

Enterprise Tuesday
Make it Brilliant and They Will Come
The story of Evi
10th February 2015

William Tunstall-Pedoe
Evi (an Amazon company)

What is Evi?



- Company founded in Cambridge (as True Knowledge)
 - Full time effort from late 2005
- Automatic question-answering
- Multiple pivots
- Multiple rounds of angel/VC finance
- Successful acquisition by Amazon in late 2012
 - Evi is now a subsidiary of Amazon
 - Amazon now a major employer here in Cambridge

Who am I?



- William Tunstall-Pedoe
- Founder of business
- Developed core technology
- Cambridge Compsci (Churchill)
 - Student in first ever 1A CST course
 - Former attendee of Enterprise Tuesday lectures...



Evi Vision



People instantly able to get any information,
on any subject....
just by asking for it

Evi Vision



Big Hairy Audacious Goal:

“Answering any question, in any language, in
one second or less”

Six things this requires



1. Knowledge representation:
 - Getting world's knowledge in computer understandable form
2. Understanding natural language
3. Common sense knowledge
4. Inference
5. Natural language generation
6. *Speech recognition and synthesis**

* *Evi's core technology is 1-5*

Technology



- Deep technology developed in 1999/2000
- Structured knowledge and inference
- Broad approach is now common:
 - Google Knowledge Graph (2010)
 - Wolfram Alpha (2009)

Evi financing



- 2006: government grant + F&F money (£75k+£45k)
 - 3 people working in St Johns Innovation Centre
 - One year of work and a crude demo
- 2007: Angel round (£650k)
- 2008: First real Venture Capital round (£2m)
 - Octopus Ventures
- Many further financing rounds followed...

What is a Pivot?



- Success in business requires iteration
- A pivot is a significant change in direction
 - But still based on core strength
- With Evi (True Knowledge) the vision stayed exactly the same
 - but needed **four** different attempts to find success

#1: Stand-alone website (~2006)



- First attempt: stand-alone consumer website
 - www.trueknowledge.com
- Consumers could ask questions and add knowledge
- Web-search would be shown when not answered



[true knowledge]™

Direct answers to human
and machine questions

[Home](#) [About](#) [Beta](#) [API](#) [Technology](#) [Blog](#) [News](#) [Jobs](#) [Contact](#)



True Knowledge is an internet search company. Our [unique technology](#) represents general knowledge in a form that computers can understand and process.

We are using it to build a repository of the world's knowledge that can be used to directly answer questions from humans and other computers... [\(more\)](#)

WE'RE HIRING!

We are looking for passionate and talented individuals to join our growing team. [Visit our jobs pages](#) to see if True Knowledge is right for you.

+ NEWS

True Knowledge launches private beta
True Knowledge, the internet search company, is seeking interested users to participate in the [private beta testing](#) of its consumer website... [\(more\)](#)

True Knowledge raises first round of venture capital from Octopus Ventures
True Knowledge, the internet search company has raised more than \$1.2m to fund the development and marketing of its [unique technology](#). [\(more\)](#)

+ BETA TEST WEBSITE

Help us test our technology and request an account:

Email:

We value your [privacy](#). We will not sell or rent your email address to third parties.

Existing users log in here:

Username:

Password:

[Forgotten password?](#)

Please watch our [demo video](#) (just 7 mins). It should rapidly give you a good overview of our technology.



[true knowledge]™

How can I help?

is madonna single?

→ GO

Examples of what you can type:

Is Tony Blair older than George W. Bush?

Who was president of the US in 1876? [\(More...\)](#)

[add knowledge](#)

No

There were two interpretations of your question, but they both resulted in the same answer. When you said "single", I understood you to mean one of the following:

- single (not married or in a committed relationship with another person)
- not joined by marriage (monogamous) to another person

This conclusion is based on a single fact in the knowledge base:

[Madonna has been married to Guy Ritchie since the 22nd of December 2000](#) [\(endorse\)](#) [\(contradict\)](#)

(I understood your question to mean: **Determine whether single (an ambiguous term) is an attribute which applies to Madonna Louise Ciccone, the famous singer of popular music at the current time?**)

External web pages (using standard web search):

[Madonna](#)

Official **Madonna** site with galleries, news, music, media, and fan club.

