TechSmith improved the customer search experience and reduced maintenance efforts with Google Site Search

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Jennifer Dyni
Manager of Emerging Technologies

◣ Tech**Smith**®

ABOUT GOOGLE SITE SEARCH

Google Site Search is a hosted website search solution, powered by Google.com. Google Site Search leverages the relevancy and sub–second response times of Google.com to improve your website experience. As a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution, you can setup Google Site Search in just minutes; customize the look and feel of search results; apply refinement labels; enjoy reporting features; obtain email and phone support; and turn off the ads on your searchresults.

For more information, visit www.google.com/sitesearch

Company

Founded in 1987, TechSmith is a leading provider of screen capture and recording software for individuals and companies. TechSmith's products SnagIt and Camtasia Studio are used to capture content from computer screens to help users communicate more clearly, create engaging presentations for diverse audiences, and analyze product usability and customer experiences. TechSmith products are available in five languages through a global distribution network of resellers in more than 30 countries. TechSmith.com, which averages more than 700,000 unique visitors per month, is the primary means for customers to learn more about TechSmith's offerings.

Approach

With more than 20 years of experience in providing screen capture and recording software, TechSmith knows firsthand how important it is to deliver information in clear and compelling ways. Yet the company's previous site search solution was often confusing and difficult for visitors. "Our site search engine could not distinguish between site navigation and page content, so it would return information about our top-level navigation as a description for search results," recalls Manager of Emerging Technologies Jennifer Dyni. "It also mixed and matched our different language sites, so someone searching for 'SnagIt' might get results for pages on our English, German, and French sites. For most of our users, it was a confusing experience."

"It is easy to implement and maintain, and readily customizable so that search results only get more relevant. Best of all, people know how to use it right away – with zero learning curve."

In addition to lacking effectiveness, the solution required heavy maintenance. In the past, when the company made major updates to the site, a senior developer dedicated solely to search had to re-index the entire site to make sure the new content was included as part of the search results. Once that was complete, the web team had to spend additional time manipulating content, metadata, and code to make sure that the most relevant results bubbled to the top.

Dyni and her team began searching for a better site search solution, with several important caveats. The new solution needed to be familiar and intuitive for customers, integrate into the existing website template, and fit the company's stylistic requirements. Support for international characters was paramount, because TechSmith operates sites in five countries. The cost of the new solution would need to be in line with the value it delivered to customers. And arduous maintenance had to become a thing of the past. After evaluating all of the major vendors offering enterprise search solutions, TechSmith selected Google Site Search. "Google Site Search scored high marks against all of our criteria," says Dyni. "When we saw the press announcement for Google Site Search, we knew right away it was what we wanted."

Results

It took a TechSmith intern a mere three hours to setup a pilot installation of Google Site Search. Staff tried the new solution internally for a few weeks and reported back with enthusiasm. The first things they noticed were its ease of use and the high relevance of search results. They saw that the system was easy to maintain. The customer service and technical support teams noted that the new search system would result in fewer support phone calls from customers asking how to find information on the site. And, from a branding standpoint, the creative services team liked the look and feel of the results page.

Since rolling out Google Site Search in August 2007, these initial reactions have grown into even more positive experiences. Customers receive extremely relevant search results and can hone in on the product information they need with speed and efficiency. TechSmith no longer has to dedicate a senior developer with specialized knowledge to maintaining search. "Google Site Search is very easy to setup and you don't have to have specialized technical knowledge to maintain it," says Dyni. "Any member of our web team can make updates to Google Site Search quickly and easily. The cost savings from simplified maintenance are substantial." Dyni describes the upfront cost of Google Site Search as being "perfect for TechSmith," and the ongoing cost reduction form reduced support calls has been a further boon to the bottom line.

TechSmith now has access to meaningful search statistics that provide insight into the company's customers and can help drive strategic direction. For the first time, TechSmith knows what its users are searching for. "We aren't surprised to see that people are searching on keywords like 'screen capture,' 'SnagIt,' and 'Camtasia Studio,' but we were surprised to see how many people a day are looking for 'Mac.' It's right up there with 'screen capture!'" says Dyni. "This is one of the many data points that is driving us to do more development for the Macintosh."

For TechSmith, there's no looking back. Says Dyni, "I would definitely recommend Google Site Search to other companies looking for a search solution. It is easy to implement and maintain, and readily customizable so that search results only get more relevant. Best of all, people know how to use it right away – with zero learning curve."

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