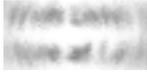
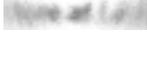


Searching, Finding, Seeking, Browsing:

Users often switch between these different roles during one session, so the site must support many different modes of seeking information and products. The site cannot assume that a user or persona will follow a “typical” path to finding products. However, determining what user’s general search patterns are will help define what features/functionality will be supported.

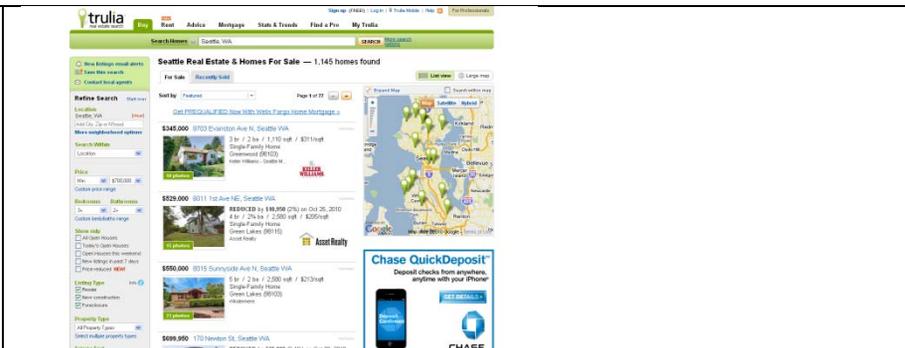
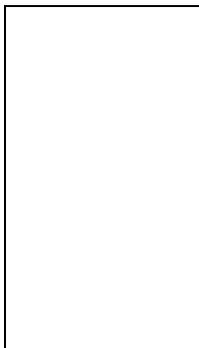
Types of Searching Behaviors to design for:

Type/Description	Market Segmentation	User Goal	Business Goal	Recommendations about how to Support <i>(1 being highest priority)</i> red – not seen on [competitor sites]
<p>Knowledgeable Seeker: User knows exactly what they are looking for. It can be clearly defined, easily described with keywords with a straightforward starting point.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Home</i> • <i>Home at Last</i> • <i>Full Service Professionals</i> • <i>Single</i> • <i>Single Parent</i> • <i>Single Parent</i> 	I want to find relevant results or recommendations quickly.	Provide relevant search results to entice user to perform specific Call(s) to Action (buy, save, etc).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide accessible Search, with easy ways for user to refine and sort the search results. (<i>“easy”?</i>) 2. Provide easily understood navigation so user can get to correct Categor(ies). 3. Build “targeted” areas for quick browsing. 4. Include targeted “links” as entry points (promo areas etc).
<p>Researching: User has some idea of what they are looking for. May or may not know key words or starting point, may have difficulty defining exactly what they are looking for and may be uncertain if they have researched their options enough. Usually know when they have “stumbled on” the right solution(s) though.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Home at Last</i> • <i>Full Service Professionals</i> • <i>Single Parent</i> 	I want to find (or be directed to) the starting place to discover products like what I want.	Allow users to either find products that match their requirements or encourage them to stay longer and engage more with the site/products so they will come back to perform Call(s) to Action.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create Navigation that echoes the way users want to navigate and supports their typical exploration paths. 2. Allow for faceted search so user understands the types and distinctions between categories. Group Search results to help user understand differences between category groups, possibly with supplementary explanatory content. 3. Provide visual or “touchy feely” search tools. 4. Provide related links and/or recommendations following every content “chunk” (whether it’s search results or other information). 5. Pre-filter Search options and results (allow user to select or de-select specific categories in a non-

