

NEXT

Numbers...You're Swimming in Them

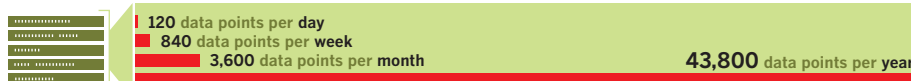
By Michael A. Prospero

Swivel, a new startup, lets users upload, compare, and contrast data—from iPod sales to wine consumption—to make sense of the world. A Web 2.0 story in charts.

Birth of the Idea

Cofounders Dmitry Dimov and Brian Mulloy originally saw Swivel as a way to help companies interpret graphically the performance stats from their Google AdWords campaigns—those text ads a user sees when he searches Google. They were inspired by the plight of Mulloy's dad, who has to wade through the reams of data that result from just five keywords advertising his part-time window-washing business.

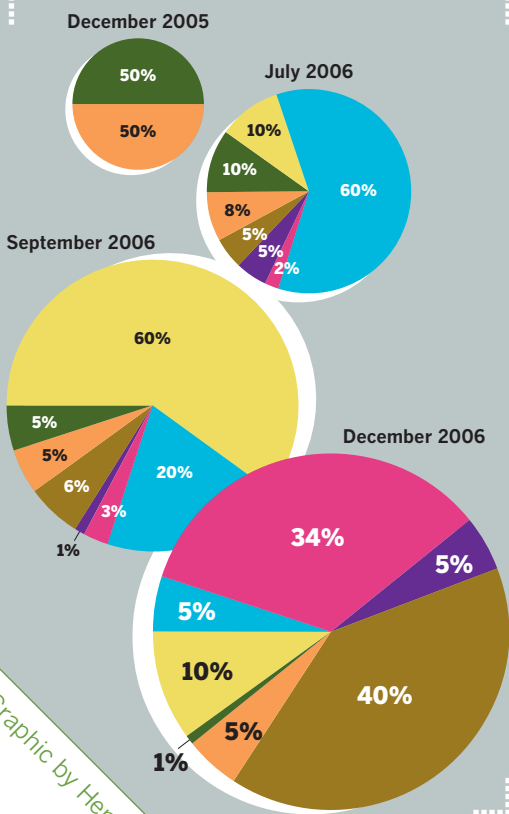
A **five-keyword** campaign will produce:



Building the Service

Initially, Dimov and Mulloy spent a lot of time with their sole investor, CNet founder Halsey Minor, devising Swivel's business. In July 2006, after deciding to let users input any info they want to chart—"It was a lot more fun when we uploaded data that we cared about," says Mulloy—their priorities changed as they ramped up before launching in December.

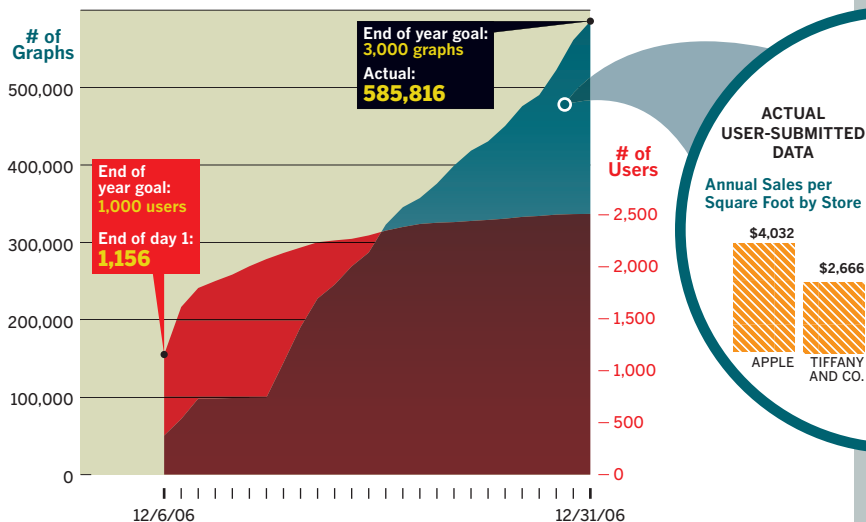
TIME SPENT



Graphic by Henry Yung

Going Live

Web 2.0 companies break through when their users contribute content well beyond their numbers. Flickr's 6 million users, for example, had uploaded 324 million photos by December 2006. Mulloy and Dimov immediately exceeded their rather modest 2006 projections for Swivel.



Looking Ahead

Swivel is unlikely to be the next Flickr—how many quant jocks are there?—but its first month as a live service augurs well for its future. The key to Swivel's growth, Mulloy says, is the relevance users will bring to the data, and the ease with which they can manipulate it. "People have to care about the data set enough to create the graphs," he says. If it follows the path of other sites of its ilk, Swivel has about 24 months to resonate with the public—and with acquisitive Web portals.

