
SWICKI: A NEW DIMENSION IN SOCIAL SEARCH

Narendra Lahkar

Badan Barman

Abstract

Swicki is a cross between a search engine and a wiki. It is a custom social search engines developed by Eurekster Inc, New Zealand and was launched to the public on January 21, 2004. Swicki can be developed by any one on any topic, with every search, vote and click it will generate power in retrieving more relevant results and turns into a valuable asset. The article discussed an overview, benefit of swicki and technique for creating it.

Keywords : Swicki, Search Engine

1. Introduction

A social search engine is a type of search engine or portal whose relevance of search results is determined by the community of its users. Users input may be in the form of social bookmarking or direct interaction with the search results by voting system. That is the user can promote or demote any search result that comes as the final product of any query. Swicki technology is also based on this concept of social search engine. Microsoft's Ramez Naam rightly pointed out that 'every human being is a neuron, and humanity as a whole is one giant brain, smarter as a connected whole'. This concept can be applied to social search engines also. 'As the web grows and evolves, web search needs to grow and evolve too' and should build potential to pulled out advertisement, horoscopes or unrelated contents from the search results list of a particular query unless a search was made for the same. A social search engine addresses these issues.

2.. Origin of Social Search Engines

The concept of social search hopes to be considered to derive from Google's patented PageRank algorithm that relying on the collective judgment of webmasters linking to other content on the web. With every incoming link for a particular site, the webmaster assigns positive importance to the Web pages. On January 21, 2004 Eurekster was referred to as personalized social search [11]. On June 28, 2005 Jeremy Zawodny at Yahoo referred to the Yahoo! My Web product as 'social search'. On October 26, 2005 Pete Cashmore applied the term 'social search' to Wink.

A wiki is a type of editable website that allows users to add, remove, or otherwise edit and change most contents very quickly and easily, sometimes without the need for registration by using relatively easy to use wiki syntax. Eurekster uses this technology to build 'search wikis' or search plus wiki (swickis). As such a swicki is a cross between a search engine and a wiki.

Swickis is currently in beta and is developed by Eurekster, Inc [4] and also patented the same. The swicki was launched to the public on January 21, 2004. Eurekster Company is based in Christchurch, New Zealand, with an office located in San Francisco, California. It is the pioneer and leader in

social search technologies that was founded in 2004 by a core team including digital media and search technology veterans Steven Marder, CEO and Grant Ryan, Chief Scientist.

3. The Swicki

'A Swicki is new kind of search engine that allows anyone to create deep, focused searches on topics you care about. Unlike other search engines, you and your community have total control over the results and it uses the wisdom of crowds to improve search results.' [8]

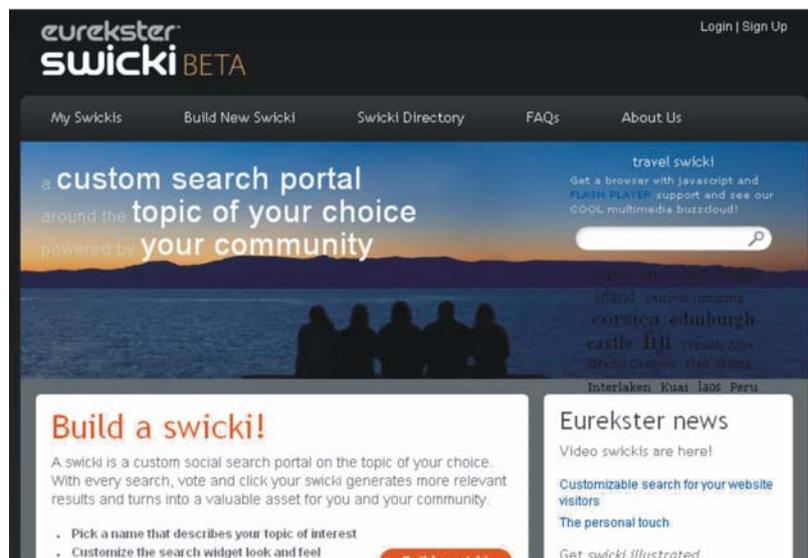
Swickis scan all the data indexed in Yahoo and Ask Jeeves, plus all additional sources one specifies and that one publishes on his/her blog, wiki or Web site and present the results in a dynamically updated, easy to use format. As users perform searches, the swicki database analyses which sites from the searches are actually used. The more useful the site is to users the more it gets promoted in the search results and the swicki will query that site more often. Every click refines the swicki's search strings, creating a responsive, dynamic result that's both customized and highly relevant. In background the user input established algorithmic or machine-based approaches where relevance is determined by analyzing the text of each document or the link structure of the documents as in the case of Page Rank (Used by Google).

