qualitative methods and require a quantitative component as well (p.277). Qualitative methods require an analytical design that often deals with the analysis of textual data for meaning, while quantitative methods, such as surveys, answer questions such as How many? How often? (p.279)

According to Greene & Caracelli (1997, cited by Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011) an important logic behind the application of this design is that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”. Thus, the combination of two different methods can create a synergistic research project in which one method enables the other to be more effective (p. 278).

The researcher did not find in the literature review a definition of a research method that matches the method used in this study. This study attempts to propose a site-evaluation method and to this end, the researcher used mostly her own experience and perspective to analyze and compare the websites of the sample.

The researcher used as a reference for this investigation, the stages defined by Codina for the development of parameters and indicators (see section 2.6 in Literature Review).

Stages 1 and 2: Definition of parameters and indicators

Parameters examine what we want to evaluate in the website, whereas indicators respond to how this parameter will be evaluated.

For instance: if we want to measure the search system of the website (parameter), one indicator that might assess this feature would be: Does the stock photography website allow its users to search by image price?

The researcher was the person responsible for carrying out the analysis and comparison of websites. She has an academic background in the field of Information Science and Management of Digital Contents. The researcher has extensive experience in the use of the Internet and in the management of digital repositories, while she also has advanced knowledge in Web Usability, Web Accessibility and Information Architecture. The academic background of the researcher allowed her to conduct the observation of the sample websites without assistance.

Following Codina's method (Codina, 2006b), the researcher prepared a table for each indicator. These tables were created from the template prototype proposed by this author and that contains a number of fields (see Table 3.2). Furthermore, in the study, each indicator was accompanied by, at least, a screenshot that illustrates the indicator described in the table.

Definition	Brief definition of the indicator and what it purports to measure.
Examination	Question/s that the evaluator should be done to assess the quality of the indicator.
Examples	Real example of good practice in the use of the indicator. This also will help to understand how to evaluate the indicator.
Procedure	Place of the website where the indicator can be found. It can also be explained here how to reach the indicator and how to proceed to evaluate it.
Mark	Recommended rating scale for the indicator. -A mark 0-1 is recommended in the following cases: If the indicator is present on the website or not (yes / no), or if its use is appropriate or not (good / bad). -A mark between 0-3 is recommended in the cases that we want to evaluate the degree of quality. A misuse of the indicator would be 0; a sufficient fulfillment but with limitations would be 1; a significant fulfillment would be 2 and an excellent fulfillment would be 3.

Table 3.1: Template prototype for indicators proposed by Codina

Stage 3: Testing the proposed site-evaluation method

After defining parameters and indicators, the researcher conducted the testing of the proposed site-evaluation method with two stock photography websites: NTB Scanpix (Norway) and AGE Fotostock (Spain) (see Appendix 3).

Score of each indicator

According to the empirical evidence, Codina (2006b) suggests the following scores for indicators:

In his work, Codina presents two different types of indicators. First, there are some indicators that have a binary nature, that is, they can be present on the website or not. These indicators are scored 0 or 1. An example of this type of indicator is "Search tips". In this case, the question for examining the indicator is as follows: Does the website have Search tips? The only two possible answers are Yes or No. This indicator is then measured with a score of 0 or 1.

The other type of indicators is scored from 0 to 3, depending on the suitability of the site to the optimal situation described in the definition of the indicator.

An example of this type of indicator is "Search by people attributes". In this case, the optimal situation would be those cases in which the website would allow the search by number of people, gender, age, ethnicity and specific people. However, there are some stock photography websites that only allow users to search by number of people and ethnicity. In this case the score of the indicator would not be 3.

Overall score

All indicators have the same level of importance in the evaluation method, so that in calculating the final score, the researcher decided to normalize the scores of the two types of indicators. Thus, the actual score of (0-3)'s was divided by 3, so that the maximum value that enters the sum is 1, in line with the (0-1)'s measures. Thus, the total score of the method matches the number of indicators and all indicators are equally important in the analysis of websites.

When calculating the overall score, Codina (2006b) suggests dividing the total score by the number of indicators that have been applied. Besides, the author provides a range of between 1.9 and 3 for the best websites. Websites with a score less than 1.5 points might need review; while those sites with a score less than 1 point, might need a makeover.

Stage 4: Refinement

The refinement stage of the parameters and indicators was carried out by consulting users of stock photography websites. Through two online questionnaires, professionals in the field of advertising, media, press and publishing responded to a number of questions, which sought to find out the importance of the proposed parameters and indicators.

Responses were analyzed by the researcher and the list of parameters and indicators was

modified according to these responses.

Stage 5: Re-testing the site-evaluation method

Having defined the final list of parameters and indicators, a new test of the two previously proposed stock photography websites (Scanpix and AGE Fotostock) was conducted by the researcher (see Appendix 4).

3.5 Data collection techniques

In the process of data collection, the researcher made use of two different techniques: the analysis and comparison of the websites selected as a sample and the development of two questionnaires addressed to some users of these websites.

3.5.1 Analysis and Comparison

As mentioned before, one of the main objectives of this research was to find out the main resources and tools that users consider most essential and useful. Thus, the first step for the researcher was to find out “the basic features that any commercial stock photography website must offer its customers and users, regardless of their size” (Pack, 2009).

The primary data of the research was collected using the observation technique, whose main purpose is to provide evidence of the “here and now” and discover how people behave in particular situations (Pickard, 2007, p. 200).

Unlike what happens in the vast majority of researches using observation technique, in this study the research did not focus on observing actions and behaviors of people (p. 201), but it focused on observing and testing the resources and services offered by the websites selected as sample.

In the technique of observation, when the researcher cannot assume a role of a complete outsider, there are three basis choices: the participant observer, the semi-participant observer or the non-participant observer. In this study, the researcher assumes the role of participant observer, since during the five months that the research lasted, the researcher became an active user (buyer of images) of the websites analyzed, in order to “develop an *insider's view* of what is happening” (p. 203).

At this stage of exploration, the researcher compared the ten websites selected as a sample and she extracted those features that were repeated throughout. On the other hand, the researcher observed the existence of certain features that only some of the websites included, but that provided an added value compared to other competitors. The user experience of the researcher demonstrated the usefulness of these features.

From these features defined, parameters and indicators have been identified and developed following Codina's method (Codina, 2006b). Next, the researcher proceeded with the development of two online questionnaires to get feedback from potential users of stock photography services about the indicators defined.

3.5.2 Online Questionnaire

After defining the parameters and indicators, the researcher was interested in knowing the opinion of the “natural” users of such websites. As already mentioned, the researcher for five months became a user. However in such a short period of time, she was not able to find all the weaknesses and strengths of these services. Then there was a need to consult with habitual and more experienced users.

In this case we cannot talk about research population or representative sample, since all users of stock photography websites are too many (see Chapter 2.3 of Literature Review) and users who agreed to participate in this research are not representative of this set of potential users. The opinions of these users were used, therefore, to complete and refine the data obtained by observation and comparison of the websites.

The instrument that the researcher used to collect these opinions were two questionnaires, whose questions were designed taking into account the objectives of the research (see Appendix 1 and 2).

The use of questionnaires in research is based on one basic underlying assumption that “the respondent will be both willing and able to give truthful answers” (Burns, cited in Pickard, 2007, p.183). The main reasons that led the researcher to select this technique as the most suitable were the geographic dispersion of respondents (Barcelona and Oslo) and the safety of anonymity. For the same reasons, questionnaires were designed to be distributed online.

The online questionnaires were used, therefore, as research instrument to collect qualitative and quantitative data for the research. The main objective of conducting this technique was to determinate the degree of importance that potential users gave the indicators proposed by the researcher after the process of analysis and comparison of websites. The researcher also sought through these questionnaires the suggestion of new indicators.

Both questionnaires were aimed primarily at image buyers, since they are the users who have more problems in the use of these websites, according to the literature review (Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez, 2011; Codina, 2008). They were designed using the tool provided by Google to develop forms for free. The questionnaires were sent by the researcher to a third party via email, who was in charge of distributing it among her customers, thereby the respondents remained anonymous.

3.5.2.1 First questionnaire

The first form was designed in order to extract from the respondents three different types of information. Thus, the researcher decided to divide it into three main sections (see Appendix 1):

➤ Section 1: Simple questions about the topic

The first questions of the questionnaire were intended to introduce the respondents in the subject of the research and find out the use they made of stock photography websites (work area, the most visited stock photography, reasons for the use of stock photography, etc.)

In this first section, the researcher decided to use different types of closed questions: dichotomous questions, that allow the respondent to choose from two possible responses; multiple dichotomous questions, that provide a list of possible responses and allow the respondent to select any number of choices from a list; and fixed alternative questions, that allow respondents to select a single option from a list of possible options (Pickard, 2007, p. 187). Furthermore, in case of need it; some questions also included the option "I don't know".

➤ Section 2: Questions about parameters and indicators

This section included questions about the parameters and indicators defined in the previous stage. In this part of the questionnaire, the type of information that the researcher sought to draw was the degree of importance that the users gave to indicators. It was divided in nine blocks, which corresponded with each of the parameters described previously. In each block, the respondents had to select the degree of importance of the indicators defined for each parameter. In this second section, the information was extracted from a particular scaling technique: the Likert scale.

The Likert scale is a bipolar scaling technique which allows a respondent to select a choice that best demonstrates their level of agreement with a given statement (Pickard, 2007, p. 188). Usually, it includes five responses: two positive responses, two negatives responses and a neutral middle.

Uebersax (2006) emphasizes the idea that a Likert scale is never an individual item, but it is always a set of several items. In this questionnaire, the researcher developed nine Likert scales. Each scale corresponded to a parameter and the items that were being measured were the different indicators.

In this scales, sometimes an even-point scale is used where the middle option is not available. This is called a "forced choice" method, since the neutral option is removed (Likert scale, 2012). In this questionnaire, the researcher chose not to include the neutral option, in order to "force" respondents to position themselves in one or the other option (positive or negative). In addition to the four options (two positive and two negative responses), each question also included the option "I don't know", for those cases where the user did not know the feature described.

In this second part of the questionnaire, open questions were also included. At the end of

each parameter, the researcher decided to include an open question which asked users the suggestion of new indicators related to the parameter described.

➤ Section 3: Reviews and personal assessments

This final section sought to find out the opinion of respondents about the proposed indicators and their use of stock photography websites. Also in this section the researcher asked respondents to suggest new indicators. They were, therefore, descriptive questions that require a more detailed and personal response (Pickard, 2007, p. 194). Thus, this final section was designed with open-ended questions, in order to collect as much information as possible.

Finally, it is important to note that the questionnaire does not include demographic questions, which require the input of personal data such as gender, age, location, etc., as they are not meaningful data for this research.

3.5.2.2 Second questionnaire

The second questionnaire was sent to the same workers in the field of image who answered the first questionnaire.

The researcher looked for the refinement of the indicators initially proposed. For this purpose, she prepared a second questionnaire in order to identify tentatively *essential* indicators, separating them from *non-essential* indicators (hereafter termed as *additional* indicators) (see Appendix 2).

The questions in this second questionnaire were closed questions. The researcher demanded respondents to indicate those items they believed essential indicators, those items which they believed non-essential but contributing something of value added to the website, and finally, those indicators that were not relevant and therefore should not be included in the site-evaluation method. At the end of the questionnaire, the researcher included a number of open questions for comments.

The researcher took into account most of the responses to develop a “definitive” list of parameters and indicators. In case of a tie in the responses, the researcher used her experience as a user to position the resources defined as indicators in a type of indicator (essential) or other (not-essential).

3.6 Ethics in research

The main ethical considerations in this research were connected with the responses to the questionnaire prepared for the study. The researcher explained the purpose of the research

to all of the participants who took part in the research project and they were asked to seek their consent for using their answers and opinions.

Throughout the research process, the anonymity of all respondents was respected. The researcher at any time asked the name of the respondents or had access to personal information about them. The researcher didn't meet them at all during the research process. In fact, the researcher has made contact with the participants through a third person.

A letter on behalf of the researcher and the university was sent to this third person who contacted the informants. In it, the researcher informed the participants about the purpose of the research and the usefulness of their responses for the proper development of it. In the letter, the researcher also insisted on the maintenance of the anonymity and assured the use of the information only for the research and not for any other purposes.

3.7 Limitations of the study

There are some limitations in this study which could be considered as factors influencing the objectives of this research.

First, this site-evaluation method is intended primarily to improve services offered to image buyers. The initial idea of the researcher was to prepare a site-evaluation method for the two types of audience (sellers and buyers of images). However, the researcher was not able to contact photographers who sell their images to these agencies. For this reason and following the guidance provided by Codina (2008) and Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez (2011) (who point out that pictures buyers are the users who find more problems when using these websites), the researcher decided to focus this site-evaluation on meeting the needs of image buyers.

Secondly, purposive sampling was used in this study and the size of the sample represents a limitation of this study. The researcher analyzed and compared only 10 stock photography agencies. Time constraints did not allow the researcher to study more websites.

Thirdly, informants who agreed to participate in the research were very few compared to the whole study population (see Literature Review). In this research, the respondents worked in press, advertising and public relations, production of news and documentaries, graphic design and publishing. Therefore, respondents are not representative of all professional sectors of the image field which use the services of stock photography companies. Besides, respondents worked in two specific cities, Oslo and Barcelona. To make the sample representative, geographic dispersion of respondents is essential in this case.

Finally, time constraints prevented to conduct a more thorough study of the indicators and the different degrees of importance of these indicators according to the needs of different types of users.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the analysis of data collected using the two techniques discussed previously in the methodology chapter: first, observation and comparison of selected stock photography websites as a sample and on the other hand, the two questionnaires addressed to “natural” users of these websites in order to find out the essential indicators of quality.

This chapter presents the results of data collection using these two techniques. It also includes the site-evaluation method proposed by the researcher to assess the quality of stock photography websites.

4.2 Results of analysis and comparison of ten stock photography websites

As explained in the Chapter 3, the primary data were extracted from the analysis and comparison conducted by the researcher, who was responsible for developing the initial list of parameters and indicators. For five months she analyzed, compared and tested the ten major websites in terms of annual turnover and number of images housed, according to Budget Stock Photo directory (see Chapter 3). These ten sites were: Getty Images, Corbis, Alamy, Media Bakery, Superstock, Punchstock, Masterfile, Photos.com, Inmage and Jupiter Images.

The ten sites included a number of features and resources that were common to all of them. However, the comparison of the sites showed that there are resources or tools that are not shared by all sites that were analyzed.

The researcher also included in the evaluation method some of these resources that are specific to certain websites, because she thought that they bring added value to the site. These main features and resources offered by stock photography websites correspond to the *indicators* defined by Codina (Codina, 2006b) (see Chapter 3).

The observation and exploration conducted by the researcher had as a result the 9 parameters and the 63 indicators presented in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 of this chapter.

Below, the main parameters and indicators are identified.

4.2.1 Parameters

According to Codina (2006b), parameters answer the question: what do we want to evaluate?

The analysis of the ten sites as a sample had as a result the identification of 9 key points. These 9 essential points correspond to the parameters defined by Codina and they should necessarily be present all in stock photography websites.

These parameters are:

- **Parameter 1 (P.1): Content.** This parameter evaluates the basic contents present in stock photography websites and the information that complements these basic contents.
- **Parameter 2 (P.2): Registered users.** This parameter analyzes the possibilities of registration enabled by stock photography websites and the benefits and advantages of registration for its users.
- **Parameter 3 (P.3): Information Architecture.** This parameter evaluates how stock photography websites organize their content.
- **Parameter 4 (P.4): User Support Service.** This parameter evaluates the quality of assistance service and user support in basic tasks such as searching, purchasing and downloading images (buyers) and tasks of submitting and uploading of images by photographers (sellers).
- **Parameter 5 (P.5): Search.** This parameter analyzes the search system provided by the website and the tools available to make it easier the search.
- **Parameter 6 (P.6): Presenting results.** This parameter examines how the website presents the results generated by user search.
- **Parameter 7 (P.7): Purchase.** This parameter evaluates the quality of purchase process and the services that make it easier this process.
- **Parameter 8 (P.8): Download.** This parameter analyzes the possibilities of downloading the images and services related to this process.
- **Parameter 9 (P.9): Presence on Web 2.0 platforms.** This parameter examines the use that the website makes of the different Web 2.0 platforms.

4.2.2 Indicators

According to Codina (2006b), indicators answer the question: how do we evaluate this parameter?

For the definition of these indicators, the researcher took into account the most significant resources or tools that are included in all websites in the sample. Usually, the indicators identified were included in all of the websites analyzed, or at least, in most of them. However, some of these indicators were only present in some of the websites selected as a sample. The researcher considered important the inclusion of these indicators in this method because in her opinion as a user, these resources provide an added value to the site over other webpages that do not have those resources.

Indicators for assessing the quality of the 9 parameters are presented in this section. Each parameter appears accompanied by the indicators identified as important in assessing the quality of the parameter.

As already said, to establish these indicators the researcher analyzed and compared the ten sites selected as a sample. This section of the data analysis chapter also includes a table for each parameter that represents the set of indicators identified and their presence on the websites of the sample.

Looking at the tables, we can see how some indicators are present in all websites, while others are only present in some of these sites.

4.2.2.1 Parameter 1: Content

- Indicator 1 (1.1): Different image collections
- Indicator 2 (1.2): Photography trends
- Indicator 3 (1.3): Photo of the day
- Indicator 4 (1.4): Lightboxes
- Indicator 5 (1.5): Shopping cart
- Indicator 6 (1.6): Application for mobile devices

The following table shows the stock photography websites that include the proposed indicators for Parameter 1.

Stock photography websites	Indicators					
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6
Getty Images	X	X		X	X	
Corbis	X	X		X	X	
Alamy	X			X	X	X
Superstock	X		X	X	X	

Stock photography websites	Indicators					
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6
Media Bakery	X			X	X	
Punchstock	X			X	X	
Jupiter Images	X			X	X	
Photos.com	X			X	X	
Inmagine	X			X	X	
Masterfile	X			X	X	X

Table 4.1: Indicators identified in the Parameter 1 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample

4.2.2.2 Parameter 2: Registered users

- Indicator 1 (2.1): Subscription
- Indicator 2 (2.2): Creating and editing lightboxes
- Indicator 3 (2.3): Sharing and sending lightboxes
- Indicator 4 (2.4): Adding notes on lightboxes
- Indicator 5 (2.5): Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark
- Indicator 6 (2.6): Orders and downloads history

The following table shows the stock photography websites that include the proposed indicators for Parameter 2.

Stock photography website	Indicators					
	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
Getty Images	X	X	X	X	X	X
Corbis	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alamy	X	X	X	X		X
Superstock	X	X	X	X		X
Media Bakery	X	X	X	X	X	X
Punchstock	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jupiter Images	X	X	X	X	X	X
Photos.com	X	X	X	X		X

Stock photography website	Indicators					
	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6
Inmage	X	X	X	X		X
Masterfile	X	X	X	X		X

Table 4.2: Indicators identified in the Parameter 2 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample

4.2.2.3 Parameter 3: Information Architecture

- Indicator 1 (3.1): Language selector
- Indicator 2 (3.2): Content customized by audience
- Indicator 3 (3.3): Quick links
- Indicator 4 (3.4): Top Searches
- Indicator 5 (3.5): Most popular content
- Indicator 6 (3.6): Website URL representative and easily remembered
- Indicator 7 (3.7): Global navigation bar

The following table shows the stock photography websites that include the proposed indicators for Parameter 3.

Stock photography website	Indicators						
	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7
Getty Images	X	X	X		X	X	X
Corbis	X	X	X			X	X
Alamy	X	X				X	X
Superstock	X			X		X	X
Media Bakery	X					X	X
Punchstock	X			X	X	X	X
Jupiter Images	X					X	X
Photos.com	X				X	X	X
Inmage	X					X	X
Masterfile	X		X			X	X

Table 4.3: Indicators identified in the Parameter 3 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample

4.2.2.4 Parameter 4: User support service

- Indicator 1 (4.1): Search tips
- Indicator 2 (4.2): Shopping tips
- Indicator 3 (4.3): Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading
- Indicator 4 (4.4): Glossary of terms
- Indicator 5 (4.5): Information about releases
- Indicator 6 (4.6): Information about licensing
- Indicator 7 (4.7): Possibility of sending suggestions and comments from users
- Indicator 8 (4.8): Image research services)

The following table shows the stock photography websites that include the proposed indicators for Parameter 4.

Stock photography website	Indicators							
	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8
Getty Images	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Corbis	X	X	X		X	X		
Alamy	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Superstock	X		X	X	X	X		
Media Bakery	X		X		X	X		
Punchstock			X		X	X	X	
Jupiter Images			X		X	X		
Photos.com		X	X			X		
Inmageine			X		X	X		X
Masterfile	X		X		X	X		

Table 4.4: Indicators identified in the Parameter 4 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample

Comments: The researcher during the observation of the sites requested technical assistance in the ten websites in order to ensure that these support services were working correctly. She sent a mail to each of the websites of the sample asking for help in the search and she was answered only by four of the sites (Corbis, Alamy, Getty Images and Media Bakery). Thanks to this technical assistance, the researcher was able to complete the search process that she had begun.

4.2.2.5 Parameter 5: Search

- Indicator 1: Autocomplete search terms
- Indicator 2: Semantic clarifications
- Indicator 3: Search for a photographer
- Indicator 4: Search by price
- Indicator 5: Search by releases
- Indicator 6: Search by type of image license
- Indicator 7: Search by type of image (Creative or Editorial)
- Indicator 8: Search by concept
- Indicator 9: Search by people attributes
- Indicator 10: Search by image composition
- Indicator 11: Search by date added to stock photography
- Indicator 12: Search by location
- Indicator 13: Search by specific events
- Indicator 14: Similar images / More images like this
- Indicator 15: New search from the selection of keywords assigned to a selected image by the user / Similar images by selecting keywords
- Indicator 16: Suggestion of new search term
- Indicator 17: Refine the search

The following table shows the stock photography websites that include the proposed indicators for Parameter 5.

Stock photography website	Indicators																
	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.8	5.9	5.10	5.11	5.12	5.13	5.14	5.15	5.16	5.17
Getty Images	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
Corbis	X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Alamy			X		X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X		X
Superstock						X				X					X		X
Media Bakery				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X
Punchstock								X	X	X		X			X		X
Jupiter Images						X		X	X	X					X		X

Stock photography website	Indicators																
	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.8	5.9	5.10	5.11	5.12	5.13	5.14	5.15	5.16	5.17
Photos.com										X					X		X
Inmagine	X	X				X			X	X				X	X		X
Masterfile						X									X		X

Table 4.5: Indicators identified in the Parameter 5 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample

4.2.2.6 Parameter 6: Presenting results

- Indicator 1 (6.1): Sorting the list of results by date (on which the image was taken)
- Indicator 2 (6.2): Sorting the list of results by date (images recently added)
- Indicator 3 (6.3): Sorting the list of results by relevance
- Indicator 4 (6.4): Sorting the list of results by regional relevance
- Indicator 5 (6.5): Image thumbnail accompanied by a brief description of the image
- Indicator 6 (6.6): To emphasize those images with restrictions or special conditions (by a quick visual icon or a note)

The following table shows the stock photography websites that include the proposed indicators for Parameter 6.

Stock photography website	Indicators					
	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6
Getty Images		X	X		X	X
Corbis	X	X	X	X	X	
Alamy					X	
Superstock		X	X		X	X
Media Bakery					X	
Punchstock						
Jupiter Images					X	
Photos.com		X	X			
Inmagine		X	X		X	
Masterfile		X	X			

Table 4.6: Indicators identified in the Parameter 6 and their presence on the websites

defined as a sample

4.2.2.7 Parameter 7: Purchase

- Indicator 1 (7.1): Contact company for pricing (RM images)
- Indicator 2 (7.2): Price calculation (RF images)
- Indicator 3 (7.3): Customized license pack
- Indicator 4 (7.4): Saved license

The following table shows the stock photography websites that include the proposed indicators for Parameter 7.

Stock photography website	Indicators			
	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4
Getty Images		X	X	X
Corbis	X	X	X	X
Alamy		X		X
Superstock	X	X		
Media Bakery		X		
Punchstock		X		
Jupiter Images		X		
Photos.com		X	X	X
Inmagine		X		X
Masterfile		X		

Table 4.7: Indicators identified in the Parameter 7 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample

4.2.2.8 Parameter 8: Download

- Indicator 1 (8.1): Different ways of downloading the images
- Indicator 2 (8.2): Technical information (PC, browser, etc.)

The following table shows the stock photography websites that include the proposed indicators for Parameter 8.

Stock photography website	Indicators	
	8.1	8.2
Getty Images	X	X
Corbis	X	X
Alamy	X	X
Superstock		X
Media Bakery		
Punchstock		
Jupiter Images		
Photos.com		
Inmagine	X	
Masterfile	X	

Table 4.8: Indicators identified in the Parameter 8 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample

4.2.2.9 Parameter 9: Presence on 2.0 Web platforms

- Indicator 1 (9.1): Blog
- Indicator 2 (9.2): Facebook
- Indicator 3 (9.3): Twitter
- Indicator 4 (9.4): Youtube
- Indicator 5 (9.5): LinkedIn
- Indicator 6 (9.6): Forum

The following table shows the stock photography websites that include the proposed indicators for Parameter 9.

Stock photography website	Indicators					
	9.1	9.2	9.3	9.4	9.5	9.6
Getty Images	X	X	X	X	X	
Corbis		X	X	X	X	X
Alamy	X	X	X	X	X	X

Stock photography website	Indicators					
	9.1	9.2	9.3	9.4	9.5	9.6
Superstock		X	X		X	
Media Bakery	X	X	X	X	X	
Punchstock			X		X	
Jupiter Images			X			
Photos.com		X	X		X	
Inmageine		X	X	X		
Masterfile		X	X	X	X	

Table 4.9: Indicators identified in the Parameter 9 and their presence on the websites defined as a sample

4.3 Analysis of the responses of the two questionnaires

The advent of the Internet and the emergence of digital collections, were two key events in the creation of webpages as a showcase and meeting place between companies and customers.

The stock photography websites, like the vast majority of e-commerce companies, have as their main purpose the sale of their products and the customer loyalty. Hence the need to provide services through the webpages that fit the needs and demands of the potential customers.

Two questionnaires addressed to users of stock photography websites were the second of the instruments used by the researcher for data collection. The first of these questionnaires had the purpose to find out the degree of importance that the proposed indicators had for the potential users.

The researcher prepared a second questionnaire in order to identify tentatively essential indicators, separating them from non-essential indicators (hereafter termed as additional indicators).

4.3.1 Users and their uses of stock photography websites

4.3.1.1 Area of work of respondents

In this question, respondents could choose more than one answer choice; since in the field of the image, one professional can work in two different areas. Seven respondents answered

the questionnaire. The sample of respondents consisted of the following professionals:

- 3 of the respondents worked in press,
- 2 respondents in advertising and public relations,
- 2 respondents in producing news and documentaries,
- 2 respondents in graphic design and
- 1 respondent in publishing.

4.3.1.2 Geographic location of respondents

- 1 respondent came from Oslo (Norway)
- 6 respondents came from Barcelona (Spain)

4.3.1.3 Time working as users of stock photography agencies

- 1 respondent has been working as user of these kind of agencies from 1 to 4 years
- 4 respondents have been working from 4 to 6 years
- 2 respondents have been working as user more than 8 years

4.3.1.4 Type of user who looks for images on the web

Looking at the literature review, Datta et al. (2006) made a classification of types of users based on their intention to find an image on the web. According to these authors, users can be browsers, surfers and searchers.

In the initial questionnaire, the researcher asked respondents what types of users were they when they were looking for images on the web.

The 7 respondents considered themselves “Searchers”. According to Datta et al., the searcher is a user who is very clear about what he/she is searching for in the system. A searcher’s session would typically be short, with coherent searches leading to an end-result.

4.3.1.5 Main reasons of use the services of stock photography agencies

Main reasons of use stock photography agencies	Number of respondents (7)
Safety in matters of Property and Model Releases	7
The quality of the images	7

Main reasons of use stock photography agencies	Number of respondents (7)
They allow a more customized and refined search	4
The search is quick and efficient	2
The variety and number of images / Choice of images	1

Table 4.10: Main uses of the stock photography agencies by the users surveyed

➤ **Suggestions of new reasons by the respondents:**

- Need of clean and safe copyright regulations.
- Need of high resolution images for print.

4.3.1.6 Main commercial image providers

The most popular commercial image provider is Getty Images. The 7 respondents said they used the services of this company. In addition, the 7 informants claimed to have subscription agreements with this company.

Corbis and Alamy are the two following companies most used by informants (5 respondents said they used their services), and finally, Superstock website (2 respondents said they used their services).

All informants responded that companies they work often have agreements with several companies and collections. The Norwegian respondent mentioned agreements with providers as NTB Scanpix, GV press, Ina agency and All Over press. In the case of Spanish informants, they claimed to have agreements with a number of agencies such as CAN, EFE, Reuters and EP, among the most important.

Furthermore, the questionnaire also included a question relative to other sources of image search. All respondents reported not using any additional source.

4.3.1.7 Subscription

The 7 respondents said they were subscribed to a stock photo agency. All respondents had subscription deals with Getty Images, 3 with AGE Fotostock and 3 of them with Corbis.

4.3.1.8 Image licenses

On the use of commercial licenses, the 7 informants reported having ever bought the two types of licenses (Royalty Free and Rights Managed). "Buying a license or another always depends on the requirements of each project", said one respondent.

4.3.2 User feedback on the proposed parameters and indicators

In order to know the opinion of users about parameters and indicators identified, the researcher included a number of questions to ascertain the degree of importance of these parameters and indicators for users of stock photography agencies. In addition, the researcher also demanded users the suggestion of new indicators and parameters.

One informant suggested in the first questionnaire that there are a number of features and tools that all stock photography websites should offer their users in order to ensure success in the acquisition of their products. In addition to these key indicators, there are other less important indicators that add value to the website, but they are not indispensable for its proper operation. The researcher followed the advice of this experienced user and she developed a second questionnaire which was sent to the respondents who answered the first form.

This section presents the results of these questions and these results are structured as follows:

First, the initial list of indicators identified by the researcher is presented. Then the views of respondents on these indicators and the new indicators suggested by respondents are exposed. Finally, this section includes the “final” list with essential indicators and non-essential (or additional) indicators.

When she was preparing the final list of indicators for each parameter, the researcher took into account most of the responses suggested by the respondents. In the case of a tie in the responses, the researcher made use of her expert judgment as a potential user to decide to include an indicator in either category (essential, additional or not important).

4.3.2.1 Parameter 1: Content

Five respondents considered this parameter very important and essential for evaluating the quality of stock photography websites. Two of them considered it important, but not essential.

➤ **Initial indicators (defined by the researcher):**

- Indicator 1: Different image collections
- Indicator 2: Photography trends
- Indicator 3: Photo of the day
- Indicator 4: Lightboxes
- Indicator 5: Shopping cart
- Indicator 6: Application for mobile devices

➤ **Opinions from respondents about the importance of the defined indicators (taken from the first questionnaire)**

Indicator	Number of respondents (7)				
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very unimportant	I don't know
Different image collections	7				
Photography trends			2	5	
Photo of the day			1	6	
Lightboxes	6	1			
Shopping cart	5	2			
Application for mobile devices			2	3	2

Table 4.11: Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 1

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 1 (taken from the first questionnaire)**

- **Different image collections.** One respondent commented in the first questionnaire that this one is not an indicator of quality, since it is an intrinsic content of stock photography agencies. This means that the images in the stock photography are organized in collections, and then it is assumed that these collections exist. For this respondent this one is not an indicator of quality.
- **Photography trends and Photo of the day.** One respondent commented that these two indicators are not significant for users of stock photography websites, since a user who accesses these sites looking for a picture usually knows what he/she is looking for. Users do not bother to search trends or the photo of the day, since they go directly to the search box. For this respondent, these two indicators are, therefore, additional, since they are not required or essential at all.
- **Application for mobile devices.** This resource is not available on all stock photography websites of the sample, which suggests the researcher that this is a rare resource. Thus, the questionnaire responses show that 2 of the 7 respondents did not know this application. On the other hand, users who knew the resource believed that this is not an essential indicator of quality.
- **Photographs, illustrations and images only on CD.** One respondent believes that any good stock photography website should offer its users the choice in content, including

photographs, illustrations and videos. This respondent commented that once he found a website that did not offer these three resources and he eventually left the site for not having the kind of resource that he was looking for. Hence, he considers it an indicator of quality.

