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TECH OBSERVER

by Blaise Zerega



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Jul 10 2008 12:00am EDT

Yahoo Gets Vertical Search. Where's Microsoft, Google?

Blaise Zerega still hasn't found what he's looking for. Yahoo's [announcement](#) to offer **BOSS** (Build Your Own Search Service-- what happened to the Y?), is a better late than never attempt to do something different to compete with Google. Fair enough. But what's particularly interesting is that the announcement is proof that many people - this editor included, think there's a huge market opportunity for vertical search. It's been overlooked as the Google juggernaut has tried to be all things to all people (quite successfully and quite profitably, I might add.)

Consider the people search engine [Spock.com](#) -- if you haven't tried

it, do. Query your name in Spock and then do it with [Google](#) and [Yahoo](#). Compare the results and you'll see what co-founder Jay Bhatti has been up to since quitting Microsoft. Hey, Microsoft, why didn't [LiveSearch](#) spot this niche?



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And while I'm at it, there's a raft of other search engines out there, all chasing Google in some fashion. I like [Clusty](#), [Me.dium](#), and [iSeek](#).

Among these startups, Kimbal Musk's Me.dium is using Yahoo's BOSS (see [NYT](#) article.) Whether BOSS gains traction, and whether Yahoo can marshal an army of Davids in its battle with the Goliath Google are questions that, given Yahoo's uncertain future, we may never see answered.

What we will see, however, is an evolution of the search market to include these narrow plays. After all, on the web, it's only by going niche that you build a broad audience.

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