Subject: search function
Posted by benscaro on Mon, 28 Jan 2013 01:48:18 GMT
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in the past few days the 'search' function appears to have gone haywire. this used to be very good.

ben

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by Youknowwho4eva on Mon, 28 Jan 2013 15:16:13 GMT
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Can you explain what your seeing, and what you expect to see?

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by benscaro on Tue, 29 Jan 2013 12:40:09 GMT
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When i used to simply search for the words 'TT scale' I would get the 80-90 results for model railway models made to that scale. (TT is a model railway scale.)

Now when I use it I get about 9000 results ... and the relevance of any to the search terms I can't fathom, unless the word 'scale' is used somewhere and a double 'tt' maybe in a word?

But the search function used to be smart enough to know that TT and scale were a related phrase.

Cheers, Ben

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by Youknowwho4eva on Tue, 29 Jan 2013 14:16:20 GMT
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When I search for TT scale, it does say 3500 products found. All the ones listed at least have TT or scale in their title. To reduce your search, put your search in quotes "TT scale". This will only bring up items that contain the exact text in the quotes. After adding the quotes, 87 products.

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by Bathsheba on Fri, 01 Feb 2013 06:45:21 GMT
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Another question about search: any reason there's no way to search through one designer's models?

I use "Search within my models" a lot, and I assumed it was available to customers, but today I wanted to look at "all my pendants as they appear to customers", so I logged out and went to my shop and saw no "Search within Bathsheba's models" box.

Sad user is sad.

This is not as bad as it would be for a really big shop, but it's a conspicuous lack. The Sections are better than nothing, but not really what I want, and way too far down the page. A casual user won't see them.

Typing "bathsheba pendant" into the main search box returns 3100 items, which mostly have items by me in their "related" section. Again, not what I want.

How about making that "Search within" box available to customers as well as designers?

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by Youknowwho4eva on Fri, 01 Feb 2013 14:01:11 GMT
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That does sound like a good feature to me. Maybe even an advanced search option, like the forum search, that allows you to specify the designer. I'll pass that on.

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by LuraSDesign on Fri, 01 Feb 2013 15:03:20 GMT
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Why for gods sake do you have to put the search words in quotes, this makes no sense at all.
At Shapeways there are hundreds of hits for every search word, so why multiply these by combining two words - who would want this ????
Everybody who puts more than one word in the search field is looking for a product with these two words, not for 3500 things with one of the two words.

We are all using Google and are used to it, so why would Shapeways use a search engine from the pre-google era ?
No average internet user thinks of putting searches into "quotes" nowadays.

It was driving me crazy just yesterday not being able to find my own design with this stupid search engine. Even with the exact name it did not show up - only showed a lot of unrelated stuff from the top sellers - yeah... good for them sucessful guys! (no offense)

How can customers find my designs if even I myself - who knows what to search for - cannot find it? Yes, with the "" it works..... now I got it.

Again: NOBODY thinks of USING QUOTES for searches !

This is REALLY REALLY BAD for the small shops on Shapeways, it kills them. I am not surprised anymore why they all can't sell anything.

- a very disappointed new want-to-be seller

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by benscaro on Fri, 01 Feb 2013 15:22:33 GMT
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seeing as things worked quite well before, i would say the best answer is just to reinstate your search engine to the way it was ... ie, when it worked.

this seems the most obvious fix.

people will not think to use quote marks. that's a mid 90s thing.

sorry, but this is going to hurt designers, and inevitably shapeways too.

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by Youknowwho4eva on Fri, 01 Feb 2013 15:37:51 GMT
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LuraSDesign wrote on Fri, 01 February 2013 15:03Why for gods sake do you have to put the search words in quotes, this makes no sense at all.
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- a very disappointed new want-to-be seller

I'm sorry but you are wrong. Use the search to find TT scale, Then use the search to find "TT scale" You'll notice that the first results for the search without quotes are the results shown with quotes. Meaning that the first items found are items with the exact search. The quotes only limits it to only find that exact phrase.

Now go to google. Search for TT scale. 31 Million results. Now search for "TT scale". 110 thousand results. Same thing too. The most relevant results are listed first. Except Google will top the list with the people that pay to be first up top.

All for ease of finding your product, I agree that there are steps that we could do to make it easier to find what you are looking for.

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by Bathsheba on Fri, 01 Feb 2013 23:03:48 GMT
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I agree that if I search for two words I am definitely looking for both words. Not necessarily the

exact phrase, but I don't want to see any results at all that have only one of those words.

Quote:Now go to google. Search for TT scale. 31 Million results. Now search for "TT scale". 110 thousand results. Same thing too. The most relevant results are listed first. Except Google will top the list with the people that pay to be first up top.

