

FOUNDED: The initial company, Turbo10, was founded in 2001. In 2004 it spun out Trexy as a separate company.

FOUNDERS:
Nigel Hamilton, CEO; and
Megan Hamilton, CMO

FUNDING STATUS:
Privately funded by founders. Amount not disclosed

MARKET CATEGORY:
Internet search

COMPETITORS: Google
and Yahoo!

BASICS:
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S U M M A R Y

Users have many options for general searches on the Internet and a vast array of vertically focused engines for specific topics. With all of these options, once you've found what you want, there's the added challenge of finding it again.

Trexy proposes to solve these issues with its TrailBar – an add-on to your browser that lays digital breadcrumbs along your search path, allowing you to find the information again as well as blazing a trail for others to follow. Connected to over 4,000 general and vertical search engines, Trexy gives users three options: search their own trails, search others' trails, or create a new trail as they search. The business model is based on pay-per-click advertising on the results page, using ads generated by Trexy's sister site, Turbo10.

Megan and Nigel Hamilton have been working in search since 2001, and have focused on developing the underlying technology for Trexy since 2004. Both were practicing lawyers in their home country of Australia. They moved to the UK in 2000, and found themselves unable to practice law without going through considerable efforts to be re-licensed. Since they both had backgrounds in computer science as well, they decided to take advantage of the dotcom boom and get involved with search technology.

G U I D E W I R E V I E W

Trexy takes on two search challenges. First, it's hard to know which engine is best for any given search. By combining results from 4,000 different engines, Trexy taps into content users might otherwise miss. Second, and more interesting, is Trexy's move to streamline the search experience. Google estimates that 50 percent of its searches are repeats. In other words, lots of people are scouring the Internet using the same key words and hitting the same sites. Trexy gives them the option of following the trails of others who searched using the same keywords. Since Trexy's trails are based on the search terms themselves, a common language is automatic – eliminating a major problem with tagging where different people use different terms for the same object.

However, Trexy is only as valuable as the trails it contains, and in order to gather those trails it requires users to download its application and allow their searches to be tracked. Though Trexy does allow users to turn tracking off, offering up one's search trail may encounter resistance from users.

Trexy is also a small fish in a sea full of larger fish, and attracting users will be difficult. The founders' dedication to creating a powerful search solution is unwavering, and their open perspective about working with all engines altruistic. But when the main competition for a startup comes from behemoths like Google and Yahoo!, dedication may not be enough. - *Cathy Brooks*