Building a Business using Google's free APIs

Michael Thompson and Jerome Mouton

Overview

Google API's

- free or low cost to use
- reliable high performance tools
- big advantage over competitors w/o them
- long-term best candidates to be "the cloud"

Short List of Essential Tools

- App Engine
- Base
- Gadgets
- Maps
- Spreadsheets

- AdSense/Affiliates
- YouTube, Picasa
- Google Friend Connect

Monetization Methods

Indirect

- AdSense
- Affiliate Programs

Direct

- Hourly rate work - more common, less attractive
  - cons; more competition vs low-cost labor markets
  - pros; can be like paid training
- Fixed price bids - makes us much more competitive
  - cons: bigger risks if estimated incorrectly
  - pros: easier to buy from us

Direct - Making Contact

- Demonstrate proficiency with API's to get noticed
- Provide solutions to problems
- Build alliances and make sure your allies win

- Provide service above and beyond the requirements

Winning at Contract Work

- Manage client expectations properly
  - avoid unrealistic expectations, eg selling too hard can backfire
- Provide clearly written contracts + requirements
  - you can win work by writing clearly for non-technical people
- Get skillful at estimating costs <= *practice!*
  - how much time? creating, debugging, testing, support
  - out of pocket costs? SDK licenses, usage fees, other workers
  - plan for reliability, uptime, scaling
- Watch for resource conflicts
  - launch dates vs other scheduled projects, vacations, etc

Selling is about fulfillment, not pitching

- Be meticulously honest
- Communicate clearly
- Once you've agreed to do something, do it, no matter what it takes
- Learn what the market will bear and bid at or just below that
- Figure out what your customers will need next year and start preparing for it now.

Which Projects to Tackle?

- Is the project in our niche?
- Is it in the neighborhood of our niche?
- Something we would really like to start doing?
- Is there anything frightening about it?

Transitioning to a Business

Programmer

- Making money accidentally or if someone insists, eg AdSense

Developer

- Take paid gigs if they look like easy wins

Professional

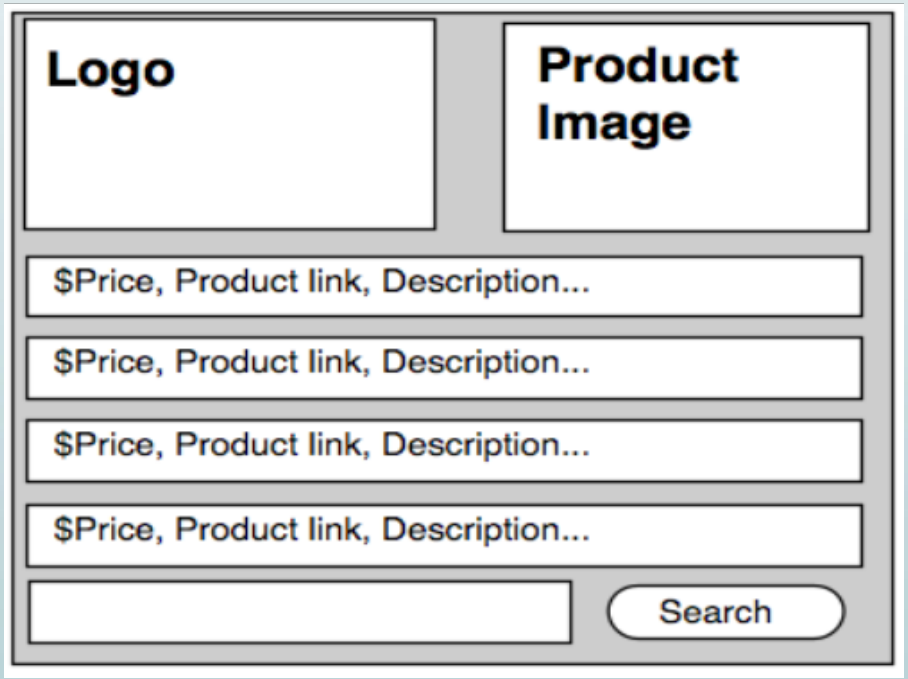
- Try to get repeat business, repeat clients

Business

- Defend repeat business by adding services/features
- Carefully choose new offerings

Lessons Learned

- Use software to automate repetitive tasks
- Look out for open ended statements in requirements
- There's no such thing as too much testing
- Quick estimating; multiply your best guess by two
- Wireframes are better for selling than rough drafts



Typical Gadget Ad Features

- Contextual
  - served by the Google AdWords system with *rawquery* parameter containing keywords matching context
- Geo-aware
  - given parameters *city, region* and/or *latitude, longitude*
- Query Google Base or a custom API
  - query the API with the given parameters
- Display items, image, location

Google Gadget Ads Examples

Google Gadget Ads

- aka Rich Media Interactive ads

Monetizing Your Products

Ad Networks - PPC

Affiliate Networks - PPA

Monetization - Gadgets

Drive quality traffic to your site

Monetize on the Gadget

Tips:
- Find a niche and grow from it
- Start small, iterate and monetize
- Listen to your users, provide them with value

