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CIS243-E-Commerce Information Systems

Google Research Report

Summary

Google is a tech company who strives for innovation. Their main product is the Google search engine, which brings up webpages relevant to the queries of users searching for information. They have also ventured into social media, mobile, advertising and commerce. Their huge success in search and advertising have brought it on a grand scale with companies like Microsoft and Apple and now have the cash to grow by acquisitions.

The purpose of this report is to examine the internet company known as Google and answer questions from a case study as well as examine its business model and analyze its strengths and weaknesses.

Research for this report included a case study from Digitalenterprise.org, information from Atants.lv Internet Library, ppc.org, Wikipedia, and MarketMotive, Webmaster-seo, Thoughtscroll, and beta.fool.com.

The major findings show that Google is very strong, mainly by its reign in search technology. But Google's ventures into other fields such as mobile and social media have brought it into very heavy competition from huge companies like Apple, Facebook, and Microsoft which is enacting a large cost in resources.

In conclusion the report recommends that Google concentrate on what they're best at: search, advertising and other products it dominates such as maps. With its large resource of cash it should be careful and hone their investments in only a few acquisitions that will help their cause such as Motorola Mobility.

They should also beware of privacy issues in dealing with marketing. Bring back the original principles on which it stood. Remember: Don't be evil.

Google Case Study Research

<http://digitalenterprise.org/cases/google.html>

What is the core tenet of Google's strategy to dominate the field of search engines?

Google endeavors to make the “perfect search engine.” It pushed itself to focus on search engine technology more than its competitors who considered search function a minor role compared to email, markets, games, etc.

<http://eng.atlants.lv/summaries-notes/google/497711/>

How is Google different from other major search engines?

Google is different from other search engines because:

1. It was originally dedicated to search unlike previous companies like Yahoo and AltaVista where the search box was considered just one feature of a variety of functions. Some of the unique features which has made it the most popular are:
 - a. Relevancy – Google’s page-rank system has made it easier for users to find the information they’re looking for. They make it a continual effort to rank good content on websites as well as faster load times, ease of finding relevant information etc.
 - b. Ease of use – The simple search box is easy to find and intuitive to use.
 - c. Great applications and tools to go along with the search engine such as maps, language translators, shopping, video, etc.
2. The link system. – Google’s use of links in the algorithm is based on the way academic research papers use citations of other sources. The more a paper is cited, especially among reputable scholars, the more credence is given to that scholarly work. Similarly, the more a webpage is linked to (especially from high ranking sources and particularly .edu and .gov links), the higher the ranking in the algorithm.
3. Minimalist design. Unlike many other popular websites, Google is uncluttered. There’s been more added in recent years, but it still keeps the basic design feature of a simple search box being the focus and mostly white space around it.
4. It is credited with the advertising with a system of pay-per-click and bidding. It has often been mistaken for inventing PPC, when actually the system was invented by Overture.
 - a. <http://ppc.org/how-comes-google-have-dominated-ppc/>
 - b. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pay_per_click

What is PageRank? Why might it produce more effective results from searching a large index? What are the limitations of this approach?

PageRank is Google’s system of ordering the results of its search. The system is designed to place the most relevant results of the searcher’s query to the top. The algorithm which decides PageRank is based on several factors such as:

- Keywords and on-page metadata
- Longevity of domain
- Number and quality of backlinks
- Anchor text in external links

http://www.marketmotive.com/training/flash/view_flv_toc.php?mov=Four-Dimensions-of-SEO&dim1=800&dim2=498

Each of these factors is designed to produce more effective results and bring up better content. Here are the advantages to the page-rank approach:

- Established authority for information is evidenced by the quality of links, longevity, etc.
- Harder to spam the keywords. Previous approaches gave preferences to higher keyword usage in the metadata, so spammers would practice "keyword stuffing" to get a better ranking. Now keyword stuffing can often result in negative points for ranking. Relying instead on links, citations, and other outside forces helps show quality content. Because of this users are directed to more quality sites to find the information they're looking for.

Limitations of the PageRank approach:

- Can be manipulated by "blackhat SEO", link farms, etc. <http://web-master-seo.blogspot.com/2008/03/google-pagerank-advantages-and.html>
- Information cannot always be verified if the links and citations have been manipulated.
- Words searched are based on literal and not always what the users mean. <http://thoughtscroll.wordpress.com/2007/07/02/limitations-of-pagerank-concept-of-google/>

What kind of business model(s) does Google use?

Google uses the advertising model for its revenue. It works as a media company, free to users, but paid for by advertisers, similar to television.

It is more relevant to users than media companies in the past, because users take on a more interactive role where they can search for information based on their own person specialized interests or use the extra features like email, maps, etc.