- **Creative and Editorial images.** “All stock photography websites must offer its users the chance of selecting between Creative and Editorial images. These two types of images have different characteristics and the use of them by the user is also very different”, said one respondent. Therefore, according to this informant, stock photography website should include two different sections, each focused on one type of image (Creative and Editorial).
- **Rights Managed and Royalty Free collections.** One respondent considers the availability of RM and RF image collections as an indicator of quality. “Every good stock photography website should offer both types of commercial licenses so that the user can decide what is best for his/her project”, he said.
- **CD collections.** Many times a project requires multiple images with the same topic or theme (such as a report of a magazine, for example). “In these cases, the stock photography website must offer Royalty Free CD collections with different pictures related to the same subject”, said one respondent.
- **New images.** One respondent suggested the inclusion of the indicator “New images” in this parameter, because in certain situations it may be useful for users who are looking for the latest news. However, he suggested that it is not a key indicator.

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about essential and additional indicators (taken from the second questionnaire)**

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Different images collections		2	4
Photo of the day			6
Photographs, illustrations and images only on CD	4	2	
Creative and Editorial images	6		
RM and RF collections	6		
CD collections	4	2	
Lightboxes	6		
Shopping cart	6		
Application for mobile devices		4	2

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Photography trends		3	3
New images		6	

Table 4.12: Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 1

➤ **List of indicators for assessing the quality of the parameter “Content”**

The researcher took into account most number of the responses to include the indicators in a group (essential) or another (additional). In the case of a tie in the answers, the researcher decided to take into account her personal opinion as a user to place the indicator in one group.

Parameter 1: Content	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Photographs, illustrations and images only on CD	Indicator 7: Application for mobile devices
Indicator 2: Creative and Editorial images	Indicator 8: Photography trends
Indicator 3: RM and RF collections	Indicator 9: New images
Indicator 4: CD collections	
Indicator 5: Lightboxes	
Indicator 6: Shopping cart	

Table 4.13: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 1

4.3.2.2 Parameter 2: Registered Users

The seven respondents considered this parameter very important and essential for evaluating the quality of stock photography websites.

➤ **Initial indicators (defined by the researcher):**

- Indicator 1: Subscription
- Indicator 2: Creating and editing lightboxes
- Indicator 3: Sharing and sending lightboxes
- Indicator 4: Adding notes on lightboxes

- Indicator 5: Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark
 - Indicator 6: Orders and downloads history
- **Opinions from respondents about the importance of the defined indicators (taken from the first questionnaire)**

Indicator	Number of respondents (7)				
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very unimportant	I don't know
Subscription	6	1			
Creating and editing lightboxes	7				
Sharing and sending lightboxes		5	2		
Adding notes on lightboxes	2	3	2		
Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark	7				
Orders and downloads history	2	5			

Table 4.14: Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 2

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 2 (taken from the first questionnaire)**

- **Creating, managing and sharing lightboxes.** “Lightboxes are an essential content and their editing and management should be available to user”, said one respondent. He suggested that the indicators 2, 3 and 4 are essential, but not separately. That is, the management of lightboxes includes creating, editing, sharing and adding notes, so it makes no sense to separate them into three indicators, when the definition of a single indicator is enough.
- **Adding notes to each image in the lightbox.** One respondent suggested the significance of adding notes to each of the images which are included in the lightboxes. Thus, the user will be able to view the use and the purpose of each of the stored images whenever he/she wants or needs it.
- **User registration.** One respondent commented that a key indicator of quality in this parameter is the user registration. That is, the system should offer the user the possibility

of registering in order to obtain additional benefits compared to the unregistered users.

- **User account.** The same respondent suggested user account as another essential indicator. This informant commented that any stock photography website should offer its users the chance of accessing their personal virtual area, which include personal data, purchase history, etc.

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about essential and additional indicators (taken from the second questionnaire)**

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Subscription	6		
Creating, managing and sharing lightboxes	6		
Adding notes to each image in the lightbox	4	2	
Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark	6		
Orders and downloads history	5	1	
User registration	6		
User account	6		

Table 4.15: Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 2

➤ **List of indicators for assessing the quality of the parameter “Registered Users”**

Parameter 2: Registered Users	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: User registration	
Indicator 2: User account	
Indicator 3: Subscription	
Indicator 4: Creating, managing and sharing lightboxes	
Indicator 5: Adding notes to each image in the lightbox	
Indicator 6: Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark	

Parameter 2: Registered Users	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 7: Orders and downloads history	

Table 4.16: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 2

4.3.2.3 Parameter 3: Information Architecture

Five respondents considered this parameter very important for evaluating the quality of stock photography websites. Two of them considered it important, but not essential.

➤ **Initial indicators (defined by the researcher):**

- Indicator 1: Language selector
- Indicator 2: Content customized by audience
- Indicator 3: Quick links
- Indicator 4: Top Searches
- Indicator 5: Most popular content
- Indicator 6: Website URL representative and easily remembered
- Indicator 7: Global navigation bar

➤ **Opinions from respondents about the importance of the defined indicators (taken from the first questionnaire)**

Indicator	Number of respondents (7)				
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very unimportant	I don't know
Language selector	5	2			
Customized content by audience	2	3	2		
Quick links		4	2	1	
Top Searchers			2	5	
Most popular content			2	5	
Website URL easily remembered	7				
Global navigation bar	7				

Table 4.17: Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 3

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 3 (taken from the first questionnaire)**

- **Top Searches and Most popular content.** One respondent commented that these two indicators are not essential for assessing the quality of the Information Architecture. According to this informant, each user who accesses a stock photography website has different needs, so that their searches will be different. These indicators can be useful for inexperienced or novice users, but those users who have long been using the services of these agencies, they will not feel the need to use them.
- **Content customized by audience.** Two respondents pointed out the importance of this indicator for assessing the quality of the Information Architecture of a stock photography website. One of them considered essential the separation between content for image buyers and content for image sellers (photographers). Other respondent pointed out, however, the need to differentiate between the content for the creative sector and content for the editorial sector.
- **Site map.** “An indicator of quality of a stock photography website may be the inclusion of a site map. They can be useful to help the user to locate a specific content within the website”, said a respondent. However, he did not consider it an essential indicator, just a support resource.

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about essential and additional indicators (taken from the second questionnaire)**

In this third parameter there was a tie in the answers. In this case, the researcher decided to take into account her personal opinion as a user to place the indicator in either group.

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Language selector	6		
Customized content by audience	3	3	
Quick links	2	3	1
Most Popular Searchers		4	2
Most Popular Content		4	2
Domain name easy to remember	6		
Global navigation system	6		

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Site map	1	4	1

Table 4.18: Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 3

➤ **List of indicators for assessing the quality of the parameter “Information Architecture”**

Parameter 3: Information Architecture	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Language selector	Indicator 5: Site map
Indicator 2: Domain name easy to remember	Indicator 6: Most popular searches
Indicator 3: Global navigation system	Indicator 7: Most popular content
Indicator 4: Content customized by audience	Indicator 8: Quick links

Table 4.19: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 3

4.3.2.4 Parameter 4: User Support Service

The seven respondents considered this parameter very important and essential for evaluating the quality of stock photography websites.

➤ **Initial indicators (defined by the researcher):**

- Indicator 1: Search tips
- Indicator 2: Shopping tips
- Indicator 3: Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading
- Indicator 4: Glossary of terms
- Indicator 5: Information about releases
- Indicator 6: Information about licensing
- Indicator 7: Possibility of sending suggestions and comments from users
- Indicator 8: Image research services

➤ **Opinions from respondents about the importance of the defined indicators (taken from the first questionnaire)**

Indicator	Number of respondents (7)				
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very unimportant	I don't know
Search tips	7				
Shopping tips	2	3	2		
Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading images	7				
Glossary of terms			4	3	
Information about releases	7				
Information about licensing	7				
Possibility of sending suggestions and comments from users		2	5		
Image research services			2	1	4

Table 4.20: Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 4

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 4 (taken from the first questionnaire)**

- **Shopping and subscription tips.** One of the respondents suggested completing the definition of the indicator “Shopping tips” adding also subscription tips. In the opinion of this informant, these tips are also very useful especially in cases where the user is unsure of the type of subscription that best fits his/her needs.
- **Glossary of terms.** The seven respondents considered this indicator not important, but they offered no reason.
- **Possibility of sending suggestions and comments from users.** Most respondents considered this indicator not important, but as with the glossary of terms, none of them gave a reason.
- **Image research services / Contact details with experts in image search.** Most informants were unaware of this service, which is unusual at all stock photography websites. In the case of those users who knew it, they did not consider it a key indicator. In fact, one of these users commented on the questionnaire that this resource can be useful for novice users. However, the professionals responsible for image search in stock photography websites usually know what they want and how to search it, so they do not need an expert researcher to help them in this task.
- **Technical information (formats, browsers, PCs, etc.).** One respondent suggested in the

questionnaire to include “technical information” as a key indicator. This informant stressed the importance of providing the user with information about the differences involved the use of a certain type of browser, a certain type of operating system (Windows, Mac OS, and Linux), etc., in order to facilitate the purchase and download of the images.

- **Useful information for photographers (contributors).** One informant considered an important indicator that a stock photography website includes in the help options, a section devoted to the photographers who sell their pictures to the agencies. According to this respondent, information such as how to submit images, pricing, licensing, etc..., is very useful for contributors and therefore they are an essential element in such websites.
- **Photographer tips.** The same respondent that also suggested the previous indicator commented the existence of a section dedicated to tips offered by photographers to other photographers and beginners. This section includes tips on how to take a good picture with potential interest for the stock photography agencies.

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about essential and additional indicators (taken from the second questionnaire)**

In this fourth parameter there was a tie in some answers. In this case, the researcher decided to take into account her personal opinion as a user to place the indicator in either group.

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Search tips	6		
Shopping and subscription tips	5	1	
Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading images	6		
Glossary of terms		3	3
Information about releases	6		
Information about licensing	6		
Suggestions and comments from users	2	3	1
Contact details with experts in image search		3	3
Technical information (formats, browsers, etc.)	4	2	
Useful information for	6		

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
photographers (contributors)			
Photographer tips		2	4

Table 4.21: Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 4

➤ **List of indicators for assessing the quality of the parameter “User Support Service”**

Parameter 4: User Support Service	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Search tips	Indicator 8: Glossary of terms
Indicator 2: Shopping and subscription tips	Indicator 9: Suggestions and comments from users
Indicator 3: Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading images	Indicator 10: Contact details with experts in image search
Indicator 4: Information about releases	
Indicator 5: Information about licensing	
Indicator 6: Technical information (formats, browsers, etc.)	
Indicator 7: Useful information for photographers (contributors)	

Table 4.22: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 4

4.3.2.5 Parameter 5: Search

The seven respondents considered this parameter very important and essential for evaluating the quality of stock photography websites.

➤ **Initial indicators (defined by the researcher):**

- Indicator 1: Autocomplete search terms
- Indicator 2: Semantic clarifications
- Indicator 3: Search for a photographer
- Indicator 4: Search by price
- Indicator 5: Search by releases

- Indicator 6: Search by type of image license
- Indicator 7: Search by type of image (Creative or Editorial)
- Indicator 8: Search by concept
- Indicator 9: Search by people attributes
- Indicator 10: Search by image composition
- Indicator 11: Search by date added to stock photography
- Indicator 12: Search by location
- Indicator 13: Search by specific events
- Indicator 14: Similar images / More images like this
- Indicator 15: New search from the selection of keywords assigned to a selected image by the user / Similar images by selecting keywords
- Indicator 16: Suggestion of a new search term
- Indicator 17: Refine the search

➤ **Opinions from respondents about the importance of the defined indicators (taken from the first questionnaire)**

Indicator	Number of respondents (7)				
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very unimportant	I don't know
Autocomplete search terms		1	3	3	
Semantic clarifications	3	2	2		
Search for a photographer		3	4		
Search by price		1	3	3	
Search by releases	5	2			
Search by type of image license	7				
Search by type of image	6	1			
Search by concept	7				
Search by people attributes	7				
Search by image composition / technical attributes	6	1			
Search by date (added to stock photography)			2	5	

Indicator	Number of respondents (7)				
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very unimportant	I don't know
Search by location	5	2			
Search by specific events	7				
Similar images / More images like this	6	1			
New search from the selection of keywords assigned to a selected image by the user / Similar images by selecting keywords	7				
Suggestion of a new search term (did you mean results for " _ "?)		2	2	3	
Refine the search	7				

Table 4.23: Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 5

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 5 (taken from the first questionnaire)**

- **Autocomplete search terms.** Most of the respondents considered this indicator as unimportant. One respondent suggested that this feature is not essential at all, because when the user inserts into the search box a term, usually he/she knows how to spell the word. According to this respondent, this one may be an additional indicator because it “saves” time to the user, yet he does not consider it a key indicator.
- **Search for a photographer, Search by price, Search by date (added to stock photography) and Suggestion of a new search term.** Most respondents did not give importance to these indicators. However, none of them offered a reasonable explanation.
- **Refine the search.** The seven respondents considered this indicator as a key indicator. However, one of these informants suggested the researcher to delete it from the list of indicators. The reason he offered was that the other indicators are the tools that the website provides users to refine the search. Thus, the indicator “Refine the search” includes all the others indicators such as “Search by price”, “Search by concept”, “Search for a photographer”, etc.
- **Search by categories, Search by date photographed and Search by collection.** One respondent suggested these three as possible indicators of quality, but he did not give any reason for that.

- **Search by color.** One respondent suggested the search by color as an indicator of quality. This informant told an anecdote in the questionnaire related to the use of this feature: once a company engaged the services of the advertising company where he worked and the fundamental requirement was that the ad was to highlight the color associated with the company's brand. The informant did not have much time and qualified staff to modify the images using a computer program at the time, so in this case this feature was very useful to carry out the project.
- **Search by image number and Similar images to an image uploaded.** One respondent suggested these two features as possible indicators of quality, but he offered no reason to justify this proposal.
- **Redefinition of the search without clearing criteria previously selected.** One informant suggested this indicator and he mentioned the breadcrumbs available on the Getty Images website as a good example of this feature.

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about essential and additional indicators (taken from the second questionnaire)**

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Autocomplete search terms		4	2
Semantic clarifications	4	2	
Search for a photographer	2	4	
Search by price	1	5	
Search by releases	6		
Search by type of image license	6		
Search by type of image	6		
Search by concept	6		
Search by people attributes	6		
Search by technical attributes	6		
Search by date (added to stock photography)	1	4	1
Search by location	6		
Search by specific events	6		
More images like this	4	2	
Similar images by selecting keywords	6		

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Suggestion of a new search term (did you mean results for "_")?		3	3
Search by categories	4	2	
Search by date photographed	1	4	1
Search by collection	2	4	
Search by color		4	2
Search by image number	1	3	2
Similar images to an image uploaded		3	3
Redefinition of the search without clearing criteria previously selected	2	4	

Table 4.24: Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 5

➤ **List of indicators for assessing the quality of the parameter “Search”**

Parameter 5: Search	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Semantic clarifications	Indicator 13: Autocomplete search terms
Indicator 2: Search by releases	Indicator 14: Search for a photographer
Indicator 3: Search by type of image license	Indicator 15: Search by price
Indicator 4: Search by type of image	Indicator 16: Search by date (added to stock photography)
Indicator 5: Search by categories	Indicator 17: Search by date photographed
Indicator 6: Search by concept	Indicator 18: Search by collection
Indicator 7: Search by people attributes	Indicator 19: Search by color
Indicator 8: Search by technical attributes	Indicator 20: Search by image number
Indicator 9: Search by location	Indicator 21: Suggestion of a new search term (did you mean results for "_")?
Indicator 10: Search by specific events	Indicator 22 Similar images to an image uploaded
Indicator 11: More images like this	Indicator 23: Redefinition of the search without clearing criteria previously selected
Indicator 12: Similar images by selecting keywords	

Table 4.25: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 5

4.3.2.6 Parameter 6: Presenting results

Four respondents considered this parameter very important for evaluating the quality of stock photography websites. Three of them considered it important, but not essential.

➤ **Initial indicators (defined by the researcher):**

- Indicator 1: Sorting the list of results by date (on which the image was taken)
- Indicator 2: Sorting the list of results by date (images recently added)
- Indicator 3: Sorting the list of results by relevance
- Indicator 4: Sorting the list of results by regional relevance
- Indicator 5: Image thumbnail accompanied by a brief description of the image
- Indicator 6: To emphasize those images with restrictions or special conditions (through a quick visual icon or a note)

➤ **Opinions from respondents about the importance of the defined indicators (taken from the first questionnaire)**

Indicator	Number of respondents (7)				
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very unimportant	I don't know
Sorting the list of results by date (on which the image was taken)		2	2	3	
Sorting the list of results by date (images recently added)		3	4		
Sorting the list of results by relevance	1	4	2		
Sorting the list of results by regional relevance			1	4	2
Image thumbnail accompanied by a brief description of the image	7				
To emphasize those images with restrictions or special conditions (through a quick visual icon or a note)	2	2	3		

Table 4.26: Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 6

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 6 (taken from the first questionnaire)**

- **Different ways of sorting the search results (by date photographed, by images recently added, by relevance, by regional relevance).** One respondent suggested in the questionnaire the combination of the first four indicators into a single one named “Different ways of sorting the search results”. According to this informant, the added value in this case is given by the possibility that the website offers the users of selecting the sorting order of the results that best suits their needs. He suggested, therefore, it is an essential indicator.
- **To emphasize those images with restrictions or special conditions.** One respondent noted the value that implies for the user the beforehand knowledge of the restrictions that accompany a particular image. According to this informant, this prior information brings significant time savings for the user, who will not need to contact the company. Thus, he considered that this is a quality indicator, though not essential.
- **Customizing the display of the details of image thumbnail (title, type, license, number, nothing, etc.).** One informant mentioned the chance of customizing the details of the thumbnail as a key indicator. According to this respondent, all stock photography websites on the page with the search results, should offer its users the opportunity to choose the information related to the image that most interested them.
- **Available actions icons (add to lightbox, add to cart, similar images, etc.) accompanying the thumbnail.** One respondent suggested as a possible indicator of quality, the presence of those icons of the most prominent actions on the page with the search results. According to him, the user saves time since he does not need to enter the details page of the image.

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about essential and additional indicators (taken from the second questionnaire)**

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Different ways of sorting/ranking the search results (by date photographed, by images recently added, by relevance, by regional relevance)	6		
Sorting the list of results by date (on which the image was taken)	2	2	2

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Sorting the list of results by date (images recently added)	2	1	3
Sorting the list of results by relevance	3	3	
Sorting the list of results by regional relevance			6
Image thumbnail accompanied by a brief description of the image	6		
To emphasize those images with restrictions or special conditions (through a quick visual icon or a note)	1	5	
Customizing the display of the details of image thumbnail (title, type, license, number, nothing, etc.)	4	2	
Available actions icons (add to lightbox, add to cart, similar images, etc.) accompanying the thumbnail	6		

Table 4.27: Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 6

➤ **List of indicators for assessing the quality of the parameter “Presenting results”**

As mentioned previously, one respondent suggested the researcher that the first four initial indicators related to the sort order of the results, should be absorbed by the new parameter named “Different ways of sorting/ranking the search results”. The researcher agrees with this suggestion, so even though some users consider some of these four essential or additional indicators, the researcher decided to remove them from the final list following this suggestion.

Parameter 6: Presenting results	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Different ways of sorting/ranking the search results (by date photographed, by images recently added, by relevance, by regional relevance)	Indicator 5: To emphasize those images with restrictions or special conditions (through a quick visual icon or a note)
Indicator 2: Customizing the display of the details of image thumbnail (title, type, license, number, nothing, etc.)	

Parameter 6: Presenting results	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 3: Preview with all the image details (title, photographer, keywords, date, location, size, price, releases, etc.)	
Indicator 4: Available actions icons (add to lightbox, add to cart, similar images, etc.) accompanying the thumbnail	

Table 4.28: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 6

4.3.2.7 Parameter 7: Purchase

The seven respondents considered this parameter very important for evaluating the quality of stock photography websites.

➤ **Initial indicators (defined by the researcher):**

- Indicator 1: Contact company for pricing
- Indicator 2: Price calculation
- Indicator 3: Information about the different formats and sizes and their uses
- Indicator 4: Customized license pack
- Indicator 5: Saved license

➤ **Opinions from respondents about the importance of the defined indicators (taken from the first questionnaire)**

Indicator	Number of respondents (7)				
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very unimportant	I don't know
Contact company for pricing	7				
Price calculation	7				
Information about the different formats and sizes and their uses	5	2			
Customized license pack	6	1			
Saved license		3	3		1

Table 4.29: Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 7

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 7 (taken from the first questionnaire)**

- **Contact company for pricing / Customizing price (RM).** “Depending on the type of license, the price calculation of the images is different. Thus, in the case of Rights Managed licensed images, the vast majority of websites allow users to contact the company in order to negotiate directly with them and customize the image price”, commented one respondent.
- **Information about the different prices available (depending on size, type of use, etc.) (RF).** “In the case of Royalty Free images, price calculation is different. Most websites include a list of different prices depending on the size of the image”, said one respondent.
- **Different methods of payment.** One informant suggested the possibility of selecting different payment methods as an important indicator of quality.

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about essential and additional indicators (taken from the second questionnaire)**

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Contact company for pricing / Customizing price (RM)	6		
Price calculation / Information about the different prices available (depending on size, type of use, etc.) (RF)	6		
Customized license pack	6		
Saved license	2	4	
Different methods of payment	5	1	
Information about choosing the right format and size	4	2	

Table 4.30: Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 7

➤ **List of indicators for assessing the quality of the parameter “Purchase”**

Parameter 7: Purchase	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Customizing price (RM)	Indicator 6: Saved license for future purchases

Parameter 7: Purchase	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 2: Information about the different prices available depending on image size (in the case of RF images)	
Indicator 3: Customized license pack	
Indicator 4: Different methods of payment	
Indicator 5: Information about choosing the right format and size	

Table 4.31: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 7

4.3.2.8 Parameter 8: Download

Four respondents considered this parameter very important for evaluating the quality of stock photography websites. Three of them considered it important, but not essential.

➤ **Initial indicators (defined by the researcher):**

- Indicator 1: Different ways of downloading the images
- Indicator 2: Technical information (PC, browser, etc.)

➤ **Opinions from respondents about the importance of the defined indicators (taken from the first questionnaire)**

Indicators	Number of respondents				
	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very unimportant	I don't know
Different ways of downloading the images	1	2	4		
Technical information (PC, browser, etc.)	3	4			

Table 4.32: Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 8

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 8 (taken from the first questionnaire)**

- In this parameter, no user suggested new indicators or provide any indication on the indicators proposed by the researcher.

- **Suggestions from respondents about essential and additional indicators (taken from the second questionnaire)**

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Different ways of downloading the images	1	5	
Technical information (PC, browser, etc.)	4	2	

Table 4.33: Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 8

- **List of indicators for assessing the quality of the parameter “Download”**

Parameter 8: Download	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Technical information (PC, browser, etc.)	Indicator 2: Different ways of downloading the images

Table 4.34: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 8

4.3.2.9 Parameter 9: Presence on 2 web 2.0 platforms

The 7 respondents considered this parameter as not-essential.

- **Initial indicators (defined by the researcher):**

- Indicator 1: Blog
- Indicator 2: Facebook
- Indicator 3: Twitter
- Indicator 4: Youtube
- Indicator 5: LinkedIn
- Indicator 6: Forum

- **Opinions from respondents about the importance of the defined indicators (taken from the first questionnaire)**

Indicator	Number of respondents (7)
-----------	---------------------------

	Very important	Important	Unimportant	Very unimportant	I don't know
Blog		2	5		
Facebook			5	2	
Twitter				7	
Youtube				7	
Linkedin				7	
Forum		3	2	2	

Table 4.35: Opinions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 9

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about the indicators defined for the Parameter 9 (taken from the first questionnaire)**

- **Toolbar web 2.0 applications.** One informant suggested the inclusion of a toolbar with all web 2.0 platforms. In the opinion of this user if the website is present in a number of social networks, it should include a toolbar on the homepage where all these tools are grouped together.
- Two informants offered their views about the insignificance of the presence in social networking and other Web 2.0 platforms. These two respondents are regular users of such websites and companies where they work have dealings with specific agencies. Thus, the main objectives of social networks to attract new customers and achieve customer loyalty, in the case of these two informants does not make sense, since they are already “hooked” on the agencies that have dealings. One of these two respondents, however, considered this parameter as important to attract new customers who have doubts about which company to choose.

➤ **Suggestions from respondents about essential and additional indicators (taken from the second questionnaire)**

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Blog		4	2
Facebook		5	1
Twitter		4	2
Youtube		4	2
Linkedin		3	3

Indicators	Number of respondents (6)		
	Essential indicators	Additional indicators	Not important
Forum		4	2
Toolbar web 2.0 applications		4	2

Table 4.36: Suggestions from respondents about the essentiality of the indicators defined for the Parameter 9

- **List of indicators for assessing the quality of the parameter “Presence on web 2.0 platforms”**

Parameter 9: Presence on web 2.0 platforms	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
	Indicator 1: Toolbar web 2.0 applications
	Indicator 2: Blog
	Indicator 3: Microblogging platforms
	Indicator 4: External services for video hosting
	Indicator 5: Social Networking
	Indicator 6: Professional Social Networking
	Indicator 7: Forum

Table 4.37: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 9

4.4 Proposed method for assessing the quality of stock photography websites

4.4.1 Parameter 1 (P.1): Content

Parameter 1: Content	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Photographs, illustrations and images on CD only	Indicator 7: Photography trends
Indicator 2: Creative and Editorial images	Indicator 8: New images
Indicator 3: RM and RF collections	Indicator 9: Application for mobile devices
Indicator 4: CD collections	
Indicator 5: Lightboxes	
Indicator 6: Shopping cart	

Table 4.38: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 1

4.4.1.1 Essential Indicators

- Photographs, illustrations and images on CD only

Definition	The website includes photographs, illustrations and images on CD.
Examination	Does the website allow its users to choose between photographs, illustrations and images on CD only?
Examples	The Alamy and the Puchstock websites include among their contents photographs, illustrations and images on CD only (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.39: Definition of the indicator “Photographs, illustrations and images on CD only”

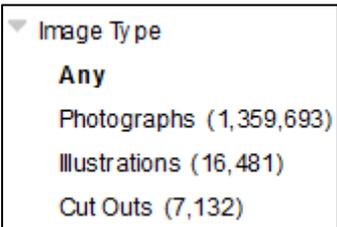


Fig. 4.1: Search for photographs, illustrations and cut outs on the Alamy website

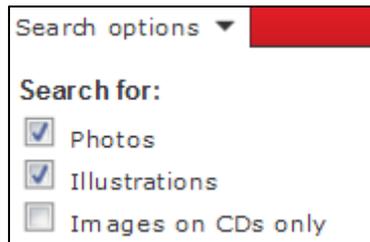


Fig. 4.2: Search for photographs, illustrations and images on CDs only on the Punchstock website

➤ Creative and Editorial images

Definition	The website includes images for the Creative sector and the Editorial sector.
Examination	Does the website differentiate between Creative and Editorial images?
Examples	The Corbis and the Getty Images websites allow users to select and filter search results by Creative or Editorial images (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.40: Definition of the indicator “Creative and Editorial images”

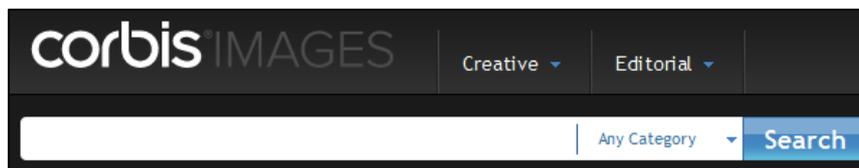


Fig. 4.3: Search for Creative and Editorial images on the Corbis website

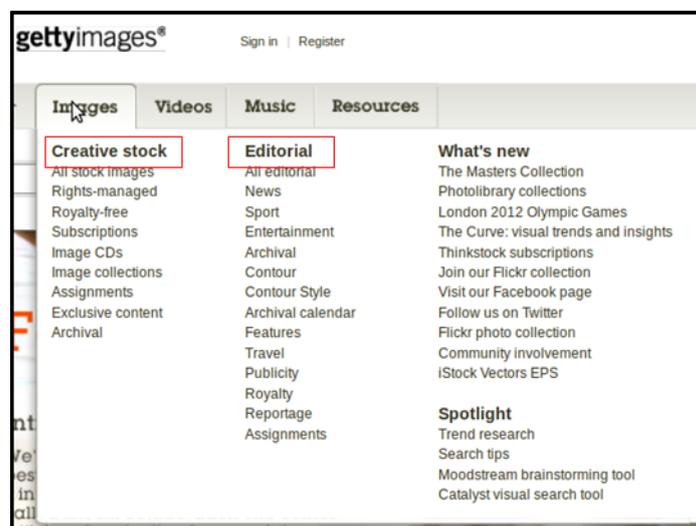


Fig. 4.4: Search for Creative and Editorial images on the Getty Images website

➤ Rights Managed and Royalty Free collections

Definition	The website has RM and RF image collections.
Examination	Does the website have RM and RF image collections?
Examples	The Jupiter Images, the Superstock and the Alamy websites allow their users to choose between Royalty Free and Rights Managed images (see Figures 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.41: Definition of the indicator “Rights Managed and Royalty Free collections”

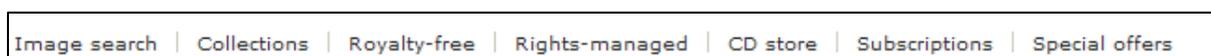


Fig. 4.5: Search for RF and RM image collections on the Jupiter Images website



Fig. 4.6: Search for RF and RM image collections on the Superstock website

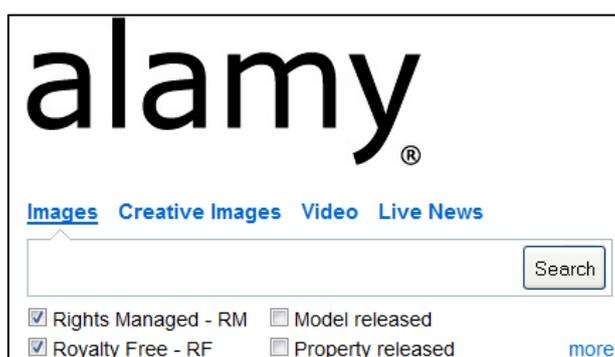


Fig. 4.7: Search for RF and RM image collections on the Alamy website

➤ CD collections

Definition	The website makes available to its users Royalty Free CD collections that are organized by subject or theme.
Examination	Does the website offers its users the chance of downloading online CD collections of Royalty Free images?