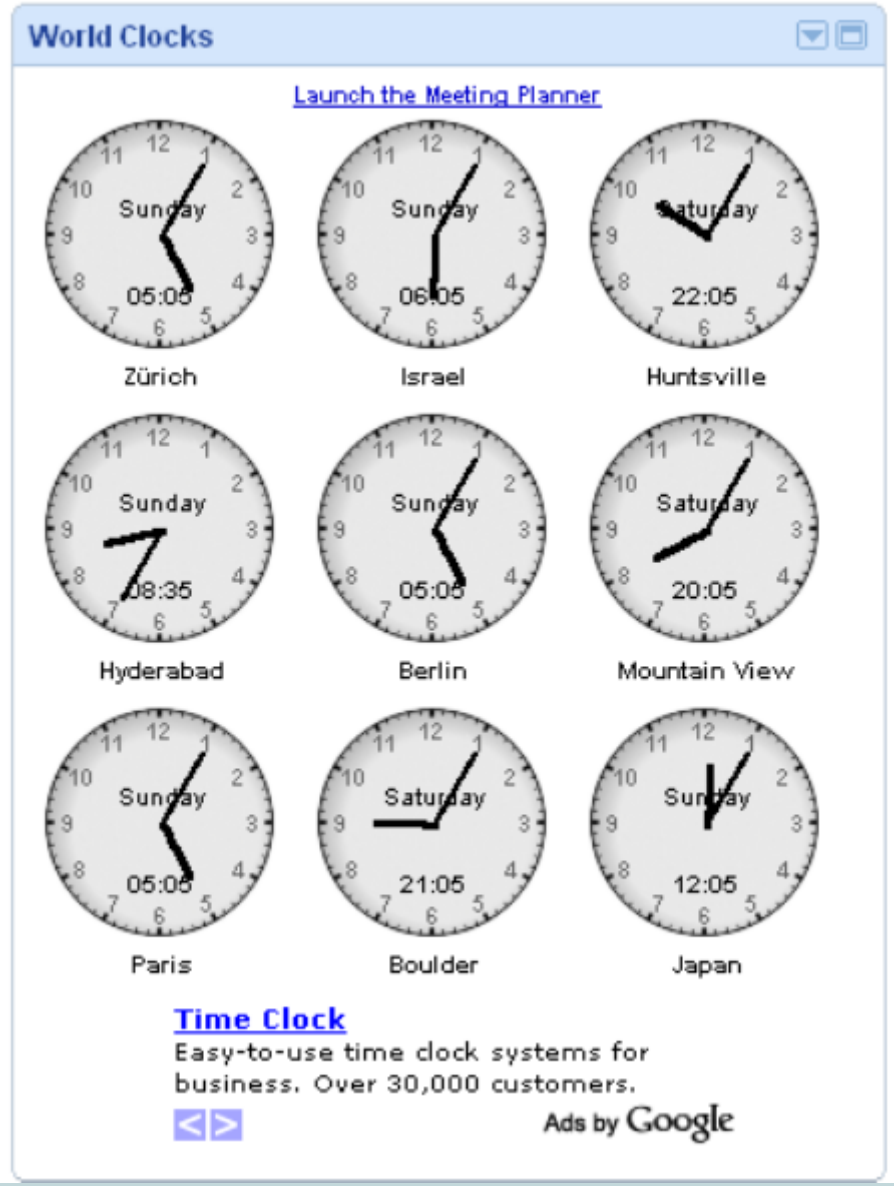
Monetization - Gadgets - Examples

AdSense in Gadget

Monetizing by topics

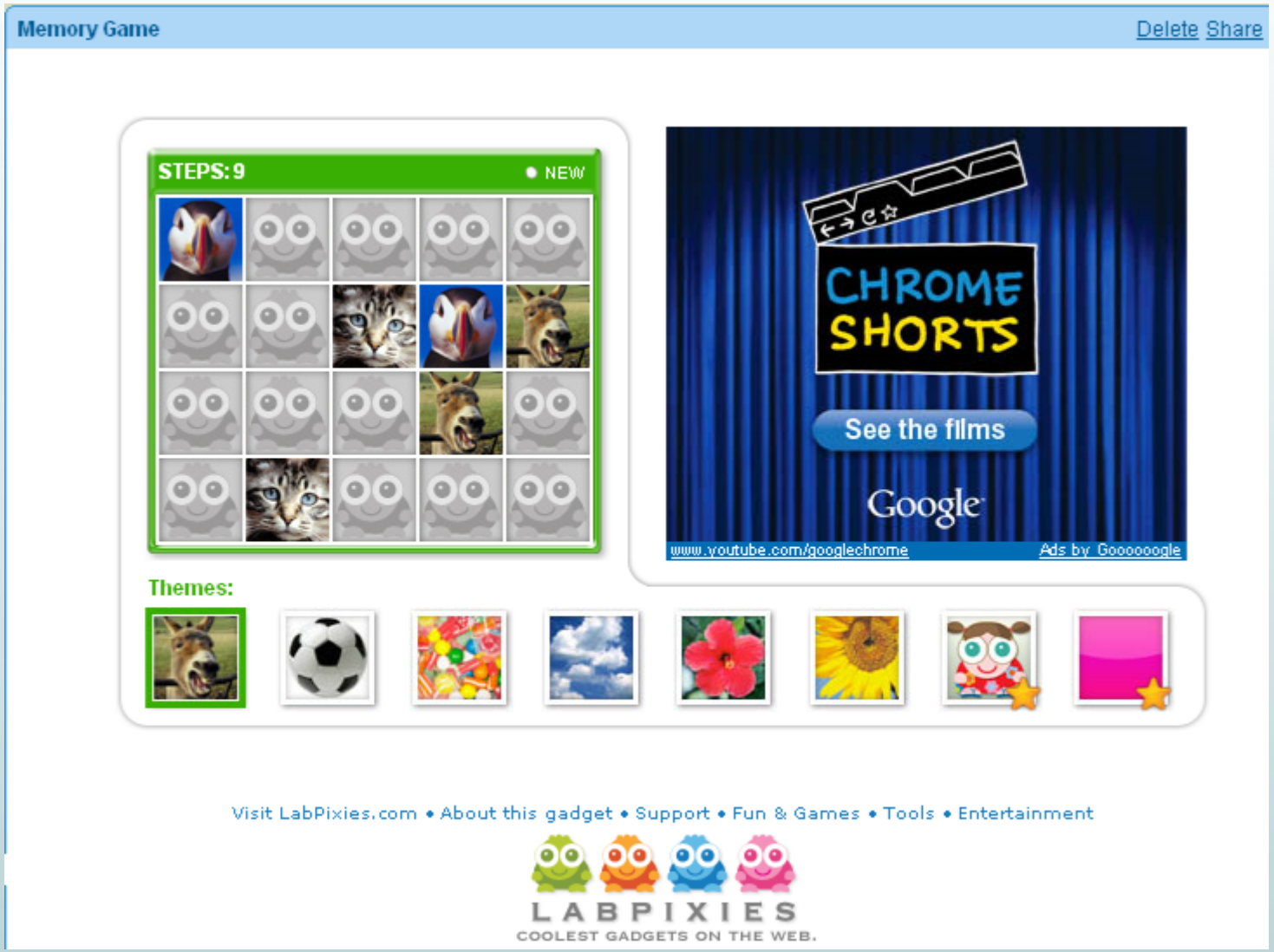
Ad pitfalls:

- Low CTR, low score
- Topic matching difficult
- Low inventory
- Policies



Monetization - Gadgets - Examples

AdSense in Gadget Canvas View



Monetization - Gadgets - Examples

Affiliate links – Woot!