				overwhelming way). (“non-overwhelming”?) 6. Allow for multiple criteria search that provides a way to easily sort results (grid, matrix, etc—like travel sites)
Educating: User does not know exactly what they are looking for or have a specific goal in mind, even though they may not be aware of this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •  •  	I want to have a satisfying site experience, learn more about the product/company and if it fits my needs.	Provide enough info at the right time to encourage users to either stay and learn more information or return to learn more in the future.	1. Provide quick, concise value propositions or product pages with related/contextual/cross-referenced links called out. 2. Provide starting point paths/messaging/calls to action on homepage and product pages.
Returning: User is looking for something they found before. Memory varies—may remember exactly or don’t remember very precisely. Ex: indeed.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 	I want to find what I found before.	Provide tools or means for user to easily re-find information or products.	1. Allow users to explicitly “save” information or products. 2. Create a passive system to store information on behalf of the user (auto-save searches, “most visited” pages/products, persistent cookies, etc). 3. Allow users to be notified when new products get added that match their search.

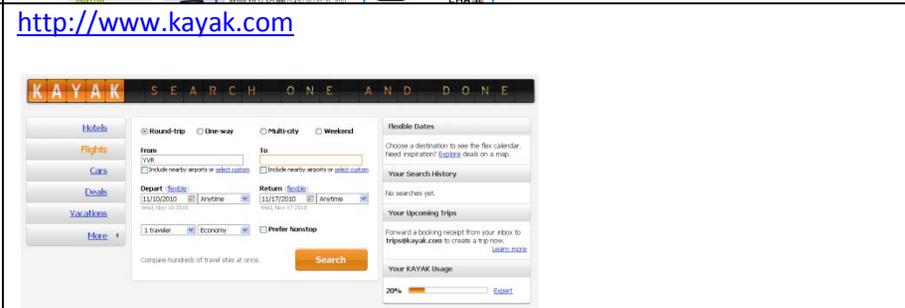
Site Examples:

Site	URL + Screenshot	Search Behavior Category/Features
Trulia	http://www.trulia.com/	Knowledgeable Seeker: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean search results grid • Refine search (a la Hotwire) • Good “advanced”/custom search features • “More search options” for extremely fine-tuned searches



Zillow.com is similar, but not as visually nice:
http://www.zillow.com/homes/seattle,-wa_rb/0-750000_price/0-2911_mp/2-baths/2-beds/

Kayak



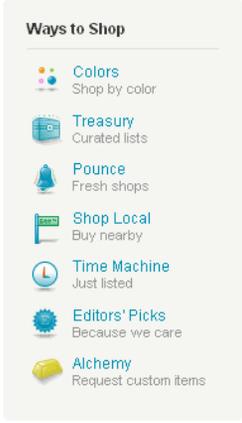
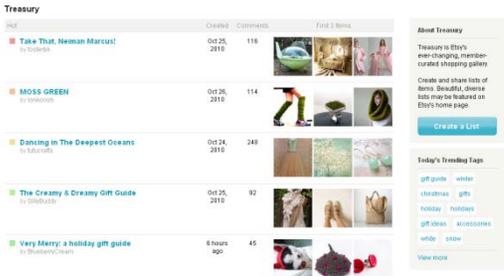
Knowledgeable Seeker:
 Simple UI for complex searches
Returning:
 Search history
Educating:
 “Your Kayak usage”

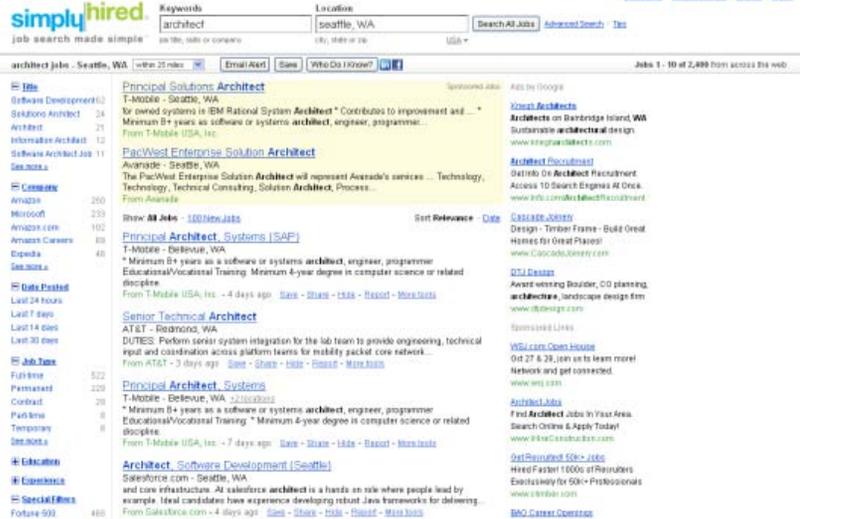
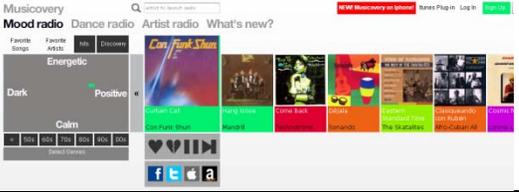
Kayak