A swicki is a custom search portal that improves the search engine capability in retrieving relevant resources as its user grows. The future search results will be based on the previous site visitors' behaviors, and the creator of the search engine Swicki. As a result, with every search, the swicki becomes more relevant and meaningful to the user community, and more valuable to the swicki builder. In simple terms it can be said that when a group of people having common interest uses a particular swicki, it will quickly produce much more relevant, tailored results for that group than any kind of general search engine.

4. Benefit from Swicki

Till date, swicki or any other custom search engines has not demonstrated measurably improved search results over algorithmic search engines or the search engines that use robot or spider to index the web. However, the swicki search engines have the human input as its backbone, so they show high relevance in retrieved results within their narrower scope or within the sites that are added to be searched by the search engine(s). The following are the benefits from swicki search engine

- a Users can build a swicki on any topic with extensive provision of customization.
- b As swicki are backed by human judgment, users are supposed to get relevant and up to date results that relate to their search queries.
- c Retrieved result lists are considered to be relevant from the Infopreneur's perspective, rather than the webmaster who desires their contents to be viewed.



- d As a social search engine, swicki will constantly getting feedback, that in turn help to display results that are more current, relevant or in context with changing information.
- e Swicki will reduce the impact of Link Spam by relying less on link structure of Web pages.
- f Each site retrieved in response to a query has been viewed and endorsed by one or more people, and comes on conclusion that the site is relevant and worthy of being shared with others.
- g Improve the relevance in search engine result list as its uses increased.
- h The swicki can be link to any website / blog / wiki and web search can be initiated from the site itself. It can also be share and distribute to the other people having common interest.
- i The community of user will have total control over the results.
- j One can also makes money by building a swicki since Eureka does plan to 'add paid search elements to the results pages for swickis.'

5. Building a Highly Customized Swicki

Building a swicki by using Eureka, Inc (<http://swicki.eureka.com/>) platform is an easy process and it is free. One just need to do is Customize, Train, and Release. But before going to build any swicki it is advisable to go for already created swicki to get an idea of best swicki description. Most people that hope to use Eureka platform to build personalized swickis will be computer-savvy enough to figure out their actual route and don't need to bother about any other tutorial. But if the hands of some inexperienced persons goes for the same then definitely he/she feel the need of

some tutorial. Realizing the need of those needy persons, the phases in building a swicki are worked out. The following steps for building a swicki are backed by the authors own experiences in building a personalized swicki to search all Open Access English Languages Journals in Library and Information Science. The outline together with screenshots will provide a brief overview to the future creators of swicki to know how swicki can be developed by using Eureka platform. The whole process in building a personalized swicki can be completed within 10-15 minutes.

6. Steps in building Swicki

When one goes for building a swicki at the beginning he/she can take it as a process of making experience to build in future some more professional swickis. One can just get going and start creating his/her swicki to know how it is working? Is it really the one what he/she are looking for? Is it really working something special? And like other. To build a personalized Swicki, one doesn't require signing up immediately (And when he/she signs up by making a user name and a password, it takes only few seconds).

6.1 Customize: Look and feel

In order to build a customize Swicki one needs to go to the Eureka, Inc (<http://swicki.eureka.com/>) platform and need to navigate to "Build a Swicki" page. After clicking on the link 'Build a Swicki', the platform will present a new page where one needs to 'Choose a name for your swicki that describes what it is about:' and 'Topic'. The terms are self explanatory. After entering the name one need to 'Choose a format that best suits your site or blog:' if one choose the 'Text' format in place of 'Video', under this two options will be available 'Vertical' and 'Horizontal';

My Swickis Build New Swicki Swicki Directory FAQs About Us

1 Customize — 2 Train — 3 Directory — 4 Publish
look and feel what to search listing details and save

Choose a name for your swicki that describes what it is about:

LIS Journals (required)
(e.g. Recipes for Men or New York Broadway Shows)
This will be the title of your search results page. Choosing a descriptive name such as Fishing will help others find it in our Swicki Directory. Once you choose a name, you cannot change it.

