



Predict-it White Paper

**The Satisfaction Engine:
Next-Generation Search Technology**

Search technology may seem cutting-edge compared to the methods we used to find products and services just a few years ago, but it's still in its infancy and users aren't entirely satisfied with search engines' functionality.

Predict-it has drawn a clear distinction between the search engine that is driven by the need to generate revenue, review sites that leave searchers wondering which reviews they can trust, and the satisfaction engine, which is the next generation of search technology designed to address the flaws from the previously mentioned options.

Predict-it presents the Satisfaction Engine: forward-thinking search technology bringing search engines to maturity and providing consumers with a search tool they can trust.

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The Problem with the Major Search Engines

In today's technology-driven world, when we want information, we expect to get it fast. We also expect it to be accurate and relevant. When we go online and search for the best deal on a new car, we don't want just any deal; we expect to get the best deal.

However, the best deal differs from person to person, and it's different for each product and service, too. For commodity goods, such as a car, price is one of the key deciding factors, but choosing a service provider to come into your home, work on your car, or watch your pet introduces a host of other variables into the best-deal equation.

According to a study conducted by Econsultancy in July 2010, “Nearly two-thirds of consumers (61%) use search engines to help them in their product research decisions leading up to purchase.”

The Internet has brought a world of information to our fingertips. Just a few years ago, we had to flip through thick phone books, read through ads, and make numerous phone calls to find a car dealership. Then, we had to physically go to the dealership and check out the inventory, bargain with the salesman, and hope we didn't drive off with a clunker.

Now, when we want to find a product or service, we fire up a browser and search for it. We can find the closest dealership in seconds, peruse their inventory in minutes, and even get details about a vehicle's history, like whether it's been in any accidents. We can also check out consumer and expert reviews to see what other people's experience has been with the dealership and the car's make and model.

Technology has made the search
for goods faster and more convenient,
but are we getting better information?

When you conduct a search online for products and services, the first results you see are advertisements. Businesses pay for these ads to show up when users type specific words and phrases into search engines. These ads are commonly known as Pay Per Click^{*} (PPC), Paid Inclusion^{*}, or Sponsored Links. Regardless of what they are called, the most prominent results displayed in your search results come from whichever companies spent the most money to promote their businesses in the best ads spots, regardless of their quality. Sometimes, these ads are for products and services that aren't even a close match to what you searched for.

If you're looking for a new car and search for a particular make and model, you'll probably get good results based on the keywords you searched for. However the results are prioritized by how much the businesses spent to get in front of people like you who are searching for those keywords or phrases.

^{*} *Definitions provided in Appendix B: Sources and Further Reading*

Picture this as an example of how it works:

You call a friend and ask for a recommendation on a particular car. Your friend puts you on hold, and then calls a bunch of auto dealers letting them bid for her valuable recommendation, which she will pass on to you. Some of the highest paying dealers may not even offer the make and model that you're interested in, but after securing payment from the dealers, your friend is now ready with a list of recommendations for the dealers who paid her the most, even if they don't carry the car that you were originally asking about. Most people would want to un-friend someone who would do such a thing. However, this is precisely what major search engines are doing to us every time we search for something.

Organic Search Results

When you search online, you get ads, but you also get organic search results. These are listings that are not paid for—at least the businesses aren't paying search engines to display them. However, it's possible (and even likely) that businesses listed at the top of the organic search results did pay a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) expert to get their website to rank high on the results pages. So again, the results may not be your best choices. Instead, they are based on how savvy the businesses are in their ability to get in front of you when you type those precious keywords or phrases that indicate to the business and the search engine that you are a hot prospect for what they want to sell.

That's business. Naturally, these businesses want to get in front of you, the consumer. It's understandable that they buy ads and invest in getting ranked high on search results pages. They want more exposure so they can sell more products, and obtaining top ranking on search engines gets results.

As for the search engines, they're doing their best to provide users with the most accurate and relevant search results. If people can't find what they want with one search engine, they'll simply go to another. However, search engines are businesses too, and they have to turn a profit—thus the ads.

So, instead of getting what you're looking for, you find yourself swimming in a sea of marketing and advertisements in one form or another. Not only are you inundated with ads—your search results show listings that are loosely related but not a close match to whatever you're trying to find. While search engine technology has made finding products and services faster and more convenient, it still has a long way to go.