Amazon #1, CJ/LinkShare #2
To experiment with: Zanox Web Services

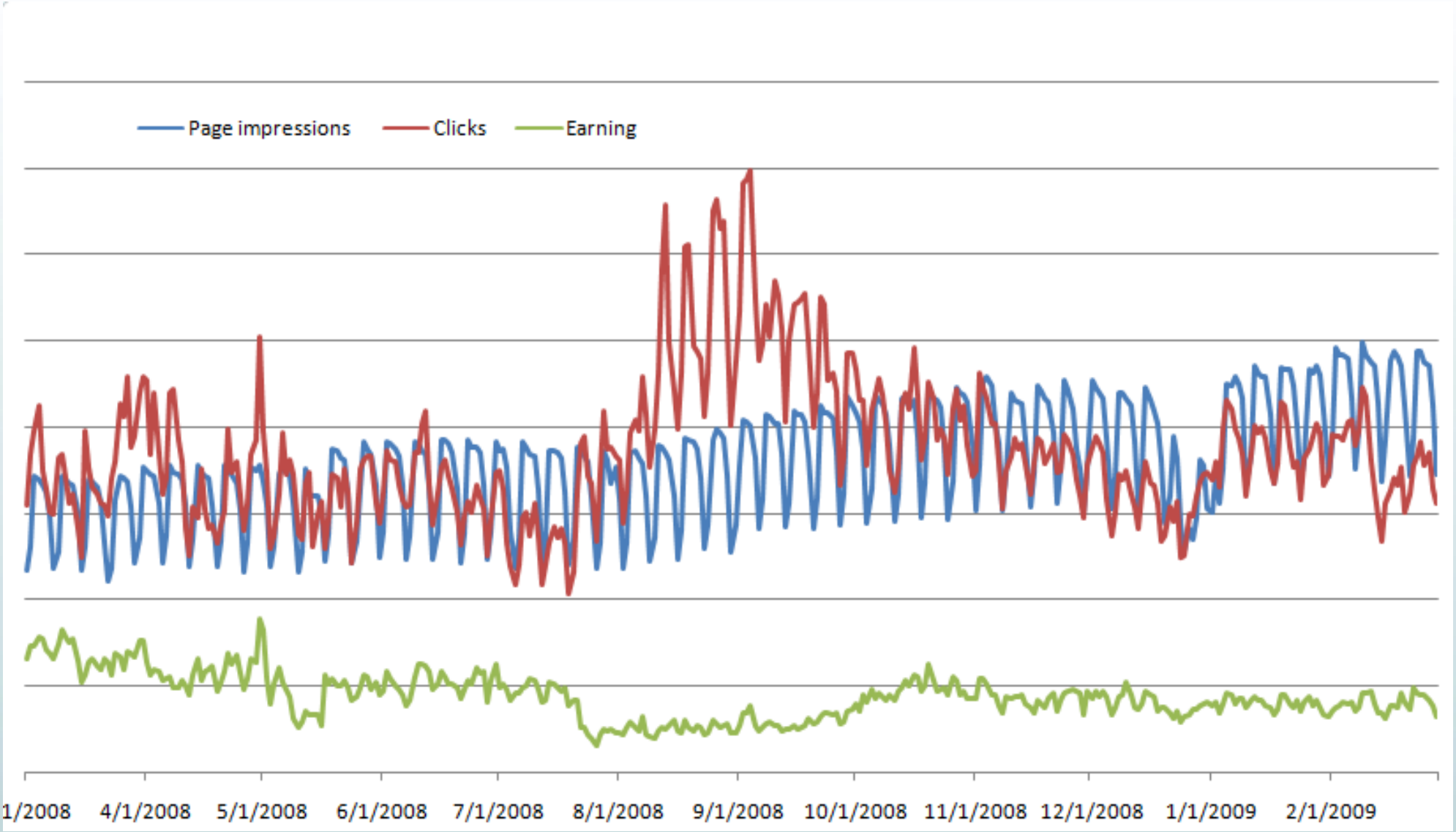
Monetization - Open Social apps

Same as Google Gadget monetization

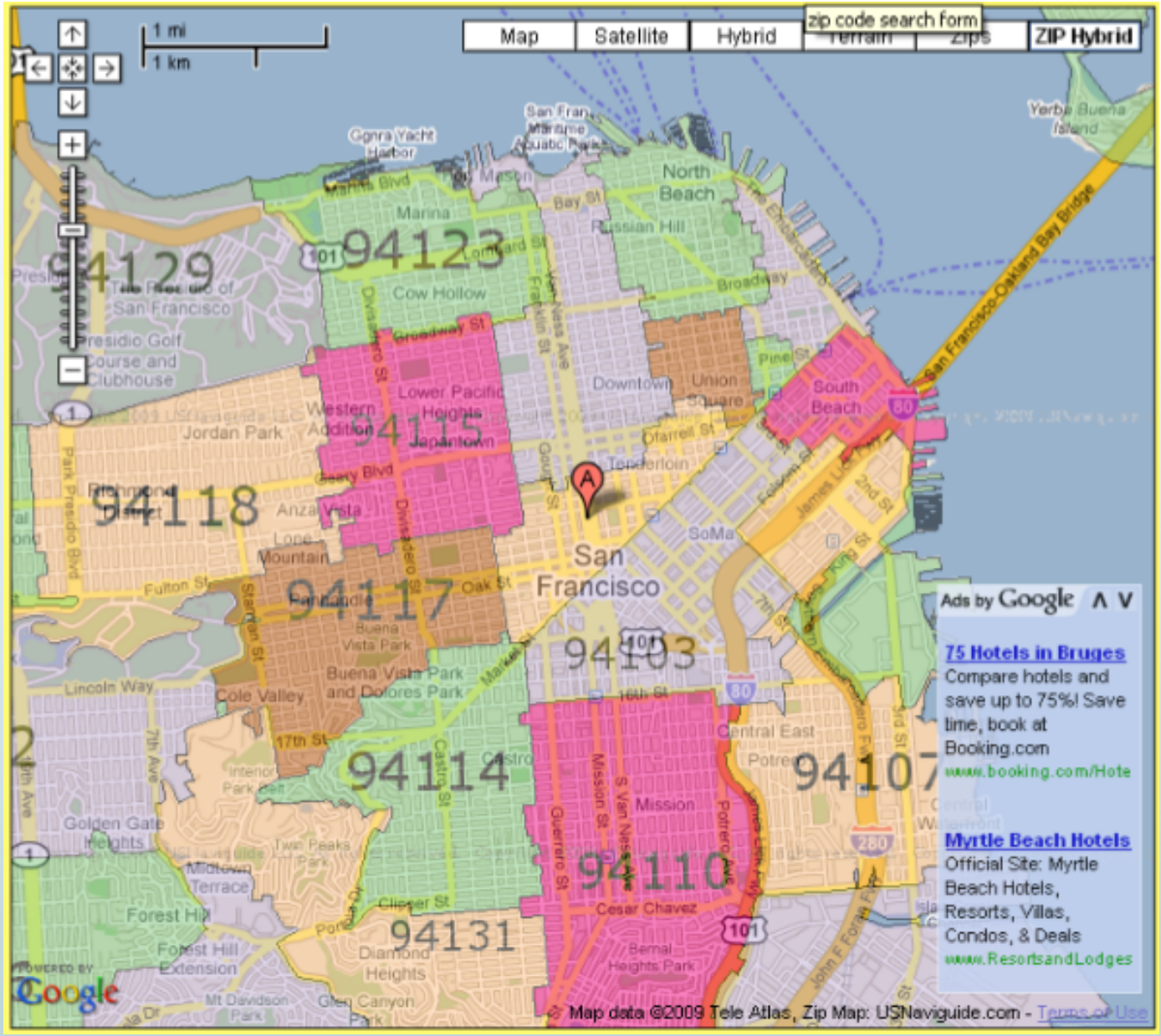
App canvas ads or linking to monetized site

Tip: Check each social platform terms of use regarding monetization - usually restricted regarding ads and linking away from social site

Monetization - Some Data



Monetization - Map Ad Units



Running a Start-up on the Cheap (free)

Infrastructure, framework and APIs for free

- App Engine - scalable cloud computing
- YouTube - Video hosting
- GWT - AJAX Framework
- Maps - Mapping, geo coding, etc.
- AuthSub - User authentification
- etc.