Topic

LIS Journals
(e.g. Fishing or New York)
Type in one or two words to help filter your searches. If you want to focus on a country, enter the domain suffix (e.g. .jp)

under video mode different options are available such as Short [skinny (130x165px, 12 videos), Narrow (200x185px, 15 videos), Medium (280x215px, 10 videos)]; Tall [Skinny (130x285px, 24 videos), Narrow (200x330px, 30 videos), Medium (280x395px, 20 videos)] and Wide [Wide (520x150px, 28 videos), Extra-Wide (655x170px, 32 videos)]. From the different combinations of format that are available choices can be made to match with the site to which swicki will be added latter on.

After going through the above steps one needs to enter minimum of five 'Relevant keywords'. Both for relevant keywords and format preview is available where one can see what input is going to the

customize swicki, a nice bonus. In the 'Relevant keywords' the creator of the swicki need to enter some keywords and phrases that will create users attention to the swicki and be something the user interested in. One can enter as many key words and phrases as he/she wants; there seem to be no limit. The next option is to 'Customize widget colors:' by choosing 'Basic' or from 'Advanced' then need to press on the button 'Next' to go to the 'Train' page of swicki building.

6.2 Train: What to Search

In this steps one need to 'Type in one or two words to help filter your searches', here if one wants to focus on a country then he/she can enter the domain extension of that country. Suppose one restricts his/her search to India then he/she should opt for '.in' i.e the keywords that are entered here will be added to all searches. In the next step the swicki builder need to mention 'What do you want searched?'. The default option is 'Web'. The site will also ask one to given the option to include search results from the swicki builder website or blog. If one check this box then his/her site's results will receive priority listing over any other results. The next thing to fill up is 'Type in the URL's of sites that are most relevant to your swicki'. Here one need to copy and paste various site URLs that are most relevant to his/her Swicki; for instance, the present author copy and paste 44 URL that are the sites of Open Access English Language Journals in Library and Information Science. Here the authors dislike most is the limitation of the URL to a maximum number of 50

(Fifty). The provision is also there to 'Type in URL's of sites to exclude or block'. Here the URL of the sites should be pasted, whose result need to be excluded from the result list due to their non relevant in nature, suppose if one really need to retrieve quality

information over the internet then he/she would like to block the Wikipedia site (<http://en.wikipedia.org>) as Wikipedia's articles are considered to be of a trivial nature. One can also exclude or include adult's site by checking or un-checking the option of 'Allow adult related sites'. The swicki builder will also find the option to include results from 'Blogs' (a source of current information) and 'Multimedia Results' if he/she checked it. Generally the Eureka display advertisement in the search results list. But, non profit organization can give up advertisement by selecting and then specifying the name of the organization in the option 'I am a non profit, university, or government organization and would like to opt out of advertisement'.

6.3 Directory: Listing Details

In this step one need to describe everything that will make the swicki easier to find and use in the directory i.e. the swicki builder need to 'Describe your swicki:' and 'Choose a relevant subject category:' by check off the relevant subject categories under which newly build swicki will be place in. This will help other people to find out the Swicki by following the directory of Eurekster.

6.4 Sign Up: To Continue Creating Swicki

In order to continue creating swicki one need, to sign up here by entering 'username:', 'Preferred Email', and 'Choose Password'. In the next option one need to checked or un checked 'Remember my login on this computer'; if the user building swicki from a shared computer, the favorable option will be to unchecked and if it is personal computer, then checked it to automatically remember the username and password by the computer. The next option 'I agree to the Terms and Conditions' must need to be checked.

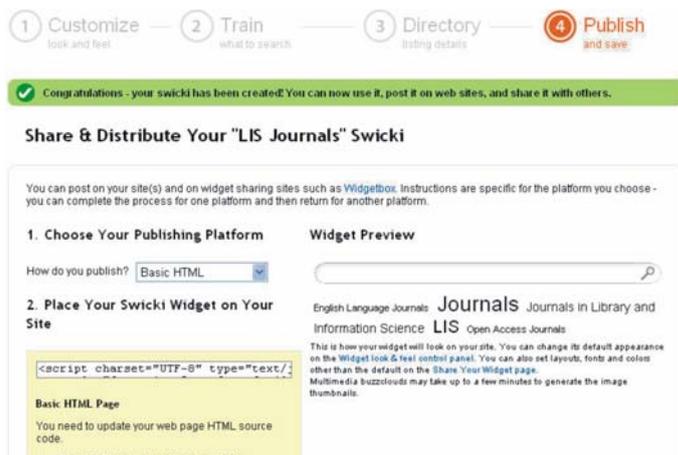
6.5 Publish and Save

We are working hard on swickis and really appreciate your feedback, let us know what you like/dislike!

