

The Evolution of Search Engine Relevancy

1. Early Search Engines used professional editors to choose content (early Yahoo). Issue: scalability.
2. Early Search Engines also used tags placed by site owners to classify content (Altavista). Issue: dishonesty, forgetting.
3. Then Search Engines used link analysis to measure popularity based on how many other sites link to a given site, and how popular they are (Google). Issue: sites can spam and manipulate their results upwards, and results can be ambiguous (should a search for “casting” return fishing, Hollywood, engineering, sculpture, or crochet results?)
4. Technology now allows Search Engine users themselves determine what is useful and relevant, by promoting/demoting results within their communities of interest (Eurekster). In another form, users now also act as editors to recommend content to other users (del.icio.us, digg, reddit, etc.). An issue here could be credibility. More on how Eurekster addresses reputation later.

The Evolution of Web Publisher’s Interests

1. Publishers have always wanted to attract, retain, and often monetize traffic.
2. Today, publishers attract traffic through search engines. But if 33% of traffic arriving at a given site is from a search engine, it may well be that 14% of the traffic leaving the site is going to a search engine (Hitwise, for the Automotive sector, 2004). This is because users return to their search engine of choice when the urge to search arrives. So in some cases a publisher loses a user to a search engine, loses a revenue opportunity, and then may pay to get the user back!
3. If a publisher could deploy a search engine on their site that attracts the user at the moment they would otherwise leave, they have the chance to retain the user and to monetize the search. If the search results are better than a generic one, then it is better than simply revenue sharing on downstream traffic with a generic search engine, because it enhances the publisher’s destination value as a portal.

The Evolution of Content

1. Initially the web had one-to-many websites, basically used by corporates as brochures, evolving into ecommerce and large content publishers.
2. Now there is the explosion of “many to few,” where millions of blogs and user-maintained pages are viewed by small communities of like-minded users. Some of them rise to become “one-to-many” (engadget, techcrunch, etc.)
3. This is the “long tail” of sites and content, and the fragmentation of channels.

What is Eurekster’s Swicki Product?

1. Eurekster is a “printing press” that allows a blog or website owner (or someone without a websites) to create a free search engine that is targeted to their

- community of interest. The engine can search for results from the web, images, blogs, specific sites, and any open search feed.
2. The creator of a swicki is guided to set-up filters to control what results and sites are returned, and can emphasize those they like and demote those they don't (competitors, differing views, etc.). Then, they can optionally place the search engine on their site or blog (see <http://www.rugbyheads.com>. Warning: run by One-Eyed Cantabrian). They can also leave it with Eurekster to host (see the same swicki at <http://rugby-swicki.eurekster.com>). It could even go in an email.
 3. Eurekster creates a dynamic "buzzcloud" of search tags that are actually being entered and searched for by the swicki community and selected by the Swicki creator. This can be displayed on the Swicki creator's website, and drives search traffic as much as 5x through the "online water cooler" effect.
 4. The Swicki search engine "learns" from the community of users, by automatically moving up results that the users click on and find useful, and by allowing them to suggest sites and URLs for promotion or demotion. Today the Swicki creator approves submitted changes (supervising reputation). We're introducing reputation tracking into our community features, which will allow users have even more influence on the community results, gaining credibility as they do so.
 5. The Swicki creator can monetize the search results traffic by adding their Google AdSense affiliate ID. Eurekster will show their ads half the time, and our own ads half the time, for automatic revenue sharing.
 6. Eurekster is also introducing its own advertising program, which allows the advertiser to target and bid for position on Swickis of interest within the long tail of content. The verticalisation of communities and targeted inventory increases the ad value compared with purely keyword-driven programs such as AdSense.

Conclusions

1. Bias is good. There is no one version of the truth, and thus the proliferation of blogs and websites where people present their differing views of the world. In the same way, search will become biased and influenced by those who want to create search engines and the people who use them. We've created a platform to do this.
2. As a brief practical tip, note that half of the people visiting MySpace are over 35 years old. If you create a MySpace page character to promote your product or service, remember that having friends online is important – as important as being socially connected in real life. The easiest way to get friends online on MySpace is to invite bands on MySpace to join your friends. Bands love everyone.
3. Thanks to NZ Marketing Association, Zac and Diane, and Stephan Spencer and the team at Netconcepts for the SEO tips they've contributed to Eurekster.

If You'd Like to Try Swicki

You can create one here: <http://swicki.eurekster.com>

Here are some examples: <http://swickihome.eurekster.com/dir.htm>

You can contact Gary here, happy to help: <http://www.eurekster.com/about/management>

We're interested to work with advertisers, agencies, and the companies that build tools to support them, to see how Swickis can be an effective part of an online campaign.