Examples	The Punchstock website allows its users to search for images within the CD collections (see Figure 4.8). Likewise, the Corbis website also includes collections of Royalty Free images on CD and it includes an alphabetical index of topics in order to facilitate the user’s search (see Figure 4.9).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage. Search page, Advanced Search page or search box.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.42: Definition of the indicator “CD collections”



Fig. 4.8: Image collections on CD on the Punchstock website

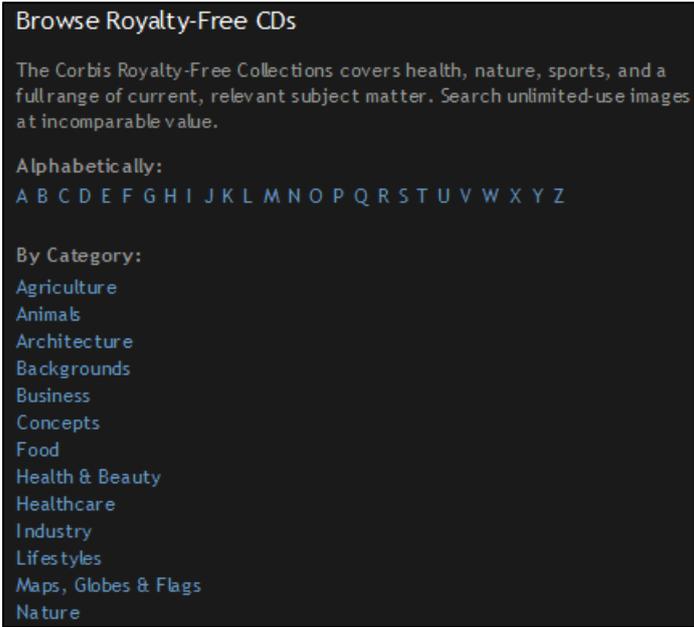


Fig.4.9: Image collections on CD on the Corbis website

➤ Lightboxes

“Lightboxes are a way of allowing users to keep track of images they like and narrowing their choices prior to purchase” (Superstock, 2012).

Definition	The website allows its users to keep track of images that they like and/or plan to purchase, by means of creating and editing lightboxes.
Examination	Does the website include the chance of creating and managing lightboxes?

Examples	The Getty Images website includes the option to create and manage lightboxes. On this website, users can display their lightboxes at any time, by logging into their user account (see Figure 4.10). The Inmage and the Punchstock websites also allow the creation and management of lightboxes. In both cases, the users can access their lightboxes from an icon in the global navigation bar (see Figures 4.11 and 4.12).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, User Account page or global navigation bar.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.43: Definition of the indicator “Lightboxes”

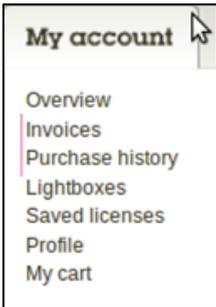


Fig.4.10: Lightboxes on the Getty Images website



Fig. 4.11: Lightboxes on the Inmage website



Fig. 4.12: Lightboxes on the Punchstock website

➤ Shopping Cart

“A cart is where you put the image(s) you are considering for purchase. You may add as many images as you wish and delete them at any time” (Superstock, 2012).

Definition	The website allows its users to keep those images that they plan to buy.
Examination	Does the website have a section where the users can keep the images they plan to buy?

Examples	<p>The Masterfile and the Getty Images websites include the option of the shopping cart, where the user can place those pictures that he/she is interested in buying. In both cases, this option is represented only by the shopping cart icon located on the global navigation bar (see Figures 4.13 and 4.14).</p> <p>The Alamy and the Jupiter Images websites also have the option of the shopping cart, but in both cases it is not represented by the icon, but by the text “Cart” (see Figures 4.15 and 4.16).</p> <p>As for the Inmage and the Punchstock websites, they combine the icon and the text in the representation of this option (see Figures 4.17 and 4.18).</p>
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, User Account page or global navigation bar.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.44: Definition of the indicator “Shopping Cart”



Fig. 4.13 and 4.14: Shopping Cart on the Masterfile and the Getty Images websites



Fig. 4.15 and 4.16: Shopping Cart on the Alamy and the Jupiter Images website



Fig. 4.17 and 4.18: Shopping Cart on the Inmage and the Punchstock websites

4.4.1.2 Additional Indicators

➤ Photography trends

Definition	The website provides its users with information about the new and upcoming trends in photography.
Examination	Does the website provide its users with information about new and upcoming trends in photography?
Examples	The Corbis website includes useful information about the newest trends in photography (see Figure 4.19).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.45: Definition of the indicator “Photography trends”

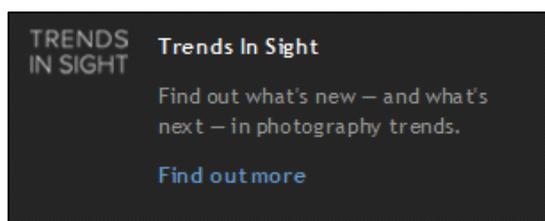


Fig. 4.19: Photography trends on the Corbis website

➤ New images

Definition	The website offers its users the chance of accessing new images as they arrive to the web.
Examination	Does the website provide its users with the search of the new images that arrive to the site?
Examples	The Masterfile website includes the option to search for the new images available in the agency (see Figure 4.20).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.46: Definition of the indicator “New images”

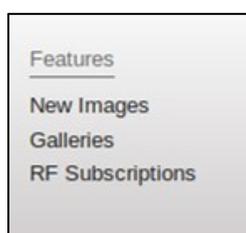


Fig. 4.20: Search for new images on the Masterfile website

➤ Application for mobile devices

Definition	The website allows downloading a mobile application through which users can see the collections, search and save images in lightboxes.
Examination	Does the website offers its users the chance of installing an application on their mobile devices to manage their images?
Examples	The Alamy website allows its users to install an application on their mobile devices to check the new images that are coming to the stock site every day (see Figure 4.21). The Masterfile website also includes this option and in addition to displaying images, it also allows searching and saving images in lightboxes (see Figure 4.22).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Resources page or Help page.

Mark	0-1
-------------	-----

Table 4.47: Definition of the indicator “Application for mobile devices”

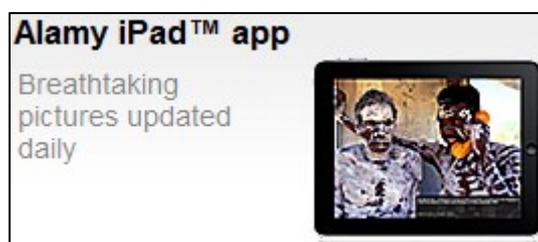


Fig. 4.21: iPad application on the Alamy website

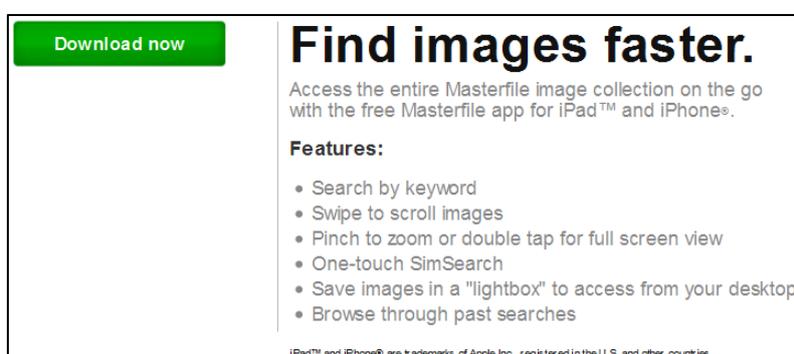


Fig. 4.22: iPad and iPhone application on the Masterfile website

4.4.2 Parameter 2 (P.2): Registered users

Parameter 2: Registered Users	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: User registration	Indicator 7: Adding notes to each image in the lightbox
Indicator 2: User account	
Indicator 3: Subscription	
Indicator 4: Creating, managing and sharing lightboxes	
Indicator 5: Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark	
Indicator 6: Orders and downloads history	

Table 4.48: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 2

4.4.2.1 Essential Indicators

➤ User Registration

Definition	The website offers its users the chance of registering. The registration offers them access to additional content and services.
Examination	Does the website allow users to register in order to access to additional services?
Examples	The Inmage and the Getty Images websites offer the chance of registering to all users who wish to do so (see Figures 4.23 and 4.24). As for the Corbis website, it also includes the registration option and in this case, this option is accompanied by a notice that informs users that the registration will provide additional services (see Figure 4.25). The Getty Images website also allows photographers to register in order to access to additional and exclusive services (see Figure 4.26).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage and subsections.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.49: Definition of the indicator “User Registration”



Fig. 4.23: Registration option on the Inmage website



Fig. 4.24: Registration option on the Getty Images website

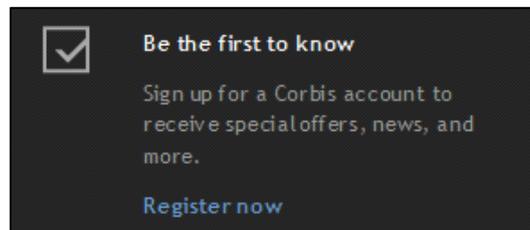


Fig. 4.25: Notice about additional services for registered users on the Corbis website

Getty Images
Contributor Community
Existing members login
 Username
 Password
 Remember me next time
 Log In
[Forgotten your Username or Password?](#)

Fig. 4.26: Registration’s contributors on the Getty Images website

➤ User Account

Definition	The website offers its registered users access to a personal page that stores all the activities carried out by the user.
Examination	Does the website allow their registered users to have access to a personal page with personal data of their interaction with the site?
Examples	The Getty Images and the Media Bakery websites provide their registered users a personal page that stores the user's movements: lightboxes, purchases, download history, etc. (see Figures 4.27 and 4.28).
Procedure	Examination of the website. User Account page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.50: Definition of the indicator “User Account”

My account	Purchase history								
Overview >	You haven't purchased anything yet. Go to the 7 items in My cart								
Invoices >									
Purchase history >	My lightboxes								
Lightboxes >	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>NAMES:</th> <th>UPDATED:</th> <th>CREATED BY:</th> <th>NOTES:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Babies</td> <td>16 May 2012</td> <td>sandra gonzalez</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	NAMES:	UPDATED:	CREATED BY:	NOTES:	Babies	16 May 2012	sandra gonzalez	
NAMES:	UPDATED:	CREATED BY:	NOTES:						
Babies	16 May 2012	sandra gonzalez							
Saved licenses >									
Profile >									
View									
My account									

Fig. 4.27: Registered user's personal page on the Getty Images website

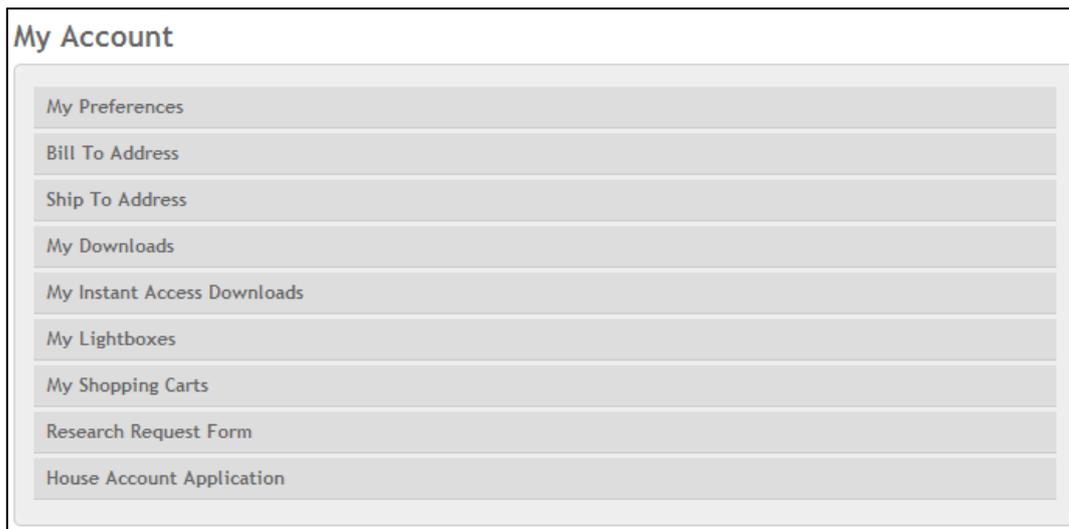


Fig. 4.28: Registered user's personal page on the Media Bakery website

➤ Subscription

“Unlimited possibilities for limited budgets” (Superstock, 2012).

Definition	The website offers its registered users different ways of subscription.
Examination	Does the website offer its users the chances of subscribing to it taking into account the different uses and needs of each particular user?
Examples	The Corbis website offers several ways of subscription depending on customer (editorial or commercial uses) (see Figure 4.29). The Superstock website includes also several ways of subscription depending on the purpose and the type of use that the user wants for the images (see Figure 4.30).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.51: Definition of the indicator “Subscription”

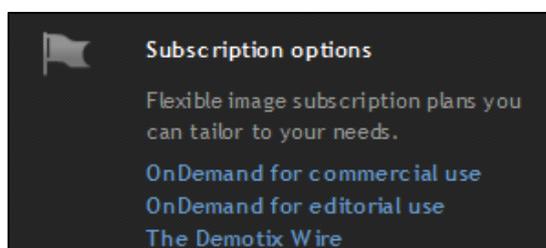


Fig. 4.29: Subscription plans on the Corbis website

Unlimited possibilities for limited budgets.
Choose from over 1.7 million images.

Subscribe now: Have questions? Call 904.680.1918

web	print	unlimited	full access
72 dpi / web resolution Max. 750 images per month 25 downloads per day	300 dpi / up to 15MB images Max. 750 images per month 25 downloads per day	300 dpi / up to 25MB images Max. 750 images per month unlimited downloads per day	300 dpi / up to 60MB images Max. 750 images per month 25 downloads per day
\$188 One Month	\$388 One Month	\$418 One Month	\$488 One Month
\$388 Three Months	\$788 Three Months	\$818 Three Months	\$888 Three Months
\$688 Six Months	\$1,388 Six Months	\$1,518 Six Months	\$1,788 Six Months
\$1,188 One Year	\$2,388 One Year	\$2,748 One Year	\$3,468 One Year

MOST POPULAR

Fig. 4.30: Subscription options on the Superstock website

➤ Creating, managing and sharing lightboxes

“Registered users may also take advantage of Advanced Lightboxes allowing drag and drop image placement within a lightbox, printing of Lightboxes, and simultaneous use of two Lightboxes where you can move images from one to the other to better define your needs” (Superstock, 2012).

Definition	The website allows its users to create and edit (rename, add notes, print, copy, delete, etc.) custom collections of photos (lightboxes). It also allows sharing them between the users of the stock photography website or by e-mailing.
Examination	Does the website allows its users to create, edit (rename, add notes, print, copy, delete, etc.) and share the lightboxes?
Examples	The Media Bakery website offers the chance of creating and managing the lightboxes (see Figure 4.31). In addition of these possibilities of editing, the Getty Images website also allows the addition of notes (such as project name, client name and comments) to each lightbox (see Figure 4.32). Besides, the Getty Images website also allows its users to send the lightboxes to different e-mail addresses (see Figure 4.33), whereas the Corbis website facilitates the transfer of lightboxes between the users of the website (see Figure 4.34).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, User Account page.
Mark	0-3 (the more information the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.52: Definition of the indicator “Creating, managing and sharing lightboxes”

Create a new lightbox

Select a lightbox
 My First Lightbox (2 images) ▼

[View selected lightbox](#)
[Print selected lightbox](#)
[Email selected lightbox](#)
[Make PDF of selected lightbox](#)

[Copy selected lightbox](#)
[Rename selected lightbox](#)
[Delete selected lightbox](#)

[Advanced Lightbox Manager](#)

Fig. 4.31: Management options of the lightboxes on the Media Bakery website

Current lightbox: Babies (4 items) ▼

Created by:	sandra gonzalez	Client name:	<input type="text"/>
Last updated:	16 May 2012 09:46 AM	Project name:	<input type="text"/>
Shared:	No	Notes:	<input type="text"/>

Maximum characters: 250

Fig. 4.32: Addition of notes and lightboxes' editing on the Getty Images website

Email this lightbox

*Required fields

Lightbox name: Babies

*To:
 (You may separate multiple e-mail addresses with semi-colons.)

Subject:

Message:

Fig. 4.33: Emailing lightboxes on the Getty Images website

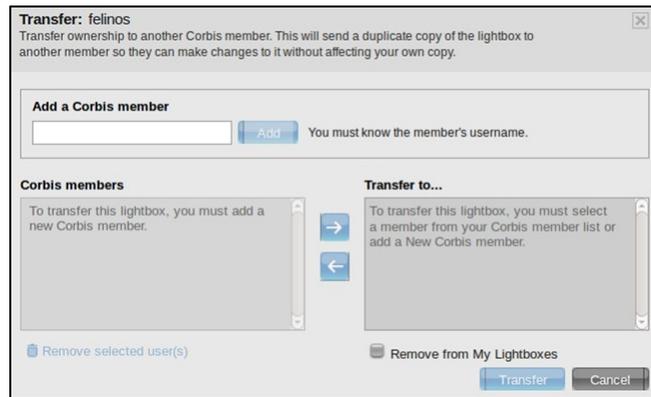


Fig. 4.34: Sharing lightboxes between registered users on the Corbis website

- Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark

“Stock photography websites should offer their customers the chance of downloading an image without watermark before its purchase. Thus, the customer can test the picture and make clean layouts” (Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez, 2011).

Definition	The website allows its registered users to download a preview version of an image without watermark, in order to use it temporarily for comp or evaluation purposes.
Examination	Does the website offer its users the chance of downloading a low quality version of the image without watermark?
Examples	The Getty Images website allows its registered users to download a preview version of an image without watermark (see Figure 4.35).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Page with the image details.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.53: Definition of the indicator “Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark”



Fig. 4.35: Image downloading without watermark available for registered users on the Getty

Images website

➤ Orders and downloads history

“The download records provide the user to have his/her expenses under control. Besides, they will help to identify images that must be bought again, because of a loss, an accidental deletion or a failure during the purchase or download process” (Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez, 2011).

Definition	The website offers its registered users the chance of checking the history of ordered and downloaded images.
Examination	Does the website has a history of orders and downloads?
Examples	The Alamy website offers to each user their personal history of orders and downloads (see Figure 4.36). The Getty Images website also includes this option (see Figure 4.37).
Procedure	Examination of the website. User Account page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.54: Definition of the indicator “Orders and downloads history”

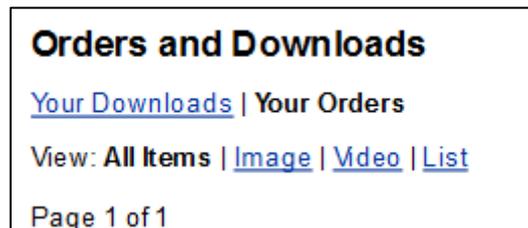


Fig. 4.36: Orders and downloads history on the Alamy website

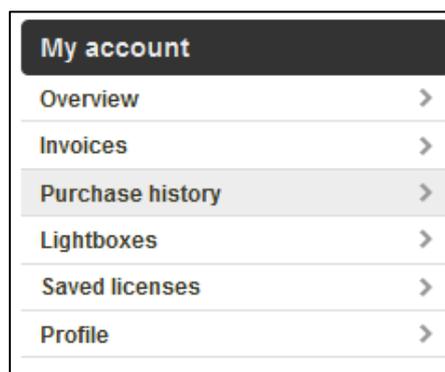


Fig. 4.37: Purchase history on the Getty Images website

4.4.2.2 Additional Indicators

➤ Adding notes to each image in the lightbox

“Stock photography websites should allow the addition of notes to each picture in the lightbox. Thus, when the user checks the history of downloads or receive the download report, he/she will be able to identify the purpose of the image or the project in that will be used each image” (Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez, 2011).

Definition	The website allows its users to add notes to each of the images that are included in the lightboxes.
Examination	Does the website allow its users to add notes to each image included in the lightboxes?
Examples	The Corbis website provides the user the addition of notes in each of the selected images (see Figure 4.38).
Procedure	Examination of the website. User Account page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.55: Definition of the indicator “Adding notes to each image in the lightbox”

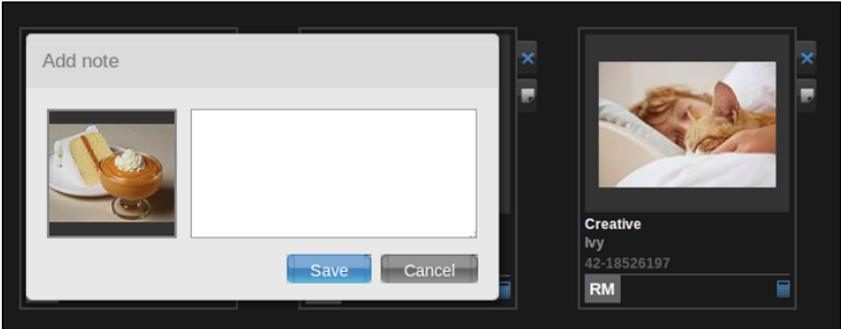


Fig. 4.38: Adding notes on each image included in the lightbox on the Corbis webpage

4.4.3 Parameter 3 (P.3): Information Architecture

Parameter 3: Information Architecture	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Language selector	Indicator 5: Site map
Indicator 2: Domain name easy to remember	Indicator 6: Most popular searches
Indicator 3: Global navigation system	Indicator 7: Most popular content
Indicator 4: Content customized by audience	Indicator 8: Quick links

Table 4.56: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 3

4.4.3.1 Essential Indicators

➤ Language Selector

“Currently many of the websites identify automatically by IP recognition from which country the user is connected. Thus, they present the content in the appropriate language saving the language selection step. However, this fact should not exclude the chance of modifying it, because frequently there are differences in the results depending on the language used in the search” (Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez, 2011).

According to Nielsen (2000), the ideal international user interface is one that is available in the user's preferred language (p. 324).

To choose between a small number of language, Nielsen recommends listing the name of each language as a word, using each language's own name for itself (p.325).

The most frequently used visual symbol for a language is probably a flag, but unfortunately flags represent countries and not languages. Nielsen recommends not using flags as symbols for language choice, because some languages are spoken in many countries and some countries have many spoken languages and that becomes a problem (p. 325)

Definition	The website has language selector.
Examination	Does the website have language selector?
Examples	The Jupiter Images website has language selector, but the system identifies the different languages with a flag; so that in this case this option could be improved (see Figure 4.39). The same happens in the case of the Getty Images website where the user does not see flags, but country names are displayed instead of the names of the languages (see Figure 4.40). Finally, Figure 4.41 corresponds to the Corbis website and here we can verify the correct use of the language selector, since the different languages are identified by their names.
Procedure	Examination of the website.
Mark	0-3

Table 4.57: Definition of the indicator “Language Selector”



Fig. 4.39: Language selector on the Jupiter Images website



Fig. 4.40: Language selector on the Getty Images website



Fig. 4.41: Language selector on the Corbis website

➤ Domain name easy to remember

“The most important component of a URL is the domain name. If users can remember your domain name, they can at least get to your home page, from which navigation and search are hopefully sufficient to allow them to find the page they need even if they don't have the rest of the URL” (Nielsen, 2000; 247).

The author identifies the following major rules when making URLs easy to spell: make the URL as short as possible, use common natural language words as much as possible, use all lowercase characters and avoid special characters (p. 248). In the case of compound domain names, Nielsen recommends running the words together if they are two reasonably short and easy-to-spell words.

Definition	The website has a URL that includes the name of the company and that is easy to remember for its users.
Examination	Is the URL of the website easy to remember and spell?

Examples	The domain name of the Alamy website matches up with the company name and it is easy to spell (see Figure 4.42). The Getty Images and the Media Bakery websites also include the name of the company in the URL. In both cases, it is a compound name, and as Nielsen suggests, the two words are together to form the domain name without including special characters (see Figures 4.43 and 4.44).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Website URL.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.58: Definition of the indicator “Domain name easy to remember”



Fig. 4.42: Domain name easy to remember on the Alamy website



Fig. 4.43: Domain name easy to remember on the Getty Images website



Fig. 4.44: Domain name easy to remember on the Media Bakery website

➤ Global navigation system

“A global navigation system is intended to be present on every page throughout a site. These site-wide navigation systems allow direct access to key areas and functions, no matter where the user travels in the site's hierarchy” (Morville & Rosenfeld, 2006).

Definition	The website has a global navigation bar which is a constant feature in every page of the website.
Examination	Does the website have a global navigation bar which is a constant feature on every page of the site?
Examples	The Getty Images and the Photos.com websites have a global navigation bar that includes the most prominent features, such as registration, log in, user account, language selector, contact, lightboxes, shopping cart and homepage link (see Figures 4.45 and 4.46).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage and subsections.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.59: Definition of the indicator “Global navigation system”



Fig. 4.45: Global navigation bar on the Getty Images website



Fig. 4.46: Global navigation bar on the Photos.com website

➤ Customized content by audience

Definition	The website offers customized content depending on the potential user (buyers/sellers, editorial/creative or different content by geographical location).
Examination	Does the website offer its users the chance of having customized content depending on the type of audience?
Examples	The Alamy website offers different content depending on whether the user is a buyer or a seller of images (see Figure 4.47). The Corbis website differentiates between the content for the creative sector and for the editorial sector (see Figures 4.48 and 4.49). Finally, the Getty Images website includes a section called “What's new”, which offers its users different content depending on their country (see Figure 4.50).
Procedure	Examination of the website.
Mark	0-3

Table 4.60: Definition of the indicator “Customized content by audience”

For buyers	For sellers
Showcase	How to submit
Picture research	Students
iPad App	Forum
	Blog

Fig. 4.47: Customized content on the Alamy website

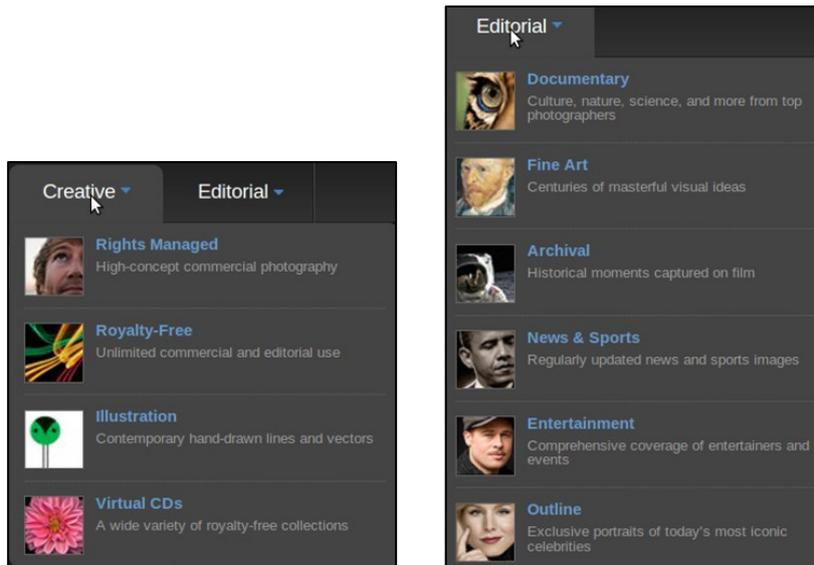


Fig. 4.48 and 4.49: Customized content on the Corbis website



Fig. 4.50: Customized content for geographical location on the Getty Images website

4.4.3.2 Additional Indicators

➤ Site map

“One of the oldest hypertext usability principles is to offer a visual representation of the information space in order to help users understand where they can go. Site maps provide such visualization, offering a useful supplement to the primary navigation features on a website or intranet” (Nielsen, 2000).

Nielsen defines a site map as a special page intended to act as website guide whose main benefit is to give users an overview of the site's areas in a single glance.

Definition	The website has a site map.
Examination	Does the website have a site map?
Examples	The Getty Images and the Photos.com websites have in the footer a link to the site map (see Figures 4.51 and 4.52). Figure 4.53 shows the site map of the Alamy website. In it we can see the different services organized hierarchically and where higher levels of hierarchy correspond to the main information needs of users (how to buy images, how to sell them, information about the company, contact information and customer help). Thus, in this case, the site map becomes an exceptional tool to guide and assist inexperienced users or users with few skills when browsing the website.

Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage. Footer.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.61: Definition of the indicator “Site map”



Fig. 4.51: Site map on the Getty Images website

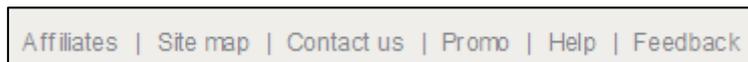


Fig. 4.52: Site map on the Photos.com website

Site map		
<p>Buying images?</p> <p>Showcase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Latest imagery ▪ Creative ▪ Architecture ▪ Backgrounds ▪ Book covers ▪ Business ▪ China ▪ Christmas ▪ Colours ▪ Concepts ▪ Corporate ▪ Cut outs ▪ Education ▪ Entertainment and celebrity ▪ Ethnicity ▪ Everyday Life ▪ Families ▪ Festivals ▪ Flowers, gardens and plants ▪ Finance ▪ Food ▪ Germany ▪ Graphics 	<p>Selling images?</p> <p>Submit images to Alamy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to sell your images? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read the contract ▪ Register and sign contract ▪ Prepare images ▪ Send images ▪ Track images ▪ Manage images ▪ Images on sale ▪ Additional revenue opportunities ▪ How to sell your News images <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ News picture guidelines ▪ News photographer Q & A ▪ Uploading News images ▪ How to sell your video ▪ Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scan and keyword services ▪ Photographer tips ▪ Keywording software ▪ Forum ▪ Blog 	<p>About Alamy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ About Us ▪ AlamyRank ▪ Corporate social responsibility ▪ Testimonials ▪ Press releases ▪ Jobs <p>Contact us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Locations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UK ▪ USA & Canada ▪ Australia ▪ Germany ▪ India ▪ Middle East ▪ Worldwide • Local contacts • How to find us <p>Terms and Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Website T&Cs ▪ Privacy policy ▪ Royalty Free EULA

Fig. 4.53: Site map on the Alamy website

➤ Most Popular Searches

Definition	The website offers its users the chance of checking the most popular image searches.
Examination	Does the website offers its users the chance of checking the Top Searches?
Examples	The Superstock website allows its users to know the most popular searches through a tag cloud. The Top Searches are marked up with a bigger font size than the rest of terms (see Figure 4.54). The Punchstock website also includes the most popular searches but in this case, they are displayed in a list (see Figure 4.55).

Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.62: Definition of the indicator “Most Popular Searches”

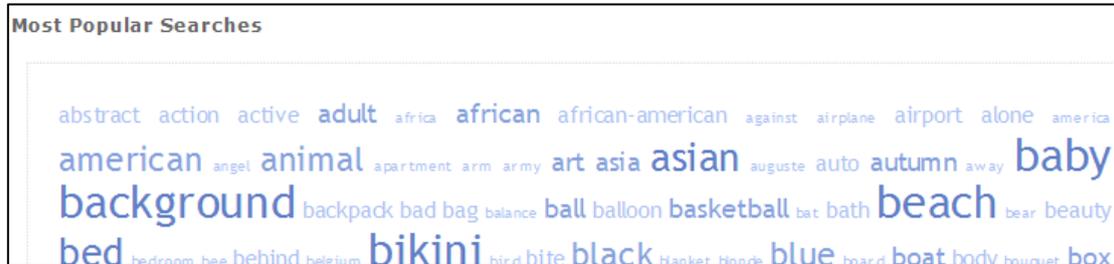


Fig. 4.54: Most Popular Searches on the Superstock website



Fig. 4.55: Most Popular Searches on the Punchstock website

➤ Most Popular Content

Definition	The website offers its users the possibility to display the most popular content.
Examination	Does the website allow its users to browse through the most popular content?
Examples	The Getty Images website includes a section that displays the featured content (see Figure 4.56). The Photos.com website allows its users to know and browse through the most popular categories (see Figure 4.57).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.63: Definition of the indicator “Most Popular Content”

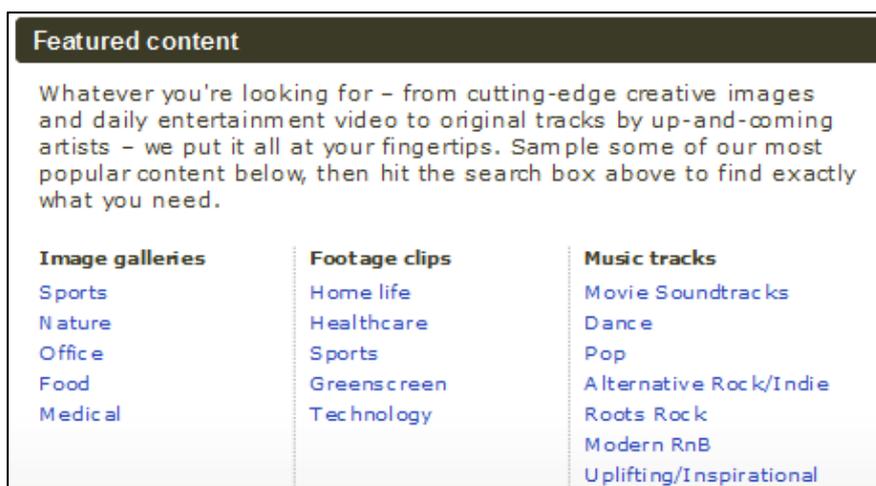


Fig. 4.56: Most Popular Content on the Getty Images website

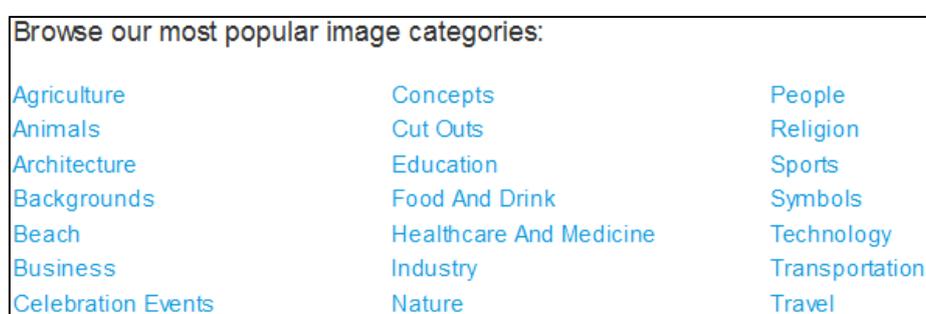


Fig. 4.57: Most Popular Content on the Photos.com website

➤ Quick links

Definition	The website offers its users the most relevant content through quick links.
Examination	Does the website include the quick links section?
Examples	The Getty Images, the Corbis and the Masterfile websites have on their homepages quick links to those sections that the management team of the webpage considered most relevant for the sellers (see Figures 4.58, 4.59 and 4.60). The Corbis website also includes quick links to interesting services to contributors (see Figure 4.61).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.64: Definition of the indicator “Quick links”

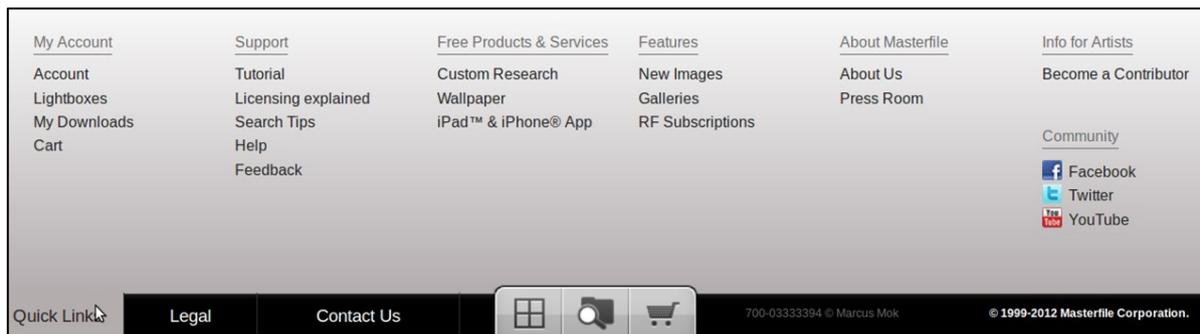


Fig. 4.58: Quick links on the Masterfile website

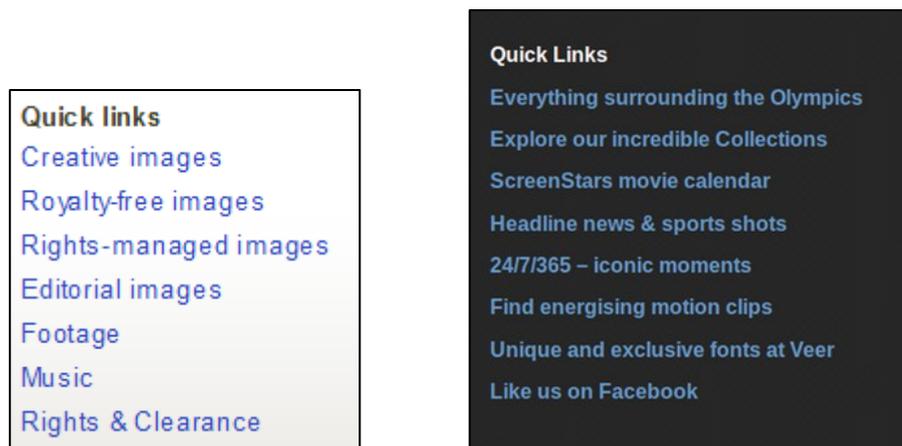


Fig. 4.59 and 4.60: Quick links on the Getty Images website (on the left) and on the Corbis website (on the right)

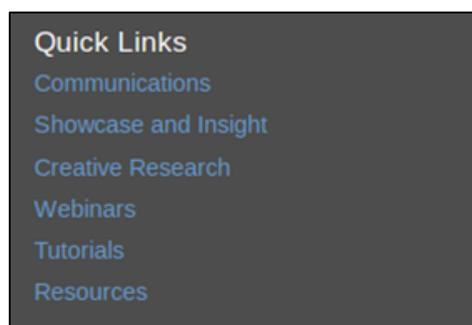


Fig. 4.61: Quick links for contributors on the Corbis website

4.4.4 Parameter 4 (P.4): User Support Service

Parameter 4: User Support Service	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)

Parameter 4: User Support Service	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Search tips	Indicator 8: Glossary of terms
Indicator 2: Shopping and subscription tips	Indicator 9: Suggestions and comments from users
Indicator 3: Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading images	Indicator 10: Contact details with experts in image search
Indicator 4: Information about releases	
Indicator 5: Information about licensing	
Indicator 6: Technical information (formats, browsers, etc.)	
Indicator 7: Useful information for photographers (contributors)	

Table 4.65: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 4

4.4.4.1 Essential Indicators

➤ Search tips

“We hear you. Sometimes it's tough to find that perfect image fast. So we've compiled answers to your most-asked search questions to help you get just what you're looking for – fast” (Getty Images, 2012).

Definition	The website offers its users tips and tricks to help them to find quickly the right image.
Examination	Does the website have a section of tricks and tips for the search?
Examples	The Getty Images website includes a section that offers its customers different types of tips to make their search experience easier: a list of keywords, a specific search tutorial and demonstration videos which show the use of the different search tools (see Figures 4.62, 4.63 and 4.64). The Superstock website also includes search tips, but in this case these tips are based only on the use of specific keywords. This option does not include, therefore, advices on how to use filters or specific search tools; so it could be improved (see Figure 4.65).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage or Help page.
Mark	0-3 (the more information the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.66: Definition of the indicator “Search tips”



Fig. 4.62: Keywords guide on the Getty Images website

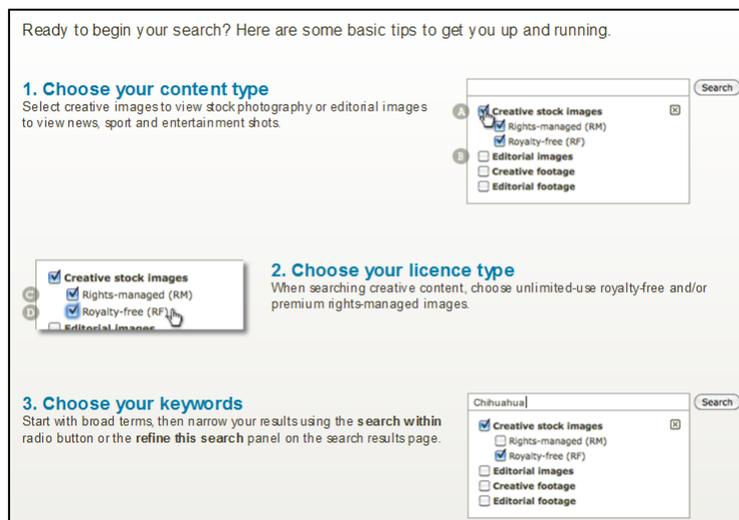


Fig. 4.63: Search tutorial on the Getty Images website

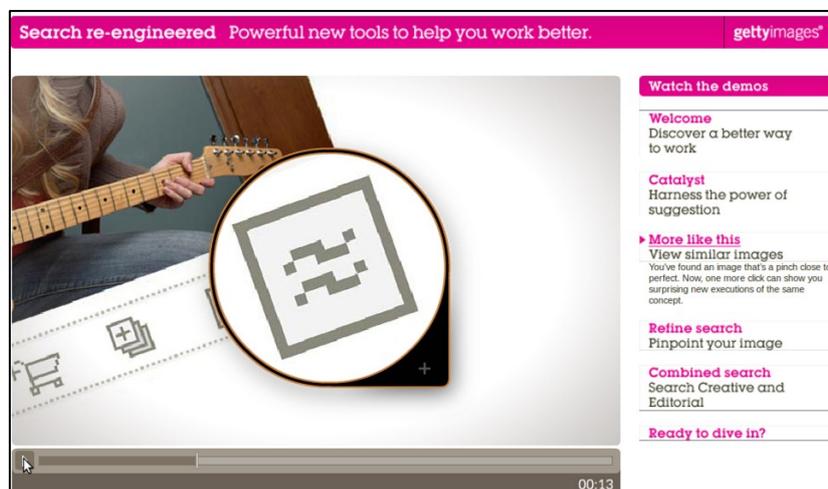


Fig. 4.64: Demonstration videos on the Getty Images website

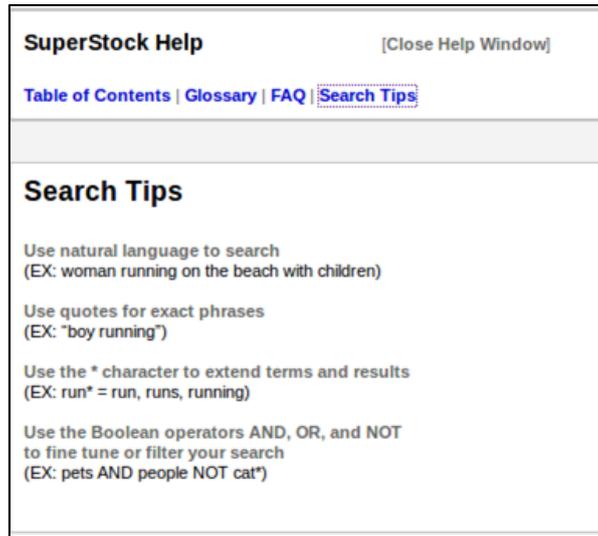


Fig. 4.65: Search tips on the Superstock website

➤ Shopping and subscription tips

“Ready to purchase? Here are some basic tips that will make the process much easier” (Getty Images, 2012).

Definition	The website includes tips and/or tutorials to help users to perform a successful, safe and smooth purchase.
Examination	Does the website have shopping tips that facilitate the purchase of pictures by the customers?
Examples	The Corbis website includes simple instructions to help its customers to manage lightboxes, calculate the image cost and complete the purchase successfully (see Figures 4.66 and 4.67). The Getty Images website includes a tutorial through which the user can follow step by step the images purchase process (see Figure 4.68). The Photos.com website does not include tutorials or tips, but it includes important information regarding the image purchase and subscription (see Figure 4.69).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage or Help page.
Mark	0-3 (the more information the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.67: Definition of the indicator “Shopping and subscription tips”

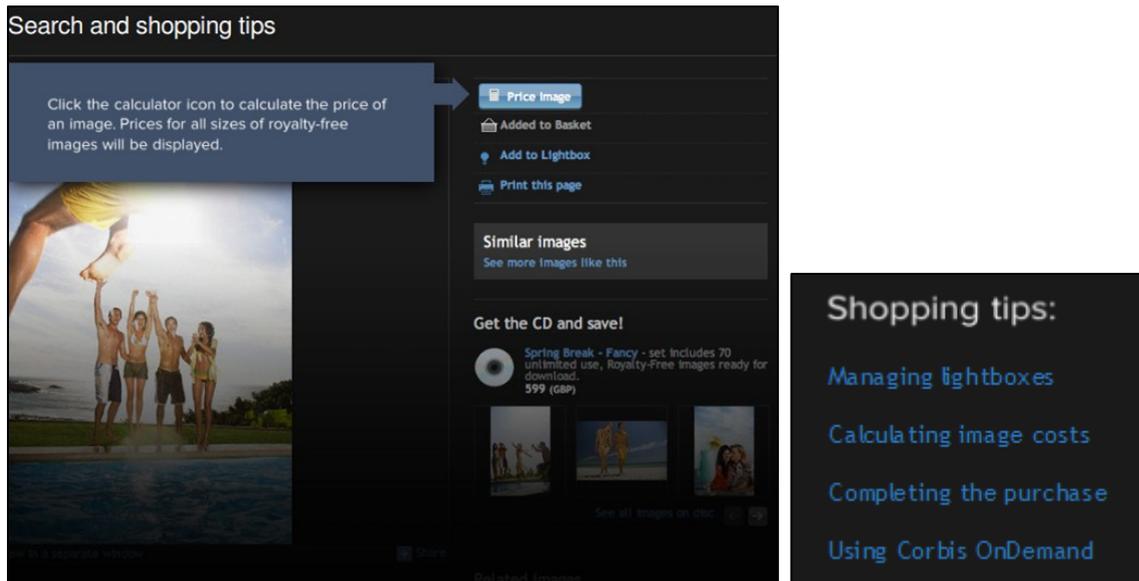


Fig. 4.66 and 4.67: Shopping tips on the Corbis website

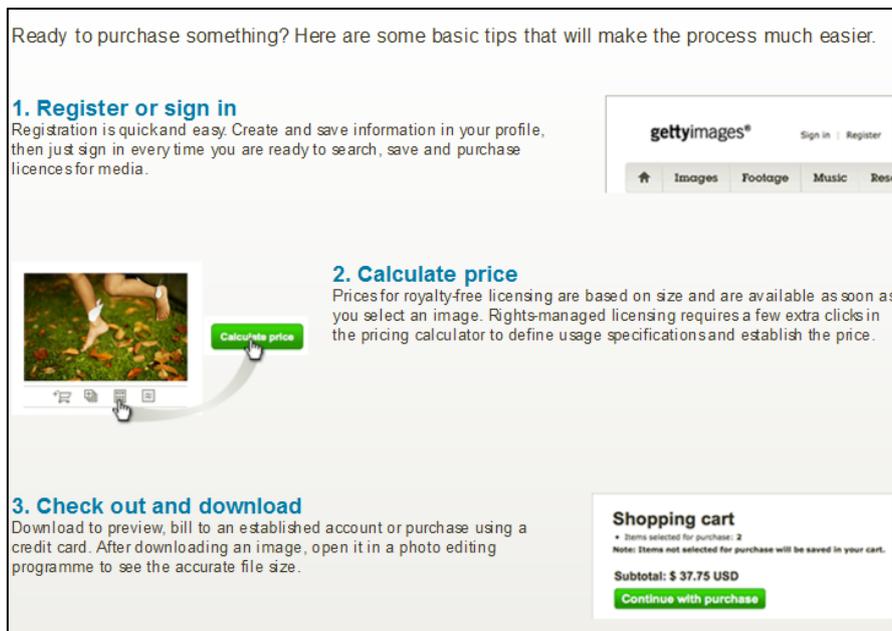


Fig. 4.68: Purchase tutorial on the Getty Images website

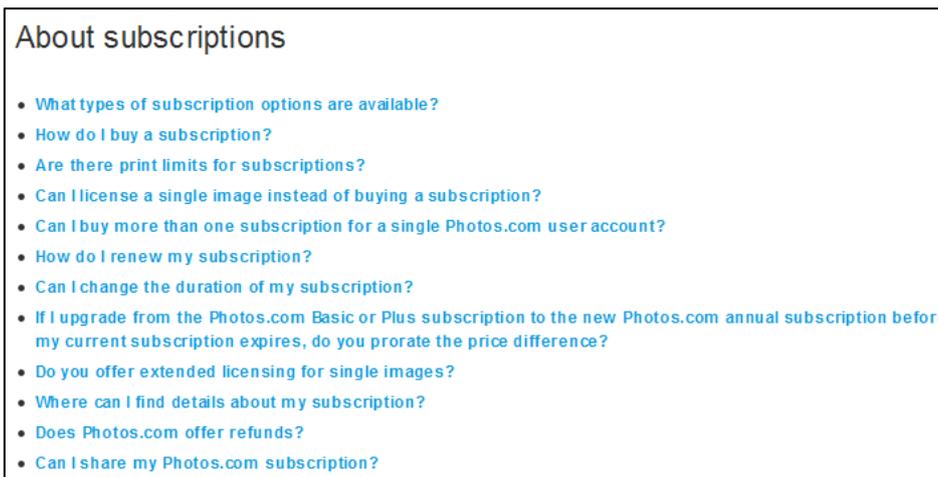


Fig. 4.69: Information about subscription on the Photos.com website

➤ Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading images

“Stock photography websites should offer a support service to search for images (by phone or e-mail), managed by professionals in the field of information and documentation. This additional service, with high added value, will facilitate the work of those customers who don't have time or don't have much experience in image search” (Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez, 2011).

Definition	The website offers its users assistance during the three basic processes (search, purchase and download of images).
Examination	Does the website offer its users any way to contact technical support?
Examples	The Media Bakery website provides its users several ways to contact (phone, fax, e-mail, mailing address) with specific departments for each query (sales, research, general inquiries and content relations). This website also offers the chance of contacting in real time (via live chat) with an operator who can assist the user at any time of the search, purchase or download processes. This website also provides a free phone for any inquiries (see Figure 4.70). The Inmage website also allows its users to contact via chat with the Sales and Support department (see Figure 4.71). In addition to contact information for headquarters, the Corbis website also provides the phone number, e-mail and website contact of each of the companies associated with it and that are located around the world (see Figures 4.72 and 4.73).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Help page or Contact page.
Mark	0-3 (the more information the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.68: Definition of the indicator “Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading images”

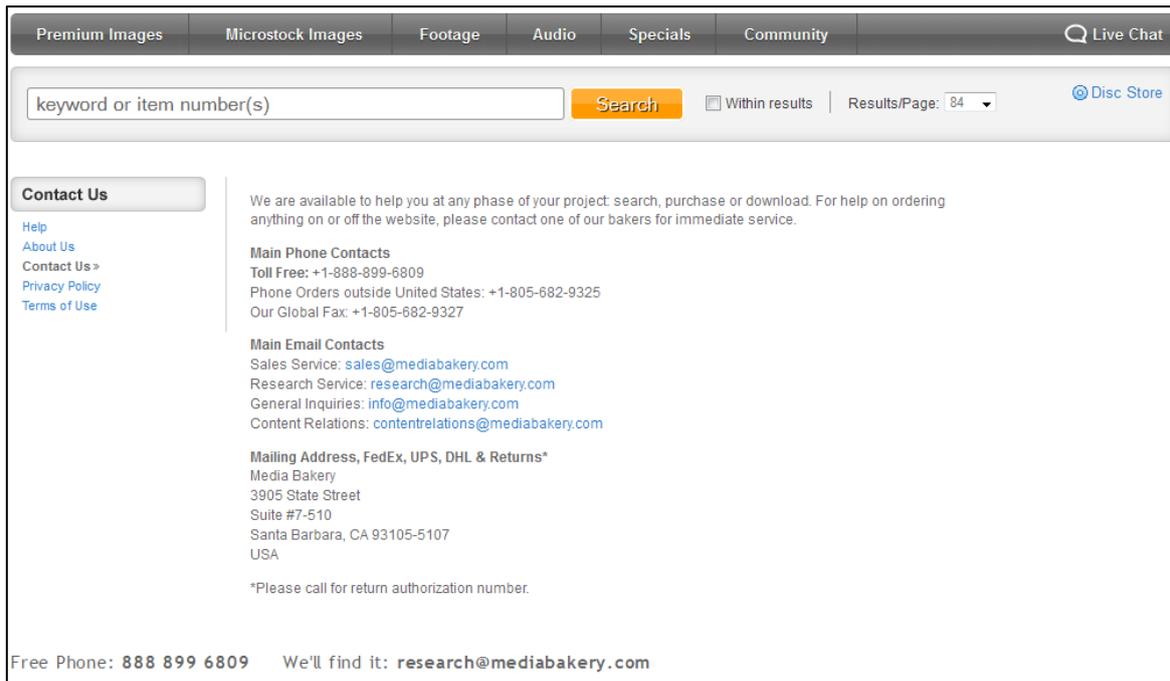


Fig. 4.70: Support service on the Media Bakery website

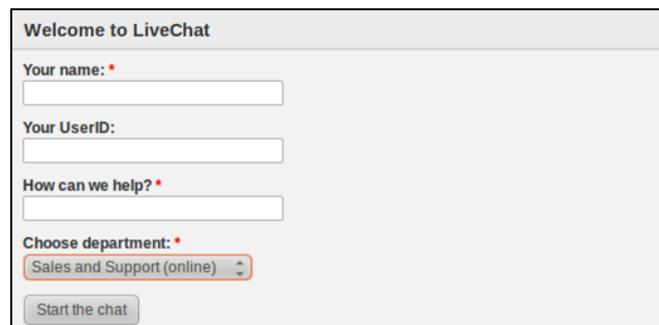


Fig. 4.71: Live Chat on the Inmage website

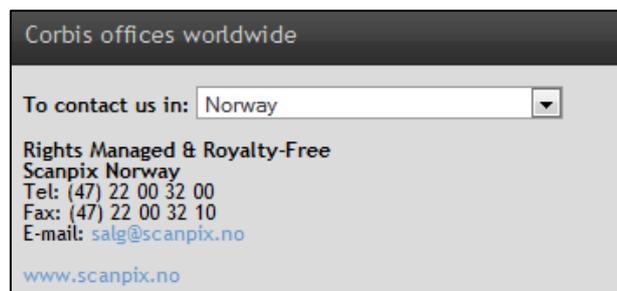
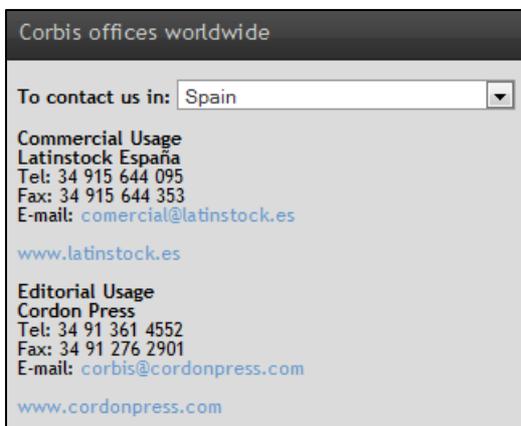


Fig. 4.72 and 4.73: Contact information in different geographical locations available on the Corbis website

➤ Information about releases

“So you’ve found the perfect image or video clip for your project. All you need now is to determine whether or not you need an additional release to use it. Unsure? If so, read on...” (Alamy, 2012).

Definition	The website provides its users information about the two type of releases (model and property releases) in stock photography.
Examination	Does the website provide its users with information about what is a release, its different types and its importance when buying a picture?
Examples	The Alamy website provides its users information about the images releases and the possible consequences of a misuse of them (see Figure 4.74). The Getty Images website also provides information about releases. In this case, when the user is interested in a particular image and he/she clicks on it to get its details, the system returns him/her the information about the releases of that image. Besides, this page also includes a link that directs to a page explaining the releases and their importance (see Figure 4.75)
Procedure	Examination of the website. Help page or Page with the image details.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.69: Definition of the indicator “Information about releases”

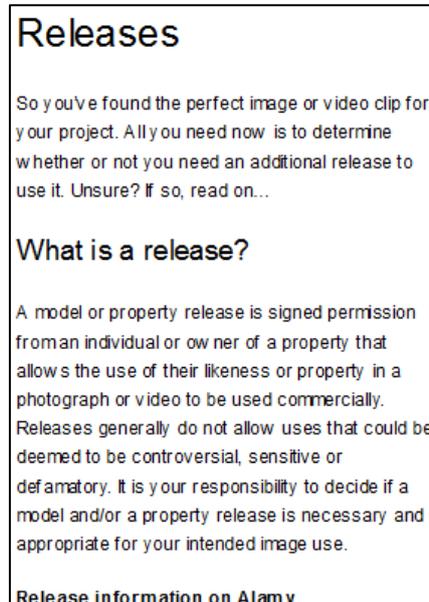


Fig. 4.74: Information about releases on the Alamy website



Fig. 4.75: Information about releases on the Getty Images website

➤ Information about licensing

“Licenses are a good thing. They allow you to legally use our images in your projects. So, how do you know which license type is right for you?” (Getty Images, 2012).

Definition	The website includes an explanation of the two types of commercial licenses (Right Managed and Royalty Free) and their main uses.
Examination	Does the website offer its users information about the types of commercial licenses that the pictures may have?
Examples	The Getty Images website provides its users information about the two types of commercial licenses (Rights Managed and Royalty Free) and their main differences (see Figure 4.76). The Punchstock website also includes information about the different types of license. In fact, once the user comes to view the details of a particular image, among these details the system returns an explanation of the image rights and licenses (see Figure 4.77).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Help page or Page with the image details.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.70: Definition of the indicator “Information about licensing”

Licensing images [↑ Back to top](#)

What does it mean to 'license' an image?

When you "purchase" content on [gettyimages.com](#) you are actually **purchasing a license** for the rights to use that content. The price of the content is based on the type of license you choose and, in the case of rights-managed images and rights-ready footage, the usage specifications you provide. Usage specifications can include the size of the content being used, placement, duration of use and geographic distribution. Depending on who you identify as the "licensee," either you (the purchaser) or someone else (3rd party individual or company, such as a client) will own the right to use the content as outlined in the licensing agreement. [Visit our Licensing Overview page](#)

How do I price content on [gettyimages.com](#)?

During your search, you'll find content that is designated as either royalty-free (RF) or rights-managed (RM). Prices for royalty-free content are based on file size, and are available right when you select an image. Rights-managed licensing requires a few extra clicks to define usage specifications and establish pricing.

Does royalty-free mean 'free'?

No. Royalty-free simply means that, after purchasing your original license, you don't have to pay any additional royalties for successive uses of a royalty-free product—provided you comply with the [license terms](#), you have a perpetual license to re-use the product.

Fig. 4.76: Information about licensing on the Getty Images website

License type

This is a royalty-free image. To learn about the types of license rights available for all PunchStock products, see our [explanation of rights](#).

Release type: No Release Required

Fig. 4.77: Information about image rights and licensing on the Punchstock website

➤ Technical information (PCs, browsers, etc.)

Definition	The website includes information about the compatibility between the website with the different browsers and PCs.
Examination	Does the website include technical information about the compatibility between the website with the different browsers and PCs?
Examples	The Superstock website informs the user of potential problems the/she can find depending on the version of browser used and it lets users download the most updated version (see Figure 4.78).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Help page or Page with image details.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.71: Definition of the indicator “Technical information (formats, browsers, etc.)”

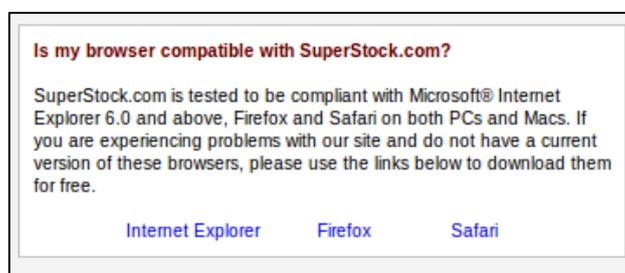


Fig. 4.78: Technical information on the Superstock website

➤ Useful information for photographers (contributors)

Definition	The website contains information specifically targeted to their contributors in order to make the uploading of their images on the website easier (how to become a contributor, how to upload images, how to keyword and describe images, etc.)
Examination	Does the website include useful information for contributors?
Examples	The Media Bakery and the Corbis websites make it easier to upload photos to their contributors. For this purpose, these websites include information about the most effective way to upload photos, the best way to describe the images through metadata, different guides of image types, etc. (see Figures 4.79 and 4.80).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Help page or Contributor page.
Mark	0-3 (the more information the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.72: Definition of the indicator “Useful information for photographers (contributors)”



Fig. 4.79: Tips for contributors on the Media Bakery website

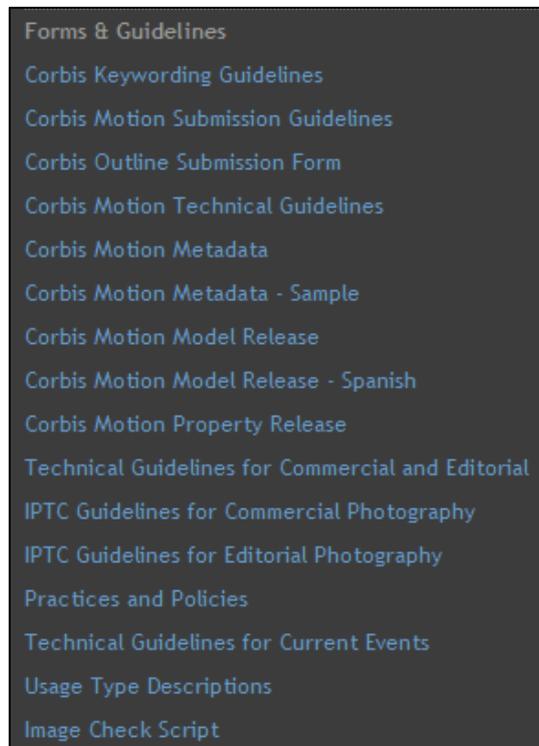


Fig. 4.80: Useful information for contributors on the Corbis website

4.4.4.2 Additional Indicators

- Glossary of terms

“A glossary, also known as an idioticon, vocabulary, or clavis, is an alphabetical list of terms in a particular domain of knowledge with the definitions for those terms. In a general sense, a glossary contains explanations of concepts relevant to a certain field of study or action” (Glossary, 2012).

Definition	The website includes a glossary of terms to help novice users to understand the terminology used in the stock photography.
Examination	Does the website have a glossary of terms related to the field of photography?
Examples	The Alamy website includes a section that includes an explanation of terms related to the field of image (see Figure 4.81). The Superstock website also includes a glossary, but in this case the glossary also includes technical terms related to the use of the website and the Internet (see Figure 4.82).

Procedure	Examination of the website. Help page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.73: Definition of the indicator “Glossary of terms”

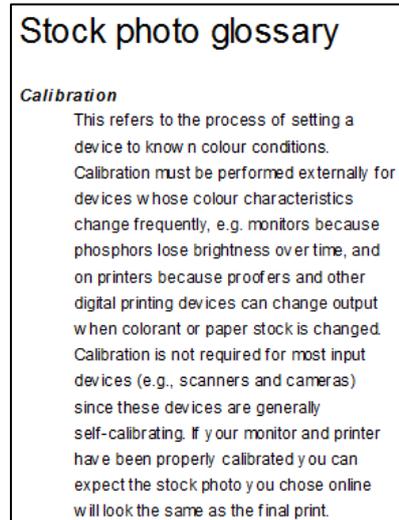


Fig. 4.81: Glossary of terms on the Alamy website

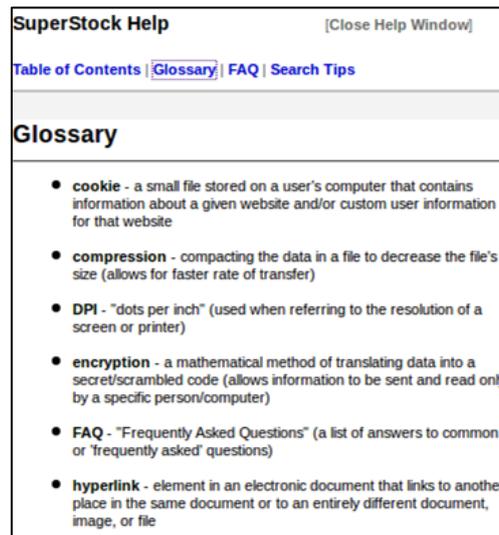


Fig. 4.82: Glossary of terms on the Superstock website

- Suggestions and comments from users

“We're interested in your feedback to help improve the Getty Images experience” (Getty Images, 2012).