Kick-off your startup without seed capital

Community Participation

…or how to get your expertise recognized

Google Groups for each Google API/Technology

- Some groups recognize their experts (i.e. API Gurus)
- Clients looking for freelancers often check related Groups

Communicate with Googlers - they might send you customers in the future

Business Sustainability

Sustainable business; generates enough sales to cover the cost of doing business plus a living for you and employees, ie. break-even point

The real question;

Will the business provide enough value to keep customers paying as much or more as the break-even point from now on?

Questions?

?

An unabridged version of this presentation can be found at:

http://echo3.net/googleio

Overview of Money Making Work Areas

Freelancing

Monetization

Entrepreneurial project on the cheap

Freelancing - Google Gadgets

iGoogle

Gadgets | Themes

Sort by
Hottest
» Most users
Newest

Narrow by category
» All categories
Editor's picks (New!)
News
Tools
Communication
Fun & Games
Finance
Sports
Lifestyle
Technology
Politics

Add feed or gadget

Add it now

Date & Time

Add a clock to your page. Click edit to change it to the color of your choice.

http://www.google.com/

By Google
10,192,472 users
1402 ratings

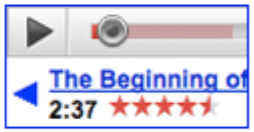
Add it now

CNN.com

CNN.com delivers up-to-the-minute news and information on the latest top stories, weather, entertainment, politics and more.

http://rss.cnn.com/

From rss.cnn.com
9,239,824 users
36 ratings



Add it now

Official YouTube Gadget

Browse, search and watch YouTube videos right inside iGoogle.

http://www.google.com/

By Google
7,440,686 users
50 ratings

Add it now

How to of the Day

Learn (and occasionally laugh) with wikiHow's, "How-to of the Day". Try a new skill every day after reading these articles with step by step images and videos. Learn new skills, solve everyday problems. From wikiHow, the wiki how-to manual.

http://www.wikihow.com/

From wikihow.com
3,153,551 users
31 ratings

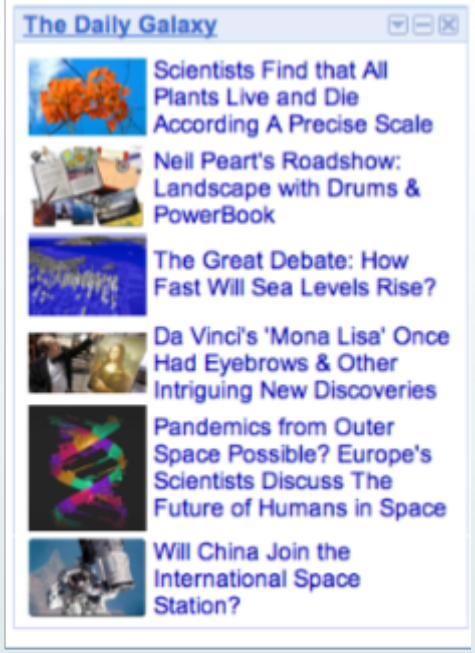
Freelancing - Google Gadgets

Tens of Millions of Users

Freelancing - Google Gadgets

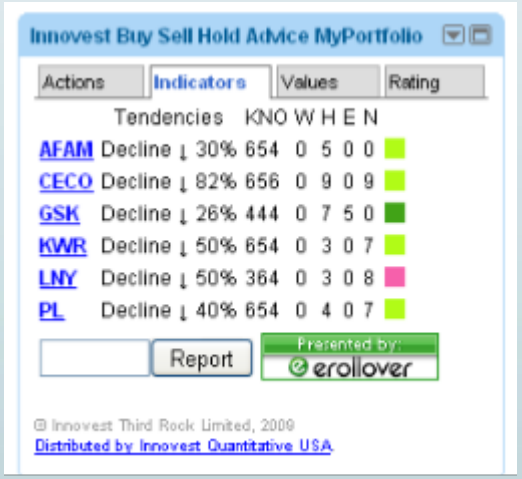
Content providers seeking for

- More visits from their existing users
- More users, which turns in more visits



Selling points:

1. Syndicate existing iGoogle users
2. Drive quality traffic to client site
3. Acquire new users



Freelancing - Open Social apps

Social extension to gadgets

- For content providers
- Leverage the audience of friends

<u>Selling points:</u>

1. Same as Gadgets
2. Larger reach (100Ms of users)
3. Viral spread – faster new users acquisition

Tips: Understand the client users' demographic to target the right social sites

Freelancing - Mapplets

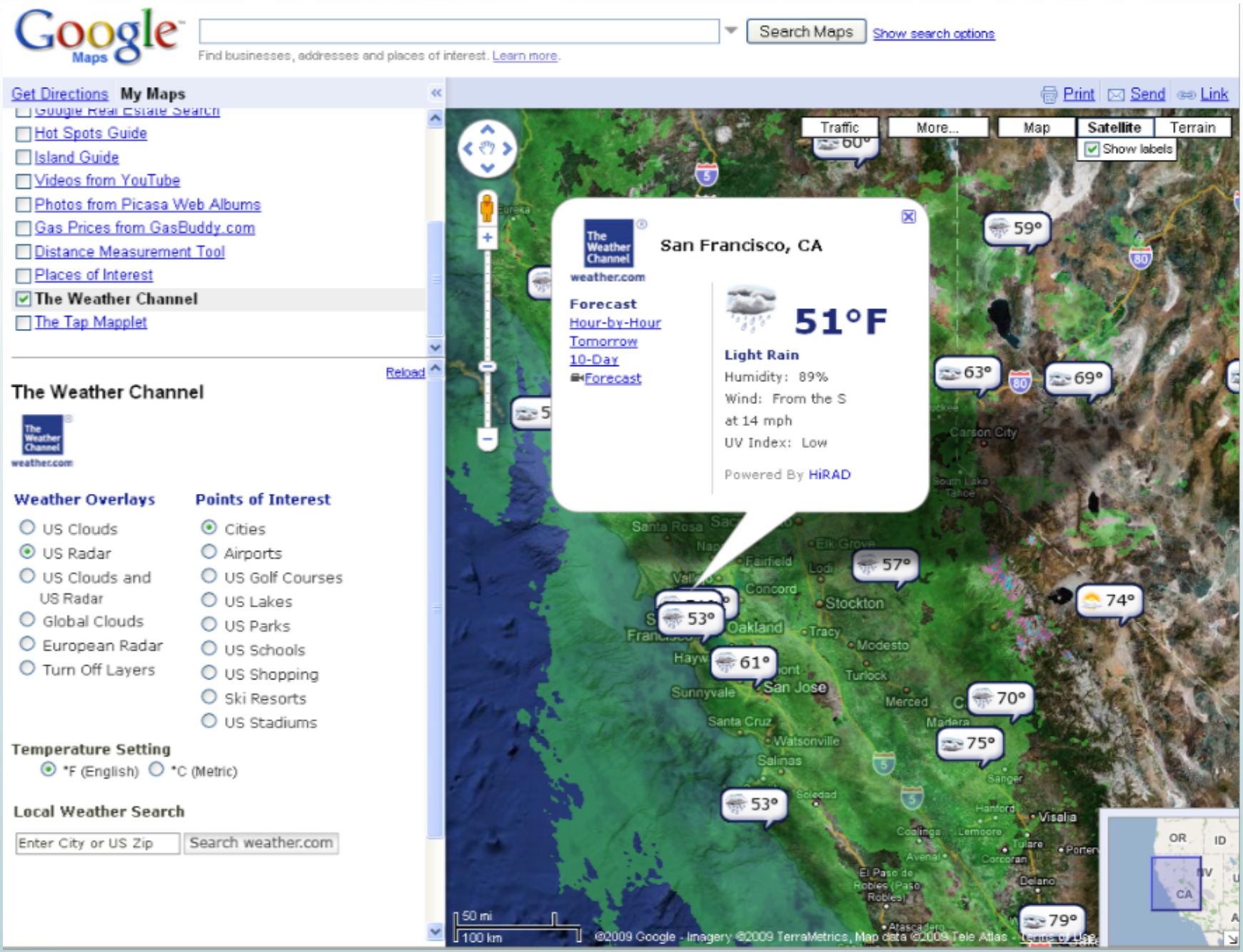
Smaller niche for clients with geo content