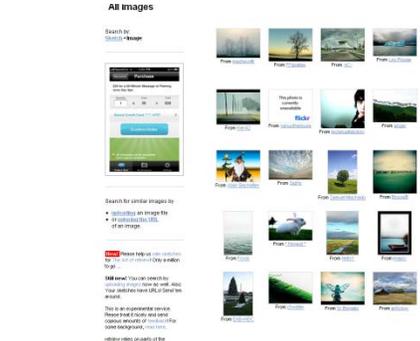


Educating/Researching:
 “Need inspiration?” → Explore

- Interactive content that adjusts on the fly
- Ability to share your “dream” journey with friends
- User can take action immediately from the expanded view (check airfare, get alerts, show related items)

	 <p>Ways to Shop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colors Shop by color Treasury Curated lists Pounce Fresh shops Shop Local Buy nearby Time Machine Just listed Editors' Picks Because we care Alchemy Request custom items 																									
Etsy	<p>http://www.etsy.com/treasury/?ref=fp_banner_TreasuryEast_101810</p>  <p>Treasury</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Hot</th> <th>Created</th> <th>Comments</th> <th>First 3 items</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Take That, Neiman Marcus! by Salsbush</td> <td>Oct 25, 2010</td> <td>118</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>MOSS GREEN by Salsbush</td> <td>Oct 26, 2010</td> <td>114</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dancing in The Deepest Oceans by Salsbush</td> <td>Oct 24, 2010</td> <td>248</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Creamy & Dreamy Gift Guide by Salsbush</td> <td>Oct 25, 2010</td> <td>92</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vary Merry: a holiday gift guide by Salsbush</td> <td>8 hours ago</td> <td>45</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>About Treasury Treasury is Etsy's peer-curating, member-curated shopping gallery. Create and share lists of items. Search, browse lists may be featured on Etsy's home page. Create a List</p> <p>Today's Trending Tags</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gift guide winter christmas gifts holiday holidays gift ideas accessories white snow View more 	Hot	Created	Comments	First 3 items	Take That, Neiman Marcus! by Salsbush	Oct 25, 2010	118		MOSS GREEN by Salsbush	Oct 26, 2010	114		Dancing in The Deepest Oceans by Salsbush	Oct 24, 2010	248		The Creamy & Dreamy Gift Guide by Salsbush	Oct 25, 2010	92		Vary Merry: a holiday gift guide by Salsbush	8 hours ago	45		<p>Researching/Educating: Member curated “galleries” also adds an editorial feel to user-generated content.</p>
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Simply Hired	<p>http://www.simplyhired.com/a/special-searches/home/</p>	<p>Researching and Educating: “Special Features” searches (hand-picked niche filters)</p> <p>Knowledgeable Seeker and Researching: Expanding/collapsing filters with results (a la Kayak)</p>																								

