



Empirical WiseWire will let users customize searches. (Empirical Media's WiseWire information management service) (Company Business and Marketing) (Brief Article)

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Users who find that their Internet **searches** produce largely irrelevant material could find exactly what they're looking for with **Empirical** Media Corp.'s **WiseWire** information management service, which will enter its second beta test this month.

The **WiseWire** service is similar to other customized information feeds, such as PointCast Inc.'s PointCast Network, in that **users** get their information from the company's servers as opposed to running their own **searches** from the desktop. Like PointCast, **WiseWire** will be free to **users** and will be supported by advertising.

"What makes us unique is the use of collaborative filtering," said **Empirical** CEO Ken Lang. "This technology gives structure to all of the unstructured information on the Internet."

WiseWire allows **users** to create their own individual topic folders, or "U-zines," where they can place information from the World Wide Web and newsgroups.

WiseWire provides collaborative filtering by letting **users** rate the quality of query responses that are placed automatically into their U-zines.

The relevance of each retrieved document is graded by **users**. As a profile of the individual's preferences, interests, and grading patterns in a U-zine emerges, the U-zine is compared and matched with those of other **users**.

"This allows us to incorporate the human filtering process into the service," Lang said.

Introducing the human element into the search-filtering process addresses the increasing problem of Web sites that contain words designed to generate responses from search-engine agents -- such as "Windows," "Java," or "supermodel," Lang said.

"Those sites will be eliminated from future queries as **users** give them low grades," Lang added.

Lang said an intranet version of **WiseWire** is also being developed.

"We think this will solve the information management problems that search engines are trying to solve -- but can't," Lang said.

WiseWire features

- * Information gathered from The Associated Press, Reuters Ltd., Web pages, newsgroups, and mailing lists
- * Free to **users**
- * Supported by on-site advertising
- * Viewable through a Web browser
- * No special client software required
- * Personalized user profiles refined in response to user feedback
- * Collaborative filtering employs other **users'** responses to grade query results

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