Skill sets same to Gadgets + Maps API

Selling point:

1. Reach Google Maps users with geo data
2. Additional deliverable with little more work

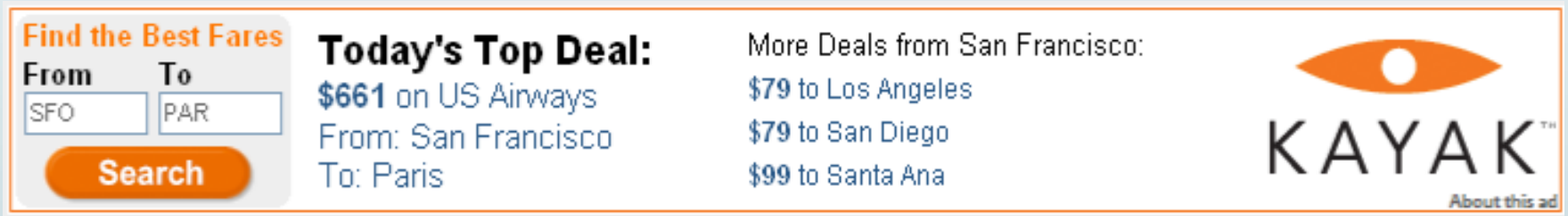
Freelancing - Mapplets



Freelancing - Google Gadget Ads

Higher tier clients, marketing focused

Same skill sets as Gadgets + Base, Maps API, etc.
To leverage contextual data, geo, customer APIs



Tip: Google Qualified Gadget Ad Expert

Freelancing - Google Friend Connect

[PMB] Polling System

Which movie are you interested in seeing with the group next Wednesday, April 22nd? (0 votes)

poll closed Tue Apr 21 22:00:00 2009

Adventureland [R]

0 votes 0%

Starring: Kristen Stewart, **Ryan Reynolds** :), Bill Hader, Martin Starr, Kristen Wiig

Synopsis: It's the summer of 1987, and James Brennan, an uptight, recent college grad, can't wait to embark on his dream tour of Europe. But when his parents announce they can no longer subsidize his trip, James has little choice but to take a lowly job at a local amusement park. Forget about German beer, world-famous museums, and cute French girls-James's summer will now be populated by belligerent dads, stuffed pandas, and screaming kids high on cotton candy. Lucky for James, what should be his worst summer ever turns into quite an adventure when he discovers love in the most unlikely place.

Official Website

Fast & Furious - New Model. Original Parts. [PG-13]

0 votes 0%

Starring: Vin Diesel, Paul Walker, Michelle Rodriguez, Jordana Brewster, John Ortiz

gadgets by ECHO3

Monetization - my-recipe-box.com

Freelancing - Others

High demand for Google API freelancers

- Google Maps – best in class mapping
- App Engine – web apps designed to scale
- GWT – demand in fast growth
- Android

App Engine Example

Fetch/Cache Real Estate Company listings

```
Make Google Base queries for          listings
where          is [customer id: 6218510]

Recommended:
        &zip=#####
        or
        &city=[city name]&state=[state abbrev]

Optional:
        &bedrooms=[#]
        &range=[## miles] default 30 mi, 10 min
        &limit=[#] default 10, 250 max, 1 min
        &start=[#] default 1

Testing:
        &cid=[customer id] default 6218510
        &cache=[cache life in seconds] default 24 * 3600, 0 = nocache
```

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Freelancing

Monetization

Entrepreneurial project on the cheap

Monetization - Gadgets

Drive quality traffic to your monetized site
Additional content or services outside gadget

Monetize on the Gadget

PPC Ad networks (AdSense)
Affiliate Marketing (CJ, Amazon, LinkShare, Zanox)
Tips:
- Find a niche and grow from it
- Start small, iterate and monetize
- Listen to your users, provide them with value

Monetization - Gadgets - Examples

AdSense – World Clocks

Monetizing by topics

Ad pitfalls:

- Low CTR, low score
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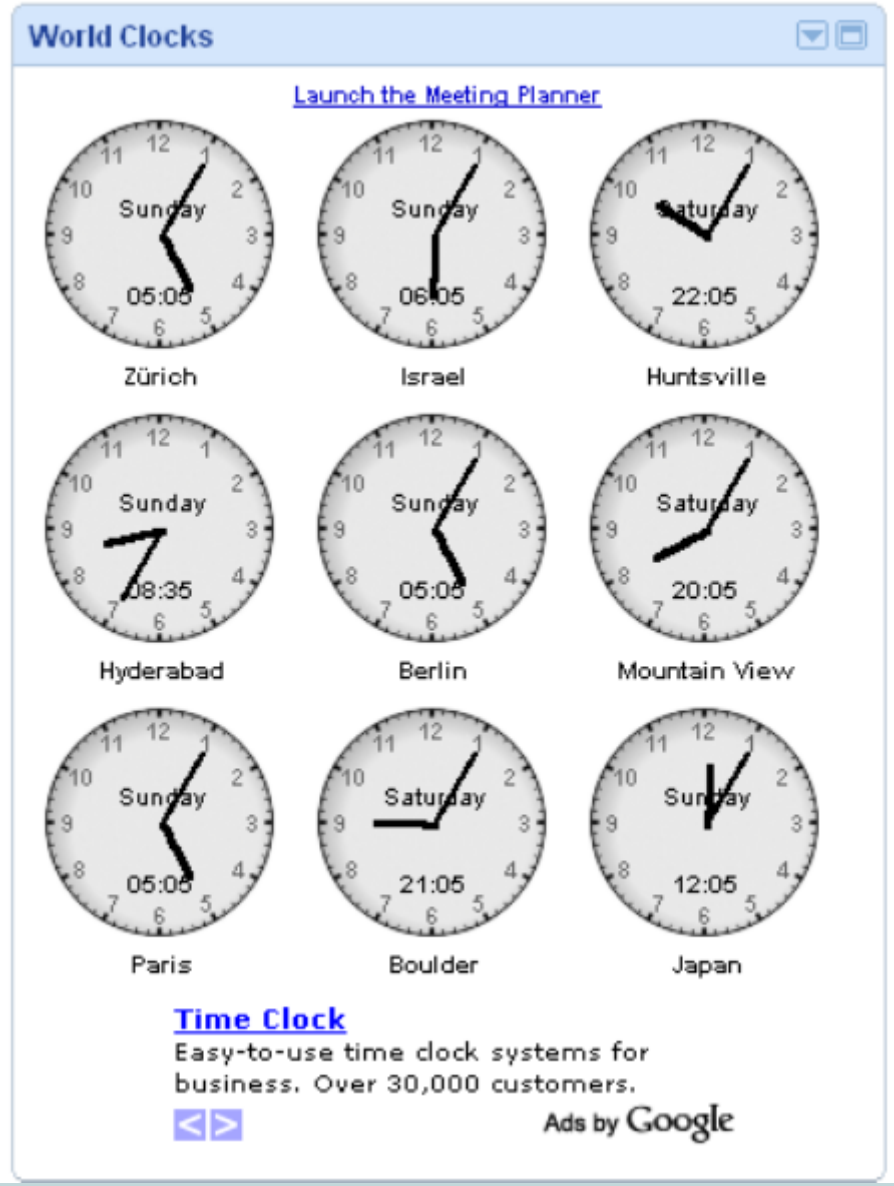

