

Pinterest adds search tool for finding fun 'pins'

April 25 2014, by Glenn Chapman



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In a move similar to one made last year by Facebook, Pinterest is tapping

into its rich trove of user-posted content to tackle questions that traditional search engines such as Google or Bing don't handle well.

Pinterest users can turn to the new Guided Search feature for answers to questions such as how to make a yummy breakfast, where to go on vacation or how to customize a motor scooter.

"Search engines are great for answering specific questions—the weather in San Francisco or the capital of Peru—but Pinterest can help with the questions that have more than one right answer," said Pinterest discovery team head Hui Xu.

"With so many possibilities, you might not know the best one till you see it."

Pinterest introduced Guided Search with the help of more than 100 "Pinner" at a party at its San Francisco headquarters.

Tailored for exploring

There are more than 750 million online bulletin boards with a combined total of about 30 billion Pins hand-picked by people sharing images on myriad interests from travel to food to sports and more, according to Pinterest.

"There are a lot of Pins and there is not much time," a Pinterest team member said at the launch event.

"We are working hard to make sure it's simple to find what you are looking for" as well as allowing for serendipitous discovery.

Guided Search was billed as being tailored for exploring, "whether you know exactly what you want, or you're just starting to look around."

The tool is available on smartphones and tablets that are increasingly the preferred options for accessing the Internet. It begins with keyword searches that trigger suggestions.

Pinterest gave the example of searching on the word "running" and being guided to refine hunts by selecting categories such as shoes, marathons, trails or even music playlists.

About this time last year, California-based Facebook launched its Graph Search tool designed to tap into networks of friends and publicly shared posts at the social network for answers to naturally worded questions such "What is a good film to check out?"

'Promoted Pins'

Pinterest last month said it will soon start pinning ads to its popular online bulletin boards in the form of "promoted Pins."

Pinterest began testing promoted Pins late last year and is "encouraged" by what it has so far seen.

Facebook and Twitter both bring in money from ads in the form of posts "promoted" to prominent positions in streams of updates at the social networks.

Pinterest late last year raised \$225 million in new capital that it planned to use to expand to 10 more countries.

The funding round valued the company at \$3.8 billion, according to a Pinterest statement to AFP.

Co-founder and chief executive Ben Silbermann said the new funding will help Pinterest's expansion.

Pinterest has become one of the Internet's hottest young websites, particularly among women, by giving people virtual bulletin boards that they personally curate with pictures showcasing interests in anything from food to sports, fashion or travel.

The company has not disclosed the number of users, although estimates from digital analytics firm comScore put the figure at around 60 million.

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