

# Real-time search market worth more than \$30 million a day

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All of those Twitter tweets and Facebook friends may have value after all, according to Penn State researchers.

Updates on Twitter, Facebook, [LinkedIn](#) and other real-time content sites could be worth more than \$30 million a day, or nearly \$10.9 billion a year, to advertisers, said Jim Jansen, associate professor, information sciences and technology.

"Real-time content is particularly interesting because it's a window into a person's world at a particular moment in time," said Jansen. "What we wanted to determine is if real-time search could be monetized."

Jansen defines real-time content as messages--usually about the size of a typical English sentence--and links to other forms of content that people post to social networks and online sites. Real-time search engines present a stream of this content based on keywords entered by users.

"This type of content typically occurs on sites like Twitter, [Facebook](#) and LinkedIn and is usually temporal in nature," said Jansen. "It's immediate and tells people what's going on right now."

The researchers, who released their results in the online version of *Information Processing and Management*, examined six months of real-time [search queries](#) from the database of Collecta, a real-time search engine. Queries are words and phrases that people plug into search engines to find information.

After separating duplicate searches to find unique search terms, they determined the value of the real-time search terms by using [Google Adwords Traffic Estimator](#). This calculator estimates how valuable ads might be. More commonly used search terms typically are more expensive for advertisers.

"The idea behind this, then, is if these real-time searches were performed on any given day on Google, what would that traffic be worth," said Jansen.

Of the 1,005,296 total queries, researchers determined that 297,392, or 30 percent, were unique queries. Approximately 52 percent of the unique searches had [economic value](#). If the searches were presented on a Google search results page, the researchers estimated people would click the resulting ads generated by the search more than 6.4 million times a day and generate approximately \$33,023,320 in revenue from those clicks.

The market for real-time search is likely to grow. The number of Twitter updates -- [tweets](#) -- has increased 1,000 percent in about a year, according to Jansen, who worked with Zhe Liu, graduate student in information sciences and technology; Courtney Weaver, undergraduate student in information sciences and technology; and Gerry Campbell and Matthew Gregg, both of Collecta.

Jansen said the figures indicate a market exists for real-time search. In addition to Collecta, the real-time [search engine](#) market includes Google Real Time and Bing Social.

"This would indicate that efforts to design advertising platforms for real time search may be fruitful," said Jansen.

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

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