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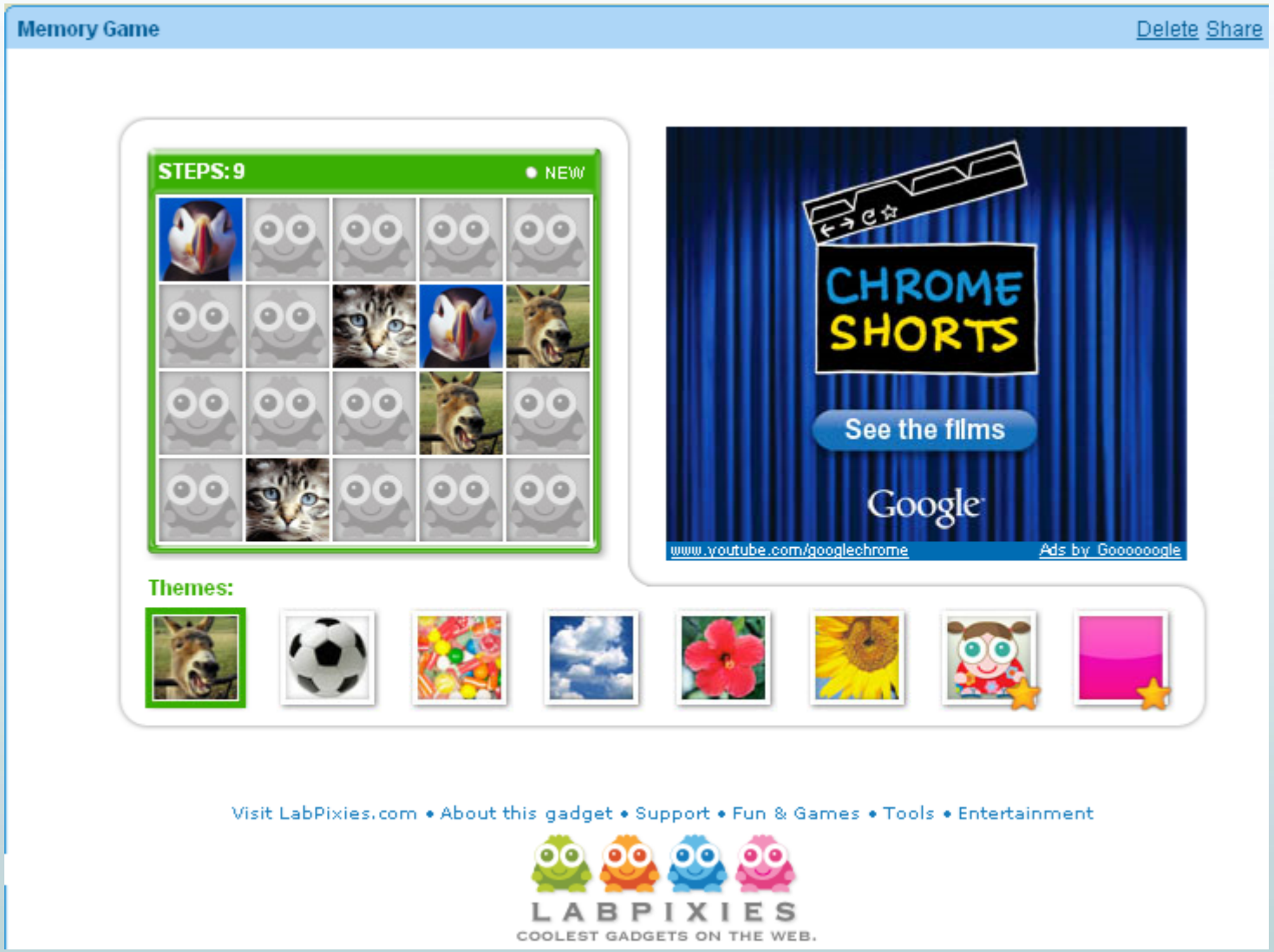