Search Engine Users Are Not 100% Satisfied

Although the majority of users have a positive experience with search engines overall, there is significant room for improvement.

According to Pew Research, in January 2002, 52% of all Americans used search engines. Ten years later, in 2012, that figure has grown to 73% or approximately 255 million Americans who use search engines to find products, services, and information on the Internet. With computer ownership, smart phones, web-enabled devices, and internet access on the rise, the percentage of search engine users will continue to increase.

The concept of a search engine seems simple enough: you want to find something online, you go to a search engine, type in a few key words and phrases, and voila—you find what you're looking for. However, many users are not satisfied with the search results they're getting. Although 91% of searchers are able to find what they're looking for, they're not all happy with the results:

- 38% felt overwhelmed by the sheer number of search results (too much information).
- 41% found conflicting information and could not determine what was accurate.
- 27% felt that most or all information found via search engines is not trustworthy or accurate.
- 34% felt that search engines are unfair or biased.
- 7% felt that search results have gotten less relevant.
- 34% felt that critical information is not included in search results.
- Only 55% of searchers feel that search results quality is improving; 4% say the quality of search results has gotten worse.

These dissatisfied searchers present problems worth solving in the search technology industry.

Advertisers Want More Information, Searchers Want More Privacy

After using a search engine to find a car, you might notice that ads for that same car frequently appear on other websites. These ads may be embedded in your web-based email and social media profiles as well. That's because social media sites and search engines are sharing your information with each other and their advertisers. Search engines and ad servers are then using personal information about you to present targeted ads, or ads that they think you will be interested in.

Search engines monitor their users' behavior, collect data about them, analyze, it, and then use their findings to sell more products and services to those users. They even use this data to determine which listings to show in the search results and which order to show them in. And search engines aren't the only ones monitoring users' online behavior so they can present targeted advertisements; social media networks engage in similar practices.

"Most search users disapprove of personal information being collected for search results or for targeted advertising."

- *Pew Internet & American Life survey*

It turns out users do not approve of websites collecting and analyzing their online activities for commercial purposes. In fact, online privacy is quickly becoming a key issue in our society. In February 2012, Pew research found the following:

- **Limited access to information:** 65% of users said it's a "bad thing" for search engines to track their searches and use the information to rank future search results, as this practice limits access to all available information.
- **Invasion of privacy:** 73% of users said they would "not be okay" with search engines monitoring and storing information about their searches in order to personalize future search results, as this practice is an invasion of privacy.
- **Targeted advertising:** 68% of users said they were "not okay" with targeted advertising, as they do not like their behaviors on the Internet to be tracked and analyzed.

The results of the survey were clear: the vast majority of search engine users are not happy with common practices that search engines and other websites engage in.

Indexing the Web

In March, 2012, *Business Insider* reported that there are 644,275,754 active websites on the Internet—that's more than half a billion sites, and it was up by over 31 million sites from the previous month. The Internet has been and continues to grow rapidly and exponentially.

Search engines are tasked with indexing all those sites. Anyone can build a website and submit it to search engines or get it indexed. Think about this: on the first page of most search results, there are only 10-15 results listed. It's a tiny fraction of how many sites may actually contain the information that the searcher is looking for. Search engines are tasked with trying to prioritize those sites—over half a billion of them—based on the words and phrases that their users enter.

Now think about how often you go to the second page of the search results. Most people change their query if they don't find what they are looking for on that first page. This makes the first page of search results for any popular keyword or phrase a piece of highly valuable real estate. Unfortunately for searchers, the best products or services for them usually aren't on that first page, and they need to do a lot of research before narrowing their options down to a manageable number of choices.

Flaws in Rating and Review Sites

To some consumers, rating and review sites seem like a great alternative to search engines. Where regular search engines index almost the entire Internet, rating and review sites focus exclusively on business listings. Each listing includes information about the business, including the products and services it offers, location, hours of operation, specials and discounts, plus ratings and reviews by other consumers.

