

## **Yahoo! Overture Out. API in. Yahoo merges search services and allows development**

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Yahoo will be killing the Overture brand name early in the second quarter as it moves to merge all its search services under the same banner. Yahoo also announced the beta version of the Yahoo Developer Network, an Application Program Interface (API) allowing search marketers and software developers to build Yahoo into search related tools they use or create.

Soon to be known as Yahoo! Search Marketing Services, (or likely, Yahoo for short), the re-branding announcement brings Yahoo's advertising and search divisions together under the same name. The opening of Yahoo Developer Network signifies Yahoo's commitment to competing with Google by allowing software developers and search marketers the ability to build timesaving tools around the Yahoo! Search Marketing Service. The announcements coincide with Yahoo's tenth birthday and day two of the mammoth Search Engine Strategies Conference currently underway in New York City.

Overture was the original pay per click search tool when it launched in June 1998 under the name GoTo.com. After hiring Ted Meisel as president of Overture later that year, the company successfully marketed the phrase "pay-for-performance" sparking the genesis of today's powerful contextual distribution business model. The company thrived over the next few years, changing its name in late 2001, weeks before announcing its first partnership with Yahoo in November. After a year of rapid growth in 2002, Overture acquired Alta Vista and the search unit of FAST, AlltheWeb in February 2003. In early October 2003, Yahoo purchased Overture and its stable of search technologies, reclaiming its role as a serious contender in the business of search.

Yahoo will be phasing out the name Overture early in the next quarter in the US. After the re-branding effort is complete in the States, it will move to re-brand in international markets with the exception of Japan and South Korea where the Overture name will be maintained.

Advertisers should not see any major changes in policy stemming from this move. It is being done mostly to alleviate confusion between the various brands owned by Yahoo!, and to allow for better internal coordination between product units. If anything, advertisers and search marketers will save time as Yahoo's core services will be accessible from the same page.

Yahoo! Search Marketing Solutions will offer the following services in one suite:

- ☞ **Sponsored Search Listings**, the flagship search advertising product
- ☞ **Content Match™**, Yahoo!'s contextual advertising listings
- ☞ **Local Match™**, Yahoo!'s local sponsored search offering
- ☞ **Site Match™ Self Serve** and **Site Match Xchange™**, Yahoo!'s search URL submission products
- ☞ **Yahoo! Product Submit™**, the Yahoo! Shopping URL submission program
- ☞ **Yahoo! Express™**, the Yahoo! Directory URL submission program
- ☞ **Marketing Console™**, which enables advertisers to track campaign performance across multiple online channels
- ☞ **Search Optimizer™**, which allows advertisers to improve their campaign performance and reduce the amount of

time spent managing their listings

"Our mission is to be essential to marketers of all types around the world," said Ted Meisel, who is also Senior Vice President, Yahoo! Inc. in a press release "Unifying all of our search marketing and related products under one banner and one common approach reflects our commitment to integrate and simplify online advertising, allowing businesses of all sizes to take advantage of the Yahoo! search marketing solutions that best fit their marketing goals."

Accompanying the re-branding announcement was the opening of the Yahoo! Developers Network API. Search is recognized as being the essential web-tool. Everything from weather information to airline tickets are found via search tools of one sort or another. Like its rivals, Yahoo offers several types of search tools such as images, maps, news, and video on top of general website search. By opening its own API, Yahoo is inviting web developers to build Yahoo search services directly into the products they create. For example, a Star Trek Enterprise fan-site could build a Yahoo powered search tool that finds video relating to quotes about the series. Similarly, a Phoenix Suns fan could create an on-site application that calls video clips of the brilliant point-guard Steve Nash. Marketers can build tools tracking specific campaigns and smaller search tools can combine their look and feel with Yahoo's massive database to produce industry-specific results (vertical search) for unique business sectors.

Yahoo's hard work to rebuild its brand strength against Google is slowly paying off with rises in market share and customer loyalty. By clearing up confusion between the brand names Overture and Yahoo and opening the hood to allow users to create their own versions of core products, Yahoo has given web searchers and marketers the gifts of clarity and empowerment. Ultimately it has given itself a gift of greater presence. Happy Birthday Yahoo!. Here's to another ten years.