

The 360 The stories behind today's news



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### We ain't seen nothing yet. The web of communication and information in 2010 will make today's glitzy websites seem like dinosaurs. **The 360** charts the moves of the Internet titans, while keeping an eye on the Googles and eBays of the future. **PreFound on Competing with Google**

Now that Google, the "web 2.0 startup killer," is moving into social search territory with its Google Custom Search offering, is it all over for startups like Rollyo, Eurekster and PreFound? I couldn't reach PreFound CEO Steve Mansfield yesterday, but he replied last night with an email that stands by itself. (See also yesterday's [interview with Steven Marder, CEO of Eurekster](#). I haven't had a response from Dave Pell of Rollyo.)

#### How Will PreFound Compete?

by Steve Mansfield

How will PreFound compete with Google? Gosh, I've never been asked that before! I'm just kidding, of course. It is THE pivotal question for not only us in the "search" industry, but as Google continues to evolve and grow its sphere of business assets and interests, even "non-search" companies tremble as the Google shadow advances toward them.

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PreFound.com is a "social search" site. Google is not. And, as *TechCrunch* recently wrote, "social" seems to be not a part of Google's DNA. PreFound.com uses people to find, organize, share and rank search results. Google uses computer programs. Google's Co-op program has not been embraced. PreFound.com's PFfinder application is superior to Google's Notebook technology. PreFound.com is a different service than what Google offers (for now) and Google has made only a superficial attempt at "social" search. So a valid question might be: "Does Google really want to compete in the "social search" arena?"

Further, PreFound.com, unlike many in our field, has two issued patents (very much a rarity) and a serious patent portfolio in order to level the playing field against the big guys. PreFound.com's interest relevant to the patents it holds is strictly as a defensive construct to maintain any competitive advantage it might have, to do our best to ensure a larger competitor can't simply do exactly what we do and outspend us to market it.

[E-mail me.](#)

Finally, and probably most importantly, PreFound.com and other "social search" sites have to become the search engines of choice for social network members. Hey, it's only natural. Social Search sites like PreFound.com can extend the "social" experience that today's users enjoy and demand in ways that Google, as yet, cannot.

Social networks like MySpace, FaceBook and many others seemingly have yet to realize their power in the marketplace. With their traffic levels, partnered with a strong social search engine, these types of sites can provide an alternative search product to Google's offering that could very much compete with Google, maybe even beat them.

Why? Because social search, seamlessly integrated into social networks, gives users the "social" experience they want, more relevant results, result sets weighed by the user's social profile, etc. All potentially without leaving their network. For the social network, they now have a great, new revenue stream in the form of sponsored search listings that they didn't have before.

That's just the tip of the iceberg, really. We have what we believe are strong strategies that will allow us to compete with Google and others.

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