Definition	The website allows its users to send suggestions and comments in order to improve the user experience.
-------------------	--

Examination	Does the website allow its users send comments about any problems or deficiencies in the system?
Examples	The Getty Images website allows its users to contact the sales staff through a form that is available online. In this form, the system allows users to enter comments about the site and its running, in order to improve the user experience (see Figure 4.83). The Punchstock website also allows its user to send their feedback (see Figure 4.84).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Help page or Contact page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.74: Definition of the indicator “Suggestions and comments from users”

We're interested in your feedback to help improve the Getty Images experience.

Need immediate assistance?
Please [contact](#) our sales staff

* Required field

Area you are commenting on: * *

Type of Feedback: * *

Subject:

Comments: *

(2,000 character limit)

Attach a screenshot indicating the topic of your comment (optional):

Email: *

Thanks for taking the time to help us improve our website - we value your input. We apologize that we may not be able to respond to every comment!

Fig. 4.83: Comments from users on the Getty Images website

Want to comment on the new PunchStock website?

Your feedback helps us improve the site -- and we promise all of it gets read. (Unfortunately, we're not able to respond individually to every comment.)

* = Required field

***About:**

***Summary:**

Computer information: Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 6.1; WOW64;

Subject:

***Comments:**

(2000 characters remaining)

***Your email address:**

Username:

Upload a screenshot: Please show us what you're seeing. Attaching a screenshot of the problem or search results is optional -- but it's really helpful.

Fig. 4.84: Comments from users on the PunchStock website

➤ Contact details with experts in image search

“We realize that there are times when you need additional help or simply don’t have the time to carry out your own picture research” (Alamy, 2012).

Definition	The website provides its users the chance of contacting pictures researchers, who can provide them extra support in image search.
Examination	Does the website allow its users to contact experts in image search on the web?
Examples	The Alamy website provides its users with contact details of companies involved in the specialized image search. These companies provided by Alamy are within the territories of Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. (see Figure 4.85). The Imagine website doesn't offer its users the contact details of pictures researchers, but it guides them in the search for the right image. Through this service, users will have to fill in a form that includes some attributes of the image that the users are looking for. Once the users submit the form, a group of experts from the company will send them a reply that fits their needs (see Figure 4.86).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage or Help page.

Mark	0-1
-------------	-----

Table 4.75: Definition of the indicator “Contact details with experts in image search”

Companies providing picture research services	
Country	Company name and contact details
CANADA	<p>Pronk & Associates Inc.</p> <p> 200 Yorkland Blvd Suite 500, Toronto Ontario M2J 5C1 Canada</p> <p> Tel: 416-441-3760</p> <p> Photofinder@pronk.com</p>

Fig. 4.85: Picture research services on the Alamy website

FREE Image Research

Looking for a personal image search that promises spectacular imagery results?

Share your creative thoughts with us and our round-the-clock trained photo researchers will revert to you within one working day. Imagine - providing valuable customers such as yourself with an endless array of exclusive imagery and more!

Did we mention it's **FREE**?

Research Needs

Product Type: Photography Illustrations Motion * Required Fields

Project Description:

Concept:

Image Description:* If you've seen an image similar to what you're searching for, include the image number below.

Image Number:

Or

Upload An Image:

Single Image or CD:



Fig.4.86: Picture research services on the Inmage website

4.4.5 Parameter 5 (P.5): Search

“If you have the perfect picture for the user but he cannot locate it easily, then you don't have the perfect picture” (Jonathan Klein, cofounder of Getty Images).

Parameter 5: Search	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Semantic clarifications	Indicator 13: Autocomplete search terms
Indicator 2: Search by releases	Indicator 14: Search for a photographer
Indicator 3: Search by type of image license	Indicator 15: Search by price
Indicator 4: Search by type of image	Indicator 16: Search by date (added to stock photography)
Indicator 5: Search by categories	Indicator 17: Search by date photographed
Indicator 6: Search by concept	Indicator 18: Search by collection
Indicator 7: Search by people attributes	Indicator 19: Search by color
Indicator 8: Search by technical attributes	Indicator 20: Search by image number
Indicator 9: Search by location	Indicator 21: Suggestion of new search term (did you mean results for "_")?
Indicator 10: Search by specific events	Indicator 22: Similar images to an image uploaded
Indicator 11: More images like this	Indicator 23: Redefinition of the search without deleting criteria previously selected
Indicator 12: Similar images by selecting keywords	

Table 4.76: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 5

4.4.5.1 Essential Indicators

➤ Semantic clarifications

“When the user enters a polysemous word in the search box, the system should provide a simple tool for clarification of the search” (Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez, 2011).

Definition	The website introduces semantic clarifications in the case of polysemous words in order to avoid the ambiguity in terminology.
Examination	Does the website provide semantic clarifications in the case of ambiguous terms or words with more than one meaning?
Examples	The Getty Images and the Inimage websites include the option of semantic clarifications (see Figures 4.87 and 4.88).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, search box.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.77: Definition of the indicator “Semantic clarifications”

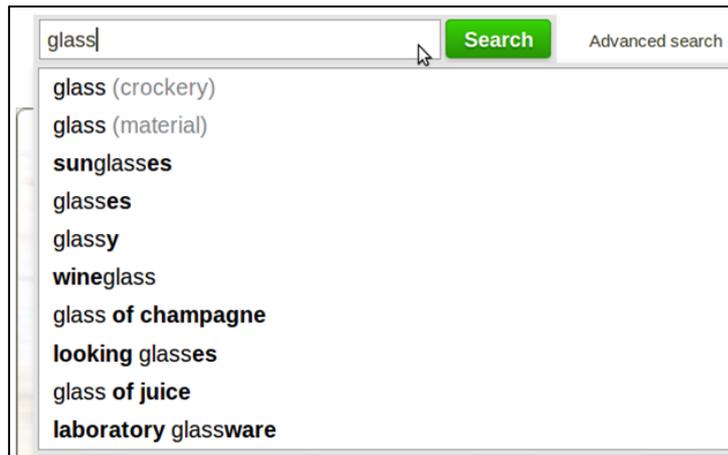


Fig. 4.87: Semantic clarifications on the Getty Images website

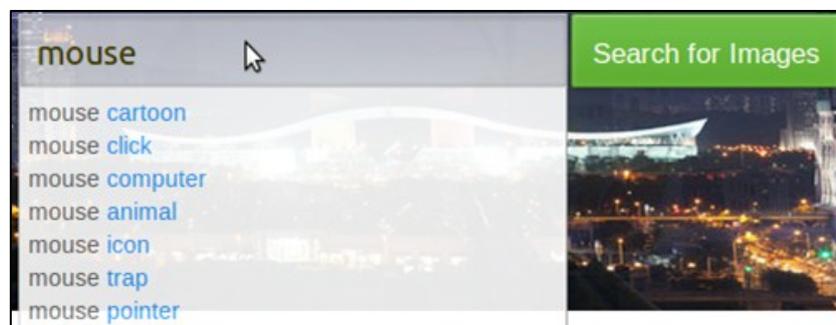


Fig. 4.88: Semantic clarifications on the Inimage website

➤ Search by releases

Definition	The website allows the user to filter search results by image releases (model release, property release or any release).
Examination	Does the website include the option to search or filter the results by releases?
Examples	The Corbis and the Alamy websites allow its users search and filter the list of the results by image releases (see Figures 4.89 and 4.90)
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.78: Definition of the indicator “Search by releases”

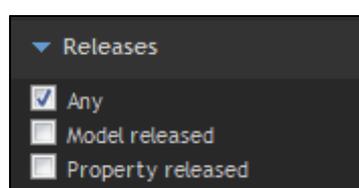


Fig. 4.89: Search by releases on the Search page of the Corbis website



Fig. 4.90: Search by releases on the Homepage of the Alamy website

➤ Search by type of image license

Definition	The website allows its users to filter the search results by type of image license (Royalty Free and Rights Managed).
Examination	Does the website include the option to search or filter the list of results by the type of image license?
Examples	The Media Bakery website allows in its homepage the search of images by selecting one or another image license (see Figure 4.91). The Masterfile website, unlike the Media Bakery website, allows the search by selecting the two types of license at once or by selecting one or another license (see Figure 4.92).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.79: Definition of the indicator “Search by type of image license”



Fig. 4.91: Search by type of image license on the Media Bakery website

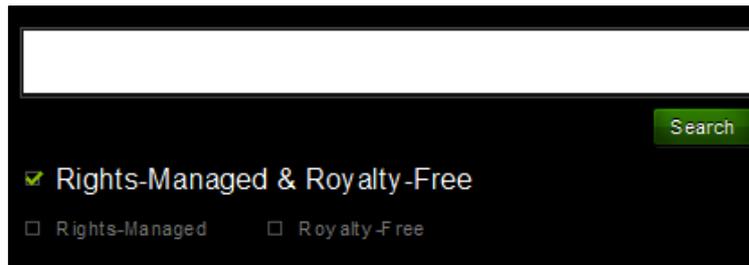


Fig. 4.92: Search by type of image license on the Masterfile website

➤ Search by type of image

Definition	The website allows its users to filter the search results by type of image (Creative or Editorial).
Examination	Does the website include the option to search or filter the list of results by the type of image (Creative or Editorial)?
Examples	The Corbis and the Getty Images websites include this option on their homepages (see Figures 4.93 and 4.94).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.80: Definition of the indicator “Search by type of image”

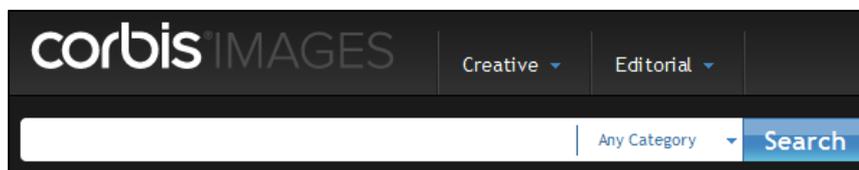


Fig. 4.93: Search by type of image (Creative or Editorial) on the Corbis website

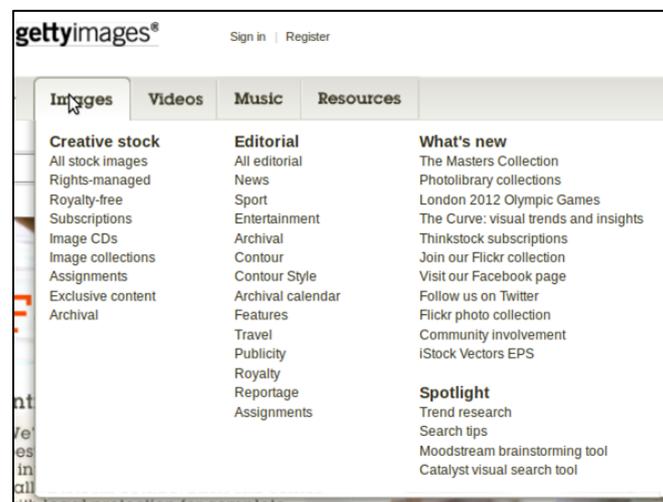


Fig. 4.94: Search by type of image (Creative or Editorial) on the Getty Images website

➤ Search by categories

Definition	The website allows its users to filter the search results by thematic categories.
Examination	Does the website offer its users the chance of filtering search results by categories?
Examples	The Inmage and the Photos.com websites allow filtering by thematic categories (see Figures 4.95 and 4.96).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.81: Definition of the indicator “Search by categories”



Fig. 4.95: Search by categories on the Inmage website



Fig. 4.96: Search by categories on the Photos.com website

➤ Search by concept

Definition	The website allows its users to filter the results considering the connotative meaning of the image.
Examination	Does the website allow its users to filter the results by the connotative meaning associated with the image?
Examples	The Getty Images and the Jupiter Images websites include the search by concept (see Figures 4.97 and 4.98).

Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.82: Definition of the indicator “Search by concept”



Fig. 4.97: Search by concept on the Getty Images website

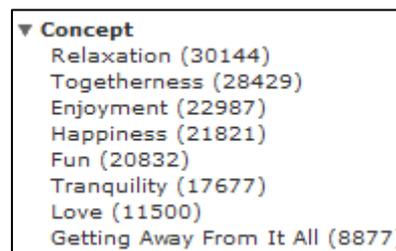


Fig. 4.98: Search by concept on the Jupiter Images website

➤ Search by people attributes

Definition	The website allows its users to filter the results considering the attributes of people in the picture.
Examination	Does the website have the option to search or filter the list of results by the attributes of people in the photograph?
Examples	The Media Bakery and the Corbis websites include the option of filtering the results by the attributes of the people shown in the image, such as the number of people, the gender, the age and the ethnicity (see Figure 4.99, 4.100, 4.101 and 4.102). The Inmage website also allows users to select certain attributes of people in the image, but in this case the options provided are less (see Figure 4.103).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-3 (the more information the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.83: Definition of the indicator “Search by people attributes”

People Attributes

- Looking at Camera
- Looking away from Camera

- No People
- People
 - 1 Person only
 - 1-2 People
 - 3-4 People
 - 5-6 People
 - Crowd

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age

- Babies
- Toddler
- Child
- Teenager
- Young Adult
- Adult
- Senior
- Elderly

Ethnicity

- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- Middle Eastern
- Caucasian

Fig. 4.99 and 4.100: Search by people attributes on the Media Bakery website

PEOPLE

- ▼ Number of people
 - Any
 - No people
 - 1 person
 - 2 people
 - 3 people
 - 4 people
 - 5 people
 - Group: 6+
- ▼ Gender
 - Any
 - Female only
 - Male and female
 - Male only

Age

- Any
- All children: 0-12 years
- Baby: 0-23 months
- Child: 2-9 years
- Pre-teen: 10-12 years
- Teenager: 13-17 years
- Young adult: 18-29 years
- Mid-adult: 30-39 years
- Middle-aged: 40-59 years
- Senior: 60+ years

Ethnicity

- Any
- African descent
- Asian
- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- Middle Eastern
- Multiethnic

Fig. 4.101 and 4.102: Search by people attributes on the Corbis website

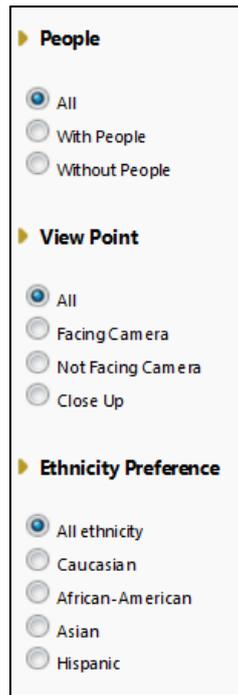


Fig. 103: Search by people attributes on the Imagine website

➤ Search by technical attributes

Definition	The website allows its users to filter the results considering the technical attributes of the image (style, layout, point of view, etc.)
Examination	Does the website have the option to search or filter the list of results taking into account the technical attributes of the image (style, layout, point of view, etc.?)
Examples	The Corbis and the Jupiter Images websites include the option of filtering the results according to criteria of the image style and composition (see Figure 4.104, 4.105 and 4.106). As for the Photos.com website, it only allows filtering according to the technical attributes of the image using four criteria (vertical, horizontal, photo objects and exclude nudity (see Figure 4.107).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-3 (the more information the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.84: Definition of the indicator “Search by technical attributes”

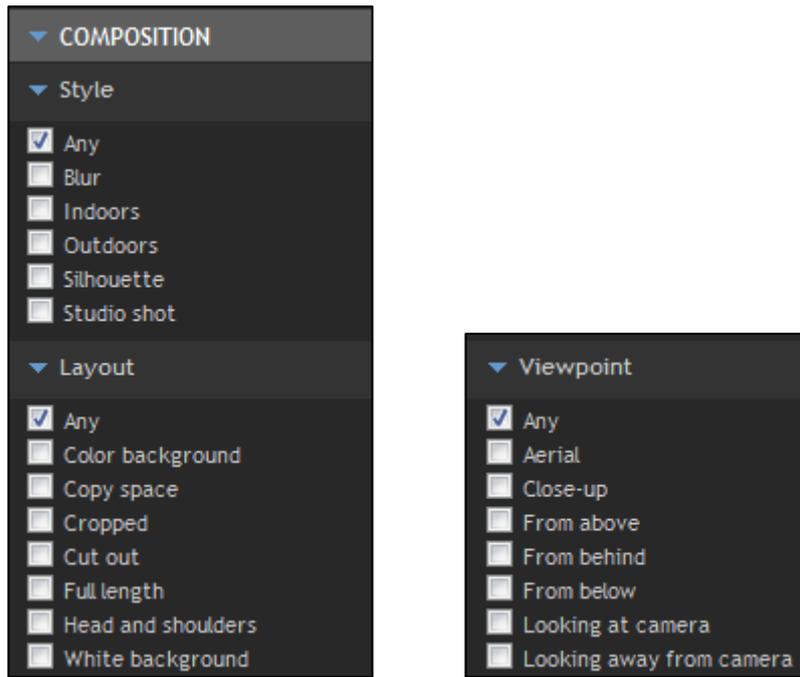


Fig. 4.104 and 4.105: Search by technical attributes on the Corbis website

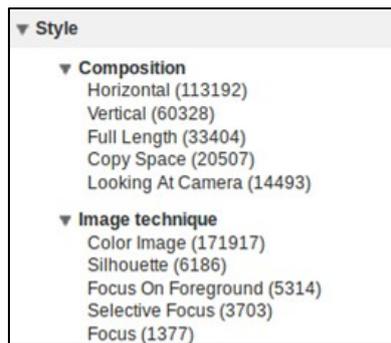


Fig. 4.106: Search by technical attributes on the Jupiter Images website



Fig. 4.107: Search by technical attributes on the Photos.com website

➤ Search by location

Definition	The website allows its users to filter the search results considering the place where the photography was taken.
Examination	Does the website offer the chance of searching or filtering the list of the results taking into account the place on where the images were taken?
Examples	The Getty Images website allows users to search editorial images considering the place where they have been taken by the photographer. The system returns the user a list of places (continents, countries, cities, etc.) sorted alphabetically (see Figure 4.108). The Alamy website also allows filtering by location, but in this case the options offered are much lower than those of the Getty Images website. Alamy only allows the selection of images taken in USA, UK and Europe (see Figure 4.109). As for the Corbis website, it allows users in its advanced search enter the name of the desired location (see Figure 4.110).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-3 (the more information the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.85: Definition of the indicator “Search by location”

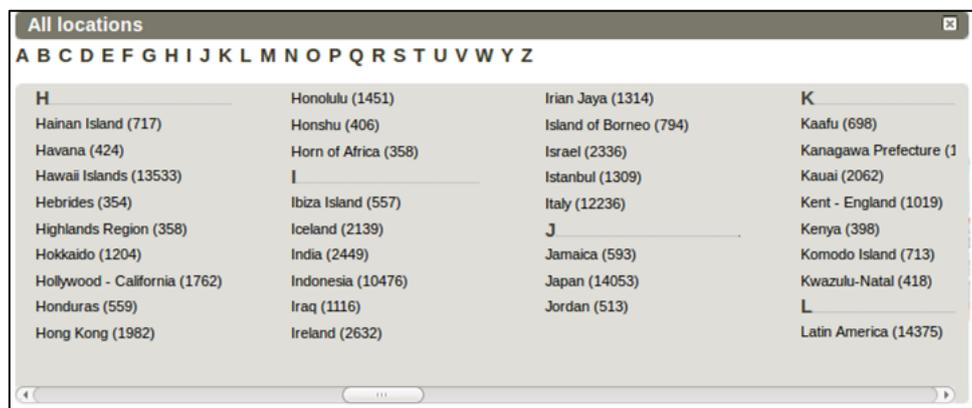


Fig. 4.108: Search by location on the Getty Images website



Fig. 4.109: Search by location on the Alamy website



Fig. 4.110: Search by location on the Corbis website

➤ Search by specific events

Definition	The website allows its users to filter the search results considering the specific event where the photography was taken.
Examination	Does the website offer the chance of searching or filtering the list of the results taking into account the specific event where the images were taken?
Examples	The Getty Images website allows users to search editorial images considering the place where they have been taken by the photographer. The system returns the user a list of places (continents, countries, cities, etc.) sorted alphabetically (see Figure 4.111).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.86: Definition of the indicator “Search by specific events”

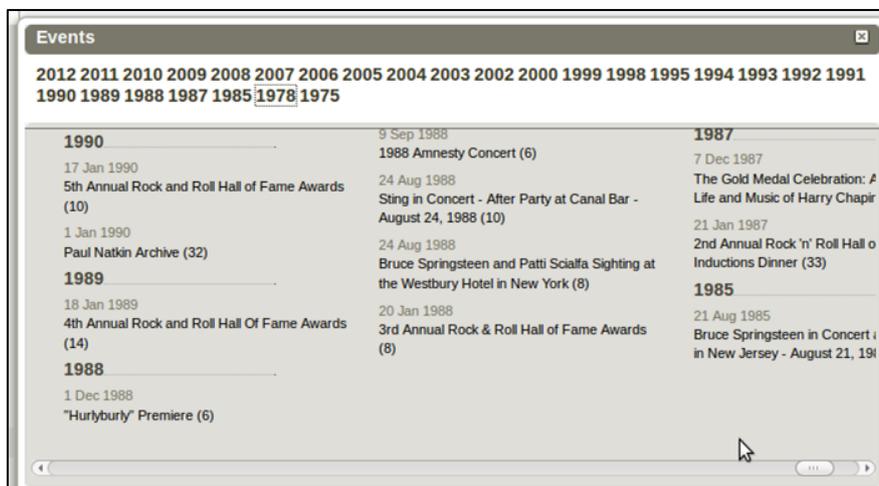


Fig. 4.111: Search by specific events on the Getty Images website

➤ More images like this

Definition	Once the user finds an image that interests him/her, the website allows him/her to search for similar images (the same photo shoot, the same pattern or places, composition, colors, author or having the same or the most of the keywords, etc.)
-------------------	---

Examination	Does the website include the option to search for similar images to a certain image (the same photo shoot, the same composition, colors, etc.)?
Examples	<p>The Corbis website allows users to search for similar images in the results page of a given search. That is, when the user enters a search term and the system returns the results for that query, the user has the chance of searching for similar images to each of the retrieved images (see Figure 4.112).</p> <p>The Media Bakery website also includes this option, but in this case, it is necessary that the user accesses the page image details (see Figure 4.113).</p> <p>The Getty Images, for its part, includes a specific icon for this option:  . On this website the user has the chance of finding similar images from the results page, or in some cases within the page image details the system also returns images that have been taken in the same photo shoot (see Figures 4.114 and 4.115).</p>
Procedure	Examination of the website. Page with search results or page with image details.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.87: Definition of the indicator “More images like this”

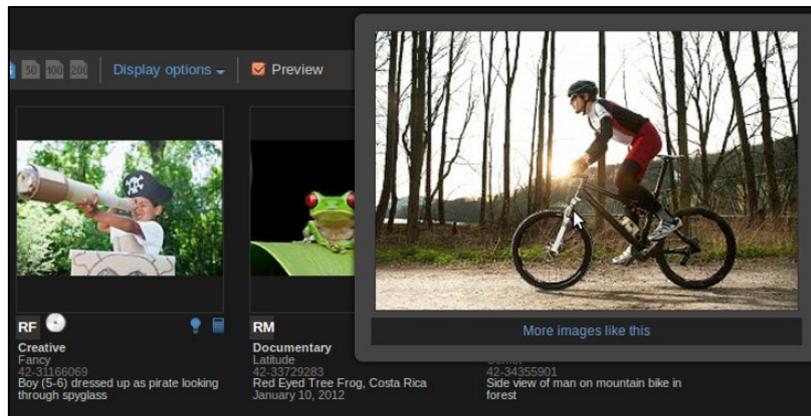


Fig. 4.112: Search for similar images on the Corbis website

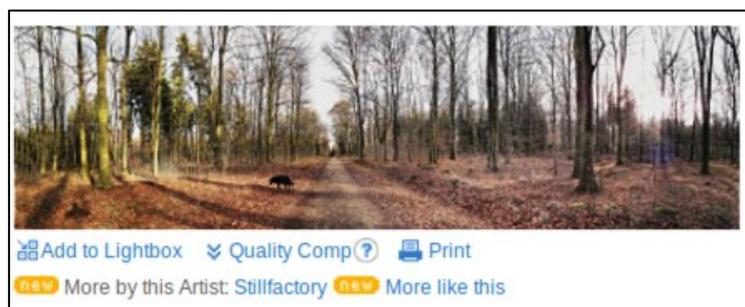


Fig. 4.113: Search for similar images on the page with image details on the Media Bakery website



Fig. 4.114: Icon of similar images on the Getty Images website

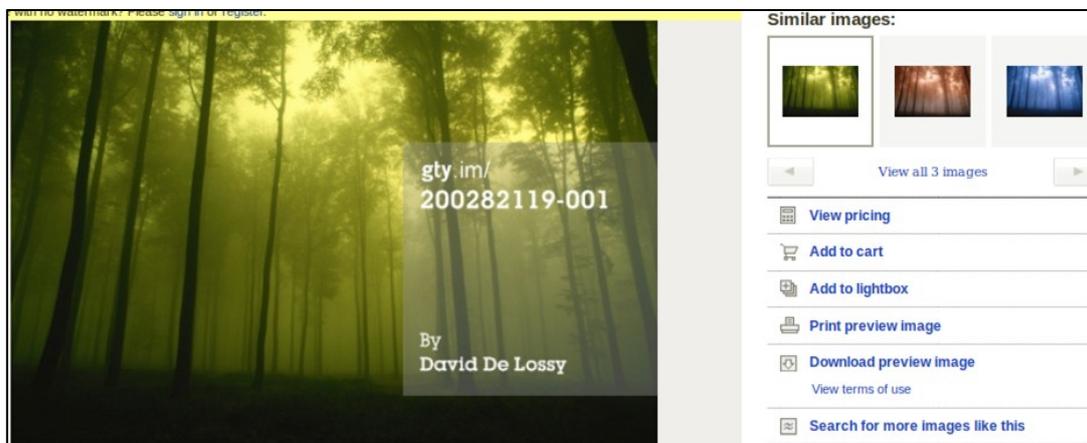


Fig. 4.115: Search for similar images on the page with image details on the Getty Images website

➤ Similar images by selecting keywords

Definition	Once the user selects an image, the website allows him/her to reformulate a new search based on keywords associated with the selected image.
Examination	Does the website allow users to search for similar images by selecting keywords associated with a particular image?
Examples	The Imagine website displays a list of keywords and offers users the option to select those they want (see Figure 4.116). The Getty Images website also allows users to find similar images by selecting keywords. Furthermore, in this case, the keywords are sorted by category (see Figures 4.117 and 4.118).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Page with image details.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.88: Definition of the indicator “Similar images by selecting keywords”

Find similar images by selecting any combination of the following keywords. Click on any keyword to search on a single keyword.

<input type="checkbox"/> clothing	<input type="checkbox"/> locations	<input type="checkbox"/> enjoyment	<input type="checkbox"/> days	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanics
<input type="checkbox"/> casual wear	<input type="checkbox"/> clouds	<input type="checkbox"/> Mexico	<input type="checkbox"/> season	<input type="checkbox"/> Latina
<input type="checkbox"/> pants	<input type="checkbox"/> outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/> side by side	<input type="checkbox"/> weekend	<input type="checkbox"/> Latino
<input type="checkbox"/> jeans	<input type="checkbox"/> young	<input type="checkbox"/> North America	<input type="checkbox"/> relative	<input type="checkbox"/> Latinas
<input type="checkbox"/> concepts	<input type="checkbox"/> candid	<input type="checkbox"/> recreational actions	<input type="checkbox"/> sibling	<input type="checkbox"/> Latinos
<input type="checkbox"/> adults	<input type="checkbox"/> perspective	<input type="checkbox"/> liquids	<input type="checkbox"/> sister	<input type="checkbox"/> hairs
<input type="checkbox"/> young adults	<input type="checkbox"/> two people	<input type="checkbox"/> furnishings	<input type="checkbox"/> friend	<input type="checkbox"/> skies
<input type="checkbox"/> 20s	<input type="checkbox"/> hair color	<input type="checkbox"/> seats	<input type="checkbox"/> woman	<input type="checkbox"/> furnishing
<input type="checkbox"/> day	<input type="checkbox"/> brunette hair	<input type="checkbox"/> resorts	<input type="checkbox"/> reflection	<input type="checkbox"/> chair
<input type="checkbox"/> seasons	<input type="checkbox"/> hairstyles	<input type="checkbox"/> decks	<input type="checkbox"/> current	<input type="checkbox"/> patio chairs
<input type="checkbox"/> summer	<input type="checkbox"/> long hair	<input type="checkbox"/> sounds	<input type="checkbox"/> modern	<input type="checkbox"/> patio chair
<input type="checkbox"/> weekends	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnicities and nationalities	<input type="checkbox"/> language	<input type="checkbox"/> emotion	<input type="checkbox"/> look
<input type="checkbox"/> people	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic	<input type="checkbox"/> accommodations	<input type="checkbox"/> feeling	<input type="checkbox"/> looks
<input type="checkbox"/> relatives	<input type="checkbox"/> places of business	<input type="checkbox"/> quantities and sizes	<input type="checkbox"/> feelings	<input type="checkbox"/> swimming pool

Fig. 4.116: Search by similar images by selecting keywords on the Inimage website

Select keywords to find similar images

Tip: Select fewer keywords to get more results. (Only images that match all of the keywords you select will be shown.)

Subject	<input type="checkbox"/> Affectionate	<input type="checkbox"/> Cheerful	<input type="checkbox"/> Cute
	<input type="checkbox"/> Diaper	<input type="checkbox"/> Family with One Child	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Body Part
	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Face	<input type="checkbox"/> Mother	<input type="checkbox"/> One Parent
	<input type="checkbox"/> People	<input type="checkbox"/> Photography	<input type="checkbox"/> Portrait
	<input type="checkbox"/> Short Hair	<input type="checkbox"/> Single Mother	<input type="checkbox"/> Son
	<input type="checkbox"/> Studio Shot		

People	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 Months	<input type="checkbox"/> 25-29 Years	<input type="checkbox"/> Baby
	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Adult	<input type="checkbox"/> Two People	<input type="checkbox"/> Baby Boys
	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Women		

Concept

<input type="checkbox"/> Beginnings	<input type="checkbox"/> Bonding	<input type="checkbox"/> Care
<input type="checkbox"/> Childhood	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyment	<input type="checkbox"/> Happiness
<input type="checkbox"/> Love	<input type="checkbox"/> New Life	<input type="checkbox"/> Togetherness

Style

<input type="checkbox"/> Horizontal	<input type="checkbox"/> Looking At Camera	<input type="checkbox"/> Close-up
<input type="checkbox"/> Head And Shoulders	<input type="checkbox"/> Series	

Fig. 4.117 and 4.118: Search by similar images by selecting keywords on the Getty Images website

4.4.5.2 Additional Indicators

➤ Autocomplete search terms

“Autocomplete involves the program predicting a word or phrase that the user wants to type in without the user actually typing it in completely” (Autocomplete, 2012). “This option will help the user to context or narrow the search if the keywords suggested by the system are relevant” (Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez, 2011).

Definition	The website includes autocomplete option; so when the user enters the first characters of a word, the system returns a list of possible search terms that begin with the same characters.
Examination	Does the website include the autocomplete of search terms?