But "scale" returns 680 million results, and "TT" returns 913 million results. The Google search for TT scale without quotes is returning only results that have both of those words, not those with only one.

Contrast what happens on Shapeways. Searching for beetle returns 34 products. Searching for scarab 31. But searching for beetle scarab returns 55: that is clearly the union of those sets, not the intersection of them. Not what I was looking for.

I don't mind using quotes to find an exact phrase, but requiring them to do a boolean-and search on multiple words actually isn't standard 21st-century search behavior. IMO it's a bug.

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by LuraSDesign on Sat, 02 Feb 2013 04:55:08 GMT
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Ok, just search for "Double Heart Pendant" with quotes and you have 2 hits (while the first even is the wrong one).
Now search without quotes and you will never find it !
The relevance thing seems not to work at all if you are not using quotes.

I have to admit, with quotes it all works very well now, but I would never have tried this before being told here in the forum.
Like benscaro said, that's a mid 90s thing.

PS: if you put "Valentines Pendant" in quotes it is not finding anything though its tagged with "valentines" - but let's dicuss that another time.

Youknowwho4eva wrote on Fri, 01 February 2013 15:37

I'm sorry but you are wrong. Use the search to find TT scale, Then use the search to find "TT scale" You'll notice that the first results for the search without quotes are the results shown with

quotes. Meaning that the first items found are items with the exact search. The quotes only limits it to only find that exact phrase.

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Subject: Re: search function
Posted by stop4stuff on Sat, 02 Feb 2013 08:19:42 GMT
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Bathsheba wrote on Fri, 01 February 2013 06:45Another question about search: any reason there's no way to search through one designer's models?

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Typing "bathsheba pendant" into the main search box returns 3100 items, which mostly have items by me in their "related" section. Again, not what I want.

How about making that "Search within" box available to customers as well as designers?

This could be simplified a bit with the designer's username inserted as a default tag on the model page. I've gotten into the habit of doing this anyway

Paul

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by AmLachDesigns on Tue, 05 Feb 2013 12:06:13 GMT
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LuraSDesign wrotePS: if you put "Valentines Pendant" in quotes it is not finding anything though its tagged with "valentines" - but let's dicuss that another time.

I wrote a post about this: 60072 and I thought the problem had been solved, but maybe not.

With regard to the general search box:

1. People will only use the quotes if they already know what they are looking for. This is not really helpful.

2. Google should be the gold standard, in terms of what we input and what we expect to see. And I cannot but laugh at the reference to the favoured listing of paid/SEO'd entries since Shapeways search rarely returns what you might expect for given terms and often seems to feature certain models (best sellers perhaps?) Type in Wedding Bridal Accessory and see what you get. I referred to this in another post 60697

I mean this as constructive criticism but the search box as it functions at present seems to be less then fit for purpose. If the search box function was improved, perhaps visitors brought to Shapeways by whatever means might search and find something else relevant with possible benefits for all.

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by Youknowwho4eva on Tue, 05 Feb 2013 13:50:24 GMT
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Don't get me wrong, I do think the search needs improving.

Keep suggesting how we can make it better, and I'll make sure it's brought up.

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by TerryNathan on Mon, 11 Feb 2013 13:04:49 GMT
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The search function has so many problems that it is hard to quantify them all. But here is my current list (from a consumer's perspective)

Quotes DO matter, and I never was able to get by without them. As has been said several times, that is problematic because most users wouldn't think to use quotes these days. Any use of the word "scale" absolutely has to be tied directly to the desired scale within quotes, otherwise chaos raeigns.

The fact that you can only include one level of categories in a search may have worked when Sahpeways had 1,000 products, but Miniatures does not mean much anymore, and without being able to drill down into subcategories, that feature is all but useless. If one could get down to a level where category specified the scale, maybe we would not be so sensitive about quotes. But I never figured out a way to do that.

There are certain products that were always at the top of any of my searches, regardless of their relevance. I assume these are paid ads, but they aren't marked that way. But if you search for anything that has "n scale" in the search criteria, the first item is ALWAYS some automobile frames, even if you were searching for fire hydrants.

And sorting by NEWEST seems to completly confuse the search engine. I could get a reasonable result by searching for "fire hydrants", but if you change the sort to NEWEST, that same search comes back with totally different results, having nothing to do with fire hydrants. This despite the fact that it clearly states at the top of the page that these results are for "fire hydrants".

Personally I have lost all patience with trying to find products at Shapeways, and am out shopping for other sources for 3D printing. If you ever get the search engine fixed, you will see your sales increase dramatically, because if customers can't find what they are looking for, you not only lose that sale, but you lose that customer. And for markets like model railroaders, who are constantly buying products, that can be very costly. If I were on your board, that search engine would be the highest priority in the company.

