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Apple Convergence

by Michael Mann

Until recently, I didn't have much of an affinity for Apple, other than for Steve Jobs himself. I thought my coworkers spent too much on their boxes, I didn't like the hype, and I thought the graphics on my PC were just fine. I have never used a Mac or studied much about it, just press releases and hype.

But I am big on convergence, as you can see by WashingtonVC's Internet vision: www.washingtonvc.com/vision/.

Anyhow, I finally realize that Jobs positioned Apple to be the all round preferred hardware provider for the future of technology (a nice position). For me, "convergence" is the future of technology. Steve has it down regarding consumer electronics and PC related devices. Jobs' strategy will disintermediate dozens of large wannabe leaders.

The exciting part is how it all subtly, but powerfully, comes together. First of all, the PC or Mac can download any multimedia, including anything made by consumers worldwide just minutes after production. Each piece of content is easily indexed on your own PC and online, given the appropriate tagging.

Next, Apple created the iPod, which is mostly a hard drive and display with full multimedia capacity and an easy, user-friendly interface. Obviously a popular invention. Now Apple has launched the iPhone. Given we bought Phone.com, even before they came up with iPhone, I am a big believer and promoter of NextGen and VoIP telecom, which is naturally convergent with many other Internet connected apps.

Apple then announced the iTV, an obvious product to go within their array. This is when I realized how it all came together and how advanced they are. The beauty of this strategy is that in the future, a TV, Phone, iPod and PC will be almost indistinguishable, besides the ala carte features chosen, the display size and placement.

The iTV can wirelessly beam the very same content to the iPhone with ease, which can also beam the same content to another enabled device like the iPod or PC, and back and forth with no loss of data integrity. They are interchangeable and therefore convergent--as it should be--and not coincidentally just like WashingtonVC's service strategy.

Apple also opened up the content flow by creating iTunes, an easy way for publishers to deliver bits of licensed content and collect fees. Obviously a good idea. You should realize that they will try to open up licensed online television distribution too--another thing I'm a huge fan of. In other words, you will log in and download the shows you want easily and legally.

iTunes, iTV and others will continue to leverage the opportunity to fill technology applications with uploaded user controlled content like YouTube. Apple will also make all applications user-friendly, I'm sure, and allow most of the content pieces to be easily managed and altered, be they TV shows, phone calls, or rock concerts.

This is why I am suddenly a fan of Apple. Maybe it's a good time to review the stock valuation again.

Peace ◆

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WashingtonVC About Us

WASHINGTONVC.COM

WashingtonVC's goal is to change the world for the better by developing cutting edge technologies; sharing ever-evolving best practices with other businesses and charities; building and selling profitable companies; and perpetually financing additional innovative work for profit and charity. We are currently invested in more than a dozen high quality technology companies, which include several of the world's best Internet brands. Each of our companies combines a unique and powerful business model with strong, independent operators. At the same time, the companies leverage many advantages from their affiliation with WashingtonVC and each other.

WashingtonVC was founded by entrepreneur and philanthropist Michael Mann. We own and help operate businesses that are working in the fastest growing and most innovative technology areas, which is why most of our assets are electronic, Internet-centric and ultimately downloadable. Digital services are extensively scalable and efficient, therefore, providing our companies with the opportunity to grow big, fast ◆

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Case study

Client SEO.com, logo design.

Challenge To design a logo for a high-profile business and domain name, SEO.com. Clients come to SEO.com because they want to be ranked high on search engines, like Google, when users search with specific keywords and phrases. In order to help position SEO.com among the elite of emerging Internet companies, their logo needed to reflect the professionalism of their high-end search optimization and pay-per-click (PPC) services.

Strategy In our review of search engine-optimization firms, we discovered a complex industry full of jargon and geek-speak that often needs an explanation. Our strategy was to create an extra sense of simplicity and trustworthiness in the SEO.com brand by focusing on the rational and functional aspect of their industry.

Creative development and site execution After a few rounds of creative work, we decided to focus on two main themes: 1) the technical aspect of the services that SEO.com provides

and 2) the focusing, or targeting, that they specifically perform for their clients. To address the "focus" theme we opted for a simple target symbol; subsequently, we encapsulated the target with a simple hexagon (nut) shape to address the mechanical aspect of SEO. The typeface accompanying the mark is a customized font, which is approachable yet technologically hip.

Results The result is a memorable logo that exhibits a simple, modern look ⬥

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For more information on SEO.com's services:
contact@seo.com | (800) 980-7864
www.seo.com

How to Make Powerpoint Scream

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by Danno

When you ask any designer worth a salt to work with PowerPoint (or any Microsoft software, for that matter), they usually cringe. After all, professional creative types who consider software by Adobe to be the tools of choice are bound to scoff when presented with the watered down, wizard-laden offerings that make up MS Office. However, when WashingtonVC wanted to strengthen their branding efforts, we stepped up to the challenge by making PowerPoint scream.