		
<p>The Sixty One</p>	<p>http://www.thesixtyone.com/#/moods/happy/</p> 	<p>Researching/Educating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate search method (find by mood/tags)
<p>Musicoverly</p>	<p>http://musicoverly.com/</p> 	<p>Researching/Educating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate search method (find by mood/tags)
<p>Retrievr</p>	<p>http://labs.systemone.at/retrievr/</p>	<p>Researching/Educating:</p>

	 <p>The screenshot shows a visual search interface. At the top, it says "All Images". Below that, there's a search bar with "Search" and "Image" buttons. A grid of 16 small images is displayed, each with a "From" label and a "View" link. Below the grid, there are instructions on how to search for similar images by uploading an image file or providing a URL. There are also some promotional banners for "Health Check" and "Lab.proof" apps.</p>	<p>Visual search – based on uploaded images, finds similar color palette</p>
<p>Healia</p>	<p>http://www.healia.com/search?sc=true&q=nutrition&btn=Search&i=Everything</p>  <p>The screenshot shows the Healia website search results for "nutrition". The page has a green header with the Healia logo and navigation tabs for "Health Topics", "Health Communities", "Health Blog", and "Health Guides". Below the header, there's a search bar with "nutrition" entered. The main content area shows search results for "nutrition", including a "Medical journals" section with 1-5 of 60,460 hits. There are also links to "Nutrition & Health Apps", "Lab.proof Health Apps", and "Health Check" app.</p>	<p>Knowledgeable Seeker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabbed/multi-faceted Search
<p>Flickr</p>	<p>http://www.flickr.com/search/?q=&w=all</p>  <p>The screenshot shows the Flickr website search interface. It has a blue header with the Flickr logo and navigation links for "Home", "You", "Organize & Create", "Contacts", "Groups", "Explore", and "Upload". Below the header, there's a search bar with "q=" and "w=all" entered. A dropdown menu is open, showing search filters: "Everyone's Uploads", "Your Photostream", "Your Favorites", "From Your Contacts", "From Your Friends & Family", "Choose from your Contacts", "The Getty Images Collection", and "The Commons".</p>	<p>Knowledgeable Seeker:</p> <p>Drop-down menu and tabbed search</p>

For further inspiration, evaluate sites in these areas:

- Books/publications/ebooks
- Art
- Paint
- Stock photography
- Music
- Fonts
- “alternative” search engines

Design Best Practices for Information Searches, Finding and Seeking.

Navigation:

- Include web conventions that tell users where they are within the site, i.e. breadcrumbs, displaying menus, and contextual navigation.
- Provide relevant and/or recommended related content links.

Search Bar:

- Make Search look like a search box and make it wide enough for typical search terms.
- Always keep it in the same place on the page.
- Should be a type-in field and not a link.
- Label it well (usually to the left or in the field)
- Follow conventions from common search engines.
- Avoid Boolean or similarly arcane “advanced” Search methods.

Results display:

- Provide relevant results!
- Optimize search to return and prioritize high quality results and. Users will get discouraged and give up very quickly. Most users will never go beyond first page of results. Nielson Norman study: Search Success First query: 51% Second query: 32% Third query: 18%
- Users are not good at coming up with search terms, so provide hints if possible.
- Consider including “faceted search” (return results within categories, i.e. amazon.com or ebay.com)
- Do not overwhelm the user with too many results. If there are an excessive number of results, make suggestions on how to refine by narrowing their search terms.
- Likewise, don’t let searches come to a dead end—always point to suggestions on how to expand their search or where else to look, or make recommendations or offer guided navigation. If there are a minimal number of results, also make suggestions.
- Allow users to filter the results by categories without leaving the page, so they can reduce the number of results. However, let a user know beforehand that filter will give no results.
- Include a numeric count of the total number of results returned.
- Ensure that results make sense and have all relevant information, i.e. no cryptic titles or file names.

- Highlight the terms that match the words originally submitted to help people scan the titles and descriptions more easily.
- Allow users to change the number of results shown per page to avoid navigating through too many paginated results.
- Make it clear what the search terms were on the results page.
- Support robust cross-linking on each page, so that when users reach pages that are near matches they can easily get to the best matches.
- Consider allowing user to see “snapshot” of product without leaving results page.