Good luck and good bye.

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by Bathsheba on Mon, 11 Feb 2013 13:49:35 GMT
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Dittoes to search needing to be a top priority.

Not prioritizing it makes me feel that SW is still mainly supporting makers: if I can find my own models everything is fine.

Well, if customers can't find them it's not fine!

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by mkroeker on Mon, 11 Feb 2013 15:41:01 GMT
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I'm not even sure I would find all of my own models if my only tool was that search dialog.

The present set of categories may have been meaningful in the first year or so, but anything that is not
obviously jewelry, art or puzzle tends to end up in miniatures.

Having to use quotes (without this being mentioned somewhere) is bad enough, but unless I have overlooked something, one cannot use boolean operators, not even just AND, in search terms. So if you are unlucky, you then have to wade through tens of pages of mostly unrelated stuff that just happens to have one of the several search terms somewhere - more often than not in a completely different context, cf. the recent thread about battlebot weapons turning up in a search for bridal accessories.

Tags are almost useless as they appear to be essentially free text, everybody seems to be invited to create new ones and nobody gets to see a list of them (except for the chosen few tags that happen to be listed as being "popular" on the homepage) ? The search box does not appear to understand them as a subcategory either, so to specifically search for a tag, one either has to copy the search/tag?tag= URL line from the "search popular tags" on the homepage and blindly try your own texts, or you hit on one shop item by some means and then try all of its "keywords"
in the hope that it returns a mostly relevant list. (Needless to say, there does not seem to be a means
of searching by keyword within the subset marked with a given tag...)

Just watching the "feed" from time to time and following up on interesting models may be more rewarding
than trying to search for something, but this is probably not what a "passerby" in search of n-scale hydrants
would do.

PS: the "paid ads" that TerryNathan suspected are probably just things that got pushed up in the results list by
"number of sales" or "number of views", but as this is not one of the user-selectable sort criteria it is probably
not a good idea as long as "relevance" to the search criteria is not always assured.

Subject: Re: search function

Posted by stop4stuff on Mon, 11 Feb 2013 17:29:32 GMT
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Google works ok with Shapeways related searches.

This search thing is about the same as any other website that has their own search function - it doesn't work the same way as the Google we are all used to.

Search algorythms are tricky buggers to figure out let alone create.

Paul

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by natalia on Mon, 11 Feb 2013 21:19:52 GMT
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Hey guys,

These are really great suggestions about how we can improve search. Paul, i like that you use your designer name as a tag - great idea in general!

That said, we DO know it has to improve.

We have been slowly chipping away at this issue over the last month or so. For instance, now caps don't matter whereas they used to before.

To give a bit of insight: There are three big projects ahead of fixing search at the moment, and they are also features requested by you, like less rejections and dual currency option on the site.

We're a small team, and we're doing our best, but there is only so much we can work on at a time.

So please, keep the suggestions coming, and when its "fix search" time, we have all the information ready to act on!

-Natalia

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by AmLachDesigns on Tue, 12 Feb 2013 15:01:48 GMT
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I would say that the search priority should be something like:

1. Model Name;
2. Tags;
3. Description words.

Perhaps there should be a way of specifying on the search which of these 3 criteria you wish to use, or a combination thereof.

Paul's idea of the designer name as a Tag, is a good one: perhaps when the model page is created by SW this could be done automatically.

How the Categories fit into this, I have no idea. Do they do anything? When you use them do you select the Header Category (e.g. Art) or is this automatically understood by selecting a sub-Category (e.g. Memes). Why only 2 slots? Could this functionality be incorporated somehow into Tags?

Slightly off-topic perhaps, but I would imagine down to the same kind of logic as the Search function is the subject of 'Related Items in Category' which shows up when someone visits your Model page. These items seem to bear little or no relation to the main model and the logic (if any) is unclear.

I believe too many items are showing up on too many searches simply because they have sold the most or been 'favourited' the most. Items should show up on lists and as recommendations purely as a result of the closeness of the fit of the Names/Tags/Descriptions and no other criteria unless the user specifically request this kind of search.

I would also imagine that using analytics software some kind of study could be made of how users come to the site, how they behave using or not using the search function in terms of stickiness, purchases etc. I say imagine because I have just added Google Analytics to my shop, looked at the results and blown a fuse trying to figure out what it all means!

Subject: Re: search function
Posted by mkroeker on Thu, 14 Feb 2013 14:13:50 GMT
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Search needs an option "show buyable objects only"
(as discussed in this thread)