

Search and the Strategic Value to the Enterprise

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It's impossible to know how much content on your intranet or corporate Web site people need to find, but can't. What is known is the amount of critical information generated across an enterprise continues to multiply like never before. According to IDC and Delphi Group, the average knowledge worker now spends an astonishing 25% of his or her day looking for information. But how much of that information is embedded in documents that have been forgotten, mislabeled or misplaced? How much is locked in incompatible repositories, on dedicated servers or individual desktops—and as a result is unavailable to employees, partners or customers, because it takes too much work to find it?

In many business environments, people struggle to find the content they need with

the tools they already have in place. But consider human nature: If people are frustrated because they can't get the information they need, they simply quit looking. Or if they find what they're looking for too late, they may never again turn to that search method.

Multiply that inaction by the number of people in an enterprise and the results can be devastating—in terms of lost productivity, missed opportunities, faulty decisions and duplicated effort. It's remarkable how much value can be lost from a single Web page, spreadsheet or document that's not available to the people who need it the most.

On the IT side, an enterprise search solution that isn't delivering the information people need can be equally damaging.

Despite some recent improvement in the economy, budgets remain tight and IT staffing lean. There continues to be little tolerance for any integration, training or maintenance challenges that would unnecessarily burden limited IT resources. Of course, no vendor would make claims for an enterprise search solution with these negatives attached. So IT managers should be rightfully cautious regarding the universal claim of great ROI that many enterprise search solution companies make.

Today, three out of four Internet users use Google.com to find what they need on

Google Case Studies

MEDTRONIC

As a medical technology leader with \$8 billion in annual revenues, Medtronic enables medical professionals to develop comprehensive solutions to chronic conditions such as heart disease, neurological disorders and vascular illnesses. Each year, 2.5 million patients benefit from the company's work.

Medtronic's 30,000 employees, especially research scientists and engineers, must be able to access each other's internal information such as published papers, recent medical journal abstracts and presentations.

The Challenge: Medtronic relied on disparate SQL search queries on its intranet, which comprised approximately 80,000 HTML, PDF and Microsoft Office documents. The existing search method proved extremely unpopular and inflexible, allowing users to enter only one search at a time, and yielding low-quality results. Frustration grew as employees were often forced to search in separate queries—and often got irrelevant or inaccurate results.

The importance of linking Medtronic employees up with fast, accurate content to facilitate sharing data and research findings became increasingly critical. So Nathan Ahlstrom, Principal IT Technologist in Medtronic's research division knew that any solution "had to be able to search across our entire Web site and handle variable length queries."

Ahlstrom says another goal was to enhance employee collaboration through an internal online newsletter. But before he could do that,

he says the company "needed a unified way for everyone to search." His idea—to publish human-interest articles and employee bios—was intended to help people get to know each other in order to seek out the latest information on a topic, and locate employee presentations and published articles. In this way, Ahlstrom hoped to avoid duplication of work.

The Solution: The approach worked: Since deploying the Google Search Appliance in May, 2002, Medtronic's intranet site traffic has tripled, largely because people are actively seeking—and finding—information about what others are doing.

XEROX CORPORATION

The global leader in document management, Xerox Corporation generated \$16 billion in revenue in 2003. The company offers an innovative array of color and black-and-white digital printers, digital presses, multifunction devices as well as a broad range of services, solutions and software.

The Challenge: 1,100 people in the Xerox Channels Group had endured a year of using an in-house categorization system that had yielded extremely poor results. The group intranet contained thousands of PDF and HTML files and a smaller number of Microsoft Office documents, all hosted on one Solaris server running Apache. Chris Smith, lead Internet Technologist for the Xerox Channels Group,

the Web. When consumers are confident with the way a technology works, they tend to use it, rely on it, and tell others about it. If they aren't comfortable, they don't use it. Even though enterprise users are often unable to choose their tools, this same behavior holds true for them. High adoption rates drive ROI—and IT managers can attest to poor ROI when corporate users are slow to adopt unpopular or ineffective tools.

