

TOP TRENDS FOR 2009 – WEB APPS, MENAISSANCE MEN, FITPRENEURS

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March/April 2009
\$7.95 AUD \$9.00 NZ (inc GST)

ISSN 177-244730301-6 39
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PROFILES - THE AUSTRALIAN WEB CELEBS

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THE AUSTRALIAN
WEB CELEBS

THE MELBOURNE 'MOSTYLER' Alex Young, Mostyle

Mostyle is a mobile ecosystem that provides 'Mostylers' the tools to build a mobile site around a community, and monetise mobile content through advertising or micropayments. Think of the 86-year old Japanese nun who, last year, wrote and sold her novel *Tomorrow's Rainbow* on her mobile phone, which went on to sell more than 10 million copies in print. Mostyle provides the platform for opportunities like this to occur.

Mostyle's founder, Alex Young, has already had an extraordinary response with his start-up venture. Having successfully tested it in the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore, he is set to add on to the initial concept with the launch of on-handset photo and video management this year.

"Normally you'd upload photos and have a big pool of content," says Young. "Now you can create an album or a diary, put in your blog and create a group, like a Star Wars fan club, for example."

The biggest mobile communities that are currently using Mostyle are coming from the UK, USA and south-east Asia, as well as from Australia. Young and his team of five developers spent six months trying to raise \$2 million dollars, but investors were scared off when the downturn occurred. But Young remains optimistic – and determined.

"We've survived this long into the economic downturn. Many of our competitors have been wiped out. This is the time to build a critical mass of users," he says, showing the grit and tenacity of a true 21st-century Internet entrepreneur.



THE FASHIONISTA Daniel P. Dykes, Fashionising.com

As it so often happens, Daniel P. Dyke's idea of an Internet business began from an inside knowledge of his industry, fashion.

"Until now, the fashion industry has largely fixated around the print press, and has failed to get online," he explains. "But I saw that it could go online, and that it could head the way of the music industry. As well, online dating has taken off. I wanted to create something that took the essence of online dating, or networking, and merged it with an industry that was yet to get online (fashion)."

It was a perfect business idea. It was also a perfect fit for Dykes, who loves both industries, fashion and new technology. His answer? Fashionising.com, a fashion social network and online community for people in the fashion industry. "Over some good Tanqueray gin the two ideas became one," he says, laughing.

Fashionising.com is now the spot where emerging and established designers, photographers and make-up artists come together to do business, "without having to go through the industry stalwarts." Dykes strategy was to create a site that had influence. And with top designers such as Zac Posen using it, and a strong presence in London, Los Angeles and New York, he has been able to convert the business onto a substantial online advertising revenue stream. He also boosts his revenue with events such as Fashion Week and consulting work.

Fashionising.com is going forward fast, and Dykes sees 2009 as being an even bigger year for it.

"This year will be about pushing the envelope for us", he says. "I'll also look for more partnerships – while actively avoiding those who are distinctly after acquiring us!"



THE BOOZLE BOY Darcy Byrne, Boozle

Like many successful online ventures, Boozle is a terrifically simple one. It allows you to find the cheapest alcohol in your suburb with just an online click. In essence, it's a search engine for the best-priced booze in your area. For founder Darcy Byrne, it was a simple premise that had great potential.

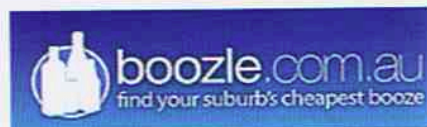
"I wanted to be the place where for people to go online for alcohol in Australia", says Byrne, "the Google of booze, if you like."

What Byrne has done is effectively identify and target a niche market; one that was just waiting to be tapped, if you'll forgive the pun. Even the idea was inspired by a need for alcohol.

"I was talking with mates about specials on booze, and I thought – what if there was a website that told you when booze was on sale?" he says. "A lot of the time one chain will have a special, and we found there could be differences of up to \$20 for a carton of beer."

Boozle is now attracting 300,000 new users every two months. And Byrne is looking for new alcoholic horizons.

"Wine is the next mountain to conquer!" he says.



THE RENT KING Steve Sammartino, Rentoid

In a country full of 'stuff', Rentoid was an online creation waiting to happen. Founded by Steve Sammartino, the site allows users to put their 'stuff' up for rent. It's like the eBay of renting. And it's becoming almost as popular.

"Rentoid evolved while I was meeting a business colleague for coffee," says Sammartino. "We'd meet once a week and discuss business ideas, exchange books, and generally motivate each other to escape our cubicles."

It didn't take long for the idea to evolve into a plan, and then a business plan, and then a business. In fact, Sammartino confesses that he didn't do much groundwork at all.

"In terms of planning we didn't do very much at all", he admits. "We just investigated whether or not the space had been occupied