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Tuesday, September 22, 2009

future OF REAL ESTATE MARKETING



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[Google Yourself. Then Ask Yourself if You're Happy with what You Find.](#)

Posted by [Joel Burslem](#) on Thursday, January 3, 2008 Filed Under: [Marketing](#)

Tags: [Digital-Identity](#), [online-reputation-management](#), [Real-Estate-2.0](#), [Real-Estate-Marketing](#), [spock.com](#)

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Seth Godin said the first thing you should do this year is [Google yourself](#). [Loudoun County Assessor Todd Kaufman](#) is learning the hard way that managing your online identity can be often be an unsatisfactory experience.

Managing your online identity is, I suspect, going to be one of the themes we encounter more and more frequently in 2008. This is a theme I've touched on many times on this blog over the years (see [Take Control of Your Digital Identity](#)) and I believe it's going to be increasingly critical task moving forward for any small business owner, including the real estate or mortgage professional.

One way this trend will manifest in this industry is, I believe that wary consumers are going to become more and more aggressive in searching out information on the parties they want to do business with.

Google is one way to find information on individuals (and still probably the best). But sites like [Spock.com](#), are part of an emerging class of vertical search sites that focus on specific niches, in this case; People.

Spock's goal is to allow web surfers the ability to finely tune their queries (a search for "Realtor" in Portland, OR for example) and get individual results on people that match those terms.



Spock also hopes to give those individuals returned in a search the tools they need to control the results that others find. Agents can go on the site, “claim” their identity and then link to the appropriate content they want people to see.

Interesting concept and the reality is that despite all the advances in Real Estate 2.0, finding a good agent these days is still tough.

Not because they aren't any out there, it's just there's no easy way to find them. Sites like [IncredibleAgents.com](#) and [HomeThinking](#) have tried to make inroads into helping consumers find individual real estate professionals – though neither have gained much traction to date. But that's not to say that the idea will go away, just look at what [Avvo](#) is doing to attorneys.

In the mean time, making sure you stay on top on your own search results should still be priority. Having a blog is a good way to ensure you stay top of the rankings for your name. So is maintaining a profile on SEO friendly social networks like [LinkedIn](#).

The bottom line here is no matter how somebody comes across your name, whether it be from a friend, yard sign, postcard, business card or email, you need to realize that the first step many people are going to take is go home and Google you (maybe even Spock you).

My advice is make sure you're giving them the information you want them to find.

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1. [Incredible Agent](#) | [Jan 3, 2008](#) | [Reply](#)

Joel, both Seth and you are right. Googling yourself is going to be one of the most important ways to manage your online identity. Our site gets thousands of people a day googling Realtors names and Offices. This goes with my theory... "You are a keyword"- whether you like it or not.

As far as IncredibleAgents.com is concerned. We are getting a lot of traction lately. Our traffic has been growing steadily over the past 12 months. Thousands of agents per month are finding their profiles and signing up. Reviews are coming in at a growing pace. All things are pointed in the right direction.

Avvo has done a great job with PR and they raised a bunch of money (\$14m?)...but they really don't have a whole lot of traction at this point. I encourage you to take a peak at compete.com for all three sites and that will tell you a little bit more about where we all stand. (BTW: Multiply Compete numbers by about 2.5 and you will have an accurate picture)

Do we have Zillow like numbers? Not even close...but we also didn't need Millions to build our site.(or even thousands)

We will be releasing a new version of the site soon, which will make things easier for the consumer to find the best agent available. Keep an eye out.

2. **Mike** | [Jan 3, 2008](#) | [Reply](#)

I have a unique name and anytime someone googles it they will find everything about me including "shout outs" from friends.

I think many people in the last 20 years are going to regret having unique names like Apple. If I had my preference I would have typical name like John Smith just to manage my identity. If I get arrested, so far so good, some one could find it on accident while trying to find me real estate site.

3. **loren nason** | [Jan 3, 2008](#) | [Reply](#)

my name is fairly unique also

but at least the first 4 pages of google (probably more) is all about ME!

4. **Ryan Hukill** | [Jan 3, 2008](#) | [Reply](#)

No doubt that this is an already important thing to consider, but will quickly become an absolute necessity. It's best to get in front of it now and try to keep things in check before it gets away from you and it's a huge undertaking.

5. **Bobby Carroll** | [Jan 4, 2008](#) | [Reply](#)

Great advice for 2008. Protecting your online brand and reputation is a must. Another smart strategy to implement when managing your digital brand is to set up Google Alerts so you are abreast of any online news about your brand and reputation.

