

ARE UNIVERSITY COURSE FINDERS LIKE E-COMMERCE SITES? IF SO, WHY DON'T THEY WORK

LIKE AMAZON?

Although many in the Higher Education sector recoil from the idea of degree-granting institutions as e-Commerce providers, there are many parallels: Australian universities are “selling” high-value products, particularly to full-fee-paying and higher degree students; Product descriptions (course information) are published and consumed online; Universities are generally motivated to increase enrolments at least for some categories of students; Typically universities want to promote and encourage enrolments in units which are initially less popular.

Uni-fied Search: Funnelback is a major supplier of search technologies to universities. Our client list includes ten or so Australasian universities and more than 30 in the UK, including Cambridge, UCL and LSE. We also operate akg.edu.au (Australia’s Knowledge Gateway). Funnelback has developed considerable understanding of the needs of our higher education partners and is working on extensions to our search product specifically targeted at business needs within universities. We plan to release these extensions as modules which will together make up “Funnelback Uni-fied Search”. The first version of Uni-fied Search is scheduled for release in September 2013. This talk will include demonstrations of current and yet-to-be-released Uni-fied Search capabilities, including assistance for student recruitment, discovery of research outputs and potential supervisors, promoting university events, and access to online learning resources.

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