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The Tens—Why Google Shouldn't Focus on Facebook

It seems nearly every article about Google these days focuses on the competition between Google and Facebook. If Google believes the trade hype, they will be in more trouble than if they stay focused on their original mission of organizing the world's information.

1 Information is still king Most of the information on the Internet remains un-indexed or inaccessible. Go work deals to open up the academic material to the world. Index deep repositories of information. Index social information. Derive value from the hidden relationships in context at levels beyond links. Google has plenty of work to do on search without creating a second-rate social platform.

2 Make Search Better Google gets its mojo from indexing and search (and advertising attached to those). Make search better. Companies indexing social content are exposing gaps in Google's search strategy. Focus on delivering better results, not expanding into areas where you have tried and failed already. Learning shouldn't be limited to business model or technical issues. The best learning focuses. Invest in outcompeting on core search rather than the distraction of social media..

3 Ads People only engage with advertising if the advertising engages them. Authentic social voice is one way, proven value, alignment with values and other attributes also drive engagement. Google should focus on all the attributes that get the right ad to the right person. That is a deeper problem than they have solved to date and it will force them to rethink their core business rather than look at social. Indexing clues in Facebook and Twitter is very different than creating alternative platforms. Again, work from strength and innovate.

4 Innovate One of the next big things is going to be social and collaboration analytics. That is an algorithmic problem, not a social attraction problem. Figure out how to make sense of the social fabric, don't try and weave your own.

5 Android Android needs leadership. Google launched Android, and it is doing well, but it is a hot mess of a user experience. Again, invest in an area with traction, not one where core competencies lack (like social media). Make Android an information appliance, not just a communication

device. People have information all over the place now that isn't indexed, use Android as a focal point for helping consumers make sense of web-storage.

6 G-mail Concentrate on a data-centric view of messaging, not a social-centric view. Clearly differentiate. If Google provides meaningful information, including social content, to mail, consumers will find that useful. If they can spend time to micro-target ads based on mail, then they can spend some CPU cycles proactively dredging up information. People will read ads in exchange for value. Compete on value delivery. The model should be completely differentiated, and for Google, that model should focus on turning data into insight.

7 Privacy Sure Google knows a lot about consumers. People expect that. Facebook is about overly open sharing, perhaps Google should be about overt protection. They already tout a browser that is more hacker-proof than others. Extend that as a core value. If users permit Google inside knowledge, that is their choice. But Google will make sure that opting-in becomes the de facto approach and everything they do should help users keep as much stuff private as they want to keep private.

8 Entertainment Great for YouTube, but what about everything else in the entertainment world? If users spend so much time on entertainment, then help rationalize that experience. Information is bits now, go index those bits and help people find quotes in a video stream. That would be cool.

9 China China isn't a social media issue or a search issue, it is a political issue. Expand where you can expand without giving up the core mission. Perhaps the first strategy should be indexing, not access. Let others see what China is creating, even if its people can't take advantage of the insight. Pull not push.

10 Focus If Google focuses on information and organizing that information for consumers and businesses, they will do fine. If they get distracted by social media then the prophecies about them becoming the next beached tech whale may prove true.