With rating and review sites, consumers are better able to find what they're looking for, but instead of being inundated with ads or struggling with privacy concerns, users find themselves sifting through pages of reviews. Some businesses have high ratings. Others have no ratings at all. Some consumers loved the product. Others hated it. Some recommend the service. Others say they'll never hire the service provider again. Which ones can you trust?

**Rating and review sites present conflicting reviews.
Which reviews can users trust?**

To make matters worse, there is nothing to stop business owners from creating multiple user accounts and posting positive ratings of their own establishments. This tactic is commonly used to bury a bad review with a bunch of positive reviews. If a user sees mostly good reviews but only a couple of bad ones, then the bad reviews will be dismissed as anomalies. It also raises the business's rating average, which plays a big role on the business's perceived quality.

Businesses can also use multiple accounts to give their competitors low marks. While such practices violate the sites' terms and conditions, these unethical activities are almost impossible to police. Consumers have no way of knowing whether a rating or review is from a legitimate customer, a competitor, or from the business itself.

It gets even more confusing, because there are products some people love but others despise. Take Apple products, for example. The company has a large, dedicated fan base of customers who loyally buy and promote their products. But there are also plenty of naysayers, folks who claim that Apple products are no better than other, similar products and insist that consumers are paying for an overpriced and overhyped brand. In cases like this, a bunch of one-star reviews and a bunch of five-star reviews average out to three stars. How are users supposed to figure out which of those reviews they can trust—not just in terms of the reviewers posting legitimate reviews but also in terms of whether the users and reviewers like the same things?

So while rating and review sites solve some of the problems that search engines present, mostly by narrowing the search field to business listings and in some cases, removing or minimizing advertisements, the very structure of these sites is inherently flawed.

What consumers need is a new way to search for businesses, products, and services.

A New Way to Search

The Internet is still relatively new, and so is search technology. In the coming years, search functionality will be refined and improved. Currently, there are key opportunities in the online search industry surrounding the lack of accuracy and credibility, privacy, and improved relevance of search results, ratings, and reviews.

Rating and review sites have the right idea. Forget indexing the entire web. Instead, build a search engine that has a specific purpose and serves a clearly defined segment of search engine users: consumers looking for products and services.

By narrowing the field, such a search engine eliminates issues with relevance and accuracy. When users search for car dealerships, they are not inundated with ads, articles, and useless information. They get what they expect: listings that help them find a place to buy a car.

But trust is still an issue. When confronted with ten different car dealerships and dozens of makes and models, how does a consumer make a decision? Ratings and reviews are a good start, but the current model of ratings and reviews is flawed. There could be hundreds of reviews to sort through and consumers have no way of knowing which reviews they can trust.

If only there were a way for users to determine which reviews are legitimate and which reviewers they have the most in common with. That's the kind of search engine people need.

Predict-it: the World's First Satisfaction Engine®

Imagine a search engine that helps people quickly and easily find businesses, products, and services that are ranked by their probability of providing consumers with total satisfaction.

By identifying flaws in current technologies behind search engines and rating and review sites, Predict-it has developed a new way to search. Our cutting-edge technology helps consumers find businesses, products, and services they want and reviews they can trust, because those reviews are matched to their personal tastes, preferences, and lifestyles.

Poised to be the next big breakthrough in both search engines and rating and review sites, Predict-it presents a score that tells users how satisfied they'll be with just about any business.

A quick look at businesses on any rating or review site will show you that there are almost always people who like a business and those who don't. Predict-it lets you know quickly which ones you're most likely to agree with.

That's why we call it a Satisfaction Engine®

Predict-it tells you how satisfied you'll be with the businesses you're searching for online. Our search results are prioritized based on layers of information derived from both consumers and businesses:

- Businesses are ranked by their probability of satisfying a particular customer. A low rating doesn't mean the business is bad; it simply means it may not be a good fit for that particular searcher. Likewise, a high rating means they are good fit.
- Businesses provide information about their products and services as well as details about their ideal customer demographic. This information helps Predict-it show business listings to customers who are a match to those businesses.
- Consumers provide information about their tastes and lifestyles. Instead of showing a bunch of random reviews from strangers, Predict-it sorts the reviews, giving preference to reviews by people that searchers have a lot in common with.
- Businesses can't buy their way to top ranking on the Predict-It search results. They earn their positions by providing their best efforts to every customer. And unlike other sites that use average ratings among all reviewers, Predict-it scores can't be manipulated because each score presented is personalized for the individual searcher.