Examples	The Corbis website includes the autocomplete option. Also, if the user is not interested in this tool, the system allows the user remove it (see Figure 4.119). The Inimage website, like the Corbis website, also has the autocomplete of search terms (see Figure 4.120).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, search box.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.89: Definition of the indicator “Autocomplete search terms”

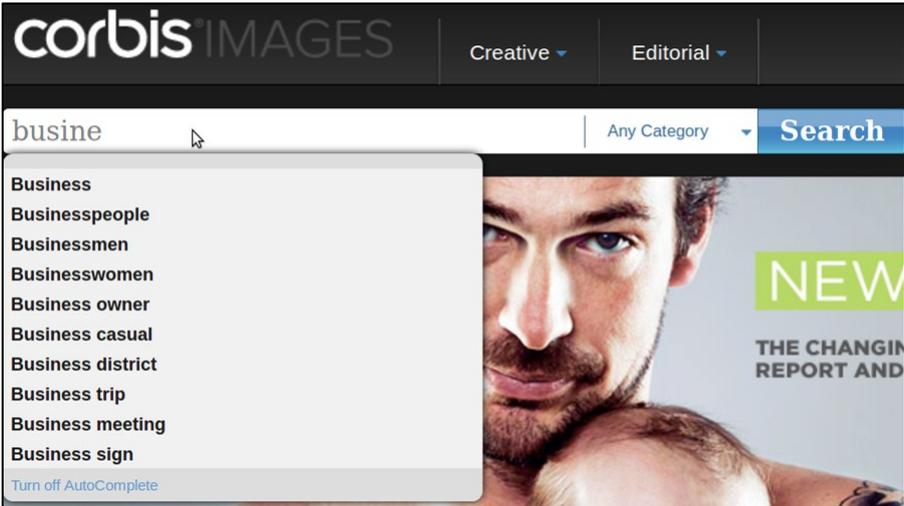


Fig. 4.119: Autocomplete search terms on the Corbis website

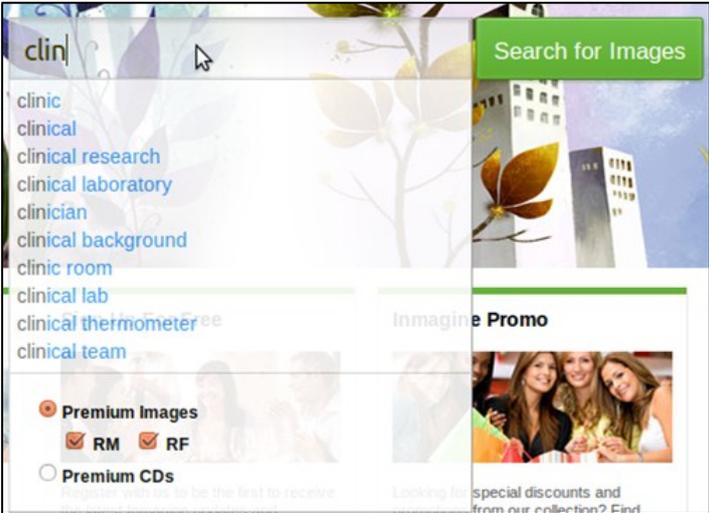


Fig. 4.120: Autocomplete search terms on the Inimage website

- Search for a photographer

“Simply contact our customer service team with your requirements and we will provide a

shortlist of photographers working in that location for you to liaise with directly” (Alamy, 2012).

Definition	The website allows its users to contact a specific photographer (as long as the photographer is in the stock photography company directory).
Examination	Does the website allow its users to contact a particular photographer who is within the company directory?
Examples	The Alamy website allows the user to contact the customer service team, which will provide the contact details of the photographer required by the user (see Figure 4.121).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Help page or Contact page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.90: Definition of the indicator “Search for a photographer”

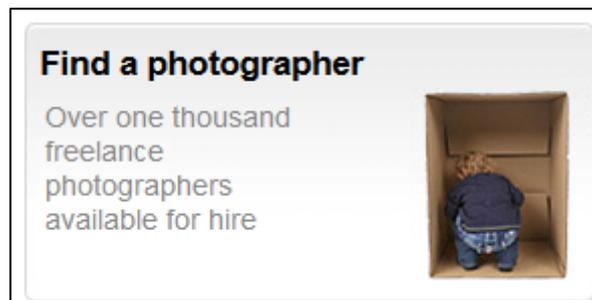


Fig. 4.121: Search for a photographer on the Alamy website

➤ Search by price

Definition	The website allows its users to search and filter search results by price.
Examination	Does the website include the option to search or filter the results by price?
Examples	The Media Bakery allows its users filter the results by image price (see Figure 4.122).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.91: Definition of the indicator “Search by price”

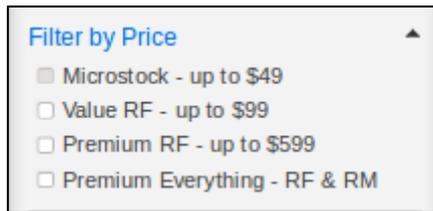


Fig. 4.122: Search by price on the Media Bakery website

➤ Search by date added to stock photography

Definition	The website allows its users to filter the results considering the date on which the images were added to the stock photography.
Examination	Does the website offer the chance of searching or filtering the list of the results taking into account the date on which the images were added to the stock photography?
Examples	The Corbis website allows users to filter the search by selecting only those images that haven been added to the stock photography in a period between two specific dates (see Figure 4.123). As for the Media Bakery website, it allows the selection of a period of time taking as reference the current date in which the user is viewing the web (last 10 days, last 90 days, etc.) (see Figure 4.124).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-3 (the more information the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.92: Definition of the indicator “Search by date added to stock photography”

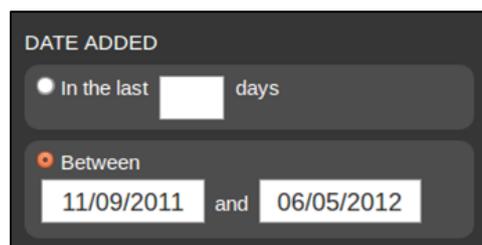


Fig. 4.123: Search by date added to stock photography on the Corbis website



Fig. 4.124: Search by date added to stock photography on the Media Bakery website

➤ Search by date photographed

Definition	The website allows its users to filter the results by the date on which the images were taken by the photographer.
Examination	Does the website offer the chance of searching or filtering the list of the results taken into account the date on which the images were taken by the photographer?
Examples	The Corbis website allows its users to search by an exact date or by a period between two dates (see Figure 4.125). As for the Alamy website, it allows the selection of a period of time taking as reference the current date in which the user is viewing the website (last 7 days, last month, last 2 years, etc.) (see Figure 4.126).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-3 (the more information the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.93: Definition of the indicator “Search by date photographed”

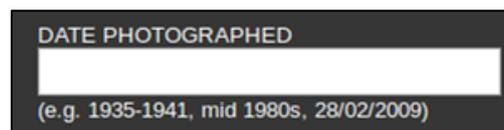


Fig. 4.125: Search by date photographed on the Corbis website



Fig. 4.126: Search by date photographed on the Alamy website

➤ Search by collection

Definition	The website allows its users to filter the search results by collection.
Examination	Does the website offer its users the chance of filtering search results by image collections?

Examples	The Inmage and the Punchstock websites allow its users to browse collections of images that are available (see Figures 4.127 and 4.128). The Corbis website includes different types of collections that depend on the value of the photographs (Standard, Premium, Value and Super Value Collections) (see Figure 4.129).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.94: Definition of the indicator “Search by collection”

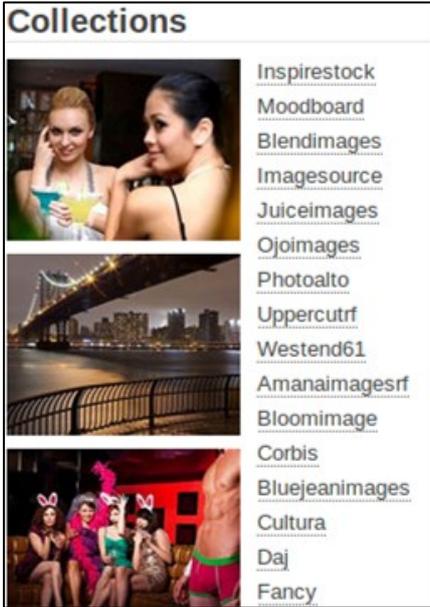


Fig. 4.127: Search by collection on the Inmage website



Fig. 4.128: Search by collection on the Punchstock website

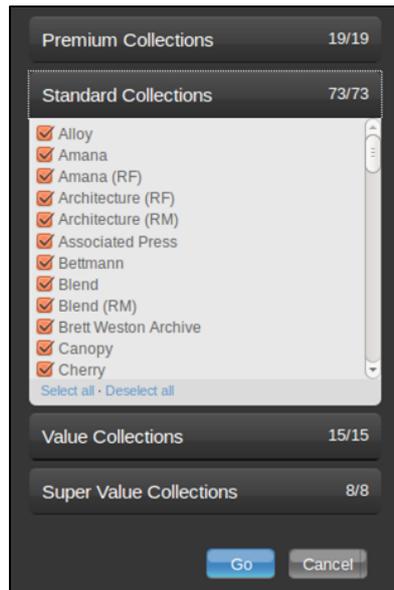


Fig. 4.129: Search by collection on the Corbis website

➤ Search by color

Definition	The website allows its users to refine the search by color range.
Examination	Does the website allow its users to search and filter the results by color range?
Examples	The Masterfile and the Punchstock websites have the option of filtering by color (see Figures 4.130 and 4.131).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.95: Definition of the indicator “Search by color”

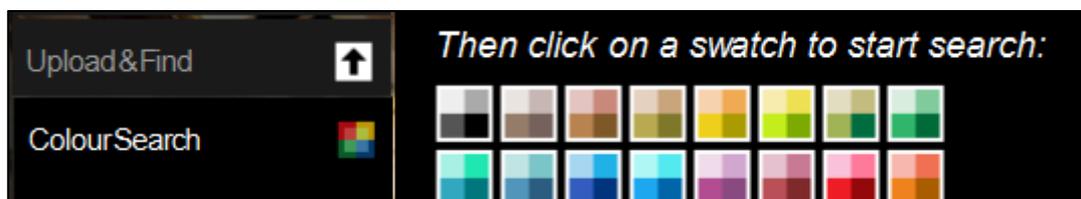


Fig. 4.130: Search by color on the Masterfile website

Color
Blue: 10803
White: 1311
Orange: 1093
Green: 1028
Yellow: 652

Fig. 4.131: Search by color on the Punchstock website

➤ Search by image number

Definition	The website allows its users to search by reference number of the image.
Examination	Does the website allow its users to search by image number?
Examples	The Advanced Search of the Corbis website has the option to search by image number (see Figure 4.132).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.96: Definition of the indicator “Search by image number”

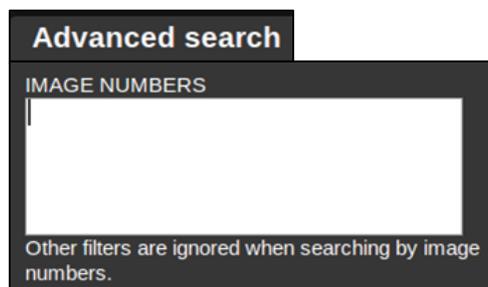


Fig. 4.132: Search by image number on the Corbis website

➤ Suggestion of a new search term (did you mean results for “_”?)

Definition	In those cases in which a search term does not return many results, the system suggests the user a new term which may generate a greater number of results.
Examination	Does the website suggest user a new search term in those cases in which the search term entered by the user does not return many results?
Examples	The Corbis website suggests the user a new term when there are few results for the search term (see Figure 4.133).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Page with the search results.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.97: Definition of the indicator “Suggestion of a new search term”

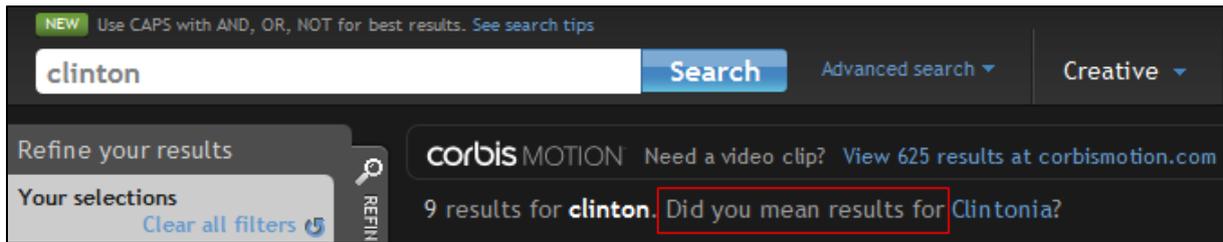


Fig. 4.133: Suggestion of a new search term on the Corbis website

➤ Similar images to an image uploaded

Definition	The website allows users to upload a file and help them to search for images in their collections related to this uploaded file.
Examination	Does the website allow its users to upload a file in order to find similar images in collections of the stock photography website?
Examples	The Masterfile website allows users find images in its collections that match an image uploaded by the user (see Figure 4.134).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage, Search page or Advanced Search page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.98: Definition of the indicator “Similar images to an image uploaded”

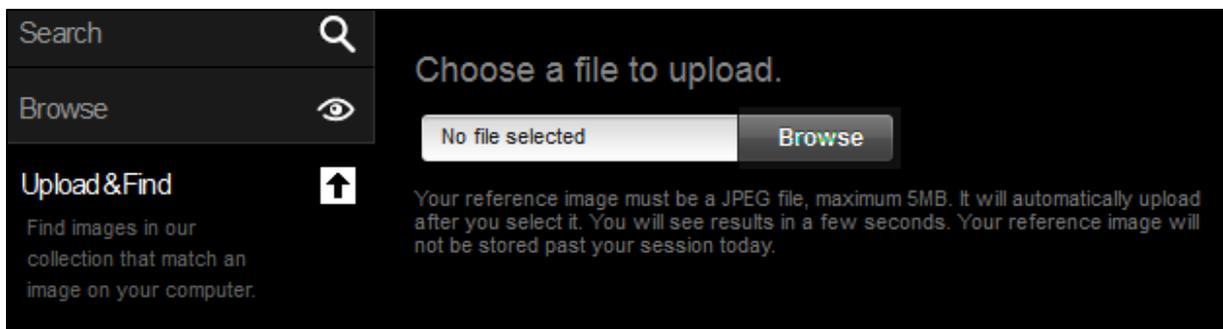


Fig. 4.134: Possibility of searching for images similar to a file uploaded on the Masterfile website

➤ Redefinition of the search without deleting criteria previously selected

Definition	The website allows users to redefine the search without deleting search criteria previously selected.
Examination	Does the website allow its users to redefine the search without deleting search criteria previously selected?

Examples	The Getty Images website includes an important and useful navigation tool called “Breadcrumbs” that allows the user to go back and select previous search criteria without having to reformulate the search again (see Figure 4.135).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Page with the search results.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.99: Definition of the indicator “Redefinition of the search without deleting criteria previously selected”

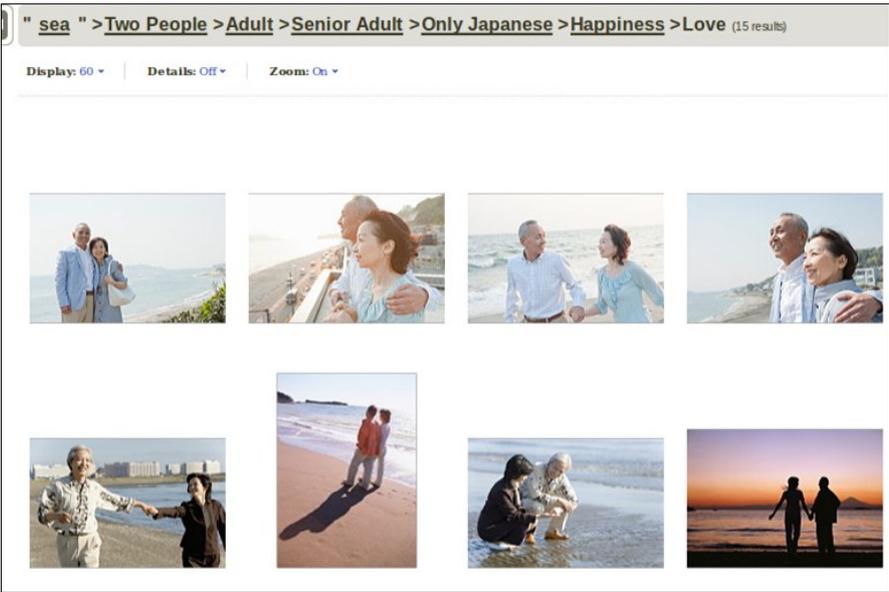


Fig. 4.135: Breadcrumbs on the Getty Images website

4.4.6 Parameter 6 (P.6): Presenting results

Parameter 6: Presenting results	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Different ways of sorting/ranking the search results (by date photographed, by images recently added, by relevance, by regional relevance)	Indicator 5: To emphasize those images with restrictions or special conditions (through a quick visual icon or a note)
Indicator 2: Customizing the display of the details of the thumbnail (title, type, license, number, nothing, etc.)	
Indicator 3: Preview with all the image details (title, photographer, keywords, date, location, size, price, releases, etc.)	

Parameter 6: Presenting results	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 4: Available shares icons (add to lightbox, add to cart, similar images, etc.) accompanying the thumbnail	

Table 4.100: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 6

4.4.6.1 Essential Indicators

- Different ways of sorting the search results (by date photographed, by images recently added, by relevance, by regional relevance)

Definition	The website offers users the chance of selecting different ways of sorting the search results.
Examination	Does the website allow its users to select different ways of sorting the search results?
Examples	The Superstock website allows users to sort the results by relevance or by date (see Figure 4.136). The Corbis website allows users to sort the results according to criteria of relevance and date as well, but this website also allows the sorting of the images by regional relevance (see Figure 4.137).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Page with the search results.
Mark	0-3 (the more options the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.101: Definition of the indicator “Different ways of sorting the search results”



Fig. 4.136: Sort by relevance and by date added on the Superstock website



Fig. 4.137: Sort by regional relevance on the Corbis website

- Customizing the display of the details of the thumbnail (title, type, license, number, nothing, etc.)

Definition	The website allows users to customize the display mode of the details of the thumbnail.
Examination	Does the website offer its users the chance of customizing the display mode of the details of the thumbnail?

Examples	The Getty Images website allows the customization of the display mode of the details of the thumbnail (see Figure 4.138). Besides, it also allows showing or hiding the details depending on user preferences (see Figures 4.139, 4.140 and 4.141).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Page with the search results.
Mark	0-3 (the more options the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.102: Definition of the indicator “Customizing the display of the details of the thumbnail”

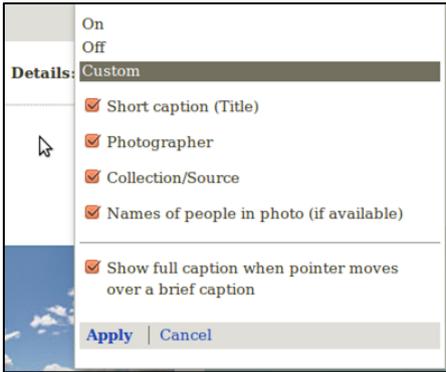


Fig. 4.138: Customizing options of the details of the thumbnail on the Getty Images website



Fig. 4.139, 4.140 and 4.141: Thumbnail details on / thumbnail details off / and thumbnail details customized on the Getty Images website

- Preview with all the image details (title, photographer, keywords, date, location, size, price, releases, etc.)

Definition	The website allows users to view the image details before making its selection and purchase.
Examination	Does the website allow its users to check the image details and its specific conditions?
Examples	The Corbis website gives all the details associated with the image, such as the image number, date, releases, keywords, license, collection, etc. (see Figure 4.142).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Page with image details.
Mark	0-3 (the more information the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.103: Definition of the indicator “Preview with all the image details”

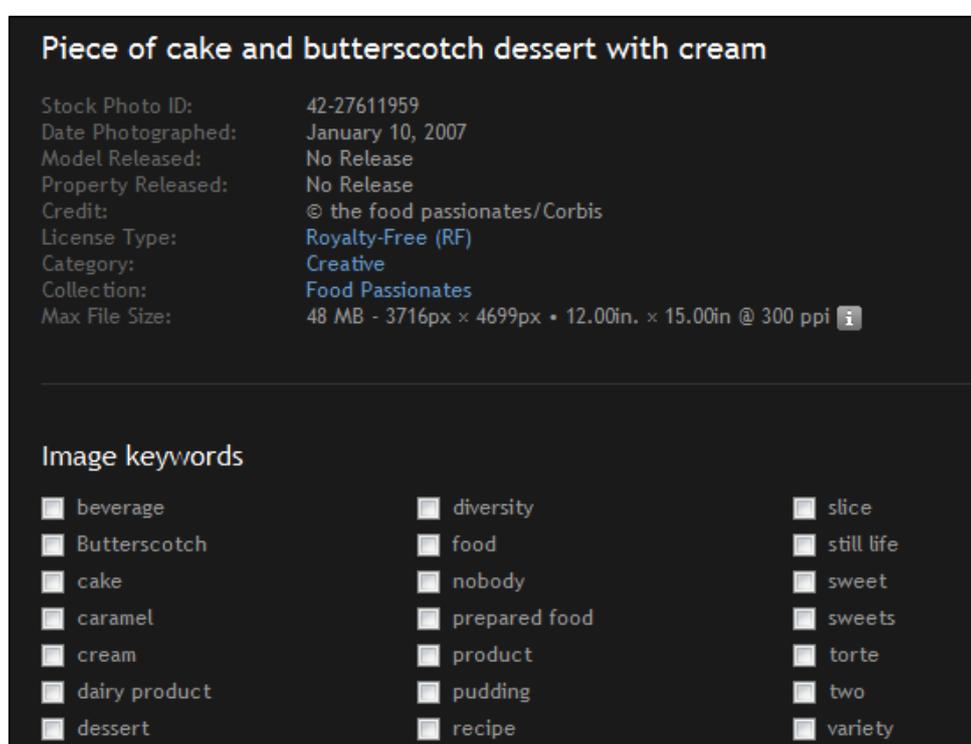


Fig. 4.142: Preview with all the image details on the Corbis website

- Available actions icons (add to lightbox, add to cart, similar images, etc.) accompanying the thumbnail

Definition	The website allows users to perform the most common actions (add to lightbox, add to cart, look for similar images and calculate price) without having to enter the page with image details.
Examination	Does the website include icons with the most common actions accompanying the thumbnail?

Examples	The Getty Images and the Corbis websites include these icons (see Figures 4.143 and 4.144).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Page with the search results.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.104: Definition of the indicator “Available actions icons”



Fig. 4.143: Available actions icons on the Getty Images website



Fig. 4.144: Available actions icons on the Corbis website

4.4.6.2 Additional Indicators

- To emphasize those images with restrictions or special conditions (through a quick visual icon or a note)

“There are photographs that are accessible, but they have special conditions or restrictions regarding price or the license of use. These exceptions must be clearly identified (by a quick visual icon or a note). Thus, the user can quickly and easily identify them, to discard them or to read the restrictive information carefully before deciding its purchase” (Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez, 2011).

Definition	The website highlights the requirements and special conditions associated with the images.
Examination	Does the website highlight the requirements and special conditions associated with the images?
Examples	The Getty Images website highlights the special conditions of the images that require additional supervision by buyers (see Figure 4.145).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Page with image details.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.105: Definition of the indicator “To emphasize those images with restrictions or special conditions”

Title: lia sophia Celebrates "Social Fashion" and Debuts "boudika" Red Carpet Collection - Day 1
Caption: NEW YORK, NY - SEPTEMBER 11: Dani Stahl (L) and Joanna Hillman (R), Senior Fashion Marketing Editor of Harper's Bazaar US, attend lia sophia Celebrates 'Social Fashion' and Debuts 'boudika' Red Carpet Collection at Empire Hotel on September 11, 2011 in New York City. (Photo by Anna Webber/Getty Images for lia sophia)
Date created: 11 Sep 2011
Editorial image #: 124733018
Restrictions: Contact your local office for all commercial or promotional uses. Full editorial rights UK, US, Ireland, Canada (not Quebec). Restricted editorial rights for daily newspapers elsewhere, please call.
License type: Rights-managed
Photographer: Anna Webber/Stringer
Collection: Getty Images Entertainment
Max file size/dimensions/dpi: 20.6 MB - 2395 x 3000 px (7.98 x 10.00 in.) - 300 dpi Download file size may vary.
Source: Getty Images North America
Release information: Not released. More information
Object name: 66312989
Copyright: 2011 Getty Images
Keywords: Beginnings , Vertical , USA , New York City , Senior Adult , Celebration , Marketing , Fashion , Red Carpet Event , Arts Culture and Entertainment , Attending , Celebrities , Dani Stahl , Harper's Bazaar , Empire Hotel , Editors . Find similar images
Availability: Availability for this image cannot be guaranteed until time of purchase.

Fig. 4.145: The Getty Images website highlights the restrictions and special conditions of the images

4.4.7 Parameter 7 (P.7): Purchase

Parameter 7: Purchase	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Customizing price (RM)	Indicator 5: Saved license for future purchases

Parameter 7: Purchase	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 2: Information about the different prices available (depending on size, type of use, etc.) (RF)	
Indicator 3: Customized license pack	
Indicator 4: Different methods of payment	

Table 4.106: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 7

4.4.7.1 Essential Indicators

- Customizing price (RM images)

Definition	The website offers its users the chance of negotiating directly with the company the price of the images (in the case of Rights Managed images and editorial uses).
Examination	Does the website allow its users negotiate the price of the images with the company without intermediaries (in the case of Rights Managed images and editorial uses)?
Examples	The Corbis website allows the customer to contact the company and negotiate the price of RM images (see Figures 4.146 and 4.147). The Media Bakery website includes an online price calculator that allows users to calculate the price of RM images. In this case, prices vary depending on several factors such as the type of use, geographic scope, number of copies, exclusivity, etc. (see Figure 4.148).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Page with image details or Purchase page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.107: Definition of the indicator “Customizing price (RM)”

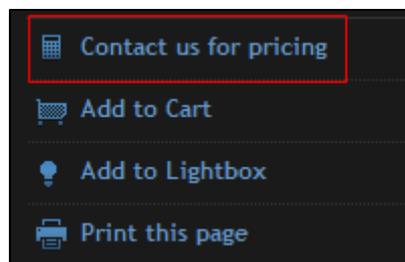


Fig. 4.146: Customizing price on the Corbis website

Contact us

To request assistance pricing or purchasing the item(s) below, submit this form or contact [Customer Service](#). * Required

* First name

* Last name

* Company name

* Email

* Phone

* Country / Region

State / Province

Comments

Fig. 4.147: Form to request assistance pricing or purchasing images on the Corbis website

RM Price Calculator



Image ID: IMS0201270
By: Media Bakery

Need assistance?
Call 888-899-6809 to speak with a Sales Rep!

Usage:

Media:

Region: Name:

Size:

Placement:

Circ./Press Run/Locations:

Length of License:

Start Date:

Industry:

End Client:

Insertions/Uses:

Exclusive Use:

Please enter a brief description of the usage:

[Calculate Price](#)

[Update Cart](#)

Fig. 4.148: Online price calculator of RM images on the Media Bakery website

- Information about the different prices available depending on image size (in the case of RF images)

Definition	The website allows users to consult the prices of different sizes of the same image (in the case of RF images).
Examination	Does the website include information on the different prices that the images have depending on their size (in the case of RF images)?
Examples	Getty Images website (see Figure 4.149).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Page with image details or Purchase page.

Mark	0-1
-------------	-----

Table 4.108: Definition of the indicator “Information about the different prices available (depending on size, type of use, etc.) (RF)”

Royalty-free pricing <small>Learn about royalty-free licensing</small>		Prices in NOK
154 KB 280 × 188 px (3.89 × 2.61 in.) - 72 dpi - RGB File size on download 26 KB	Nkr. 50,00	Add to cart
502 KB 505 × 339 px (7.01 × 4.71 in.) - 72 dpi - RGB File size on download 79 KB	Nkr. 219,00	Add to cart
1.00 MB 723 × 485 px (10.04 × 6.74 in.) - 72 dpi - RGB File size on download 260 KB	Nkr. 700,00	Add to cart
3.01 MB 1251 × 840 px (17.38 × 11.67 in.) - 72 dpi - RGB File size on download 635 KB	Nkr. 1.260,00	Add to cart
8.59 MB 2115 × 1420 px (7.05 × 4.73 in.) - 300 dpi - RGB File size on download 1.77 MB	Nkr. 1.800,00	Add to cart
28.5 MB 3853 × 2586 px (12.84 × 8.62 in.) - 300 dpi - RGB File size on download 5.41 MB	Nkr. 2.400,00	Add to cart
49.4 MB 5073 × 3405 px (16.91 × 11.35 in.) - 300 dpi - RGB File size on download 7.40 MB	Nkr. 2.800,00	Add to cart

Fig. 4.149: Table with the price list of RF images on the Getty Images website

➤ Customized license pack

“Customized licenses offer unlimited usage, and unrestricted circulation and size, in the media, territory, industry and time frame you select” (Getty Images, 2012).

Definition	The website allows the customization of licenses according to customer preferences.
Examination	Does the website allow its users the customization of licenses?
Examples	The Getty Images website allows the customization of the uses of the image. If a client is interested in using the same image in an advertisement in a newspaper and on the web, the website makes it easier the purchase of this multiple license (see Figure 4.150).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Purchase page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.109: Definition of the indicator “Customized license pack”



Fig. 4.150: Flexible license pack on the Getty Images website

➤ Different methods of payment

Definition	The website allows different methods of payment.
Examination	Does the website allow its users to pay the images in different ways?
Examples	The Inmage and the Getty Images websites allow the payment using different banking companies (see Figures 4.151 and 4.152).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Purchase page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.110: Definition of the indicator “Different methods of payment”



Fig. 4.151: Different methods of payment available on the Inmage website

*Name on credit card:	<input type="text"/>
*Credit card number:	<input type="text"/>
*Credit card type:	Select one...   
*Expiration date:	Select month... <input type="text"/> Select year... <input type="text"/>
*Security code:	<input type="text"/> What's this?

Fig. 4.152: Different methods of payment available on the Getty Images website

4.4.7.2 Additional Indicators

➤ Saved license for future purchases

“A saved license allows you to save the rights-managed license details that you have selected, so that you can apply them to future rights-managed pricing without having continually re-enter the same information” (Getty Images, 2012).

Definition	The website allows users to save the Rights Managed license details that he/she has selected for future purchases.
Examination	Does the website allow saving the Rights Managed license details for future purchases?
Examples	The Getty Images website allows its customers to save the details of a RM license previously selected and purchased by the customer (see Fig. 4.153).

Procedure	Examination of the website. Purchase page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.111: Definition of the indicator “Saved license for future purchases”

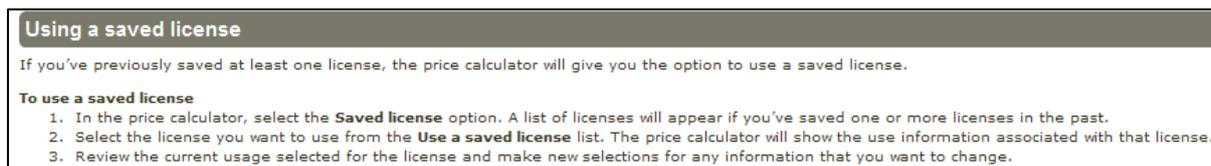


Fig. 4.153: Information about using a saved license on the Getty Images website

4.4.8 Parameter 8 (P.8): Download

Parameter 8: Download	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
Indicator 1: Technical information (PC, browser, etc.)	Indicator 2: Different ways of downloading the images

Table 4.112: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 8

4.4.8.1 Essential Indicators

- Technical information (PC, browser, etc.)

