

Spannerworkers' blog digest

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Even if Spannerworks' bloggers took a few days off over Christmas, the festive season wasn't short of

news on the subjects dear to our hearts.



Silly season set in not long after the last roundup, with a rash of Christmas-themed stories around search and the internet. Search queries after the big day revealed [a lack of appetite for leftovers](#), but our favourite was [the Google Maps mashup](#) that let kids of all ages track Santa on his rounds. The fun was over in the new year, though, with Yahoo! announcing the demise of its 12-year internet veteran [Yahoo! Picks](#).

Computing Which? announced that [Bebo is the best-performing social networking site](#), with the magazine narrowly rating its security above arch-rival Facebook. As if to prove the point, Facebook users have since been [warned about an application](#) that may be a 'social worm'.

Potentially the most important story of the last couple of weeks is the much-anticipated [launch of the Wikia Search alpha](#), though it caused widespread disappointment. Writing on Kocchi Kade after some of the dust had settled, [Nilhan Jayasinghe explained that his feelings had turned to apathy](#).

'I'm no longer angry at the crappy results or the fact that their crawler had managed to completely miss my site,' he wrote, going on to explain how the infant search engine lacked sophistication when it came to attempts to manipulate results that other search engines had kicked out years ago: 'On a search for 'cheap flights' it even pulls in a picture of some bloke, just cos he said he's interested in cheap space flights,' he lamented.

However, there may be light on the horizon for [Wikia](#), as Nilhan explains: 'The clever bit comes once the user base start to provide their expertise.

'This may yet do something useful or at least vaguely interesting? I love the idea of using social signals to drive search, but this is not going to fly anytime soon and I'm guessing never.'

Open source

Antony Mayfield took a break over Christmas, and managed to hold out for 17 days between 2007's last post to [Open](#) and the first of 2008. He's back bigger than ever, though, racking up ten posts in the five days to 9 January.

Picking up on [the Facebook social worm scare](#), Antony says that for most users this is likely to be far more important than [Facebook's newfound enthusiasm for data portability](#). He warns: 'It's? confirmation of every IT department's fears / warnings about why people shouldn't be using FB at work (any by extension, any other social media applications). A setback, then, for advocates of giving employees access to social computing tools freely in the workplace?'

Antony also discusses the use of [Twitter as a peer-reviewing platform](#). In a follow up post on [the Tweet Scan search tool for Twitter](#), he reflects: 'Have to say that if you're working with an entertainment brand

especially, searching Twitter for reviews / mentions must be one of the best most instant ways of getting feedback??

Feedback was all the rage on Hackbash, after [student journalist Dave Lee](#) picked up on the wording used in Spannerworks' advertisements for its current journalist vacancy: 'I have no problem with people wanting to enter the world of PR,' he wrote. 'What I have a problem with is when jobs such as this are advertised as journalism. Journalism it is certainly not.'

We agreed with Dave's assessment: the wording didn't sound like journalism to us either, so we pulled the advert [and rewrote it to better describe what we do](#).

The position is still open, so [please get in touch if you're interested](#).

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