

30 To Watch

We have a long-standing history each year of looking at companies, services, or projects that we believe will have an important impact on the publishing and information provider community. We refer to them as our 30 To Watch.

Companies meeting the criteria for our 30 To Watch each year are:

- Doing particularly innovative things or things that are on-trend with market dynamics;
- Shaking up their respective marketplaces and challenging all publishers and providers to reevaluate their activities and learn;
- Exemplifying our *Outlook* theme each year – for this year, by focusing on unique or exceptional experiences for a new day, a new dawn, and a new decade.

The list includes leaders, new market entrants, and small startups – an eclectic group that indicates where changes are taking place and where new competition and threads are emerging. This year's 30 To Watch are (in alphabetical order):

1. Apple Computer. The ultimate in experience creation and marketing, Apple continues to be a trendsetter. It has proven mobile as a user platform, set the pace with its App Store, and is expected to do the same for tablets and e-readers. It sets the pace.
2. Attributor. The company has smartly purposed its anti-piracy software into the Fair Share Consortium, aiming to wring Google/Yahoo!-fueled advertising revenue shares out of usage on non-licensed sites.
3. Baidu.com. Worthy because it's the leading contender to dominate China's search market and be the Google of China, the world's fastest growing economy.
4. Blackboard. By acquiring Angel, Blackboard took out its main competitor and opened up the part of the market where Angel was more dominant. It is now focusing on partnerships (and acquisitions) not just for the sake of growing but for driving new features, tools, and content through its platform.
5. Bloomberg. Long a creator of unique experiences for its user base, which must have "its terminals," Bloomberg's Business Week and New Energy Finance purchases and other moves signify it intends to be among those left standing in the global battle for business news and data. It is also elbowing into the legal research space at a critical time. It is late to the inorganic growth game, and as such, is unproven in whether or not its insular culture can create new experiences and growth – lessons for the industry either way.
6. Demand Media. This firm is the consummate practitioner of the Walmart content model: massive volume, middling content, and lowest cost base in the industry. Although it is not a model for publishers to copy wholesale, Demand Studios proves that a high-volume content factory ruled by algorithms and analytics can hit the moving target of serving up a huge mix of what mass audiences want to read, all at cut-rate costs that deliver top-rate margins.



7. E Ink. E Ink is the leader in electronic paper display and the provider of underlying technology for most of the readers and devices out there. It will continue to be integral to the user experience in mobile devices and a future driver that can't be ignored, especially with the deeper pockets and muscle brought to it by its acquirer, Taiwanese leader Prime View International, which is also a leader in the field.
8. Econsultancy. Econsultancy is a real example of what a professional community on the open web can look and feel like. It has free-to-fee models and serves a variety of digital marketing roles with an array of content that supports learning, networking, best practices, and other key elements of doing this evolving job faster and better.
9. Epoq US. Epoq US is the provider of the DirectLaw virtual law firm platforms and tools that are helping small firms automate the practice of law.
10. Facebook. Dominating its space, Facebook is creating a platform to interact with users in a way that lets them "have it their way." Content like the Huffington Post is becoming part of the fabric of the environment and with professional users and consumers active on the site its chances of becoming the "SharePoint" of the future is interesting. Plus, Facebook's notion of "the wall" lends lessons to what desktops can be like across all devices and environments.
11. Giunti Labs. Giunti Labs is the creator of some of the most dynamic, interactive, 3D, multi-device-integrated learning solutions in the market that exemplify how it all comes together in work and learning apps of the future.
12. Google. Its push to the cloud, launch of mobile devices and operating systems, and possible move to being a telco-like carrier is significant. Further, its dominance in advertising has big implications beyond web search and all the repercussions its evolution had. Google Wave also provides interesting experiments in inter- and intra-enterprise collaboration.
13. Hearst Business Media. Hearst keeps improving and expanding its integrated, must-have data solutions delivered into workflow applications with a steady stream of new services from Zynx evidence-based medicine, the Map of Medicine, Veretech (in the auto sector), and FleetCross (for trucks).
14. HuffingtonPost.com. The Huffington Post created a new segment, commentary-led aggregation, and now is looking to take its position both vertically and locally. It is a critical model of the news organization of tomorrow.
15. Kaplan. Kaplan's growth rate and strategic expansion make it interesting as it takes its strong financial performance and expands into for-profit education and professional licensing with a variety of online courses and tools.
16. LinkedIn. Claiming 45 million users from 150 industries, LinkedIn exhibits a scaled-down but Google-like culture of experimentation with countless options for further monetizing its large, active professional audience. It pursues partnerships, including working with Hoover's, Manpower, Amazon, BusinessWeek, CBS MoneyWatch, Google, Twitter, IBM, SAP, and CNBC, and embodies crowdsourcing, networking, and market research firms of the future by taking "real people" and using them for survey sample, rather than using online panels for which participants need to be verified as "real" through a variety of methods.
17. Lithium. Unlike CRM systems of old, Lithium provides social CRM, putting at the base of its system a platform to help customer service and marketing build customer communities. Community helping community is at the forefront of the new decade, especially for technical support.



