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July 21st, 2005
Search engine masters

On(line) good authority

Craig Silverman

Where do you go when you need to find something online? The Explainer isn't psychic, but your answer was likely Google. The strangely named company largely rules the web search world, but two Montreal men want to give the people another option.

Explainer hits upon a local search party.

1. Zenome.com is the brainchild of Zsolt Szigetvari and John Connolly. The former is a media and communications lecturer at Concordia and Dawson, while the latter is an MBA who teaches at Dawson and the John Molson School of Business. Both realized that students who were assigned research projects for class were ending up with the same, often lacklustre information. "They had all gone on Google," says Connolly. "[Results] are based on the popularity of a site, so any obscure critical or analytical material, however valuable, is crowded out." The concept behind Zenome is that it will rely on its users and a team of editors to build an ever expanding directory of websites. Connolly says the company will share revenue with its editors. Content will be ranked by a combination of popularity and the expertise of section editors. Connolly says this adds an element of human intelligence to the process and will provide results that are more about substance rather than popularity. "This is a directory that will grow and continuously reorder itself according to the needs of the people who use it," he says. "We release it, step back, and let the community take over." The site is still in beta, meaning it is still being perfected, and currently has a traffic ranking of 168,591 according to alexa.com, a well-known rankings site.

2. There are many ways to search the web, and Zenome isn't alone in using a directory model where sites are categorized according to their subject. The Open Directory Project is the largest human-edited directory on the Internet today and has been building itself up since 1998. (Connolly argues that it has lost its momentum and that Zenome is different because it combines the human element with algorithms to help prioritize the directory listings.) It claims to have 4,631,076 sites selected by 68,983 editors working in 787,774 categories. As for Google, Alexa ranks it as the third most-popular site on the Internet. It employs over 3,000 people and has searched over eight billion webpages and more than one billion images. Google's name is derived from the mathematical word for the numeral that is a 1 followed by 100 zeros.

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Explainer : Archives

Zenome (beta)

Search

Arts + Humanities
Art History, Artists, Design Arts...

Computers + Internet
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