

Digital Times is a "for eCommerce newsletter reporting on the development and/or availability of interactive products and services."

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Digitally UN-C-O-O-L! NAPSTER

Back in 2005 [& previous to that] there were concerns that the U.S. government was going to legislate Digital Music delivery. Congress was trying to determine whether or not there should be government mandates **enforcing digital music compatibility** across the board.

Here is an article by WebProNews from that period called **Napster Steps To The Digital Music Compatibility Plate -iTunes FairPlay DRM mgmt.**

In 2005, Napster's CTO William Pence stated before a congressional subcommittee that While Napster does support interoperability, they do not believe the government should intervene by issuing mandates. Pence also told the subcommittee that the *music industry will eventually promote interoperability itself without the need for government intervention.* It appears that Napster's agenda was to protect themselves, as they had their **proprietary vision of non-interoperability** for the consumer of digital music.

Fast **forward to 2008.** My daughter recently signed up with Napster. They sent a 'widget' [small software application] to her computer. She proceeded to choose some tunes to download. **The widget began converting every MP3 she had on her computer to some sort of Napster proprietary format!!! Somehow, she got out of that, saved her MP3's and went to iTunes.**

iTunes delivered her music without changing the format of the MP3's on her computer -- for her, the obvious choice for digital music delivery is iTunes.

Back in the late 1990's, as I remember it, **Napster was a free, peer-to-peer service.** Some of my friends cheerfully downloaded thousands of songs in spite of the risk of receiving computer viruses in the process. Napster, as a digital delivery service, was deemed an illegal operation and forced to shut down due to DRM legislation, only to appear about a year later as a legitimate, DRM compliant, fee-based music delivery service.

-editor

Scroll
Down for
rest of
issue!



AGENCIES Sell Goods Online...



Here are four websites that sell by directly or by auction, **confiscated** or government surplus goods, including diamond rings, iPods and fire trucks!

Bid4Assets.com lists new and used items from hundreds of government agencies and allows returns of certain categories of merchandise. Here you will find real estate, art, apparel, cars, computers, consumer electronics, etc.

PropertyRoom.com lists unclaimed stolen goods from police agencies nationwide. Bidders cannot inspect the auction items before purchase, but experts have already examined them to establish authenticity and verify quality. Smaller merchandise is shipped to customers for a fee, but not cars or other heavy products. Returns are generally subject to a 15% restocking fee.

At GovDeals.com you can find boats, cars, educational supplies, confiscated personal property and much, much more. All sales are final.

At PublicSurplus.com you can browse auctions in your area. Using search, you will find that some items are available for inspection and can be picked up. Otherwise, buyers are responsible for shipping costs.

Make sure to read the fine print before making any purchases.

-editor

SEARCH GONE WILD!

Organized Wisdom, Powerset, ChaCha, Cuil [Cool], and **Mahalo** are all interesting **contributors** to the search engine space. Here is the breakdown:

Mahalo & **Organized Wisdom** have **human guides** to provide better, more relevant search results, as opposed to Google's traditional link analysis and traffic ranking which lists *the most popular links* in their search results. Google, Yahoo and MSN are not able to distinguish between good and bad information.

Organized Wisdom is an ad-supported human-powered search engine using guides to create content pages on health-related topics. The content pages, called **WisdomCards** are reviewed by physicians for accuracy. **Mahalo** features human-aided search in areas where there is financial interest, such as travel, finance, and health products. They believe a consumer's need might easily be filled with only **'two or three good links.'** For example, a search for "Paris hotels" on Mahalo yields links to Frommer's, Fodor's, Lonely Planet and The New York Times...all top sites that don't rank on traditional engines Google, MSN or Yahoo, who will return hundreds of results in a split second, requiring minutes or hours of filtering and sorting through the information.

ChaCha is a **free**, mobile-centric search engine that allows people to send questions in conversational english **via text message or call 1-800-2CHACHA to ask questions verbally. The standard SMS text id is also 'CHACHA' (242 242).** A ChaCha guide researches the question and sends an answer back within minutes. **At their website you can sign up to be a GUIDE, referred to as a 'Brainiac.'**

Powerset is a search tool that lets users sift through content from **Wikipedia** & open source repository, **Freebase** by using natural-language algorithms to help users find what they need--ideal for students doing research.

Cuil [pronounced **COOL**] pledges site relevancy over sheer volume in search results. Some users love it, claiming that it cuts to the chase and saves tons of time--some hate it. **Note:** users have some control over the magazine-like Cuil display by clicking the **"2 column" or "3 column" link** at the bottom-right of the results page.

-editor

Photosynth

On it's first day of operation, Microsoft's new FREE digital photo sharing site, **Photosynth** went down, as its servers strained to handle an unexpected flood of online traffic.

Photosynth, by Microsoft **Live Labs**, *stiches together a set of related digital photos* into a presentation that allows viewers to **zoom** and **pan** across a scene. To create and view synths you must download a 'widget' - a free software application to your Windows PC.

'Synths' transform standard digital photos into a three-dimensional, 360-degree experience. Anybody who sees your synth is put right in your shoes, sharing in your experience, with detail, clarity and scope impossible to achieve in conventional photos or videos.

CSI: NY detectives used a series of camera phone images to create a synth of a crime scene. Synths can be viewed at the **National Geographic** website, whose photographers have created synths around Machu Picchu, Stonehenge, Yosemite, the Taj Mahal and other locations.

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