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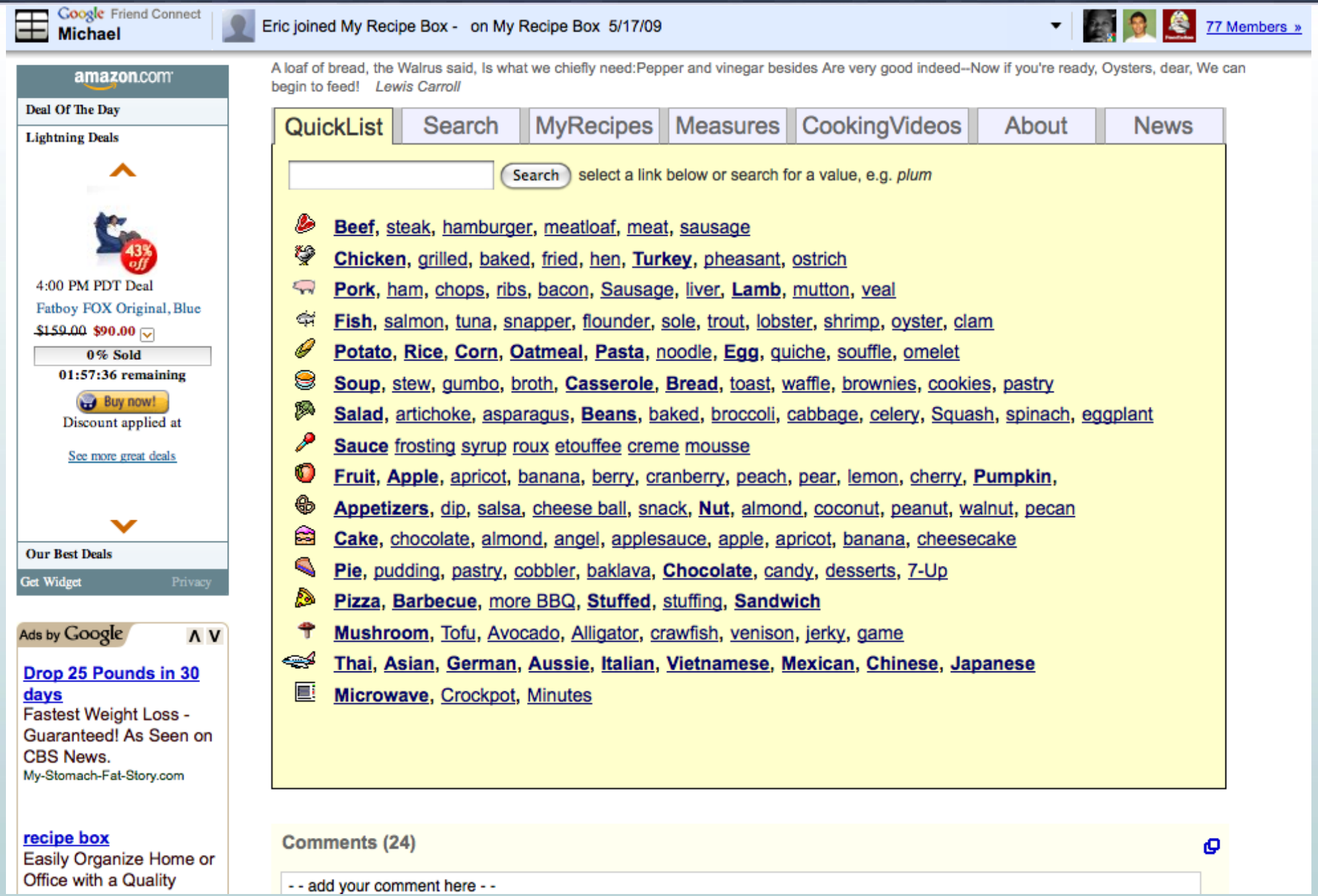
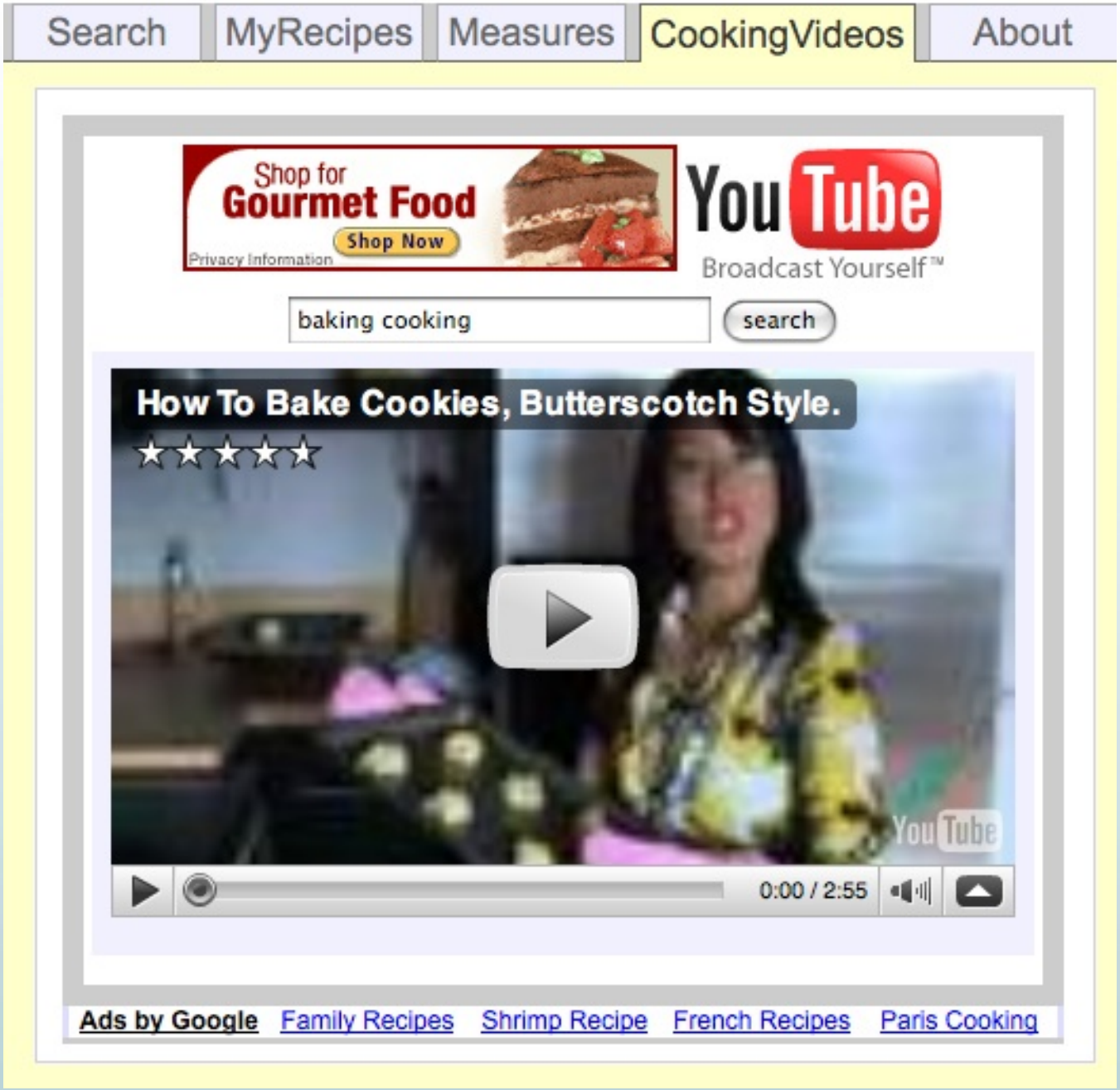