Definition	The website provides its users with technical information about the differences involved in downloading images depending on the PC and the browser used by the user.
Examination	Does the website include information about the differences involved in downloading images depending on the PC and the browser used by the user?
Examples	The Superstock website includes information about technical issues (see Figure 4.154).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Help page or Page with image details.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.113: Definition of the indicator “Technical information”

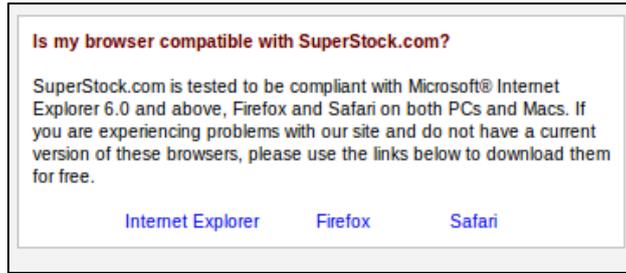


Fig. 4.154: Technical information on the Superstock website

4.4.8.2 Additional Indicators

- Different ways of downloading the images (compressed files in ZIP directly to your computer, sending by e-mail or downloading via FTP).

Definition	The website allows the user to select how to download images from a set of different options.
Examination	Does the website allow different ways of downloading images?
Examples	The Getty Images website allow users downloading the images in different ways.
Procedure	Examination of the website. Purchase page.
Mark	0-3 (the more options the site provides, the higher the mark)

Table 4.114: Definition of the indicator “Different ways of downloading the images”

4.4.9 Parameter 9 (P.9): Presence in Web 2.0 platforms

Parameter 9: Presence on 2.0 web platforms	
Essential indicators	Additional indicators (not essential)
	Indicator 1: Toolbar web 2.0 applications
	Indicator 2: Blog
	Indicator 3: Microblogging platforms
	Indicator 4: External services for video hosting
	Indicator 5: Social Networking
	Indicator 6: Professional Social Networking
	Indicator 7: Forum

Table 4.115: List of indicators for assessing the quality of Parameter 9

4.4.9.1 Additional Indicators

➤ Toolbar Web 2.0 applications

Definition	The website has a toolbar that integrates those Web 2.0 applications in which the company is present.
Examination	Does the website inform its users through clickable icons that it is present in 2.0 platforms?
Examples	The Getty Images and the Inmage websites include links to their respective social platforms (see Figures 4.155 and 4.156).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.116: Definition of the indicator “Toolbar Web 2.0 applications”

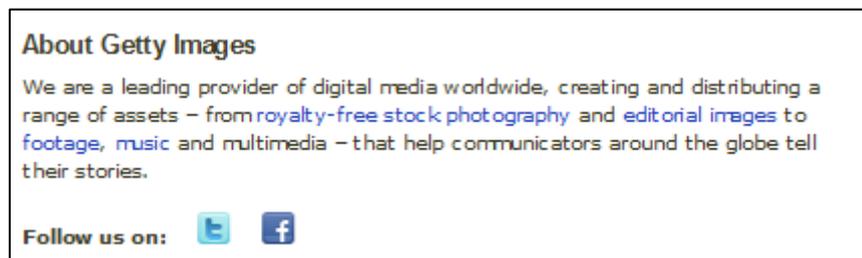


Fig. 4.155: Toolbar Web 2.0 applications on the Getty Images website

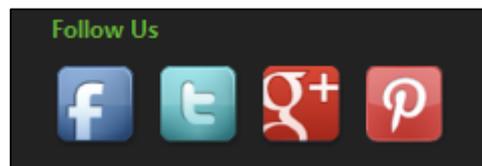


Fig. 4.156: Toolbar Web 2.0 applications on the Inmage website

➤ Blog

Definition	The website has one or more corporate and/or thematic blogs in which the company publishes content related to it and its news.
Examination	Does the website have a blog?
Examples	The Getty Images and the Alamy websites allow its customers to be informed about the news in the company through a corporate blog (see Figures 4.157 and 4.158).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage or Community page.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.117: Definition of the indicator “Blog”

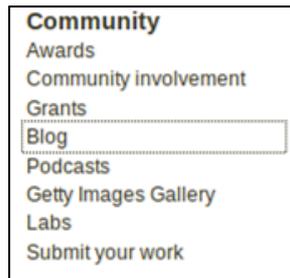


Fig. 4.157: Blog on the Getty Images website



Fig. 4.158: Blog on the Alamy website

➤ Microblogging platforms

Definition	The website has a presence on microblogging platforms with the purpose of publishing and/or promotes content that produces between users of this platform. Contents are usually limited to 140 characters.
Examination	Does the website make use of microblogging platforms to broadcast the information produced by the company and to reach more potential users to spread its content?
Examples	An example of microblogging platform is Twitter and two stock photography websites that make use of it are the Alamy and the Masterfile websites (see Figures 4.159 and 4.160).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage or Community page. Usually it is represented by an icon of the platform.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.118: Definition of the indicator “Microblogging platforms”



Fig. 4.159: Alamy profile on Twitter

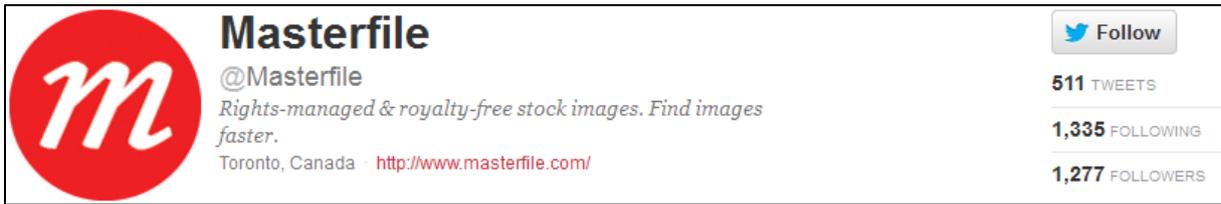


Fig. 4.160: Masterfile profile on Twitter

➤ External services for video hosting

Definition	The website makes use of external services of video hosting to broadcast the audiovisual content produced by the company.
Examination	Does the website make use of external services of video hosting to broadcast the audiovisual content which the company produces?
Examples	A video hosting service very popular among users is Youtube and an example of a stock photography website that makes use of this platform is Corbis. The users of Corbis can subscribe to its channel and comment on videos, mark them as favorites, etc. (see Figure 4.161).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage or Community page. Usually it is represented by an icon of the platform.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.119: Definition of the indicator “External services for video hosting”

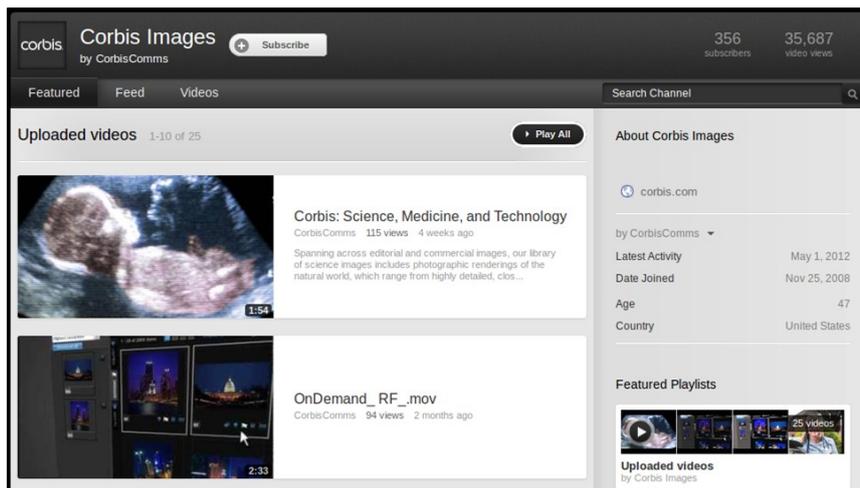


Fig. 4.161: Corbis channel on Youtube

➤ Social Networking

Definition	The website attracts and consolidates the loyalty of users through its presence in social networking.
Examination	Does the website make use of social networking?
Examples	The social networking most popular nowadays is Facebook and one example of stock photography website which makes use of this platform is Inmage (see Figure 4.162).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Homepage or Community page. Usually it is represented by an icon of the platform.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.120: Definition of the indicator “Social Networking”

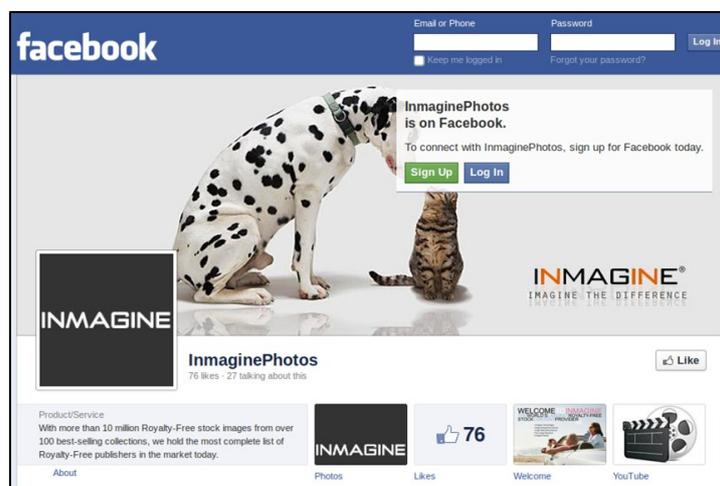


Fig. 4.162: Inmage profile on Facebook

➤ Professional Social Networking

Definition	The website uses professional social networking to make known the company and its services to professional users.
Examination	Does the website use professional social networking?
Examples	An example of a professional social networking is LinkedIn and one example of stock photography website which makes use of this platform is the Getty Images website (see Figure 4.163).
Procedure	Examination of the website. It is unusual for the stock photography websites to announce their presence in this type of network. If they do it, they usually have an icon of the network on the Homepage.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.121: Definition of the indicator “Professional Social Networking”

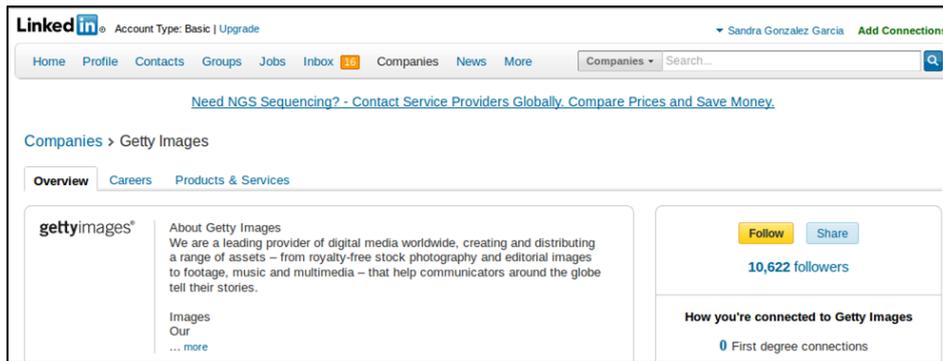


Fig. 4.163: Getty Images profile on LinkedIn

➤ Forum

Definition	The website has discussion forums where users can express their opinion or give some tips. Registration is required usually.
Examination	Is there a discussion forum where users can express their opinion or give tips?
Examples	The Alamy website has a discussion forum that allows contributors to share their experiences, questions or tips with other professionals (see Figure 4.164).
Procedure	Examination of the website. Section reserved for it.
Mark	0-1

Table 4.122: Definition of the indicator “Forum”

Alamy Forum			
Current time: 10:41:22. Your last visit: jueves, 31 de mayo de 2012 10:41:22.			
Forum	Topics	Posts	
Alamy Forum index			
<input type="checkbox"/> Alamy Quality Control and technical queries (12 Viewing) QC discussion, upload, cameras, software, workflow advice from your fellow contributors	1.764	22.607	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ask the forum (38 Viewing) Need answers relating to Alamy or the stock industry? Surely a fellow Alamy contributor will have the answer here?!	7.109	87.570	

Fig. 4.164: Forum on the Alamy website

Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

In this study, the researcher presents a prospective method for assessing the quality of stock photography websites.

This method is intended for use by those professionals responsible for the management of stock photography websites. It also aims to be useful for those professionals who have the intention of creating a new stock photography website. Therefore the advice and recommendations herein are intended to be useful for the creation and development of these kinds of websites.

For the development of this site-evaluation method the researcher used two different but complementary data collection instruments: analysis and comparison of ten stock photography websites selected as a sample and two questionnaires addressed to users of these websites.

This research used a mixed method to collect data. The main research method conducted was qualitative but also quantitative elements were used in data collection (see Chapter 3).

This chapter integrates the analysis of the results of data collection presented in Chapter 4. Then the chapter discusses the findings related to the research questions of this study. It concludes by implications for further research.

5.2 Summary of the main results of data collection

This part of the Chapter of Conclusions focuses on the analysis of the findings related to the research questions exposed in the previous chapter.

5.2.1 Type of user and reasons for the use of the services of stock photography websites

Users identified as “Searches”

The seven users who responded to the first questionnaire defined themselves as “Searches”, according to the classification established by Datta et al. (2006) (see section 2.2.4 in Literature Review Chapter). This image-seeking behavior is common in users who know what they want and how to find it.

This finding is not very revealing, because in most situations in which these professionals

face image search, they know in advance the project which will include images and the purpose of these images in the project. For this reason, most users of these websites know what they want and how to find it. Hence, they regard themselves as “Searchers”.

Main commercial image providers and users' geographical location

Currently, besides the traditional stock photo agencies on the Internet there are other sources that provide access to image search. In recent years, called Microstock sites have been slowly making its way into the online sale of images, competing with major Macrostock agencies such as Getty Images and Corbis (see section 2.2.4 in Literature Chapter). Other sources that are available online are the search engines, such as Google Images or Yahoo! Images.

Users respondents carried out their activity in the field of advertising, graphic design, press, production of news and documentaries and publishing (see section 4.3.1.1 in Data Analysis Chapter). The seven informants were regular users of the traditional photo agencies (hence the researcher decides to contact them). Furthermore, none of them had ever used the services of other sources to look for images in their work (as the data shown in section 4.3.1.6).

Getty Images, Corbis and Alamy are the three agencies most used by the users surveyed. In addition, depending on the customer's country, the seven respondents reported having agreements with agencies settled in the country of the customer: NTB Scanpix, GV press, Ina agency and All Over press for the Norwegian case and Europa Press, Agència Catalana de Notícies and EFE agencies for Spanish customers.

Spanish respondents who said they used the services of three Spanish agencies described above, they worked on press and production of news and documentaries. This last data might be an indication that the geographic location of users and the user's area of expertise influence the selection of a website or another.

Releases and copyright regulations

In the first questionnaire, the researcher asked respondents to identify the main reasons that drove them to use the services of this type of image providers. They pointed out the certainly and clarity in licensing and copyright issues, the safety in matters of property and model releases and the availability of high quality and high resolution images for printing (see section 4.3.1.5 in Chapter 4).

Although the sample is not representative of all users of stock photography sites, unanimity

on the importance of these three issues might be an indicator of the particular importance of taking care of legal issues. Codina (2008), Sanger & Reid (2006) and Allison (2006) mention in their work the obligation for stock photo agencies to be clear with the releases, license and copyright regulations (see sections 2.5.3 and 2.5.4 in Literature Review Chapter).

The analysis and comparison of the ten websites selected as sample showed that all of these agencies provide information about licenses and copyright of their images. However, one of these sites, Photos.com does not provide users any information about releases (see section 4.2.2.4 in Data Analysis Chapter).

This could be a problem for the user who decides to purchase any image on this website. In the absence of information on the releases, the user will have to contact the company or even the photographer, in order to get this information. And this is a waste of time for the user.

5.2.2 Recommendations for creating quality stock photography websites that meet the needs of their users

At baseline, the researcher posed two research questions, which sought to be answered through the development of this study.

The first research question was:

What are the specific recommendations or guidelines for creating quality stock photography websites that meet the needs of their potential users?

The user experience of the researcher was the first of these instruments. For five months she analyzed, compared and tested ten websites selected as a sample. This observation and exploration had as a result the 9 parameters and the 63 indicators presented in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 of Chapter 4.

The site-evaluation method presented in the section 4.4 of Data Analysis Chapter might be a possible answer to this first research question. However, there are a number of aspects that are important to mention before deciding if this research question has been answered or not.

First, the site-evaluation method presented in this study is not the only possible method. The researcher used as a reference, the method developed by Codina for the analysis of the quality of digital documents and websites in general (see Literature Review). However, as discussed also in Chapter 2, there are many more methods to assess web quality.

Secondly, at the beginning of the study, the researcher thought to contact a representative number of potential users who were willing to cooperate in the study. However, there were several reasons that prevented the researcher to have a representative sample for the

research. The main reasons were the lack of resources, the lack of contacts in the field of imaging and the large amplitude of the population of users of stock photography websites. Thus, only 7 respondents defined the potential needs of users that are mentioned at the wording of this first research question. The seven respondents had extensive experience as users of stock photography websites. In fact, the results of the first questionnaire showed that the seven informants had been using these websites for more than 4 years (see section 4.3.1.3 in Chapter 4). Nevertheless, the number of respondents was not enough to define all potential needs of the users.

The researcher was the person responsible for selecting and defining indicators with the help of 7 informants who developed their work in the field of imaging. However, these 7 informants were not representative of the entire set of users of the stock photography websites.

The standard method proposed by Codina is based on recommendations or guidelines. Recommendations are presented as indicators that correspond to features, tools, resources or services that the stock photography website should offer its users (see Chapter 3). The definition of each indicator is a recommendation. For example, in the case of the evaluation of User Support Service (Parameter 4), the website should offer its users search tips, shopping and subscription tips, information about licensing, information about releases, the possibility to contact the company in case of doubts or problems, etc.

Therefore this site-evaluation method consists of a total of 46 essential indicators and 31 non-essential indicators.

Essential indicators set out those features and resources that every stock photography website must have, in order to meet the basic needs of their potential users.

Non-essential indicators set out those features and resources that stock photography websites may include, but not necessarily. These indicators provide additional services to users to help them to improve user experience. However, the basic needs of customers are covered with essential indicators.

5.2.3 Resources and services of stock photography websites are not equal to its users

The second research question was:

Are all resources and services offered by stock photography websites in the same level of importance for their users?

The results of analysis of the responses of the two questionnaires indicate that users give more importance to some indicators than others (see section 4.3.2 in Data Analysis Chapter). The same happens in the case of the parameters. Thus, the parameters of “User Support

Service”, “Search” and “Purchase” are the most important for the users, while the parameter of “Presence on 2.0 Web platforms” is considered the least important.

Two informants offered their views about the insignificance of the presence in social networking and other Web 2.0 platforms. These two respondents are regular users of such websites and companies where they work have dealings with specific agencies. Thus, the main objectives of social networks to attract new customers and achieve customer loyalty, in the case of these two informants does not make sense, since they are already “hooked” on the agencies that have dealings. However, one of these two respondents considered this parameter as important to attract new customers who have doubts about which company to choose (see section 4.3.2.9 in Data Analysis Chapter). This might indicate that a parameter or indicator may have several levels of significance depending on the user to look at it.

The suggestions included in the first questionnaire about the existence of indicators more important than others, led the researcher to develop a second questionnaire which required respondents to differentiate the proposed indicators between essential and non-essential (or additional) (see Appendix 2).

Looking at the results of this second questionnaire, one might hypothesize that there is unanimity in the degree of relevance of the proposed indicators. When selecting essential indicators there is usually a full consensus on respondents, such as in the case of “Language selector”, “Domain name easy to remember” and “Global navigation system”, which are indicators of quality of Parameter 3 (see section 4.3.2.3 in Chapter 4). This unanimity in the responses also occurred in the indicators “Search tips”, “Information about releases” and “Information about licenses”, which are indicators of quality of Parameter 4 (see section 4.3.2.4 in Chapter 4). This unanimity when defining essential indicators might be an indication that the indicators identified as essential are probably essential in stock photography websites.

When defining additional indicators, respondents were not as sure and there was no such consensus. In fact, there are cases in which some respondents considered an indicator as non-essential, while other respondents considered this indicator as not important at all, and therefore it should not be included in the site-evaluation method. One example of this lack of consensus occurred in the case of indicators “Most Popular Searches” and “Most popular Content” (Parameter 3). In these cases, the researcher took into account most of the answers and her experience as a user to decide the type of indicator (essential or non-essential) (see section 4.3.2.3 in Chapter 4).

The results show that there is therefore unanimity in identifying essential or key indicators, but this consensus is less clear in the case of additional indicators. However, informants' responses show that there are indicators that are more important than others, so it is necessary to distinguish these two types of indicators.

5.3 Implications for Further Research

The site-evaluation method presented in this study is specific to stock photography websites but it also is a general method since it does not differentiate between different users and different needs that customers may have. It is not a definitive methodology because it has a number of weaknesses, but it serves to lay the groundwork for a final methodology more elaborate and refined.

This research took as a starting point the hypothesis that the stock photography websites have a number of features, tools and resources that are essential and that make it easier the search, purchase and download of images to their users. Besides, most of these tools and resources are specific to stock photography websites. The collection and analysis of the data indicated that there are some more or less essential features that should count more in an evaluation of a site than other features, and that these features can be specifically identified by surveying (large number of) users.

In developing this research and in view of the results of data analysis, a new hypothesis was put forward. This new hypothesis was defined as a result of this study and it would be necessary to carry out further research in order to confirm it or not. This hypothesis is as follows:

Indicators defined in this site-evaluation method are not equal in importance and the relative importance of indicators can be identified for different kind of users.

In this Chapter we talked about the low importance of some parameters and indicators for advanced and habitual users (such as Presence on Web 2.0 platforms). However, these same parameters and indicators may be essential for other novice users or even prospective clients. Other factors that may also influence the relative importance of the indicators could be the type of work performed by users and their area of expertise, the working environment of the user and the user interactions in his/her professional capacity (see section 2.3.2 in Literature Review Chapter).

To confirm this new hypothesis will also require a comprehensive study of the proposed indicators. To this end, it would be interesting to consider a number of issues:

1. In this study the researcher analyzed and compared only ten stock photography websites. For future research it would be interesting to have a larger sample that will be representative of the entire study population. Expanding the sample, the results of observation and comparison of the webpages will be much richer and significant.

2. In this study only Macrostock websites were analyzed and compared. For future research it would be interesting to extend the study population also including Microstock sites, since

these websites are becoming more used by users.

3. It would also be interesting for further research to have a larger sample of the study population of professionals surveyed. To make the sample representative would take nearly 50 respondents from different countries or geographic areas, with a profession included within the professional sectors of the image field and professionals with a high proficiency in English.

For further research would be interesting to carry out therefore a depth study of the different types of users in order to identify their different needs, as recommended Devadason & Pratap Lingam (1997) in their proposed methodology (see section 2.3.2 in Literature Review Chapter).

Having defined the study sample and identified the needs of users of stock photography websites, it would be interesting to conduct surveys in order to find those indicators considered most relevant for users and the main reason for their decision. The amplitude of the sample and the geographical dispersion of users influence the decision to draft questionnaires as the main instrument of data collections. In addition, semi-structured interviews by phone or Skype with a representative number of users would be very useful for further information and resolve any doubts arising after the analysis of questionnaire responses.

When defining the sample of users to participate in the user test, it would be interesting to include a heterogeneous sample, in order to extract as much information as possible, provided the financial means allow it. Thus, it would be appropriate to include a sample of experienced users in the use of stock photography websites, novice users and users that are familiarized with Internet and e-commerce platforms but have never used the services of this type of companies.

4. This site-evaluation method is intended primarily to improve services offered to image buyers. The initial idea of the researcher was to prepare a site-evaluation method for the two types of audience (sellers and buyers of images). However, the researcher was not able to contact photographers who sell their images to these agencies. For this reason and following the guidance provided by Codina (2008) and Perdices Castillo & Perianes Rodríguez (2011) (who point out that pictures buyers are the users who find more problems when using these websites), the researcher decided to focus this site-evaluation on meeting the needs of image buyers.

For future research it would be interesting to contact contributors in order to find out their needs and expectations in the use of stock photography websites and to expand the number of indicators identified for these users. It would be interesting, therefore, conduct semi-structured interviews with photographers in order to get as much information as possible.

5. At the site-evaluation method we can check the existence of indicators that are measured with a mark 0-3 (see section 3.4 in Research Design and Methodology Chapter). An example of this type of indicator is searching for the attributes of the people shown in the picture. In this case, the optimal situation would be one in which the website would allow the search by number of people, gender, age, ethnicity and specific people. However, there are many cases of websites that only allow users to search by number of people and ethnicity. In this case the score of the indicator would not be 3. It would be interesting for future research to find out what specific resources are marked with 1, what specific resources are marked with 2 and what resources are marked with 3. The comprehensive analysis and comparison of these indicators in a wider number of stock photography websites will help to define each of the marks.

6. The results of the questionnaire indicated that the parameter of “User Support Service” is one of the parameters that users consider most important (see Chapter 4.4.4). For this reason, this parameter and its indicators should meet the information needs that may arise in the user.

The Parameter 4 (User Support Service) entails a number of indicators that require contact with a company's commercial centers, such as indicator 4.3 (Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading images), indicator 4.9 (Suggestions and comments from users) and indicator 4.10 (Contact details with experts in image search). In these three examples, the indicators are considered quality indicators provided they fulfill their function. Thus, in addition to offering these services, the site must ensure their proper operation.

There are a number of indicators that can be measured taking into account their presence on the website, such as indicators User account (2.2), Global navigation system (3.3) and Information about releases (4.4), among others. However, those indicators that need to contact the company and require a response from their support service are not so easily measured. In these cases, the quality of the indicator will be measured according to the proper operation of the assistance service.

During the five months that the researcher became a user of stock photography websites, she tried some of these user support services. However in such a short time, she had not enough time to deal with all possible cases of doubt. Hence it may be relevant for future research to conduct semi-structured interviews with a large number of experienced users who can provide information about assistance needs that they have had throughout their experience as users of these websites. In addition to assistance needs would also be interesting to ask interviewers about problems they found and the solutions. Thus, the site-evaluation method could contain a number of indications or guidelines about possible problems users may find and their possible solutions.

6. Once the user needs are defined and new indicators identified according to these needs, it would be interesting the implementation of the definitive site-evaluation method on specific stock photography websites in order to test the new indicators defined.

References

Abbott Miller, J. (1999). Pictures for Rent: From Stereoscope to Stereotype. *Design Writing Research: Writing on Graphic Design*. Ed. Ellen Lupton and J. Abbott Miller. London: Phaidon, 121–33.

Alamy (2012). Alamy Help Center. <http://www.alamy.com/help/default.asp>

Allison, G. (2006). Penis Gourds and Model Releases. Keywords: SAA's Guide to the Business of Stock Photography, 1, 32-25. Retrieved from www.stockartistsalliance.org/files/SAA_KEYWORDS_web.pdf

American Society of Media Photographers. (2012). <http://www.asmp.org/>

Autocomplete. (2012, June 13). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Autocomplete&oldid=497350702>

Barthes, R. (1977). Rhetoric of the image. *Image, Music, Text*. Ed. and trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang. 32-51.

Cai, D., He, X., Li, Z., Ma, W., & Wen, J. (2004). Hierarchical Clustering of WWW Image Search Results Using Visual, Textual and Link Information. Published in ACM Multimedia 2004. Proceedings of the 12th annual ACM international conference on Multimedia, 952-959. New York. doi: 10.1145/1027527.1027747

Codina, L. (2006a). Evaluación de calidad en sitios web: Metodología de proyectos de análisis sectoriales y de realización de auditorias. Retrieved from http://upf.academia.edu/lluiscodina/Papers/116917/Evaluacion_de_calidad_en_sitios_web_Metodologia_de_proyectos_de_analisis_sectoriales_y_de_realizacion_de_auditorias

Codina, L. (2006b). Metodología de análisis y evaluación de recursos digitales en línea. *Información y documentación digital*. Retrieved from <http://www.lluiscodina.com/metodos.htm>

Codina, L., & Palma, M. (2006). Image and audiovisual banks and search engines in the www. *Revista española de Documentación Científica*, 24(3). doi:10.3989/redc.2001.v24.i3.58

Codina, L. (2007). Evaluación de recursos digitales en línea: conceptos, indicadores y métodos. *Revista española de Documentación Científica*, 23(1), 9–44. doi:10.3989/redc.2000.v23.i1.315

Codina, L. (2008). Entender los bancos de imágenes. *El profesional de la información*, 20 (4), 417-423.

Copyright. (2012, June 8). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Copyright&oldid=496538436>

Copyright Act of 1976. (2012, June 1). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Copyright_Act_of_1976&oldid=495433204

Datta, R., Joshi, D., Li, J., James, & Wang, Z. (2006). Image retrieval: Ideas, influences, and trends of the new age. *ACM Computing Surveys*, 39, 2007.

Devadason, F. J., & Lingam, P. P. (1997). A Methodology for the Identification of Information Needs of Users. *IFLA Journal*, 23(1), 41–51. doi:10.1177/034003529702300109

Evans, P., & Wurster, T. S. (1999). *Blown to Bits: How the New Economics of Information Transforms Strategy* (illustrated edition.). Harvard Business School Press.

Greisdorf, H., & O'Connor, B. (2002). Modelling what users see when they look at images: a cognitive viewpoint. *Journal of Documentation*, 58(1), 6–29. doi:10.1108/00220410210425386

Hesse-Biber, S.N. & Leavy, P. (2011). *The Practice of Qualitative Research. (2nd Edition)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Frost, P. (2001). Inside the Image Factory: Stock Photography and Cultural Production. *Media, Culture & Society*, 23(5), 625–646. doi:10.1177/016344301023005005

Frost, P. (2003). Digital Technology and Stock Photography: And God Created Photoshop. In L. Gross (Eds.), *Image Ethics in The Digital Age* (pp.183-216). Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.

Getty Images (2012). Getty Images Help Center. <http://www.gettyimages.no/HelpCenter>

Lara Navarra, P., & Martínez Usero, J. Á. (2004). Agentes inteligentes en la búsqueda y recuperación de información. Retrieved from <http://eprints.ucm.es/5840/>

Levine, Robert (2007). Photo wars: a \$2 billion business gets rough. CNN Money.com, 2007, April. Retrieved from http://money.cnn.com/magazines/business2/business2_archive/2007/04/01/8403372/index.htm

Likert scale. (2012, May 16). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Likert_scale&oldid=492890011

Lodico, M. G., Spaulding, D. T., & Voegtler, K. H. (2006). *Methods in Educational Research: From Theory to Practice* (1.^a ed.). Jossey-Bass.

López Jiménez, A. L. (2009). Colecciones digitales de reproducciones artísticas: bancos de imágenes. Presented in Congreso Internacional de Imagen y Apariencia. Retrieved from <http://congresos.um.es/imagenyapariencia/imagenyapariencia2008/paper/view/1371>

López Yepes, A. (2003). Bancos de imágenes en Internet. Red Digital. *Revista de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación Educativas*, 3.

Retrieved from

http://reddigital.cnice.mecd.es/3/firmas_nuevas/informes/infor_yepes_res.html

Machin, D. (2004). Building the world's visual language: The increasing global importance of images banks in corporate media. *Visual Communication*, 3(3), 316-336

Marcos Recio, J. C.; Sánchez Vigil, J. M.; & Olivera Zaldua, M. (2011). Uso en publicidad de

fotografías de bancos de imágenes españoles. *El profesional de la información*, 20 (4), 384-391.

Marvasti, A. B. (2004). *Qualitative research in sociology: an introduction*. London: Sage.

Moro, J. L. (2007). Bancos de imagen: no sólo fotos. El mundo de los archivos de imágenes evoluciona. *El publicista*, 175, 16-27.

Morville, P. and Rosenfeld, L. (2006). *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web*. (3th edition). New York: O'Reilly Media.

Muñoz Castaño, Jesús E. (2001). Bancos de imágenes: evaluación y análisis de los mecanismos de recuperación de imágenes. *El profesional de la información*, 10 (3), 4-18.

Nielsen, J. (2000). *Designing Web Usability* (1st ed.). Peachpit Press.

Pack, T. (2009). How amateur photographers can make a buck. *Information today*, 26 (9), 38-39.