6. **Mike** | [Jan 4, 2008](#) | [Reply](#)

This is why I use mynamelisting.com

It's quick, easy and I come up above the other results. And I pay for it, so it's not up to the 'algorithms' to decide what comes up and why.

And since I have a commonly misspelled last name, I include a few of them in the terms and I'm covered.

7. **Jason Brown** | [Jan 4, 2008](#) | [Reply](#)

It's a good idea to check that occasionally since so many sites are not self-populating.

8. **Jason Brown** | [Jan 4, 2008](#) | [Reply](#)

I meant to say “now” self-populating...

9. [Real estate halifax](#) | [Jan 5, 2008](#) | [Reply](#)

It is a shame more people don't google themselves or their area of business – they'd get a shock if they did! Too many people have invisible websites! People look to buy the home of their dreams rather than a real estate agent – how many realtors does the average person know – certainly more than one!

10. [Dee Copeland](#) | [Jan 7, 2008](#) | [Reply](#)

I definitely watch my online identity and brand. Many of us use Google Alerts, which is the easiest way.

I find that doing a lot of online writing and blogging will typically help you dominate your name. This is even more powerful for those of us with common names. I have two common names “Dee” and “Copeland”, but I take up the first few pages of Google with my brand because I write articles for national blogs as well as my Texas Realty Blog.

11. [Kathy Jacobs](#) | [Jan 17, 2008](#) | [Reply](#)

Thanks for checking out Spock. I am glad to hear you found it useful. One thing that I love about Spock is that it is community driven. While the initial search results are gathered via a people search engine, members of the community can vote up or down the results.

In the case of your search for a realtor in Portland OR, this means I can influence what others see about a particular realtor. If I really liked what the realtor did, I can vote up the tags on their profile. Same goes the other way. What's more, if I am that realtor, I can go to my Spock profile and see what people have said about me.

As you said, this is really the future of search engines. It takes the best of the search capabilities and combines them with the best of community.

One other use I have for Spock: If I am about to hire or work with someone, I put their name into the search box at Spock and find out all I can about them. When searching for a realtor in particular, this search can provide me with information about the realtor. It will also tell me if we have connections in common. Put these two together and I (as a consumer) have more information on which to base my choice.

Searching for you, Joel, tells me that you haven't claimed your results yet. This means that I can't connect with you through there and find out where else you write. That's too bad – I really like the style of your blog and would like to connect with you elsewhere 😊

Just my two cents.
Kathy Jacobs, Spock Evangelist

12. [Kenneth Udut](#) | [Feb 15, 2008](#) | [Reply](#)

As someone who is as obsessive user of Spock.com, I have no doubt that Spock will become more and more valuable as time moves on. Insane people like me are helping tag other people properly, as best I can, so that when they DO discover their already-existing Spock profile, they will have a head-start.

Even though I am not a real-estate agent, some of my customers are agents and I make it a point to verify and correct any errors on Naples, FL real estate agents as best I can, even if I don't know them.

i think Spock will become an incredible resource for realtors, especially since they have managed to absorb a whole TON of real estate professional's profiles, complete with pictures and such. If you login, add a few tags for yourself that distinguish yourself from others, work on getting your “spock power” up so that your name gets more credibility in the system (pushing you up the search results not only in Spock but also in Google indirectly) – you'll find amazing things happening.

And if you want, feel free to add me to a friend on spock or elsewhere. I'm Kenneth Udut or simplify3 – and I'm always up for helping people promote their business (as long as it isn't much work for me 😊)

<http://www.spock.com/Kenneth-Udut>

currently #8 on spock leaderboard with tons of “Spock cred”

13. [Rob Abdul](#) | [Aug 1, 2009](#) | [Reply](#)

My name “Rob Abdul” for the last 3 years has been my brand name.

I was so proud when my name appeared in Google’s suggestive list.

It may not sound like much but at least 60 to 80 people goggle me a month.

It is nice for the Ego, I must admit!

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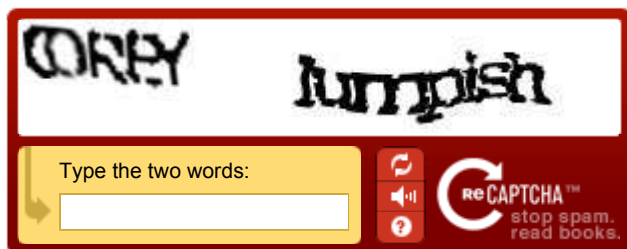
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