



## Marketing Mashup Tools

### **CrownPeak's VP of marketing gives a recipe for how to cook up some marketing mashups for your Web site.**

Two things I love are music and internet technology. And, if you haven't heard, there's a phenomenon happening in both, called "mashups." Ironically, if you look up "mashup" in Wikipedia, you choose from either the music definition – "a musical genre of songs that consist entirely of parts of other songs" – or the Web definition – "a Web site or Web application that combines content from more than one source."

As I was listening to Danger Mouse's Grey Album (a mix of The Beatles' White Album with Jay-Z's Black Album) and surfing digglicious.com (a mix of digg.com and del.iciou.us), I started to think about how we could cook up some mashups for the Web site marketing tools we already use.

If Web 2.0 is teaching us anything it's that integration between the technology we use to manage our Web sites is becoming easier, not harder. Creating methods for our marketing tools to work together more effectively should do two things: 1) Help us deliver and measure how we are communicating with our customers and 2) Help us deliver sales opportunities to our business.

### Getting started in the kitchen...

Before you pull out all the pots and pans, the key here for digital marketers is to keep it simple. There are simple mashups that you can and should consider which will make your Web site marketing applications work together better for you. To get us started, let's look at two simple mashup dishes:

### Web site Subscription

Mashup Recipe: A Site Search System +Email Campaign Management System.

If you have a fairly large Web site, where the content changes fairly frequently – or you release product data to consumers – consider Web site subscription.

We've all heard of Web site search, RSS Feeds and email campaign management. Why not mash those applications up and allow your users to conduct a search on your Web site and then "subscribe" to that search via either an RSS feed or as part of the email newsletter that you send out? That way, if they include your Web site on their favorite my.yahoo-like portal they are getting a personalized feed of the content on your site that's important to them. Then, every time you update a particular piece of content that matches their search query they're immediately updated.

Conversely, with email, now when you send them the monthly email newsletter– each subscriber has a section of the newsletter dedicated to just their search query that provides only the headlines that they care about.

From the measurement standpoint, it gives you the ability to measure which keywords and content are really the most popular– instead of just measuring the popularity of the content you think will be interesting to your site visitors. Plus, it adds a personalized touch for your subscribers.

## Content feedback– smart Web sites

Mashup Recipe: A Content Management System + Web Analytics System.

Certainly the idea that you can garner feedback on your content isn't new. Letting users "rate" content they deem valuable is something that is growing widely. You might have seen this with something like Amazon's customer reviews. Or Dell's "was this help article helpful" type of feedback mechanism. What isn't as widely deployed by marketers is the ability to affect the content based on a rating or even the simple viewing of that content.

The first idea here would be to let users append content on your Web site to add to a knowledge-base. This might manifest itself by allowing users to contribute to your product help section, or allowing users to "tag" or categorize your content so that it might be more easily repurposed into an XML RSS feed or improve the search relevance over time– think Flickr for your own repository of help docs.

The second idea is to let users "rate" content. Think beyond a basic four-star or 1-10 system here– to more qualitative types of ratings such as a scale of helpfulness, or categories for future navigation, or even popularity (e.g., driven out of your analytics engine). The idea of this feature is to allow your content to move based on these ratings. Digg.com is a great example of this. The more "diggs" a piece of content gets, the more it is featured.

Now if your site is a corporate site, it's easy to see how this might be counterproductive. It isn't always the most popular content that you'd like featured. So, why not even deploy the opposite? Why not begin to bubble up content on your site that isn't popular so that it might get more readership? Or, leave frequently accessed items on the home page that might otherwise be moved off because of a date or other time-based archiving mechanism?

Overall, the idea here is to let your Web site content breathe and react more fluidly to the way it is used by your users. Whether it's to let them subscribe to specific pieces of your site– or to ensure that your site begins to change based on usage.

## Picking the right ingredients...

Of course mashing up these applications assumes that you have them to begin with. So, in order to conjure up our recipes above, you'll need at least a few of these ingredients: a content management system, an email campaign management system, a Web site search system and a Web analytics system. And like any good chef, make sure to check the quality of your ingredients:

Consider...

- Content Management systems that can really be the hub of your online marketing efforts. To cook up the best mashups, consider a CMS that can simultaneously publish HTML content along with your RSS feeds and integrate your content into an email campaign management system. Also make sure your CMS can directly import content generated from the users of your Web site.
- Site Search systems that can return your site content results in a variety of formats including an RSS feed, or other types of formats. Consider a search system that can also integrate search queries and results into other applications, such as your CMS or your email campaign management system.
- Email campaign management systems that can do more than just send email, but can also allow you to create customized demographics and filters, and that can integrate search results or other types of dynamic content directly into the body of the email.

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- ▶ Web Analytics systems that can export Web traffic analysis data into your CMS. You should be able to effect workflow or publishing of content based on Web traffic. For example, you should be able to have your CMS automatically promote a Web page to the top after it has received 10,000 pageviews.

And this is just the beginning of your cookbook. There are other mashups just waiting to be done. Don't be shy about getting creative with your Web site management applications—mashing them up together can be a lot tastier than eating them alone.

Happy cooking!

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