
Technology Update: Gaining the Internet Advantage

**National Directory Conference
Washington, DC
September, 2001**



The Perkins Group Ltd.

Starting from the Beginning

- **What the Web *can* do for you**
 - Serve as efficient information distribution platform
 - Merchandise and sell your information products
 - Streamline customer service
 - Augment existing data collection and updating activities
 - Provide a base to evolve more valuable product offerings
- **What the Web *can't* do for you**
 - Make your inherently vertical, niche market bigger
 - Generate vast new revenue streams from existing products
 - Allow you to totally automate your business and eliminate your need for employees
 - Allow you to substantially raise prices just because you're now on the Web



Success = Adding Value

- **Directories have traditionally served as a starting point, but today's information user wants a full result**
 - A transaction
 - A contact
 - An answer
- **The closer you come to delivering a full result, the more relevant and valuable you become**
- **Simply offering your existing data on the Web buys you time but it doesn't secure your future**



Basic Technology Rules

- **Don't lock yourself into specific technologies**
 - Too much is in flux to dependably pick winners
 - Remaining media neutral is still the way to go
- **More important than ever to stay close to your customers**
 - Trying to anticipate their needs is dangerous and expensive
 - Too much technology in search of applications
- **New gizmos are cool, but new *standards* are often more important**



Technology Crash Course

- **XML**

- XML makes your data portable and able to seamlessly integrate with other data. This is the future of the Web, and you will have no future unless you're ready for XML when it finally hits big in the not-too-distant future

- **Handheld databases**

- Palm, eBook and other devices make it easy for your customers to carry some or all of your data around with them, but do they want to, and will the proliferation of broadband access make this all a big yawn?

- **Wireless**

- If you've got real-time, high value data serving highly mobile customers, you shouldn't be thinking about wireless access, you should be offering it. If you've got relatively low value, relatively static data, what you should be thinking about wireless is "*why* am I thinking about wireless?"



Technology Crash Course (continued)

- **Online Updating**

- You need to offer it, but don't do it to save money – you won't, and don't expect a miraculous increase in your overall response rate; it's just one more tool

- **Data Mining**

- Tools are emerging to automatically gather and field data from other Web sites. This technology will *revolutionize* our industry, but beware of the current gap between vendor claims and actual capabilities

- **UDDI**

- A set of standards and a central database to enable computers to automatically query databases to check prices, find vendors, place orders. Keep your eye on it.



Technology Crash Course (continued)

- **Digital Rights Management**
 - A confusing world with vendors now dropping like flies, and oriented towards text and not data.
- **Indexing/Categorization Software**
 - Keyword searching may be easy, but a lot gets lost as a result of this simplicity. Tools are now emerging that automate the categorization of content, something that can offer real benefit to many directory publishers.
- **Bar Code Web Links**
 - An idea that makes sense in the BTB world, but thoroughly discredited in the BTC world. Takes a lot of guts today to suggest it.

Technology Crash Course (continued)

- **DOI**
 - A seamless way to sell small chunks of information. You might call them “pay per view hyperlinks.” Just taking root in the world of journals and newspapers. Could be a huge thing for directory publishers. Watch it.
- **Search Engine Positioning**
 - New services are emerging that won’t guarantee position, but will guarantee quick inclusion and rapid refreshes, important issues for directory publishers
- **Broadcast Email**
 - Hardly new, but it’s becoming clear that whether in editorial, marketing or as part of your product, push email (with personalization) is essential to this business.

Technology Crash Course (continued)

- **Web/PC Integration**

- It's happening now and will ultimately assure the primacy of the Internet as an information access/delivery medium, and will create huge new opportunities for directory publishers to evolve their products



In Summary

- **It's cheaper, safer and smarter to stay slightly *behind* the curve**
 - Very few technologies/standards are ready for immediate use upon release
- **The most important technologies are those that let you integrate your data into customer systems and business processes**
- **Understanding how your customers use your data and their evolving needs is more critical than ever**



More Information

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