

EDITORIAL

SEARCH IS BROKEN

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Ten years ago we asked 4,000 consumers what they wanted from the Internet. The overwhelming response was a desire for an Internet experience that they could control and rely on to provide unfiltered information based on merit, transparency and truth. This is the Internet they desire, but it's certainly not the one that exists today. This is particularly evident when you consider the way search engines control and manipulate search results for consumers.

The content resulting from "searches" today makes it clear that Google and the other search engines have little or no interest in what consumers actually want from a "search". Instead, these search engines unilaterally decide what consumers want and how they want it based on their desire to maximize data mining and the profits that result from the sale of this data. Consequently, "searches" have become increasingly narrow, less dependable and downright creepy when you consider the algorithms that customize search results based on digital consumer profiles containing a disturbing amount of our personal information.

I'll give you a personal example of how most people search on the Internet in an effort to show how confusing and ineffective searches have become.

A friend of mine asked me if I could recommend a home appraiser. So I said I would take a look at my contacts and get back to them. I began thinking about real estate agents I might know who work in the area where my friend's home is located. It took awhile, but I finally thought of someone and gave them a call. No answer, so I left a message. Then I sent an email. Four hours later I finally got a response with a name and phone number of an appraiser.

My next step was to do a Google search for the appraiser. The result I get back included ten advertisements for appraisal books, appraisal classes, appraisal jobs and a LinkedIn post for the appraiser, who now knows I looked at her profile. I log onto LinkedIn and review this person's profile. The profile says nothing but wonderful things about her, and I notice that she is even endorsed for things she doesn't do by people that have never worked with her. I am in the Bonus Round now!

I am 2 hours into my attempt to connect my friend to an appraiser, and so far I have a name, number, platitudes and self-promoting digital bragging, but no affirmation from someone that I know and trust who has experienced this person's services. Frustrated, I go back to the real estate agent from whom I received the referral, but she does not want to give me any more information either because she doesn't want to get involved in a situation she can't get out of, or simply because she doesn't have any experience working with this person.

After all that, the only thing I'm able to do is simply pass the name and number on to my friend with a caveat that I know nothing about this person and an apology for being of so little help. My friend is left to pursue the same futile search.

I so wish my experience was unique, but it is not. It is alarmingly common, and 4,000 consumers begged us to make it stop by creating a platform that would allow them to perform a fast, convenient, productive and meaningful search without all the confusion and clutter we see today. So we did!

Localloop combines a new Unified Search engine with a business directory, ratings, a social network and more, to create a new Internet experience that provides consumers with everything they want. Localloop's Unified Search engine will be launched soon. Had I been able to apply this Unified Search engine to my situation described above, I assure you the results would be drastically different. For example, if I searched for appraisers near my friend's home, the Localloop search result would consist of a single page showing, among other things, the top certified appraisers in that location, the members of their team, verified reviews and even a list of my friends who prefer this appraiser. All of this without any advertising, tracking or consumer trafficking.

This is the type of search result that consumers crave: convenient, instant, informative and meaningful. One search, one great result.

This Unified Search engine is just part of the powerful platform we have created to connect and build community through verified performance, transparent data, social affirmation, and attribution for those who connected us.

On July 15th, 2014, this platform will be released and the internet will never be the same.