Monetization - GFC my-recipe-box.com



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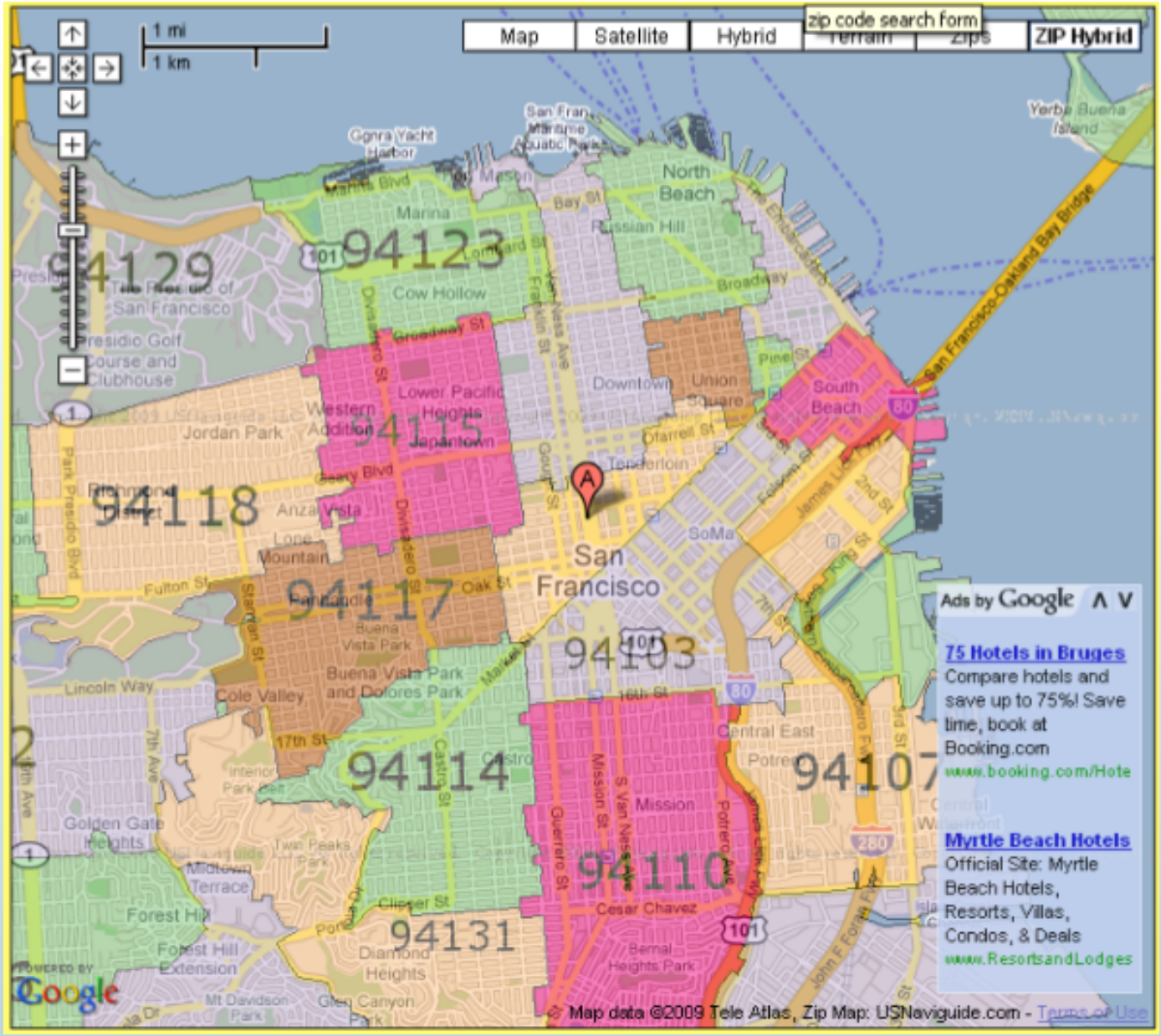
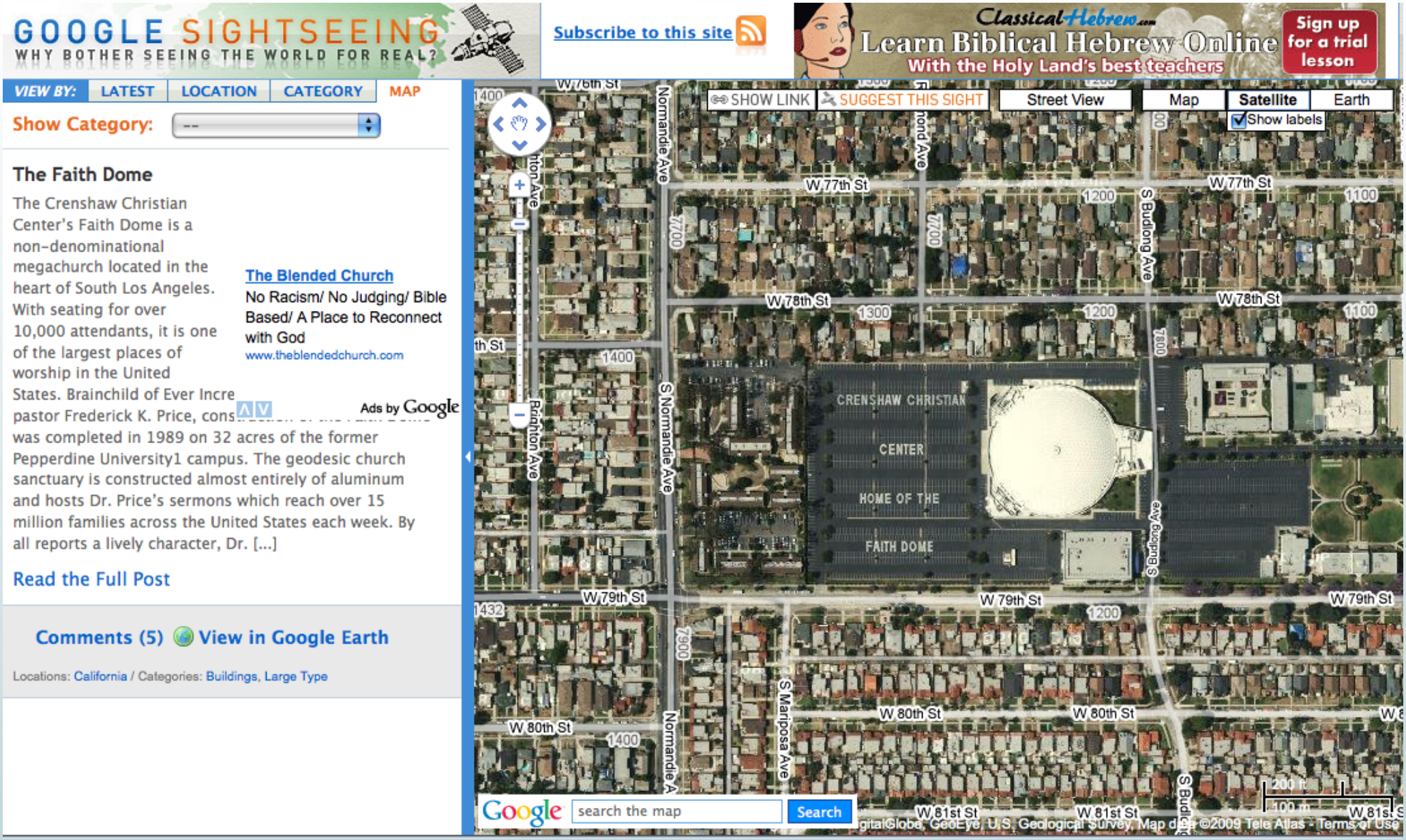


Monetization - Maps API GoogleBar



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