Get recommendations you can trust from people who share your tastes, preferences, and lifestyle

Our patented Satisfaction Engine scoured more than 100 million reviews and determines which reviewers you have the most in common with based on taste, preferences, economics, and lifestyle. Then it delivers recommendations based on which choices you'll find most satisfactory without all the advertising and long reviews to sort through. With Predict-it, you'll quickly find products and services that meet your standards for quality, price, and service.

Anonymous Personalization™

The Predict-it default setting has Anonymous Personalization enabled. This means we only require minimal personal information and don't share any of your information with third parties. You can use Predict-it's Anonymous Personalization to get premium, personalized results without even giving us your name. How refreshing is that?

This innovation in search technology bucks the trend of other major search engines and social networking sites, which lead consumers to believe that by giving up their privacy and giving these companies permission to gather and share their personal information, businesses will be able to provide better more personalized recommendations for products and services. Although there is some truth to that, a quick search will show that businesses primarily use the volume of personal information they collect about their customers as a selling point to attract advertisers interested in targeted customer lists, and if you are like most users, you prefer they skip the unrequested advertising all together. That's why Predict-it doesn't sell or display ads—ever.

Predict-it doesn't need to covertly follow you all over the web, watching how you interact with people, reading your emails, and tracking which websites you visit. We just ask some simple questions up front, like *do you prefer an SUV or a luxury sedan?* We then compare the information you provide with other users' answers as part of our process to determine whose recommendations are most likely to meet your standards for excellence.

**Predict-it with the world's first and only
Satisfaction Engine.**

Predict-it is the future of consumer search engines on the web. Our cutting-edge technology is already patented in the U.S. and pending internationally, and we're committed to continue innovating search in the twenty-first century, making it easier than ever for consumers and businesses to connect.

We don't merely help people find products and services or help businesses find customers. We match consumers to businesses, ensuring satisfaction all around.

With Predict-it's next-generation search, shoppers will feel more confident about their purchasing decisions and businesses will attract customers who are likely to become their word-of-mouth superstars and loyal clients. Our Satisfaction Engine is a win for everyone.

Get products you'll love and services you can trust
quickly and easily with Predict-it.

[Try it now](#)

Appendix A: Predict-it Competitive Summary

Search Engine Competitive Analysis

Search Engine Problems	Predict-it Solutions
Search results are based on keyword phrase matching and are often weighted using personal information about the user.	Search results are based on keyword phrase matching plus your probability of satisfaction
General results don't take personal preferences into account. Personalized results assume people who are friends like all the same things.	Personalized results are quantified using patented technology that measures similarities between users within the entire Predict-it database.
Top results and advertisements are bought by companies that are paying to get in front of customers.	Top results are based on users' personal tastes and interests and sorted by satisfaction probability. Businesses cannot buy rankings or advertisements.
Search engines attempt to index almost the entire Internet, over half a billion sites. Searchers end up overwhelmed with too many options to choose from.	Predict-it indexes businesses and is exclusively for consumers looking for products and services.
Search engines track users' online behavior, analyze it, and then use the information to present targeted ads and skewed search results.	Predict-it offers Anonymous Personalization, allowing users to keep their online activities private while still making it easy to find what they're looking for.

Rating and Review Sites Competitive Analysis

Rating and Review Sites Problems	Predict-It Solutions
Ratings and reviews are conflicted—some consumers love the product; others hate it. Users don't know which ones to trust.	With Predict-it, users know exactly which reviews they can trust because search results include satisfaction scores, which are determined based on which reviewers the users have the most in common with.

Businesses can stack the reviews by creating multiple accounts and issuing positive ratings for themselves or by leaving negative feedback on their competitors.

Trying to game the system is a waste of time, because no matter how many positive or negative reviews there are, users are only matched to reviews by other users who have similar tastes, interests, and lifestyles.

Lack of personalization: even businesses, products, and services with stellar ratings may not be a good match for a particular consumer.

Predict-it doesn't just help consumers find goods. We match people to businesses, products, and services that they'll find 100% satisfying.

Appendix B: Sources and Further Reading

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