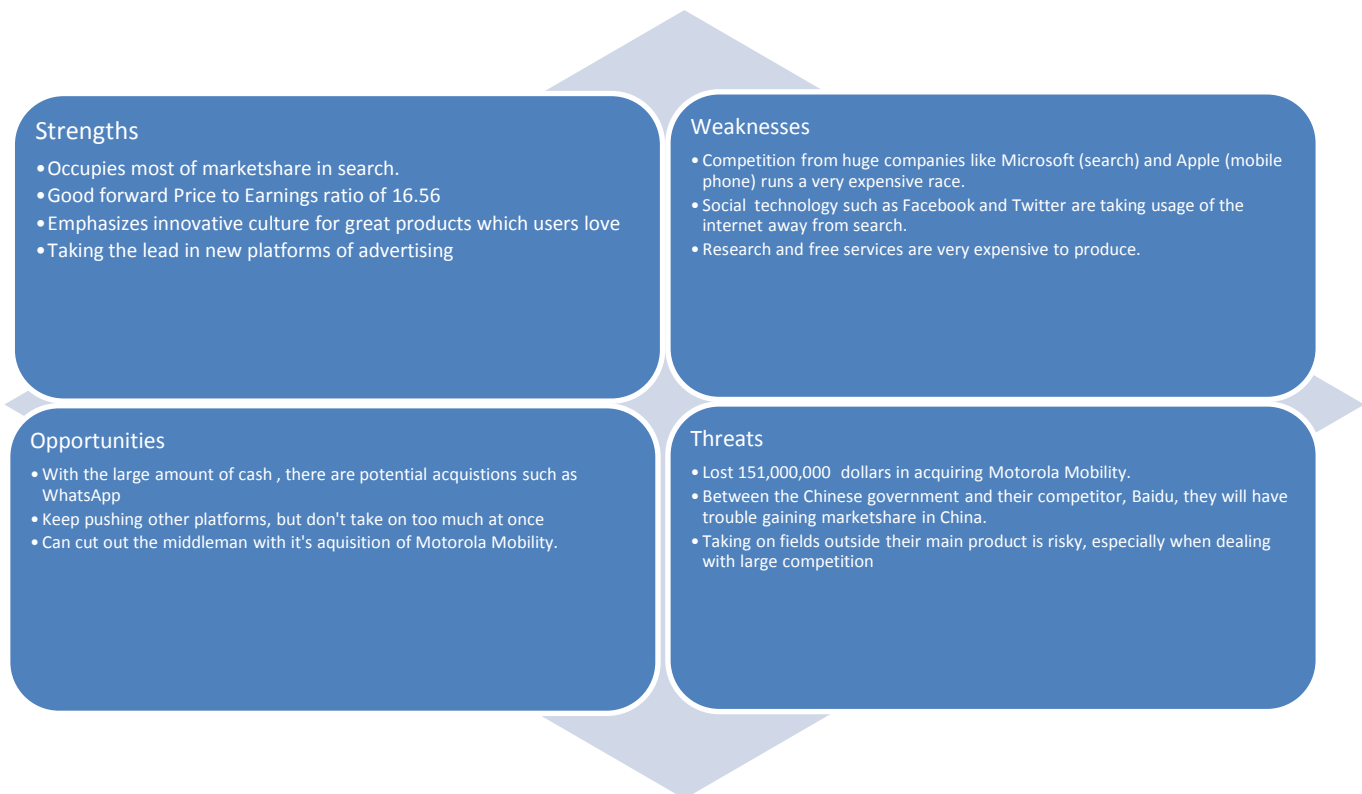
It is better for advertisers because:

- They take less risk in only having to pay when users click.
- They can also analyze the data and decide whether their ad campaign is effective based on that data.

- The ads are only shown for specific keywords, making them far more relevant to their intended audience.

<http://bmimatters.com/2012/03/29/understanding-google-business-model/>

SWOT Analysis: Google-



Reference: <http://beta.fool.com/makinmoney2424/2012/11/01/google-strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats/15420/>

Recommendations:

- Choose your battles wisely. Given the amount of strong competition in mobile, social media, and search, focus on certain campaigns rather than taking on all the competition from different platforms at once.
- Be careful with further acquisitions and make the ones already underway such as Motorola Mobility count. Now that they're in hardware, they should spend those resources on further establishing their brand in smartphones in competition with the iPhone.

- Spend more resources on making great products already established such as Googlemaps and Adwords *better* and more user-friendly.
- Consider users' ethics before marketing when dealing with subsidiaries like Doubleclick. Come back to your roots of serving users and "Don't be evil".