Here, one will get the code to place the search box of swicki in his/her own blog or WebPages. The copy and pasting process is same as usual. However before copy and pasting of the code in the blog or website it is suggested to go for the option 'Choose Your publishing Platform' where one will have a look of the preview of the swicki already build. Now the swicki is ready to share with the community of users where they will make a search, vote or put the code of search box in their own webpages or blogs.

6.6 Example of Swicki Search

When an user enters search term in the search box of swicki and make a search the name of swicki search engine will be displayed at the top with buzz cloud at the upper most corner of right



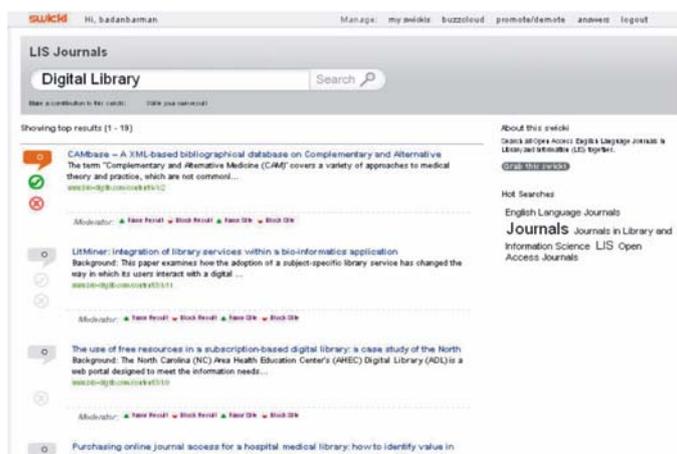
hand side and the result will be at the remaining portion of the screen. At the bottom of every single Swicki page one will see a link to email Swicki support which in turn is the option for getting feedback from the user of swicki by the EurekaStar.

One who creates the swicki will have complete and utter control of the search results since he/she is the person who can figures out what searches are most relevant to the swicki site, what sites need to be

searched to pull out the results in response to a search and so on. He/she can also further customize the looks, edit buzz cloud, promote or demotes sites in the results, train to modify behaviour, and delete the swicki by going to the Control Panel of the swicki. The creator of the swicki can also become aware about what is happening on his/her swicki and review the new search tags for inclusion or exclusion from the buzzcloud, estimate average daily search volume, the value of the swicki in dollars (\$) and so on.

7. Concerns

In swicki users can directly add results to the search engine. There is a risk that some users could insert Search Spam directly into the search engine. Elimination or prevention of this spam would require the ability to detect the validity of a users' contribution. Again there is a possibility to have a lot of searches while valid to be unique and tends to be performed very infrequently. In



such cases, the relevance of the search results in a search engine that relies on users filling (swicki) in all the searches would be at a disadvantage position to one that used machines to crawl and index the entire Web.

8. Conclusion

A swicki is a new kind of search engine that looks at contents relevant to one's query. It will pull out new relevant information as it is indexed, and presents a buzz cloud around the search box to show hot search terms within our community. The swicki keeps track of the applications running on them and reflect it in the form of buzz clouds. Buzz clouds are nothing but a list of search tags that are most popular or recently typed into the swicki (reflection of the terms that are at the top of people's minds!). The more popular a term, the larger it is displayed. Clicking on a particular tag will display the search results for that tag. The time is right now for the professionals to go for swicki and get dissolve into it.

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ABOUT AUTHORS

Prof. Narendra Lahkar is the Head of the Department of Library and Information Science, Gauhati University. He has done his Mlib.Sc from Gauhati University, MSc in Information Studies from the University of Sheffield (UK) and Ph.D. from Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam

Sh. Badan Barman is Research Scholar at DLISC, Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam
E-mail: badanbarman@gmail.com