One of the design briefs was to raise the bar on their PowerPoint presentation—and—simultaneously port that presentation over to a web-friendly Flash version.

Our flash designer, Mike Wasiak ("Waz") had the task of testing PowerPoint and pushing it to the limit, which allowed us to find what technical constraints we'd be working with and where we could make WashingtonVC's web site excel.

After much perseverance by Waz, and eventual victories, we created a PowerPoint presentation

that uses good-looking digital video, vector-based flash animation and slide layouts--taking PowerPoint to a completely new level ⬥

Check out the web-based flash version of this presentation for yourself:
 www.washingtonvc.com/presentation

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SEO.COM | MARKETING IN A GOOGLE WORLD
by Dave Bascom

Rather than being force-fed marketing messages, consumers can pay attention to any advertisements that they choose. Google and other search engines have made it easy for consumers to find exactly what they are looking for with a few quick strokes on their keyboard. U.S. searchers are taking full advantage of this new technology—to the tune of over 8 billion searches per month, according to Internet measurement service ComScore Media Metrix.

In order to capture your share of those 8 billion searches each month, you have to make sure that your website is showing up on the search engines in a keyword search. Essentially, two pieces to the search engine-marketing (SEM) puzzle that you need to know about and address are 1) keyword advertising (also known as sponsored links or pay-per-click/PPC) and 2) search engine optimization (SEO). In most cases, you should be using both methods for maximum exposure in the search engines.

Keyword advertising is the practice of buying ads that appear at the top or side of the search engine results alongside the organic listings.

> **There are essentially two pieces to the search engine marketing puzzle: keyword advertising and search engine optimization.**

These ads are priced per click, using an auction-based system. The traffic from keyword searches converts at a very high rate because these people are actively searching on keywords that are related to your business—they are asking for exactly what you are selling.

The price fluctuates depending on the competitive market for each keyword. These links are displayed in order, contextually and dynamically based on the users search input, the bid prices, and select criteria that meets the commercial needs of Google and others.

SEO is the process of adjusting the content and code of your website in such a way so the search engines will recognize the content of your site. Another important aspect of optimizing your website is to have other websites link to yours. Having links from other websites sends the message to the search engines that your site is a valuable, relevant resource that should be featured in their search engine.

Search engine marketing is a complex process, but a pro can help you get up and running quickly and efficiently compared to doing so on your own. As you get started, look to the guidance of an experienced search engine-marketing professional for your business ◆

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Make Change! Trust   About Us

Make Change! Trust is a charitable fund developed by Internet entrepreneurs and philanthropists who are devoted to using technology to improve the world. We donate to nonprofit organizations that are empowering other nonprofits and the underserved.

MC!T has millions of dollars in committed capital and growing. Over the last year, we have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to technology-focused organizations serving others and directly to nonprofits fighting disease, homelessness, poverty, and supporting other humanitarian causes. We are committed to assisting non-profits who are appropriately leveraging technology, studying and sharing best practices, and growing online and offline nonprofit communities.

MC!T makes grants on an invitation-only basis and periodically utilizes a competitive RFP process. We donate to best-of-breed social organizations meeting the following criteria:

• A focus on underserved populations requiring assistance with technology, education, environmentalism, humanitarian relief, fighting disease, homeless issues, crime, political freedom, government reform, consumer protection, youth issues, addiction, or other like-minded, non-legislative causes;

• A strong management team with leaders from the nonprofit and technology sector;

• At least two years of successful operating history;

• A five-year operating plan that brings benefit to at least five times the number of beneficiaries being served today;

• Efficient management systems with clean financial statements and clear measures of impact on target communities

By providing funds and resources to our charity partners, we believe that we are effectively addressing some of the fundamental issues necessary to create sustainable social advancement for those in need ◆

Make Change! Trust

As of January 2007, Susan Wilder became director of Make Change! Trust. Susan is also a contract attorney for Nixon Peabody LLP where she focuses on affordable housing and community development. Her work involves researching and identifying potential non-profits for donations and coordinating the details of grants. Currently, she is developing a grant application for prospective grantees.

Some of the groups and projects she has reviewed and funded on behalf of MC!T include :
• **Aspiration's Social Source Commons**
• **Organizers' Collaborative**

• **Center for Democracy and Technology**
• **International Summit for Community Wireless Networks**
• **Children's Hospital Foundation**
• **Mentors, Inc.**
• **NetSquared**

Recent charity work of Susan's includes
• Executive Committee for the Muscular Dystrophy Association's 2007 DC Gala,
• Women for Women International
• Whitman-Walker Legal Clinic in Washington, DC

MAKE CHANGE! T R U S T

Susan Wilder, *Director*

Prospective Donees: MC!T will make grants and accept applications on an invitation-only basis. Applications will generally be reviewed on a quarterly basis for funding ◆

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