

eCommerce Optimization

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Interview: John Foley Talks About Pronto.com

<http://www.ecommercoptimization.com/articles/interview-john-foley-talks-about-prontocom/>

Pronto.com Overview:

[Pronto.com](#) is a comparison shopping engine, marketplace, product review source and have recently begun to merge into the social shopping realm. Now one of the fastest growing CSE's (over 1266% growth in past 9 months according to industry sources), Pronto.com allows shoppers to browse, compare prices and read reviews within an unbiased, easy to use interface and display.

What Makes Pronto.com Unique? Here are a few reasons...


- Comprehensive Product Search - searches far more than a standard product search
- Patent Pending Search Technology - created by leading world renowned scientists
- Pronto Shopping Messenger - browser plug-in for shopping and real-time updates
- Unique Business Model - shows items from a variety of merchants, not just advertisers

Pronto.com uses a combination of CPC based pricing and qualified merchants to list products within their shopping engine. Not only do they show results from cost per click advertisers, but they also show results from other merchants who offer popular items and a quality shopping environment. Category rates range from .15 all the way up to \$1 per click on some categories. The majority of categories cost between .35 - .55 per click.

Pronto.com has also recently undergone a site redesign and is currently running a new beta as they work towards improving their current technology and add more social media features into their shopping platform. Pronto 2.0 will be a more social experience for shoppers mixed in with state-of-the-art product search and sort technology that has helped Pronto grow to what it is today. There have also been recent talks about a Pronto/Facebook app or integration of widgets for shopping. It certainly appears like Pronto is well ahead of the pack and is really thinking towards the future of Online shopping. It will be interesting to see all their new developments, feature releases, shopping applications, social tools and whatever else their team can think up!

John Foley Answers 10 Questions About Pronto.com:

 **Roughly how many merchants are included within Pronto.com?**

 Pronto.com has over 65,000 total merchants, 5,000 of which are paying us for traffic in a performance-based capacity.

e **Roughly how many products are included within Pronto.com?**

#P Pronto.com has over 70 million products in our index. Our goal is to have every product sold online so that we give our users access to all of the lowest prices and unique products that can not be found in other marketplaces. I think we're getting pretty darn close to that goal.

e **Roughly how many individuals currently work on the Pronto.com support and coding teams?**

#P The Pronto Team is roughly 40 people split between New York City and Boulder , CO.

e **What other places across the Internet, if any, are merchants and products included?**

#P Pronto powers the shopping experience for sites such as Ask.com, Lycos.com, Excite.com and many others. We have a very rich suite of partnering options such as a partner API, contextual product units, and co-brands and as such we are adding partners by the month.

e **What, in your opinion, are the highlight features Pronto.com offers it's users?**

#P In addition to being the Web's most comprehensive product search engine offering the lowest prices available, Pronto.com has recently launched a social shopping platform that allows users to "like" products, create personal profiles, build social networks, and learn from like-minded users. Traditional comparison shopping sites provide solid advice on where to buy products but do little to help users decide WHAT to buy. We believe Pronto.com will become the destination for both.

e **What, in your opinion are the highlight features Pronto.com offers merchants?**

#P Pronto.com is one of the few shopping sites to offer its merchants a suite of self-service web tools that include features such as SKU level bidding, robust feed management, and ROI tracking. These features, coupled with a team of world-class Sales and Client Services professionals, distinguish Pronto as a leader in providing merchants with a unique and powerful marketing solution.

e **Are new features being added and updated often? How often would you say?**

#P Often weekly, but no less than monthly, we are adding material improvements to both the consumer and merchant experiences.

e How does Pronto.com plan to stay competitive with sites like Amazon and eBay marketplaces?

#P Our goal is to become the online destination where consumers can go to make the best, most fully informed buying decisions. We feel that encouraging the community to engage in the shopping experience will allow like minded people to have a dialogue about what are the best products to buy and where to buy them. We have seen social media sites transform several other verticals on the Web and we're hearing from our users that they are excited we have brought this discipline to online shopping. Primarily, we want the social network on Pronto to allow users to help each other make better buying decisions. Secondly, Pronto community members can express themselves through products they like, want, or own. In this way, we combine the best of social software and product search into an online shopping community that has not existed until now, including on Amazon and Ebay.

e Where do you see Pronto.com in the next 3-5 years?

#P We will continue to be the most innovative online shopping player for many years to come; where this takes us will be mostly determined by our consumers and merchants. If we listen to them and react quickly - something we have proven we do well - there is no doubt we will create a marketplace and a community in which both consumers and merchants look forward to participating in.

e What Online product marketplaces, other than Pronto.com, do you personally use to shop from?

#P I personally use a lot of top marketplaces and a lot of direct retailers. My wife and I are big online shoppers to be sure. A few that come to mind as good experiences: TigerDirect.com, Drugstore.com, Nordstrom.com, Bloomingdales.com, Amazon.com and of course Porthos.com for good California wines... can't forget about the wine!

Conclusion & Final Thoughts:

It pleases me to see a comparison site that cares and caters so much to the consumers and their site users. Many of the CSE's are reliant upon merchant fees and do not spend as much time as they should thinking about the shopping experience and retaining existing users. If Pronto.com is able to keep up their current pace and stay consistent with their future goals, they will certainly grow far beyond what we have seen any other CSE accomplish in the past. In my opinion, it will be a race to the social end of things and the ones who have the most users in the end will win the race. That, and connecting shoppers with Offline merchants will be huge for these types of sites in the future. I can't wait to see what Pronto has in store for us next.

To John: I really appreciate you taking the time to conduct this little QandA with us John. I have always liked Pronto, but after being able to see first hand what you all have been up to lately, it's quickly becoming one of my favorites (to use and recommend). It must be exciting to be a part of something that is so useful to Online shoppers and merchants both. Keep up the quality work, let your team know what a good job we think they are doing and please keep us informed on new features or Pronto.com news, I would be happy to help spread the word.

To our readers: I hope you have enjoyed reading this installment of comparison shopping engine QandA with John Foley of Pronto.com. We plan on doing several more interviews with other comparison shopping engine founders, marketers and employees. If you haven't already, be sure and subscribe to our [articles feed](#) so you don't miss any of our upcoming CSE and product listing portal interviews!

[Pronto.com](#) is Featured as one of the comparison shopping engines on our [Product Listing Guide](#)!