Perdices Castillo, L., & Perianes Rodríguez, A. (2011). Sistemas de búsqueda y visualización en bancos de imágenes comerciales. *El profesional de la información*, 20 (4), 439-443.

Pickard, A. J. (2007). *Research methods in information*. London: Facet Publishing.

Pickerell, J. (2006, August 7). History of the Stock Photo Industry. Message posted to <http://www.selling-stock.com/ViewArticle.aspx?id=64f4a2d1-2e1d-4a49-b32e-e07d95d48898>

Piclet. The Web's photography war. <http://www.piclet.com>

Rights Managed. (2012, May 11). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rights_Managed&oldid=492021576

Robledano Arillo, J., & Moreiro González, J. A. (2002). La recuperación documental de la imagen fotográfica: perspectiva tecnológica y documental. article. Retrieved from <http://e-archivo.uc3m.es/handle/10016/8951>

Royalty-free. (2012, May 23). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Royalty-free&oldid=493976820>

Sanger, D., & Reid, B. (2006). Licensing Models. Keywords: *SAA's Guide to the Business of Stock Photography*, 1, 12-14.

Struck, Amos. (2011, April 5). What is a Lightbox? Stock Photo Secrets. Retrieved from <http://www.stockphotosecrets.com/questions-answers/technical/what-is-a-lightbox.html>

Superstock (2012). Superstock Help Center. <http://www.superstock.com/Help>

Taub, E. A. (2007, June 5). When Are Photos Like Penny Stocks? When They Sell. The New York Times. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/05/technology/circuits/05syndicate.html>

Uebersax, J.S. (2006). Likert scales: dispelling the confusion. Statistical Methods for Rater Agreement website. Retrieved from <http://john-uebersax.com/stat/likert.htm>.

United States Copyright Office: <http://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/faq-general.html>

Yoon, J. (2006). An Exploration of Needs for Connotative Messages during Image Search Process. Conference Paper. Retrieved from <http://eprints.rclis.org/handle/10760/8749#T-i5mUhPJok>

Resources

Alexa The Web Information Company: <http://www.alexa.com/topsites>

Budget Stock Photo: <http://www.budgetstockphoto.com>

Wikipedia: <http://www.wikipedia.com>

Websites used as a sample

1. Getty Images: <http://www.gettyimages.com/>
2. Corbis: <http://www.corbisimages.com/>
3. Alamy: <http://www.alamy.com/>
4. Superstock: <http://www.superstock.com/>
5. Media Bakery: <http://www.mediabakery.com/>
6. Jupiter Images: <http://www.jupiterimages.com/>
7. Photos.com: <http://www.photos.com/>
8. Punchstock: <http://www.punchstock.com/>
9. Inmagine: <http://www.inmagine.com/>
10. Masterfile: <http://www.masterfile.com/>

Appendix

Appendix 1: Questions of the first questionnaire to users of stock photography websites

User needs of Stock Photography

This questionnaire is designed for professionals who use the services of stock photography companies.

The first part of the questionnaire includes descriptive questions. The purpose of these questions is to determine the type of user that uses the services of the stock photography companies, how they uses its resources, from when and why.

The second part of the questionnaire focuses on a list of parameters and indicators defined by the researcher after studying five of the most important stock photography companies. In this part, we ask the respondent to select the level of importance he / she thinks for each indicator.

NOTE: The answer options that include square check boxes allow you to click more than one option.

In which of the following areas or sectors you include your work?

- Advertising and public relations
- Graphic Design
- Department of Communication of private companies or civil service organizations
- Production of audiovisual fiction
- Press, daily and non-daily
- Publishing house
- Today's news and documentaries
- Other:

Below we show different types of users who search images on the web. While searching for images in your work, what type of user you think you are?

- Browser. This is a user browsing for pictures with no clear end-goal. A typical browser jumps across multiple topics during the course of a search session.
- Surfer. A surfer is a user surfing with moderate clarity of an end-goal. A surfer's actions may be somewhat exploratory in the beginning, with the difference that subsequent searches are expected to increase the surfer's clarity of what he / she wants from the system.
- Searcher. This is a user who is very clear about what she is searching for in the system. A searcher's session would typically be short, with coherent searches leading to an end-result.

How long have you or the company where you work been using the services of commercial stock photography agencies?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 -4 years
- 4 - 8 years
- More than 8 years
- I don't know

What is (are) the main reason (s) why the company where you work uses the services of commercial stock photography instead of traditional image search engines (Google Images, Bing Images, Yahoo! Images, etc.?)

- The quality of the images
- The ability to access historical images and / or images of a certain age
- They allow a more customized and refined search
- The search is more quick and efficient
- Safety in matters of Property and Model Releases
- The variety and number of images
- I don't know
- Other:

Which of the following commercial image providers have you or the company where you work ever searched or bought images?

- Getty Images
- Corbis
- Jupiter Images
- Superstock
- Fotolia
- Alamy
- Other:

What kind of stock photography websites are visiting by you in your work?

- Macrostock sites (big commercial agencies)
- Microstock sites (only Royalty Free images)
- Both
- I don't know

Why?

- Price of the images
- Quality of the images
- Possibility of subscription
- Possibility to have the exclusivity of the images
- I don't know
- Other:

Is the company where you work subscribed to a commercial stock photography site?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Please, enter the name(s) of the stock photography site(s) you or the company you work for are subscribed.

What kind of image licenses are usually purchased at the company where you work?

- Usually, rights-managed images
- Usually, royalty-Free images
- Usually, both
- It depends of the project
- I don't know

In case you have not ever bought a Rights Managed image, please, specify the reasons:

- Project with a low budget
- There was no interest in owning the exclusivity of the image
- I don't know
- Other:

**In addition to the stock photography sites, do you use another source for finding images?
Please, indicate which:**

- Flickr
- Google Images
- Yahoo! Images
- Creative Commons Search
- I don't know
- Other:

In the search for an image, which of the following aspects are most important to you as a user?

- Wide variety of results to choose
- Speed on response
- Information about image property, licensing and releases
- Filters that help to refine the search
- I don't know
- Other:

PARAMETERS AND INDICATORS

Please find below a number of parameters and indicators which are intended to evaluate the quality of stock photography websites.

Parameters answer the question: what do we want to evaluate?

Meanwhile, indicators answer the question: how do we evaluate this parameter?

PARAMETER 1: CONTENT

	Very unimportant		Very important		I don't know
Different image collections	<input type="radio"/>				
Photography trends	<input type="radio"/>				
Photo of the day	<input type="radio"/>				
Lightbox (to keep track of images that users like and/or plan to purchase)	<input type="radio"/>				
Shopping cart	<input type="radio"/>				
Application for mobile devices	<input type="radio"/>				

Is there any other indicator related to the content that you think is important?

PARAMETER 2: REGISTERED USERS

The website offers advantages and additional services to its registered users

	Very unimportant			Very important	I don't know
Subscription	<input type="radio"/>				
Creating and editing lightboxes	<input type="radio"/>				
Sharing and sending lightboxes (by e-mail or between users of the stock photography website)	<input type="radio"/>				
Adding notes on lightboxes (users can add notes for each image included in the lightbox)	<input type="radio"/>				
Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark (for comp or evaluation purposes)	<input type="radio"/>				
Orders and downloads history (useful in case of a loss, an accidental deletion or a failure during the purchase or download processes)	<input type="radio"/>				

Is there any other indicator related to registered users that you think is important?

PARAMETER 3: INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

	Very unimportant			Very important	I don't know
Language selector	<input type="radio"/>				
Content customized by audience (buyers vs sellers / creative vs editorial / geographical location)	<input type="radio"/>				
Quick links (links to the most relevant content)	<input type="radio"/>				
Top Searches (most popular searches)	<input type="radio"/>				
Most popular content	<input type="radio"/>				
Website URL representative and easily remembered	<input type="radio"/>				
Global navigation bar (a constant feature in every page of the website)	<input type="radio"/>				

Is there any other indicator related to information architecture that you think is important?

PARAMETER 4: USER SUPPORT SERVICE

	Very unimportant		Very important		I don't know
Search tips (keyword guides, tutorials and demos of search tools)	<input type="radio"/>				
Shopping tips (tutorials and purchase guides)	<input type="radio"/>				
Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading images (by phone, e-mail, chat)	<input type="radio"/>				
Glossary of terms	<input type="radio"/>				
Information about releases (property and model releases)	<input type="radio"/>				
Information about licensing (Rights-Managed and Royalty-Free)	<input type="radio"/>				
Possibility of sending suggestions and comments from users (to improve user experience)	<input type="radio"/>				
Image research services (a list of independent picture researchers who can provide users an extra support in the search process)	<input type="radio"/>				

Is there any other indicator related to user support service that you think is important?

PARAMETER 5: SEARCH

	Very unimportant		Very important		I don't know
Autocomplete search terms	<input type="radio"/>				
Semantic clarifications (to avoid ambiguity in terminology)	<input type="radio"/>				
Search for a photographer	<input type="radio"/>				
Search by price	<input type="radio"/>				
Search by releases (model and property)	<input type="radio"/>				
Search by type of image license (Rights-managed and Royalty-Free)	<input type="radio"/>				
Search by type of image (Creative or Editorial)	<input type="radio"/>				
Search by concept (tranquility, freedom, glamour, pain, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				
Search by people attributes	<input type="radio"/>				
Search by image composition (style, layout, and viewpoint)	<input type="radio"/>				
Search by date added to stock photography (past day, past week, past year, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				
Search by location (in the case of editorial images)	<input type="radio"/>				
Search by specific events (in the case of editorial images)	<input type="radio"/>				
Similar images / More images like this (the same photo shoot, composition, colors, author etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				

New search from the selection of keywords assigned to a selected image by the user	<input type="radio"/>				
Suggestion of new search term (did you mean results for " _ "?)	<input type="radio"/>				
Refine the search (the user can further specify the search selecting or deselecting features associated with the image (keywords, concepts, people, releases, etc.))	<input type="radio"/>				
Catalyst (specific search tool of Getty Images)	<input type="radio"/>				
Moodstream brainstorming tool (specific search tool of Getty Images)	<input type="radio"/>				

Is there any other indicator related to the search that you think is important?

PARAMETER 6: PRESENTING RESULTS

	Very unimportant		Very important		I don't know
Sorting the list of results by date (on which the image was taken)	<input type="radio"/>				
Sorting the list of results by date (images recently added)	<input type="radio"/>				
Sorting the list of results by relevance	<input type="radio"/>				
Sorting the list of results by regional relevance (country or continent of the user)	<input type="radio"/>				
Image thumbnail accompanied by a brief description of the image (title, type, license, number, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				
To emphasize those images with restrictions or special conditions (by a quick visual icon or a note)	<input type="radio"/>				

Is there any other indicator related to presenting results that you think is important?

PARAMETER 7: PURCHASE

	Very unimportant		Very important		I don't know
Contact company for pricing (negotiate the amount directly with the company)	<input type="radio"/>				
Price calculation (different price depending of the use of the image)	<input type="radio"/>				
Information about the different formats and sizes and its uses	<input type="radio"/>				
Customized license pack (use an image for multiple types of media, e.g. print + web)	<input type="radio"/>				
Saved license (save the rights-managed license details selected by users for future purchases)	<input type="radio"/>				

Is there any other indicator related to purchase that you think is important?

PARAMETER 8: DOWNLOAD

	Very unimportant		Very important		I don't know
Different ways of downloading the images (direct downloading to the user's computer, sending by e-mail or downloading via FTP)	<input type="radio"/>				
Information about the differences involved in downloading the images depending on the PC and the browser used by the user	<input type="radio"/>				

Is there any other indicator related to download that you think is important?

PARAMETER 9: PRESENCE ON 2.0 WEB PLATFORMS

	Very unimportant			Very important	I don't know
Blog	<input type="radio"/>				
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>				
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>				
Youtube	<input type="radio"/>				
Linkedin	<input type="radio"/>				
Forum (to share concerns and doubts)	<input type="radio"/>				

Is there any other indicator related to the presence on 2.0 web platforms that you think is important?

Please select the level of importance of the parameters:

	Very unimportant			Very important	I don't know
Parameter 1: Content	<input type="radio"/>				
Parameter 2: Registered users	<input type="radio"/>				
Parameter 3: Information Architecture	<input type="radio"/>				
Parameter 4: User support service	<input type="radio"/>				
Parameter 5: Search	<input type="radio"/>				
Parameter 6: Presenting results	<input type="radio"/>				
Parameter 7: Purchase	<input type="radio"/>				
Parameter 8: Download	<input type="radio"/>				
Parameter 9: Presence on 2.0 web platforms	<input type="radio"/>				

Is there any other parameter or indicator that is essential for you and was not mentioned in this questionnaire? Please specify which one (s).

In your opinion, what is the stock photography website that offers a better service to its users? Please indicate the reason (s) for your answer.

In your opinion, what is (are) the most positive aspect (s) of stock photography websites?

In your opinion, what is (are) the most negative aspect (s) of stock photography websites?

Thank you for your contribution and time.

Please, click "Submit" to send the questionnaire. Thank you.

Appendix 2: Questions of the second questionnaire to users of stock photography websites

Final list of indicators for assessing the quality of stock photography websites

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to prepare the final list of indicators of the methodology for assessing the quality of websites.

It presents the nine parameters explained in the previous questionnaire with their respective indicators.

Besides the indicators presented in the previous questionnaire, here are new indicators suggested by respondents.

Indicators fall into two basic categories: essential indicators (the website should include them) and additional indicators (the website may or not include them)

If you disagree with any of the indicators, please enter your reasons on the question of suggestions and comments available at the end of each parameter.

Thank you for your participation and your help!

Parameter 1: Content (essential indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Photographs, illustrations and images only on CD	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creative and Editorial images	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
RM and RF collections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cd collections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lightboxes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shopping cart	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are additional indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are additional indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Parameter 1: Content (additional indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Application for mobile devices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photography trends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photo of the day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New images	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are essential indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are essential indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Do you have any comments about the Parameter 1?

Parameter 2: Registered Users (essential indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
User registration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
User account	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Subscription	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating, managing and sharing lightboxes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Orders and downloads history	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are additional indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are additional indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Parameter 2: Registered Users (additional indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Adding notes to each image in the lightbox	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are essential indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are essential indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Do you have any comments about the Parameter 2?

Parameter 3: Information Architecture (essential indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Language selector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Domain name easy to remember	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Global navigation system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are additional indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are additional indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Parameter 3: Information Architecture (additional indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Quick links	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content customized by audience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Site map	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most popular searches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most popular content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are essential indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are essential indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Do you have any comments about Parameter 3?

Parameter 4: User Support Service (essential indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Search tips	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading images	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about releases	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about licensing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Useful information for contributors (photographers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technical information (about PCs, browsers, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are additional indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are additional indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Parameter 4: User Support Service (additional indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Shopping and subscription tips	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Glossary of terms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Possibility of sending suggestions and comments from users	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contact details with experts in image search	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Photographer tips (about how to take good stock photos)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are essential indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are essential indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Do you have any comments about Parameter 4?

Parameter 5: Search (essential indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Search by releases	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by type of image license	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by type of image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by concept	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by people attributes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by technical attributes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by location	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by specific events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More images like this	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Similar images by selecting keywords	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Refine the search	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by categories	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by date photographed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by collection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by image number	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Similar images to an image uploaded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Redefinition of the search without clearing criteria previously selected	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are additional indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are additional indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Parameter 5: Search (additional indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Autocomplete search terms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Semantic clarifications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search for a photographer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by price	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by date (added to stock photography)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Search by color	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suggestion of new search term	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are essential indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are essential indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Do you have any comments about Parameter 5?

Parameter 6: Presenting results (essential indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Image thumbnail accompanied by a brief description of the image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Different ways of sorting/ranking the search results (by date photographed, by images recently added, by relevance, by regional relevance)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customizing the display of the details of image thumbnail (title, type, license, number, nothing, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Available stock icons (add to lightbox, add to cart, similar images, etc.). accompanying the thumbnail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are additional indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are additional indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Parameter 6: Presenting results (additional indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Emphasize images with restrictions or special conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sorting the list of results by date (on which the image was taken)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sorting the list of results by date (images recently added)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sorting the list of results by relevance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sorting the list of results by regional relevance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are essential indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are essential indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Do you have any comments about Parameter 6?

Parameter 7: Purchase (essential indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Contact company for pricing / Customizing price (RM)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Price calculation / Information about the different prices available (depending on size, type of use, etc.) (RF)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customized license pack	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about choosing the right format and size	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Different methods of payment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are additional indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are additional indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Parameter 7: Purchase (additional indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Saved license for future purchases	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are essential indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are essential indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Do you have any comments about Parameter 7:

Parameter 8: Download (essential indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Technical information (PC, browser, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are additional indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are additional indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Parameter 8: Download (additional indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Different ways of downloading the images	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are essential indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are essential indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Do you have any comments about Parameter 8?

Parameter 9: Presence on 2.0 Web platforms (additional indicators)

	I agree	I disagree	I don't know
Blog	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youtube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Linkedin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Forum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These indicators with which you disagree, do you think they are essential indicators or otherwise they are not indicators of quality?

- They are essential indicators
- They are not indicators of quality
- I don't know

Do you have any comments about Parameter 9?

Thank you!

Thank you for your participation and your help!

Appendix 3: Testing the proposed site-evaluation method

The observation and analysis of the ten websites selected as a sample had as a result an initial site-evaluation method composed of 9 parameters and 63 indicators.

In order to test the proposed site-evaluation method, Codina recommended to apply it to a small group of websites (as explained in section 3.4 of Research Design and Methodology Chapter).

Following the advice of Codina, the researcher conducted the testing of the proposed method with two stock photography websites: NTB Scanpix (Norway) and AGE Fotostock (Spain).

Parameter 1 (P.1): Content				
Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
			Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
1.1	Different image collections	0-1	1	1
1.2	Photography trends	0-1	0	0
1.3	Photo of the day	0-1	0	0
1.4	Lightboxes	0-1	1	1
1.5	Shopping Cart	0-1	1	1
1.6	Application for mobile devices	0-1	0	0
Parameter results		6	3	3

Parameter 2 (P.2): Registered users				
Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
			Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
2.1	Subscription	0-1	1	0
2.2	Creating and editing lightboxes	0-1	1	1
2.3	Sharing and sending lightboxes	0-1	1	1
2.4	Adding notes on lightboxes	0-1	0	1
2.5	Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark (for layouts, presentations, etc.)	0-1	1	1 (only Premium Users)
2.6	Orders and downloads history	0-1	0	1
Parameter results		6	4	5

Parameter 3 (P.3): Information Architecture				
Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
			Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
3.1	Language Selector	0-1	1	1
3.2	Content customized by audience (sellers vs. buyers / creative vs. editorial / geographical location, etc.)	0-3	2 (creative vs editorial / only Scandinavian)	2 (sellers vs buyers)
3.3	Quick links	0-1	0	0
3.4	Most Popular Searches	0-1	0	0
3.5	Most Popular Content	0-1	0	0
3.6	Website URL representative and easily remembered	0-1	1	1
3.7	Global navigation system	0-1	1	1
Parameter results		9	5	5

Parameter 4 (P.4): User Support Service				
Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
			Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
4.1	Search tips	0-3	2 (only in Norwegian)	3
4.2	Shopping tips	0-3	0	3
4.3	Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading images (phone, e-mail, address, chat)	0-1	1	1
4.4	Glossary of terms	0-1	0	0
4.5	Information about releases	0-1	0	0
4.6	Information about licensing	0-1	0	1
4.7	Possibility of sending suggestions and comments from users	0-1	1	0
4.8	Image research services	0-1	0	0
Parameter results		12	4	8

Parameter 5 (P. 5): Search				
Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
			Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
5.1	Autocomplete search terms	0-1	1	1
5.2	Semantic clarifications	0-1	0	0
5.3	Search for a photographer	0-1	1	1
5.4	Search by price	0-1	0	0
5.5	Search by releases	0-1	0	1
5.6	Search by type of image license (RF and RM)	0-1	0	1
5.7	Search by type of image (Creative and Editorial)	0-1	1	0
5.8	Search by concept	0-1	0	0
5.9	Search by people attributes	0-3	1 (only search by specific people)	0
5.10	Search by image composition	0-3	0	2
5.11	Search by date added to stock photography	0-1	1	0
5.12	Search by location	0-1	1	0
5.13	Search by specific events	0-1	1	0
5.14	More images like this / Similar images	0-1	0	1
5.15	New search from the selection of keywords assigned to a selected image by the user	0-1	1	1
5.16	Suggestion of new search term (did you mean results for “_”?)	0-1	0	0
5.17	Refine the search	0-1	1	1
Parameter results		21	9	9

Parameter 6 (P.6): Presenting results				
Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
			Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
6.1	Sorting the list of results by date (on which the image was taken)	0-1	0	0
6.2	Sorting the list of results by date (images recently added)	0-1	0	0
6.3	Sorting the list of results by relevance	0-1	1	1
6.4	Sorting the list of results by regional relevance	0-1	0	0
6.5	Image thumbnail accompanied by a brief description of the image	0-1	1	1
6.6	To emphasize those images with restrictions or special conditions (by a quick visual icon or a note)	0-1	0	0
Parameter results		6	2	2

Parameter 7 (P.7): Purchase				
Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
			Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
7.1	Contact company for pricing	0-1	1	1
7.2	Price calculation	0-1	0	1
7.3	Information about the different formats and sizes and its uses	0-1	1	1
7.4	Customized license pack	0-1	0	0
7.5	Saved license for future purchases	0-1	0	1
Parameter results		5	2	4

Parameter 8 (P.8): Download				
Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
			Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
8.1	Different downloading ways (compressed files in ZIP directly to your computer, sending by e-mail or downloading via FTP)	0-1	1	1

Parameter 8 (P.8): Download				
Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
			Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
8.2	Technical information about downloading the images (formats, PCs, browsers, etc.)	0-1	0	1
Parameter results		2	1	2

Parameter 9 (P9): Presence in 2.0 Web platforms				
Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
			Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
9.1	Blog	0-1	1	1
9.2	Facebook	0-1	1	1
9.3	Twitter	0-1	1	1
9.4	Youtube	0-1	0	1
9.5	Linkedin	0-1	1	1
9.6	Forum	0-1	0	0
Parameter results		6	4	5

Results of testing the initial site-evaluation method

Total Score (in absolute value)	Total Score	Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
		73	34/73

As explained in the Chapter 3, this evaluation method includes two different types of indicators: some indicators that are measured with a score of 0 or 1 and others that are measured from 0 to 3. However, all indicators have the same level of importance, so that when calculating the final score the researcher decided to normalize the scores of the two types of indicators. Thus, the actual score of (0-3)'s was divided by 3, so that the maximum value that enters the sum is 1, in line with the (0-1)'s measures.

Applying the normalization of the score, the results were the following:

Total Score (normalized)	Total Score	Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
		63	29.5/63

When calculating the overall score, Codina (2006b) suggests dividing the total score by the number of indicators that have been applied. He also provides a range of between 1.9 and 3 for the best websites. According to him, websites with a score less than 1.5 points might need review; while those sites with a score less than 1 point, may need a makeover (see Chapter 3.4).

According to Codina, 3 is the maximum score/value that a website can have. After normalizing the scores of the (0-3)'s indicators, the total score of the method matches the number of indicators. Thus, the total score divided by the total number of indicators has as a result 1. Therefore, this 1 corresponds to 3 defined by Codina as the maximum score. The results are as follows:

Total Score (normalized)	Total Score	Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
		3	1.4

As proposed by Codina, the AGE Fotostock website has a score above 1.5, which means it meets the requirements of the evaluation-method. However, the Scanpix website has a score less than 1.5, which means that the site might need a review.

Appendix 4: Re-testing the proposed site-evaluation method

Responses to both questionnaires helped the researcher to define new indicators. Following the suggestions of respondents, the researcher decided to separate the indicators into two groups according to relevance criteria: essential indicators and non-essential indicators (or additional).

The new proposed site-evaluation method consisted of 46 essential indicators and 31 additional indicators.

In order to test this new method, the researcher used the two stock photography websites previously tested: NTB Scanpix (Norway) and AGE Fotostock (Spain).

	Parameter 1 (P.1): Content				
	Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
				Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
Essential indicators	1.1	Photographs, illustrations and images only on CD	0-1	0	1
	1.2	Creative and Editorial images	0-1	1	1
	1.3	RM and RF collections	0-1	1	1
	1.4	CD collections	0-1	0	1
	1.5	Lightboxes	0-1	1	1
	1.6	Shopping Cart	0-1	1	1
	Parameter results (essential indicators)			6	4
Additional indicators (not essential)	1.7	Application for mobile devices	0-1	0	0
	1.8	Photography trends	0-1	0	0
	1.9	New images	0-1	0	1
	Additional indicators results			3	0

	Parameter 2 (P.2): Registered users				
	Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
				Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
Essential indicators	2.1	User Registration	0-1	1	1
	2.2	User Account	0-1	1	1
	2.3	Subscription	0-1	1	0

Parameter 2 (P.2): Registered users				
Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
			Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
2.4	Creating, managing and sharing lightboxes	0-3	2	3
2.5	Adding notes to each image in the lightbox	0-1	0	1
2.6	Downloading a preview version of an image without watermark (for layouts, presentations, etc.)	0-1	1	1 (only Premium Users)
2.7	Orders and downloads history / Purchase area	0-1	0	1
Parameter results (essential indicators)		9	6	8

Parameter 3 (P.3): Information Architecture					
	Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
				Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
Essential indicators	3.1	Language Selector	0-1	1	1
	3.2	Domain name easy to remember	0-1	1	1
	3.3	Global navigation system	0-1	1	1
	3.4	Content customized by audience (sellers vs. buyers / creative vs. editorial / geographical location, etc.)	0-3	2 (creative vs. editorial / only Scandinavian)	2 (sellers vs. buyers)
	Parameter results (essential indicators)		6	5	5
Additional indicators (not essential)	3.5	Site map	0-1	1	0
	3.6	Most Popular Searches	0-1	0	0
	3.7	Most Popular Content	0-1	0	0
	3.8	Quick links	0-1	0	0
	Additional indicators results		4	1	0

	Parameter 4 (P.4): User Support Service				
	Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
				Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
Essential indicators	4.1	Search tips	0-3	2 (only in Norwegian)	3
	4.2	Shopping and subscription tips	0-3	0	3
	4.3	Support service for searching, purchasing and downloading images (phone, e-mail, address, chat)	0-1	1	1
	4.4	Information about releases	0-1	0	0
	4.5	Information about licensing	0-1	0	1
	4.6	Technical information (formats, browsers, etc.)	0-1	0	1
	4.7	Useful information to the contributors (how to submit, how to create keywords, how to sell photos, etc.)	0-3	1	3
	Parameter results (essential indicators)			13	4
Additional indicators (not essential)	4.8	Glossary of terms	0-1	0	0
	4.9	Suggestions and comments from users	0-1	1	0
	4.10	Contact details with experts in image search	0-1	1	0
	Additional indicators results			3	2

	Parameter 5 (P. 5): Search				
	Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
				Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
Essential indicators	5.1	Semantic clarifications	0-1	0	0
	5.2	Search by releases	0-1	0	1
	5.3	Search by type of image license (RF and RM)	0-1	0	1
	5.4	Search by type of image (Creative and Editorial)	0-1	1	0
	5.5	Search by categories / topics	0-1	1	1

Parameter 5 (P. 5): Search					
	Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
				Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
	5.6	Search by concept	0-1	0	0
	5.7	Search by people attributes (fewer options to choose from, the lower the mark)	0-3	1 (only search by specific people)	0
	5.8	Search by technical attributes (composition, style, point of view, etc.) (fewer options to choose from, the lower the mark)	0-3	0	2
	5.9	Search by location	0-1	1	0
	5.10	Search by specific events	0-1	1	0
	5.11	More images like this	0-1	0	1
	5.12	Similar images by selecting keywords	0-1	1	1
	Parameter results (essential indicators)		16	6	7
Additional indicators (not essential)	5.13	Autocomplete search terms	0-1	1	1
	5.14	Search for a photographer	0-1	1	1
	5.15	Search by price	0-1	0	0
	5.16	Search by date added to stock photography	0-1	1	0
	5.17	Search by date photographed	0-1	1	0
	5.18	Search by collection	0-1	0	1
	5.19	Search by color	0-1	0	0
	5.20	Search by image number	0-1	1	0
	5.21	Suggestion of new search term (did you mean results for “_”?)	0-1	0	0
	5.22	Upload and Find Similar Images	0-1	0	0
	5.23	Redefinition of the search without clearing criteria previously selected	0-1	0	0
	Additional indicator results		11	5	3

	Parameter 6 (P.6): Presenting results				
	Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
				Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
Essential indicators	6.1	Different ways of sorting the search results (by date photographed, by images recently added, by relevance, by regional relevance)	0-3	0 (no way to choose the sorting)	0 (no way to choose the sorting)
	6.2	Customizing the display of the details of image thumbnail (title, type, license, number, nothing, etc.)	0-1	0	0
	6.3	Preview with all the image details (title, photographer, keywords, date, location, size, price, releases, etc.)	0-3	2 (no information about releases)	2 (no information about releases)
	6.4	Available shares icons (add to lightbox, add to cart, similar images, etc.). accompanying the thumbnail	0-1	1	1
	Parameter results (essential indicators)			8	3
Additional indicators (not essential)	6.5	Emphasize images with restrictions or special condition (with a quick visual icon or a note).	0-1	0	0
	Additional indicator results			1	0

	Parameter 7 (P.7): Purchase				
	Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
				Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
Essential indicators	7.1	Customizing price (RM images)	0-1	1	1
	7.2	Information about the different prices available (depending on size, type of use, etc.) (RF images)	0-1	1	1
	7.3	Customized license pack	0-1	0	0
	7.4	Different methods of payment	0-1	1	1
	7.5	Information about choosing the right format and size	0-1	0	1

	Parameter 7 (P.7): Purchase				
	Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
				Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
	Parameter results (essential indicators)		5	3	4
Additional indicators (not essential)	7.6	Saved license for future purchases	0-1	0	1
	Additional indicators results		1	0	1

	Parameter 8 (P.8): Download				
	Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
				Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
Essential indicators	8.1	Technical information about downloading the images (formats, PCs, browsers, etc.)	0-1	0	1
	Parameter results		1	0	1
Additional indicators (not essential)	8.2	Different downloading ways (compressed files in ZIP directly to your computer, sending by e-mail or downloading via FTP)	0-3	2 (it doesn't allow via FTP)	2 (it doesn't allow via FTP)
	Additional indicator results		3	2	2

	Parameter 9 (P9): Presence in 2.0 Web platforms				
	Number	Indicator	Mark	Results	
				Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
Additional indicators (not essential)	9.1	Toolbar Web 2.0 applications	0-1	1	1
	9.2	Blog	0-1	1	1
	9.3	Microblogging platforms (Twitter)	0-1	1	1
	9.4	Social Networking (Facebook)	0-1	1	1
	9.5	External services for video hosting (Youtube)	0-1	0	1
	9.6	Professional Social Networking (Linkedin)	0-1	1	1
	9.7	Forum	0-1	0	0

	Parameter 9 (P9): Presence in 2.0 Web platforms		
Additional indicators results	7	5	6

Results of testing the methodology

	Total Score (in absolute value)	Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
Essential indicators	64	31/64	46/4
Additional indicators	33	15/33	13/33

After normalizing the two types of indicators' measures (0-1 and 0-3) and dividing the total score by the number of indicators as Codina suggested (see Literature Review) and re-normalizing them by assigning 1 to 3, the total scores are as follows:

	Total Score (normalized)	Scanpix	AGE Fotostock
Essential indicators	3	1.56	2.2
Additional indicator	3	1.32	1.12

The presence of essential indicators is the factor that provides quality to a website. Thus, when evaluating the quality we only take into account the results of these essential indicators.

As proposed by Codina (see Literature Review), the AGE Fotostock website has between 1.9 and 3, which means it is a very good quality website, whereas the Scanpix website has a score between 1.5 and 1.9, which means that it meets the requirements.