The Google Search Appliance

Using the same technology that powers Google.com, the Google Search Appliance is a plug-and-play enterprise search solution that integrates hardware, software and support. The Google Search Appliance was designed to deliver the most relevant content possible, no matter how large an enterprise. To achieve that goal, the Google Search Appliance crawls content on intranets and enterprise Web sites, capturing data on highly distributed, heterogeneous networks in a single coherent view.

Document creators and administrators previously had to manually weight, rank or tweak content to ensure efficient retrieval. A come-as-you-are approach to indexing makes far more sense. After all,

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data that requires a laborious makeover to be included in search results is not only going to be time intensive, it will be costly. Unless an enterprise search solution makes deploying content as easy as finding it, there's no competitive advantage.

ROI—People Finding Answers.

In today's cost-sensitive environment, no enterprise can afford to waste resources or miss opportunities. So removing the barriers and frustration that keeps people from the content they need is vital. Helping everyone in an enterprise to quickly and efficiently find the relevant information they need benefits your organization internally in countless ways: improved decision-making, less duplication of work, increased revenues and customer satisfaction.

Externally, the positives are just as impressive. Sales and revenues increase. Customer support costs decrease as their

satisfaction grows. And website visitors get connected to the information they need. It all makes a compelling case for an enterprise search solution that is widely accepted because of the quality results it delivers. □

Google's innovative search technologies connect millions of people around the world with information every day. Founded in 1998 by Stanford Ph.D. students Larry Page and Sergey Brin, Google today is a top Web property in all major global markets. Google's targeted advertising program, which is the largest and fastest growing in the industry, provides businesses of all sizes with measurable results, while enhancing the overall Web experience for users. Google is headquartered in Silicon Valley with offices throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. For more information, visit www.google.com.

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set about evaluating the various choices that would work best for his organization.

According to Smith, "search solutions were expensive, involved a great deal of IT configuration time and ongoing maintenance, and required us to find a server to host it. We had a very small budget to work with. I needed to find an inexpensive solution that didn't require a lot of effort."

End Results: "The best overall benefit is that there is no ongoing maintenance," says Smith. In addition, he notes that "a better enterprise search solution has enabled the sales team to spend more time selling, and less time searching. Whether it's sales collateral or the latest promotional offer, team members can now find what they're looking for, and we've stopped receiving complaints."

USATODAY.COM

More than 35 million people depend on USATODAY.com each month for the same breaking news and informational graphics they find in each printed issue of USA TODAY. This award-winning news and information site delivers more than 250,000 pages of breaking news, updated 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Challenge: USATODAY.com wanted to improve the quality of search results for its millions of readers each month. Chat Joglekar, USATODAY.com's manager of business development, had a growing

problem: corporate data that lived off the network. "Because we outsourced search to a third party, the search results pages lived off-site," reports Joglekar.

The Solution: USATODAY.com deployed three Google Search Appliances—one for site search, one for internal story development and another to organize the publication's travel collection.

The team at USATODAY.com used the Google Search Appliances to customize the types of collections they needed. For the external site, the Google Search Appliance organizes and searches a rolling 14-day collection. By restricting access to the last two weeks, USATODAY.com is able to charge a premium for access to its archives. The 14-day article limit also helps USATODAY.com deliver faster response rates and more relevant results. "With control over the interface and results pages, we can restrict access to search results by date," Joglekar says. For the site's travel section, Joglekar and his team set up the appliance so that it returned search results from just that section, plus results from the paper's travel partners.

End Result: Besides providing better and faster results for readers and editors, USATODAY.com is now combining internal search results with Google WebSearch and Google AdSense, the advertising program for serving relevant ads on content pages. Thanks to XML capabilities, "we can now deliver one comprehensive search page to our visitors. Today we completely control search on our site, and we have the flexibility to modify the solution any time we need to."