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SPOCK SEARCH ENGINE FOCUSES ON PEOPLE

Thursday, July 19, 2007

Associated Press

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SAN FRANCISCO — A search engine startup promises to deliver more targeted results on queries about people, whether it's your ex-girlfriend, the guy from the bar last night, or Paris Hilton.

The idea is to help you avoid sorting through the thousands of results — the vast majority likely to be irrelevant Web pages — delivered by the major Internet search companies.

Menlo Park-based Spock Inc. scours sites such as News Corp.'s (NWS) MySpace, [Wikipedia](#), [LinkedIn](#) and Yahoo Inc.'s (YHOO) Flickr and compiles biographies of real people — alive, dead, famous or obscure, from New York to New Delhi.

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Results often include an individual's photo, age, job title, political or religious affiliations, and research papers or articles written.

Members contribute such information about themselves or others, similar to Wikipedia's model of letting anyone contribute to the online encyclopedia regardless of expertise.

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Spock is gaining 30,000 new members per week in an invitation-only "beta" test mode. It will launch within a month with a searchable database of 100 million people.

The site relies on public data; if you've never given your age or posted your photo on a blog or other site, that information may not appear on Spock.

Nor does the site include information that's stored behind sites that require passwords, such as the popular social-networking site [Facebook](#).

But if you've submitted information to a company or your neighborhood's online newsletter, or if you've used another networking site, including MySpace, Xanga or Ning, you may already be Spocked.

None of Spock's 30 employees is an editor. Computer algorithms police the site: If you post inflammatory or inappropriate items, your user rating plummets. Everything users add or delete can be traced back — nothing is anonymous.

To highlight the ingenuity of Spock, co-founder and CEO Jaideep Singh searched for "Boxer."

On Google, the top result is dogs — specifically the American Kennel Club site. On Amazon.com, it's underwear.

On Spock, it's biographies of California Sen. Barbara Boxer and former World Heavyweight Champion Muhammad Ali.

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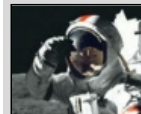
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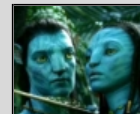


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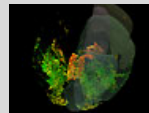
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