

Chapter 4.20

Sensis.Com.Au: An Uprising Star of E-Innovation and E-Entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT

Sensis Search, a young entrepreneurial dot-com launched in 2004, is the first mover in redefining the Australian search market and creates a new paradigm for Internet searches that delivers relevant, quality local, and global results. This chapter focuses on exploring the experiences of Sensis Search and identifying key issues of its operation. Data for this qualitative case study was collected mainly from two primary sources: (i) a documentary research into Sensis' business reports, online newsletters, memos, agendas, and other official publications, and (ii) an in-depth interview with a senior manager of sensis.com.au. The case study illustrates how Sensis has been managed, how it has succeeded, and what lessons can be learned from its experience.

INTRODUCTION

In 2002, **Sensis** Pty Ltd was launched as a new corporate brand and company name to replace the Pacific Access Pty Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Telstra Corporation, Australia's largest telecommunication company. According to the CEO of Sensis, the name of the company Sensis reflects the essence of today's business — keeping people in touch through appealing to the key human senses of sight, sound, and touch, using different media — print, voice, online, and wireless (Sensis, 2002). To strengthen the strategic position of Sensis in **online advertising** business, the company acquired CitySearch Online and BMC Media Ad Sales, adding new lines of advertising business to Sensis. After two years' operation driven by an aggressive growth strategy, Sensis has developed into one of Australia's leading advertising and search companies, offering a suite of print, online, voice, and wireless

products designed to bring buyers and sellers together any time, anywhere. Sensis Pty Ltd has a team of over 3,100 employees, among whom 2,300 are directly employed by Sensis and 800 by its wholly-owned subsidiary the Trading Post Group of companies.

Sensis' products and solutions include:

- **Sensis Search** (www.sensis.com.au) — an Internet search engine that utilises some of the most comprehensive and up-to-date product and service listings in Australia, with a much greater emphasis on local and national businesses. The Web site was launched in July 2004 and used by 59% of Australians with more than 5 million visitors every month, according to a recent Nielsen/NetRatings (Sensis, 2004a).
- **Yellow Pages®** — with more than 14 million copies in circulation, the Yellow Pages® print directories are found in virtually every home and business in Australia.
- **White Pages®** — print and online business directories.
- **City Search®** — Australia's leading online culture and lifestyle guide, offers tailored Internet solutions.
- **Whereis®** — Whereis® products and services are the location (digital mapping) and navigation brand of Sensis Search.
- **Sensis1234** — With sensis1234.com.au, callers can find a business (and residential listings) through a single number, whether they know the business name or not.
- **MediaSmart®** — Provides consulting services on the best sites and advertising formats to reach your target market.
- **Trading Post®** — a print and online private and classified advertisements directory for goods and services.
- **JustListed.com.au** — a new commercial and residential online real estate portal currently based in Sydney, where its inventory includes over 42,000 rental and sale properties and

1,670 real estate agents. Due to the very successful performance of the portal, Sensis plans to develop it into a national, online real estate portal.

As shown, Sensis Search (sensis.com.au) is a key component of Sensis multiple dimensions of business and plays a central hub role in the interfaces between online and print searches of information. This chapter focuses on exploring the experiences of sensis.com.au and identifying key issues of its operation. Data for this qualitative case study was collected mainly from two primary sources: (i) a documentary research into Sensis' business reports, online newsletters, memos, agendas, and other official publications, and (ii) an in-depth interview with a senior manager of *sensis.com.au*. The case study focuses on how Sensis has been managed, how it has succeeded, and what lessons can be learned from its experience.

SENSIS SEARCH: CREATING A NEW PARADIGM FOR INTERNET SEARCH IN AUSTRALIA

Sensis Pty Ltd launched its search engine Sensis Search (sensis.com.au) in July 2004, which constitutes all the online/electronic portfolio of Sensis Pty Ltd including www.whitepages.com.au, www.yellowpages.com.au, www.whereis.com.au, and www.CitySearch.com.au (Sensis, 2004c). By doing so, Sensis Search is able to provide Australians with fully blended search results across local proprietary and global Internet content. For example, Australians can use sensis.com.au to find a local florist anywhere in Australia and also to locate and purchase a pair of shoes in New York. The search engine provides local, commercial, and global searches from which customers can get blended results from local Yellow Pages®, White Pages®, CitySearch®, and Whereis® data, combined with global Web content. Sensis Search is the first mover in redefining the Australian search

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