Optimization:

- Learn what the most common search terms are from your search logs and optimize for them.
- Optimize results for the most commonly submitted queries. Working from the search logs, try out each of the top queries and evaluate the quality of the top results returned, then optimize the content of those pages to improve their ranking.
- When pages cannot be further optimized, include a manually generated “Best Bets” sidebar to force those matches to appear at the top. This gives the page a second chance to hit the specific target in Andrea’s mind.

Search Tools:

- Consider providing tools that assist with entering in search terms, i.e. auto-complete
- Consider including lists of popular searches or automated storage of the user’s previous queries, saved to a profile or cookie.
- Allow users to compare search results and products easily

Additional Notes after reviewing [family of sites]:

- Provide easy access to simple Search. [Site 1] and [Site 2] do not provide simple search. Homeplans is more aligned with “modern” simple search however.
- Advanced search is overwhelming and confusing.

- “Architectural Styles” could be a good starting point for users but it currently assumes that users are familiar with the terminology and styles
- “Plan Code” is not geared toward new users. How do I get one? Why do I need one?
- Home page/browse should feature more of a magazine/portal style experience to direct user’s focus.

General Conversion Numbers:

- “One of the things we noticed was that in every single case, people who searched the site internally had a higher conversion rate than people who didn't. In the case of one very large online retailer, the conversion rate of people who use the internal site search to find products is 42% higher than those who don't.” (also a list of general recommendations below)

Ref: <http://www.smartcompany.com.au/online-sales/20100604-how-to-improve-your-internal-site-search-to-get-more-conversions.html>

- “Research has found that visitors to retail sites who use those sites' search box are 2-3 times more likely to convert than those who don't. Moreover, our own studies have found that if customers can't find what they're looking for in the first couple of minutes, they'll leave a website, possibly never to return.”

Ref: <http://www.marketingprofs.com/articles/2010/3823/eight-ways-to-improve-your-site-search-and-capture-more-conversions>

Specific Conversion Numbers/Examples:

Kiddicare.com

includes guided navigation that lets online shoppers refine searches by price, age, brand or user ratings. Shoppers can also search and navigate through product images and rich media content including video demonstrations of products. Kiddicare added consumer ratings and [reviews](#) technology from [PowerReviews Inc.](#), which enables shoppers to rate and review products and filter search results by ratings and reviews content through the Endeca search application. The Endeca system automatically tags review content to make it searchable. The combination of the search-and-navigation and integrated consumer reviews has enabled Kiddicare to double its visitor-to-sales [conversion rates](#) to 10% from 5%. As a result, Kiddicare has nearly doubled its total revenue, the retailer says.

Ref: <http://www.internetretailer.com/2010/08/19/how-kiddiecare-doubled-conversion-rates-new-site-search>

Step2

Step2's web analytics data indicate that visitors who use site search are 2.5 times more likely to make a purchase than visitors who don't use search. In addition, the number of visitors who exit Step2's site from site search pages is 14% lower than from other pages on the site.

Ref: <http://www.internetretailer.com/2010/09/02/step2-learns-new-way-show-site-search-results>

Ergo In Demand

Currently, rating status is the third most popular option for the initial sort on search results, following price and product name, he says. The retailer made "minimum rating" a refinement option on the left-hand navigation that appears on the page after shoppers have done a product search, allowing them to choose to see only five-star rated products, four star-rated products, and so on. That option has become the number one option for refining search results, Goldsmith says.

