

Stockholm, Sweden 2006-11-20

The Warm Website Initiative

B2B DRAFT

Revision 11

A couple of months ago I started to think about how business is done today and I realized that Internet technology was not used to its limits; we have just scratched the surface.

It became quite clear when I compared a traditional shopping experience with a visit to a company website. In the “real world”, shopping behavior has been studied for thousands of years, thus creating shops and shop attendant procedures to match human behavior. E-commerce provided new technology for large sites, with functions like “others that have purchased this item also purchased these items”, but this mainly mimics “real world” shopping where all the people in the line look at what others have purchased.

Today, a visit to a traditional corporate website either ends up in downloading some material (while hopefully registering name, email and phone number) or that the visitor/prospect leaves the site. The thing is when someone is on a website; they are at that precise moment interested in something that they think they can find on the site. With today’s common CRM approach, the interest-form data is given to a sales person in order to try to track down the prospect.

It normally takes a couple of days to get a hold of the prospect and by then they have visited lots of other sites/companies and might already have made their mind up, being less interested in looking into yet another product...

I think this can be done much better!

What if the sales force could work with warm leads instead of cold leads?

When someone is on your site they are interested in something, right now, not necessarily later!

What if the site could adapt to the visitor, showing content like customer references from the same business area?

To dress like your customer is an old sales trick. There is now a technology based on traditional ip number lookup paired with Dunn & Bradstreet data that makes it possible to have the web site adjust its content. If the visitor is from a municipality, the government references and the banner for the Government seminar is shown etc. This is done without the usual integrity issues.

What if someone pops up in a webcam, typing a chat message like “Hi, I am Carol and I am the host of this site today. I’m right in the middle of an online demo, if you’d like to join us just click here! Or click here to be notified of the next available demo”

This technology exists by itself today but not tightly integrated with CMS and CRM data.

What if the site host could be presented data like “The visitor entered the site after searching Google with the keywords “Content Management+dotnet” and comes from “A pharmaceutical company in Europe with more than 1000 employees”?

This can be done today with a mixture of different technologies.

What if an automatic assistant could assist the visitors?

Companies like Ikea have now started to use a sort of robot technology that can answer questions from the site visitors. The technology is based on advanced language analysis and site/keyword mapping but has over the years proven to be very useful, especially on larger sites.

What if “Click here to chat with us” was a standard feature?

This customer interaction becomes more and more common. First in line are large customers like Scandinavian Airline (www.sas.se) but I think all companies can benefit from this technology.

What if “Enter your phone number and we will call you within 20 minutes!” was a part of your website?

Old technology, such as regular telephones are not bad when it comes to having a conversation. Today many customers such as banks and insurance companies has realized that allowing hot prospects the benefit of a controlled call is much better than interrupting someone in their dinner through regular telemarketing...

What if Skype pops up on the screen of a sales person with the message “Mr. John Crawford has just logged on to our extranet, click here to initiate a chat session with John”?

To provide the sales staff with a way to easily interact with their VIP customers is a very powerful tool.

What if a screen sharing system was built into the website, allowing instant demonstrations and presentations?

The use of screen sharing systems is vital for many business, especially when trying to get into new markets. Why not employ an online sales person that can do 10 times more sales presentations than a regular sales person? And have the ongoing product demonstration as a “thumbnail live video” on the homepage?

What if the website itself can detect a prospect?

By adding “prospect values” to the web pages, the web system can monitor the user behavior and expose offerings, sales interaction etc and through Skype (or similar IM program) notify a sales person. All done without the need for the visitor to fill in any forms at all!

What if an email newsletter system was built right into the website, allowing a mixture of web and personalized content to be sent as emails to thousands of visitors?

If we at EPiServer AB are having a problem with sending out email newsletters I bet that our customers are having the same problem....

What if it was possible to see the website visitors movements, in real-time?

In the real world, a shop manager looks at the behavior in the shop in order to get a feeling about whether the new product exposure really works. That way they know, long before the sales figures proves it. It is now possible to do the same on a web site, seeing visitors move around the pages!

What if videos could be used, without technical hassles?

The use of streaming videos has been increasing the last year, becoming more and more common on websites. New technology makes it possible to manage videos as easy as any other piece of content.

What if your website could host a large user community?

The power of the Internet is much about getting people together. If someone has an interest, or a problem, it is natural to see if others has similar experiences or solutions. If your site can be in the middle of this, you have a marketing machine that can get you into new markets, lower the cost for your support and sales plus increase your brand value.

What if someone reads this page for more than 20 seconds, it is worth a dollar?

Is there anything more boring than reading web statistics? Zillions of numbers and charts describing something that took place weeks ago?

What if there was an easy way to measure the marketing value in eMarketing? Put a value on pages and compare these to the cost for traditional marketing (for example, sending a letter to a prospect costs 2 dollars) and add those up! Put the numbers on a screen at the office and track the progress!

What if you had your own banner system?

Not only business-to-business companies needs a good banner system in order to highlight information and events. Imagine having a banner system that adapts to the visitor behavior, that keeps track of what information that has been showed for each user, tracks the click-rate success etc.

What if your site was married to your CRM system?

Imagine a CRM system that is automatically fed from all electronic activities... Where prospects appears automatically as soon as they have registered on the website.. Where a customer can update his address, subscriptions and interest areas through his web page. When seamless is not just a buzzword anymore..

What if all electronic contact with a customer could be made searchable?

Were are the customers coming from? Should we increase our Google advertizing? How did we get in contact with this customer for the first time? Putting everything together into a common platform enables new level of decision making for the management, besides the regular upsides like providing all information through a common search interface.

What if everything mentioned can be put together?

I think we will see a meltdown between web, CRM, email marketing, online meetings, communities and live chats. I also see a very clear vision of how EPiServer can serve as the foundation for this, putting all pieces together into a system that really provides a competitive advantage!



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The Warm Website Initiative is a joint project between EPiServer AB and selected EPiServer Alliance Partners.