<http://www.madonna.com/> - 19k

[Unreleased Madonna single slips onto Net | CNET News.com](#)

Unreleased **Madonna single** slips onto Net | The pop singer weighs in on the Net music piracy wars after a copy of an unreleased **single** finds its way onto ...

<http://news.com.com/2100-1023-241341.html> - 37k





How can I help?

GO

Examples of what you can type:
[Is Sean Connery resident in Scotland?](#)
[What is Mexico's currency?](#)
[\(More examples...\)](#)

[true knowledge]

[Home](#) | [Forum](#) | [Blog](#) | [Wiki](#) | [Prefs](#) | [Recent Activity](#) | [League Table](#) | [Add Knowledge](#) | Logged in as [johnsmith](#)

Here is the answer that I found:

- **10:01:01 PDT on the 21st of October 2007**

I used the following facts to provide this answer:

- [the Googleplex has always been in Mountain View \(Silicon Valley\), California](#) ([endorse](#)) ([contradict](#))
- [Mountain View \(Silicon Valley\), California has been in Santa Clara County, CA since at least November 2006](#) ([endorse](#)) ([contradict](#))
- [Santa Clara County, CA has been in california since at least November 2006](#) ([endorse](#)) ([contradict](#))
- [california has been in the Pacific Standard Time region since at least 00:00:00 UTC on the 13th of July 2007](#) ([endorse](#)) ([contradict](#))
- [the Pacific Standard Time region is a time zone area](#) ([endorse](#)) ([contradict](#))
- [Pacific Daylight Time has been the time zone for the Pacific Standard Time region between 10:00 UTC on the 11th of March 2007 and 10:00 UTC on the 4th of November 2007](#) ([endorse](#)) ([contradict](#))
- [-7 hours is the time zone differential of Pacific Daylight Time](#) ([endorse](#)) ([contradict](#))

(I understood your question to mean: **What is the current local time at the location of the Googleplex, Google Inc's headquarters in Mountain View, California?**)

[Click here for a more detailed explanation of the answer](#)

External web pages (using standard web search):

[TIME: Life in the Googleplex Photo Essay](#)

TIME: Life in the Googleplex; Inside Google Headquarters __ Click here to visit our advertiser.

An employee at the Googleplex he ...

http://www.time.com/time/photoessays/2006/inside_google/



How can I help?

[GO](#)

Examples of what you can type:
[Who was the president of the US](#)
[Who is Peru's president?](#)
[\(More examples...\)](#)

[true knowledge]™

[Home](#) | [Forum](#) | [Blog](#) | [Wiki](#) | [Recent Activity](#) | [League Table](#) | [Add Knowledge](#)

Here is the answer that I found:

- **the age 118 years, 9 months and 20 days old**

This conclusion is based on a single fact in the knowledge base:

the 31st of March 1889 is the date of creation of the Eiffel Tower ([endorse](#)) ([contradict](#))

(I understood your question to mean: **Which ages are an attribute which applies to the Eiffel Tower, the tall iron tower in Paris, France at the current time?**)

[Click here for a more detailed explanation of the answer.](#)

External web pages (using standard web search):

[Paris Eiffel Tower News: Paris Photos](#)

Paris Eiffel Tower News helps you to discover Paris with the ... Paris Eiffel Tower News Paris Eiffel Tower News Home Page Links: ...
<http://paris-eiffel-tower-news.com/photos-of-paris.html>

[Eiffel Tower Gifts and Souvenirs - from Souvenirs of Paris](#)

... 2006). