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Welcome to the August edition of What's Emerging.

Be sure to read the article this month if you are interested in the price of petrol. The article is an opinion piece that Paul wrote for the Melbourne Age a couple of weeks ago proposing a scenario where oil could be less than US\$40 a barrel within 3 years. The article unleashed a flurry of emails, phone calls, and radio interviews with a wide range of views and opinions expressed on internet chat rooms around the world. We hope you enjoy it.

Paul Higgins, Sandy Teagle, Syed Ahmed Muqthar and Samantha Kyle-Little

Business Tip

There are two business tips this month on internet search systems:

Web competitor intelligence

This is a free article with some useful tips on how to use your competitors' websites to assess some of their business information and strategies.

Business web search

Business research from Deep Web Technologies is a beta version of a web search system that consolidates searches from a number of sources that you can modify for your own use.

Emerging issues from around the world

Click on the titles to read the full stories.

Is strategy dead

This is an interesting blog on why strategy may be trumped by creativity. We don't necessarily agree but the thinking is interesting.

Cassava ethanol

China is building a Cassava based ethanol plant in an effort to move ethanol production away from grain due to concerns about food shortages. An interesting follow on from Paul's article on farmers terms of trade in the Australian Farm Journal – see article

download area on the front page of our website.

Outsourcing in web 2.0

The explosion of web site traffic for organisations like MySpace has resulted in a dilemma similar in principle to previous strategy questions but far shorter in cycle time. MySpace now has over 3500 servers. If you want to succeed in Web 2.0 where you have to scale up quickly (at one stage MySpace was adding a million users every 4 days) then you need to have the capacity. The strategic question is whether to keep this in-house or outsource it. External web hosting services are springing up to serve this market but what should you do?

New Ford Investment

Ford has announced that it is doubling its research spending on environmental technologies for its car fleet, increasing spending to one billion Pounds. The research includes work on lightweighting, hybrid fuel technology, and biofuel vehicles. Ford is working on several areas in order to provide a range of solutions rather than locking itself into a single solution, a clever strategy in a complex market place laced with uncertainties.

Nano patents

Almost 5000 patents for nanotechnology were filed in the USA last year, a 4% increase on the previous year which was 20% higher than the prior year. Wouldn't you just love to know which of those will be the next great application!

Web 2.0 and VC funding

We have covered the concept of web 2.0 in this newsletter quite a bit. This is an interesting blog where web 2.0 companies and Venture Capital funding meet. One of the key issues is that most of the funding is at a lower level than the VCs are used to doing, primarily because web 2.0 companies seem to need less cash. This causes some problems at VC firms because they still have to put all the assessment and due diligence work into a small funding placement.

Open source journalism

Can journalism go open source – well Professor Jay Rosen thinks it can and is having a go at making it happen. Read this blog report if you are interested in the burgeoning phenomenon of open source which is spreading from IT applications to biotechnology, consulting and now journalism.

Hybrid flex fuel vehicles

Ford has revealed a hybrid flex fuel Escape research vehicle. Ford are working on combining hybrid motor technology with flex fuel technology that allows vehicles to run on fuel that is anywhere from zero to 85% ethanol.

Burying carbon under the sea

Geosequestration of carbon, or in other words burying carbon emissions, has been one solution put forward to the problem of increasing carbon dioxide levels in our atmosphere. Now there is a new proposal to bury the carbon in formations under deep oceans. The carbon will still leak out eventually but the depth and pressure mean that it will take millions of years.

Vaccine against obesity

A vaccine against the hormone ghrelin in mice has resulted in mice that eat normally but gain less weight and have lower body fat. What happened to eating less and exercising more?

What Are We Writing About

This month's article is an opinion piece that Paul had published in the Melbourne Age a couple of weeks ago. The article proposes a scenario where oil can be less than US\$40 a barrel in the next three years. You can download the article by going to the front page of our website. At the bottom of the download list is a more detailed version of the analysis if you want to read more.

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