18. Manta Media. Manta is differentiating itself on both its very small, 1-to-10-employee-firms focus and its leading edge content model. Manta has built a series of quid pro quos to entice small firms to build out their own company's profiles in return for access to customers and partners who find them while using Manta and its networking features.
19. National Public Radio (NPR). Providing energized national leadership, new NPR management is making the audio-to-digital transition, as print did years ago.
20. Nature Publishing. It creates terrific experiences for its core audiences, has flipped business models, and invested in open access. It is an innovator with a storied tradition and history. This combination and brand is a terrific model to watch, especially for decades-old publishers seeking to change.
21. NetProspex. A new provider of sales leads, NetProspex is working to differentiate itself by using validation and proprietary QA processes to boost customer ROI. Customers buy or trade leads, with all traded contacts verified before they are published on NetProspex. The focus on delivering ROI is captured in the firm's motto, "Sell more, faster, easier."
22. News Corporation. News Corporation's head, Rupert Murdoch, has led the charge for finding alternative business models for news and is building on its pay-news model. It is an 800-pound gorilla in the news space and will be influencing and driving news consumption experiences.
23. Paisley. Paisley is enabling the centralization of governance, risk, and compliance (GRC) functions, and the integration of compliance processes with compliance information under its new owners Thomson Reuters.
24. Practical Law Company. Helping lawyers leverage past work and know-how, it is now entering the US market after building a solid following in the UK.
25. Public Library of Science (PLoS). PLoS is investing heavily in the development of new STM publishing paradigms in which the subjective assessment of "value" is attributed after publication via article-based metrics.
26. Socialtext. The creator of unique collaborative environments within the enterprise, it offers some of the best integrated experiences for knowledge workers available on the market today.
27. TechCrunch. The free CrunchBase database of technology companies, people, and investors emerged from the popular TechCrunch blog (2 million US unique visitors, per Compete.com) "obsessively profiling and reviewing new internet products and companies." It is especially useful for its venture and private equity funding information; it has also become a convenient aggregator of revenue and valuation estimates for these companies.
28. TheInfoPro. Facilitated peer-to-peer networking for IT professionals is the core underpinning of TheInfoPro's value proposition coupled with a hands-on, in-person approach to interviewing.
29. Vision Critical. Vision Critical is known as the gateway drug because once a company uses its technology and has a custom panel in place, there is no going back to ad hoc market research surveys through third-party firms. Buyers report getting addicted to being able to instantaneously interact with their customers.
30. Wolfram Alpha. Any "search engine" that can address the question, "What is the average speed of an unladen swallow?" just might have the chance to eke some real share away from the big G. This isn't a search engine but a computation machine. If you know what you're looking for, just not how to calculate it, this site is superior.

