



# Web Alert Service



## *Business Plan*

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## Executive Summary

### Market

The maturation of the web and pervasiveness of connectivity presents the opportunity to provide web users with a subscription-based service that will alert them when information becomes available or changes on the internet. Representing the next generation of information dissemination, only information that has been specifically requested by the subscriber is provided, reducing time spent searching and monitoring target sites.

Generic in nature, the service could be used in a variety of ways:

- Notification of qualified changes in Stock Prices or other financial data
- Breaking news stories featuring key search terms
- Product Recalls
- School Closings or delayed openings
- Real Estate Listings meeting desired criteria
- Job Openings
- Consumer Product Sales Announcements

In fact, any directly assessable web-resource could be targeted for periodic monitoring.

### Proposed Business

Web users register once, and then enjoy unlimited subscriptions at no cost. A Subscription represents a request for notification when a specific change occurs to a target web resource. Subscribers will receive intermittent email notifications when the specified change occurs to the target resource.

Revenue sources include:

- Advertiser sponsorship of email notification
- Advertiser sponsorship of website banners
- Vendor sponsored and branded "Alert Services"
- Subscriber fees for "premium" services such as
  - High frequency monitoring of target resources
- Consulting services for advanced monitoring and reporting

### Location

Operations will be hosted at the existing offices of Affinity IT Training. The web site and services will be hosted Affinity IT Training at a local ISP.

### Management

### Financing



## Mission and Strategy

The mission is to become a recognized and valued service to web users.

The Business Strategy can be summarized as follows:

- Establish a growing base of Registered clients
- Provide reliable Client service at no cost
- Capitalize on popularity of the site through advertiser sponsorship

### Establishing User Base

Since the business will not produce revenue until a sizable user base is established, this discourages significant advertising expenditure in building the user base.

Although a formal marketing plan will be developed later, it will no doubt include a grass-roots effort to get the word out, including:

- Presentations at local libraries
- Handouts at College Campuses
- Handouts at Computer Stores
- Kiosks on College Campuses, Retail Establishments...
- Manhattan Street handouts

Second phase marketing will include:

- Vendor sponsored "Alert Services" will leverage vendor's internet access to grow the User base

### Obtaining Advertising Sponsorship

We envision a combination of passive and active marketing will be employed.

With regard to passive marketing, all Affinity IT Training sponsored Client sites will feature an "Advertise with Us" link and associated summary page. Client sites will reserved real-estate for banners and advertiser sponsored links.

As far as active marketing goes

- We will approach the Marketing Departments of major retailers to license the service as an add-on to their existing sites. That is, transparently license the service to them as a value-added feature of their existing web sites.
- We will approach the Marketing Departments of selected companies to solicit sponsorship of email notifications. The potential to reach a targeted audience with piggybacked announcements, banners, and links will be attractive to potential advertisers.



## Market

### Background

The role that the Internet plays in personal life and commerce continues to evolve as connectivity increases, and businesses continue to offer new services and provide increasing volumes of information electronically.

A service that acts as an information agent, tirelessly monitoring numerous information resources and reporting changes of interest represents the next step in the evolution of information management. The maturation of the web and the increasing sophistication of its users has rendered generic messaging such as Spam, once a viable marketing tool, into a mere annoyance that is deleted or automatically filtered out. An opportunity exists to provide a valuable service that provides ongoing monitoring of information sources of interest and notifications of noteworthy changes.

### Customer Need and Value Proposition

Rather than being bombarded with information, the next generation web service will allow consumers to effortlessly monitor information of interest and be presented with those resources that fit their current interest profile. This will save time and effort in searching for information of interest.

A service that provides this capability will be desirable, and one that is offered at no cost will be attractive. There is no downside as long as the system is easy to use.

### Product Description

We envision a solution consisting of two parts:

- A Front-End Website (FEW) through which the web user can:
  - Register: Become an authenticated user of the service, this would involve the completion of a form with email, and other optional contact information.
  - Subscribe: To receive subsequent email notifications, this would entail identifying the web-resource to be monitored, the data of interest within it, and the notification triggering event.
  - Unsubscribe: Cancel a notification subscription.It is envisioned that it will be possible for users to organize Subscriptions into “Profiles” such as “Home”, “Work”, “School” etc., which can be individually enabled/disabled.
- An Alert Service that functions behind the website and which:
  - Maintains a data store of Registered users
  - Maintains a data store of Subscriptions
  - Conducts the periodic monitoring of web-resources per existing subscriptions
  - Generates email notifications as necessary

Note that this architecture offers several distinct advantages:

- The Web Service is decoupled from the FEW and can be licensed separately
- Numerous FEWs customized for particular industries and targeted at particular market segments can be produced that share the same Alert Service.

Note that a FEW:

- Might be closely associated with the web-resource to be monitored
- Might require the user to select one or more resources from a list
- Might require the user to enter one or more Universal Resource Locators (URLs)



### **Competitive Analysis**

Many websites offer “alerts” about breaking news or other events within their control that are really just email lists in disguise.

An increasing number of Financial sites offer true notification service based on client-defined triggers for selected indexes and securities.

We are not yet aware of any company or website that offers general notification services to their clients.

### **Business Categories Now and Future**

#### **Marketing Strategy**

A Marketing plan and schedule to be developed.