

Newsletter
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news

FLAX

flax building high-end search features at low cost

One of the best things about the increased use of open source search technology is that features that were previously unattainable for clients with small budgets are now within reach. Bride and Groom Direct, a UK-based business selling wedding gifts and stationery, asked Flax to improve the search features on their website and in particular the auto-suggest – benchmarking the website of US mega-retailer Sears.com for inspiration. They particularly liked the way that while you type, Sears' website doesn't just show you suggested words but also clickable picture previews of products you might be looking for. Using Apache Solr and in under two days Flax built a similar feature for their website; they now have access to equally good search facilities to those of

Sears and are happy with the results.

"We had a version of Apache Solr running on the website already, but



Flax highlighted that this was prehistoric and lacked many essential search features needed by today's shopper. With their help, we have updated our systems, and developed a modern search facility that gives our customers a better user experience. We built product images into the search dropdown, and included other out-of-the-box features such as autocomplete and spelling correction. The result is an optimised search system that our visitors love."

Kristin Bogumil, Bride & Groom Direct.

Another short Flax project using open source was for Cambridge University Press, the publishing business of the University of Cambridge, who asked Flax to assist with performance tuning of an Apache Solr-powered search engine for one of their high profile digital products.



"Flax helped us at very short notice with a Solr performance problem, working with both our local and offshore teams to remove a significant bottleneck – their expertise was invaluable."
Anthony Joyes, Technical Services Manager for Cambridge University Press.

Enterprise Search Europe

One of the biggest influences on the enterprise search market over the last few years has been the rise of open source search software. Open source search can match the closed source offerings in terms of accuracy and features, and with zero license cost can offer highly economical scalability. There are many choices as to how you can implement open source search – you can build it internally, buy in specialist help or choose a packaged or cloud-hosted solution based on open source. Enterprise Search Europe is offering a number of sessions led by experts in the field to help you choose the best approach for your needs.

Charlie Hull of Flax will be hosting both the panel and the open source search track and will be available throughout the event to answer any questions you have on open source search, and to help you make the most of open source opportunities.

Visit Enterprise Search Europe 2013 on 15 & 16 May 2013 (Workshops – 14 May 2013) at Hilton London Olympia, UK

For more information and to register, see:
www.enterprisesearch europe.com/2013/

Searching for Books?

Two new search books were presented at the recent London Search Meetup. Martin White of Intranet Focus has written a book on Enterprise Search with the strapline 'Enhancing Business Performance'. Martin has decades of experience in the sector and an enviable collection of war stories from inside the enterprise.

Tony Russell-Rose and Tyler Tate talked about their new book which focuses on the user experience of search. 'Designing the Search Experience' promises to be a rich resource on how, why and where people use search and how this impacts the design of user interfaces.

About Flax

Flax is highly active in the information retrieval market with international clients from sectors including academia, public relations, e-commerce, government and private businesses. Flax's clients include The Financial Times, Accenture, the Newspaper Licensing Authority, The University of Cambridge and Reed Specialist Recruitment.

Flax delivers a cutting-edge enterprise search solution, using the power of open source software to drive down costs and provide world beating search performance with no software licence fees. Flax is an authorized partner of LucidWorks, the commercial company behind Lucene & Solr.