Ref: <http://www.internetretailer.com/2010/07/15/ratings-and-reviews-prove-popular-during-site-searches>

KarenMillen.com

The Learning Search service from SLI Systems tracks shopper search behavior in aggregate so that future searches deliver the most relevant and popular items, says Shaun Ryan, CEO of SLI Systems. "We watch what people search for and click on the most and adapt to preferences," he says. The Learning Search system used by Karen Millen adjusts search results on a daily basis, based on the previous day's shopper behavior trends, Ryan says. The search function also automatically suggests popular search terms as the shopper types in a keyword. For example, if a shopper types in the word "blue," the auto-complete feature will suggest the term "blue dress" or "blue shoes" depending on which is currently the more popular search phrase. If the shopper accepts "blue dress," the first search result presented is the site's most-viewed blue dress. Karen Millen says it expects to see a 50%

increase in web sales this year as a result of the changes, based on improved conversion rates it experienced during a test of the system on the company's U.S. web site.

Ref: <http://www.internetretailer.com/2010/08/19/using-behavior-refine-site-search>

Prestwick House

Sales have increased 13% since Prestwick House improved its site search late last year to make it easier for educators to search for books on the retailer's web site. The new system enables online shoppers to sort by book category, author, format and price. Search results bring forth item images and short descriptions, along with links to related products. Bergstrom says that while only 25% of site visitors use site search—shoppers also can find products through tabs that cover various aspects of education, such as “core language and learning”—those visitors who do search account for 62% of the company's revenues.

Ref: <http://www.internetretailer.com/2010/07/01/you-it>

Motorcycle superstore

“We get up to 30% of our revenue through site search,” Miller said. He noted that the 100 most commonly used keyword phrases embedded in MotorcycleSuperstore.com's site search system accounted for 38% of revenue gained through organic search revenue last year. But that left 62% of converted organic search results coming from long-tail keyword phrases, Miller said. With its broader base of keyword phrases, it also takes advantage of SLI's auto-complete tool, which automatically produces a drop-down menu of search terms as a shopper begins to enter the first letters of a keyword. This not only can support deeper searches with more keywords for additional products.

<http://www.internetretailer.com/2010/06/10/motorcycle-superstore-revs-site-search>

HouseofAntiqueHardware.com

The retailer's e-commerce site, HouseofAntiqueHardware.com, operates on an e-commerce platform from NetSuite Inc. The platform includes a site search function that produces site search results based

on product data and search keywords maintained in the retailer's online product catalog. But the results will also show many listings based on additional products other shoppers have gone on to view or purchase after searching the site for glass knobs, such as products within other categories like cabinet knobs. One possibility, he says, is adding a form of guided navigation. If site search results are showing 15 items, and House of Antique Hardware knows that several are hot sellers during particular seasons, or that some products within those 15 items complement one another, it could use the guided navigation to emphasize the listings of the hot seasonal items and the groups of complementary ones, Treuber says.

Ref: <http://www.internetretailer.com/2010/04/29/two-types-site-search-are-better-one-retailer-says>

Other Search Metrics

Faceted information can be described as topics broken down into categories or attributes (e.g., topic equals "music" and attributes equals "genre, artist, album, song, lyrics"). This method of categorizing information is extremely useful when presenting online search results. Faceted navigation is a searchandising mentality that plays on a shoppers' inclination to start with a vague idea of what they're looking for and to browse a site until they stumble upon relevant products.

Search analytics data is currently used by 65 percent of Best-in-Class retailers to build customer profiles, evaluate buying patterns and discern successful keywords and conversion paths. This data can be modeled to anticipate customer behavior and is leveraged by 26 percent of Best-in-Class merchants to tune search results in order to merchandise to customers and customer segments on a predictive basis. Additionally, 68 percent of leading sites use data collected from search to feed back into their merchandising tactics to influence results. What's even more important is the ability to measure and manage the conversion process to key into what works and to modify tactics that fail.

According to 55 percent of leading retailers, they actively monitor conversion rates achieved from search optimization tactics and continually fine tune results as a corrective measure. Twenty-two percent of retailers reported conversion rates 26 percent to 50 percent better than those who did not use search; 11 percent of Best-in-Class retailers reported improvements in conversion rates that were 51 percent to 75 percent better than non-search users.

Ref: <http://www.ecommercetimes.com/story/56434.html?wlc=1288030346>