Socialommerce: the next big thing?

GOOGLE PRODUCT VP Marissa Mayer recently told The New York Times that social search would be a key component in the future of search. Eric Qualmann of Search Engine Watch (www.searchenginewatch.com) uses the term Socialommerce, which he labels as 'the next big thing', to describe the marriage of social networking with online commerce, driven by the simple idea that people value other peoples' opinions. The concept of trusting the opinions of their peers' opinions is tried and tested in many spheres (e.g. consumer product testing associations), and has had considerable history on the web since 1994 (e.g. www.epinions.com).

What is new is that social networks make it so much easier to disseminate the information and, given that people want to disseminate information, there is a logical link between sites such as Facebook (offering instant status updates to members and their contacts) and product and service providers, along with e-commerce facilities. There are clear benefits for those offering online retail and travel services to advertise in social networking websites. There will also be a downside if peer opinion is negative but, from the consumer point of view, this is a positive feature guiding purchasing decisions.

Eric Qualmann predicts that the big social networks will eventually dominate this portion of socialommerce and, in the meantime, sites like ThisNext (www.thisnext.com), Kaboodle (www.kaboodle.com) and WishPot (www.wishpot.com) are taking advantage of this market opportunity by enabling the buyer to quickly share their purchases and reviews with friends.

In the longer term, websites of social networks could well become the first place where people go to carry out searches for products and services.

KILLERSTARTUPS AND STARTUPULSE
www.killerstartups.com
www.startupulse.com

Two websites that exclusively cover startups are KillerStartups and Startupulse. Both are user-driven internet startups communities.

KillerStartups explicitly aims to harness the 'wisdom of crowds' to help identify 'the next big thing'. The researchers do some very basic analysis on the features and potential usefulness of a startup or the business model, and then select the top 10 and premium sites as features. Categories are well developed and business partners support the site's activities.

Startupulse commenced in September 2007 and is clearly still growing. This site focuses on data, including offline contact information, traffic and stat data from various services and external press coverage. KillerStartups is more features oriented, but has more profiles available.

Both feature a blog approach on the front page, with a growing number of company profiles available under the various categories.

All information on Startupulse is available under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License.

Perhaps this is the place to identify the next generation Google or Amazon?

NEW PROPERTY MARKET SEARCH FACILITY
www.domain.com.au

Domain.com.au, in conjunction with InvestSMART, com.au and Australian Property Monitors (APM), recently announced the availability of a new online research tool for the Australian property investment market.

The new INVEST section provides online tools that allow for quick and easy searching for high-performing postcodes by capital growth and rental yields, with results also bringing up matching properties for sale in those postcodes.

Also available is market data from APM's Home Price Guide reports linked to listings from Domain.com.au, presented in a reader-friendly InvestSMART table for easy comparison of potential investment areas by postcode.
DOWNLOADABLE MARKETING CHARTS

www.marketingcharts.com

This site proves free graphic charts showing data on ad spending, search share, top sites in a particular market, and a range of other useful statistics. A small caption underneath shows the data source and a small icon gives a link to a downloadable Excel spreadsheet containing the data.

There is also access to other recent news and research in the marketing sector, with information and news available by marketing media by topic (the expanded list includes demographics, affiliate marketing, blogs, case studies, retail, research, etc.) or by keyword search.

There is a strong US focus, but some global data is available as well.

UN DATA SEARCH TOOL FOR STATISTICS

http://data.un.org

Already at 55 million records and still growing, this site allows for searching of both data and glossary, browsing available statistics, looking at information by country, and reviewing available sources. Popular searches are highlighted along with a list of databases that are currently being searched.

Once you have the primary set of results, you are then able to filter by data, preview a sample of the data, download the data (sometimes just in one format, like XML, and sometimes in multiple format, like tab or comma-delimited), or explore similar data sets. You can click on the name of the data set to explore and filter by various data points. The data set pages also contain the source name, source’s home page and contact information.

TRACK ALL YOUR SHIPMENTS IN ONE PLACE

www.trackmyshipments.com

With more and more consumers using e-commerce, a service called TrackMyShipments allows the consolidation of shipping orders from all suppliers in one place. After registering for an account (requiring an e-mail address and name only) and confirming your account, you send tracking information for a shipment by email to track@trackmyshipments.com with the relevant ordering data, including extra notes and comments.

TrackMyShipments will send you a note when it receives your shipping information, after which you can then log on to the website to review and track with all your shipment details at any time. You can receive updates on your package’s movements by both e-mail and SMS.

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