

**Mike McGinley**

**From:** MediaPost Publications [news@mediapost.com]  
**To:** Mike McGinley  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Search Insider: The Era Of APIs  
**Attachments:**

**Sent:** Mon 3/29/2010 10:48 AM

## The Era Of APIs

by Derek Gordon , Monday, March 29, 2010

Do you remember a time when elementary school report cards included information like "Student plays well with others"? I do, and I mostly got high marks in that department (math, on the other hand, not so much.)

While at the OMMA Global Conference in San Francisco a couple of weeks ago, I got to chat with fellow Search Insider Aaron Goldman about his upcoming new book, "Everything I Know About Marketing I Learned from Google." He was intrigued by my last column, in which I chronicled some of my experiences with the new iPhone app called Siri, a digital personal assistant.

Our conversation then turned toward one of my favorite subjects: the unfolding era of the API (**application programming interfaces**) and, more broadly, increasing openness across the Web. That the era of the API coincides with the arrival, at long last, of the mobile revolution, only adds to my intense fascination with the phenomenon. (As you might imagine, date night at my house can be scintillating.)

But why should search marketers care?

Quite simply, because APIs are at work reshaping the ways in which we understand search today, and will challenge our profession to stretch, grow and change significantly in the coming years.

APIs are an interface implemented by a software program to enable interaction with other software, similar to the way a user interface facilitates interaction between humans and computers (so says [Wikipedia](#).) APIs are implemented by applications, libraries and operating systems to determine the vocabulary and calling conventions the programmer should employ to use their services.

As we emerge from a Web economy based on links -- that is, the primary reliance on links for everything from measuring a Web site's popularity for the purposes of ranking indexed information in search engine results, to links as the primary means of navigating around the Internet -- we are moving more and more toward an API Web economy.

Real-time information flows via APIs from Twitter and Facebook into Google and Bing search results. APIs make it possible to source products and services from multiple locations to generate results within purpose-built apps, again all in real time. Users can demand information, act on that information, complete transactions and then move on to the next thing, all without having to jump from one site to the next and the *mishegoss* that goes with it (log in, click around, enter credit card information, enter shipping information, etc., etc., etc.).

Even PayPal is opening up its system to third-party developers for seamless commerce, by enabling the integration of digital transactions into every app. This could slowly eliminate the need for credit cards, invoices, accounts payable and receivable departments (at least as we currently understand them) -- even cash itself. In the first three months of PayPal's new program, 15,000 developers signed up. Apple's SDKs for the iPhone and new iPad are

screaming successes. Google's Android system is even more open, and thousands of apps are being built every month. Each of these enable the creation of apps that are tapping into APIs all over the Web, to fundamentally alter commerce, entertainment - and search.

For those with Web sites that are still closed to the outside, it's time to think about whether or not an API strategy is right for your company. The era of insisting that users come to a destination site to source and secure information, products or services, is already passing. Users now demand that we go where they want us to be: exactly when they want it.

And the only way to do that is, start playing nicely with others.

[This commentary is insightful. I recommend it to others.](#)

[Post your response to the public Search Insider blog.](#)

[See what others are saying on the Search Insider blog.](#)

*Derek Gordon is vice president of marketing at Yield Software. He blogs regularly for the Yield Web Marketing News blog and recently co-authored the eBook "The Link Economy and Why It Matters to Small and Growing Businesses." Contact him [here](#).*

*Do you have strong opinions and inside knowledge about the topic of this newsletter -- and do you want to share your insights, observations and points of view regularly with the readers of MediaPost? To be considered as a MediaPost contributing writer, please send pertinent info about your credentials, plus several column ideas and one example of your writing on the topic, to [pfine@mediapost.com](mailto:pfine@mediapost.com). Please see our [editorial guidelines](#) here first.*

Search Insider for Monday, March 29, 2010:  
[http://www.mediapost.com/publications/?fa=Articles.showArticle&art\\_aid=125119](http://www.mediapost.com/publications/?fa=Articles.showArticle&art_aid=125119)

---

You are receiving this newsletter at [mike@sroconsultants.com](mailto:mike@sroconsultants.com) as part of your membership with MediaPost. If this issue was forwarded to you and you would like to begin receiving a copy of your own, please visit our site - [www.mediapost.com](http://www.mediapost.com) - and become a complimentary member. For advertising opportunities see our online [media kit](#).

---

If you'd rather not receive this newsletter in the future [click here](#).

---

We welcome and appreciate forwarding of our newsletters in their entirety or in part with proper attribution.  
(c) 2010 MediaPost Communications, 1140 Broadway, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10001