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SPH Launches Local Search Engine - Rednano.sg

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Launch of Singapore's First Local Search And Directory Engine

-rednano.sg to be premier onInie destination for Singaporeans



Online search and directory company SPH Search today launched the nation's first local search and directory engine - rednano.sg.

After 18 months of development, rednano.sg is now available for people to use and to give feedback for improvements. The logo of rednano.sg or Rednano, was unveiled at the launch, and the search engine opened to the trade and public, at a ceremony which was officiated by Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Minister of State for Trade and Industry, at the Red Dot Design Museum.

Two key features of Rednano are that it is focused on delivering the most appropriate results when it comes to information specifically on Singapore and that it will make access to this information as easy to select as possible.

It is able to do this because of its understanding of the local environment through its heritage and its use of "federated search". Federated search means users can conduct just "one search" and get "all results" from each of Rednano's six verticals or categories. The six verticals are: Web, News, Images, Directory, People and Maps Search.

Tuesday's opening up of rednano.sg is the first phase in SPH Search's plan to make the website the go-to place for anyone interested in Singapore. This phase sees the introduction of many features which SPH Search encourages people and businesses to use and comment on.

The feedback collected during this phase will be used by SPH Search to modify and improve rednano's current features as well as shape the timing of the roll-out of other features.

The company that created Rednano, SPH Search, is a joint venture between local media giant Singapore Press Holdings Limited (SPH) and Norwegian media group Schibsted ASA (Schibsted).

Alluding to the fact that the number of Internet users will continue to rise in the future, Dr Tony Tan, Chairman of SPH, said: "As more homes, offices and even schools are connected to the Internet, each generation of Singaporeans will be more tech-savvy than the previous one. SPH has and will continue to come up with new ideas to stake our claim in the online industry."

Mr Alan Chan, Chief Executive Officer of SPH, highlighted the successes of SPH's online products. He said: "Our existing online products have achieved new heights recently. We have also broken into the mobile market with innovative products such as SPH TVC (Targeted Video Commercial) and The Straits Times Razor TV. The realm of digital media presents a host of opportunities to us."

SPH's AsiaOne received 10.1 million pageviews in January 2008, and popular citizen journalism portal Stomp had 10.5 million pageviews during the same month. Compared to September 2007, that is a resounding 50% and 35% increase respectively.

Mr Chan added: "As we at SPH add yet another offering to our list with Rednano, our consumers and industry

SPH Launches Local Search Engine - ...

professionals have already come to recognise us as a multimedia company that is both a source of reliable information, and a provider of various innovative solutions to their marketing needs."

To provide users with the most accurate and timely results for local searches, Rednano licensed search technology from FAST Search and Transfer ASA, the leading developer of enterprise search technologies and solutions. In addition, to give a wider range of results to users, SPH Search has entered into a partnership with Yahoo!. Announced recently, this partnership will see Rednano using Yahoo! Search technology, to generate global search results to its users.

Mr Leslie Fong, a Director at SPH Search and SPH's Senior Executive Vice-President of Marketing, pointed out that leading media giant SPH has an enormous amount of local information and resources gathered over the years. It made business sense to produce a local search and directory engine that would give people the best results when they are searching for local information online, even compared to other established international search engines.

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Mr Fong said: "SPH's knowledge in local affairs gives Rednano a distinct advantage over other players when it comes to providing best results in a local search. But we also enjoyed the benefit of learning from our Norwegian partner Schibsted, which has experience and knowledge in setting up local search engines."

Mr Paul Jansen, CEO of SPH Search, who gave a unique "digital demonstration" of rednano.sg to the 300 guests at the launch, said: "It requires considerable effort and expertise to sift through the entire World Wide Web and uncover content that can be called Singapore-related, particularly when many of Singapore's companies and sites use a dot com URL rather than a dot sg.

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"We have done our best to develop rules and algorithms which help us to do this. However, this is an on-going process and still requires some "people-ware" rather than merely "software". For instance, in creating our business directory, we physically called 78,000 registered businesses to date to verify their particulars. We are working from a list of 300,000 businesses. So, as you can imagine, we are busy continuing to call others as we build our databases. We had also launched business and personal information collection campaigns and have been collecting the responses to our advertisements and adding them to our directories.

"Nonetheless, there is still much to do and we look forward to more responses to our campaigns, as well as suggestions on how we can improve rednano.sg."

"This phase of rednano and the reactions to it by users will allow us to shape our search engine into a better offering by the time we hold our full public launch in a few weeks."

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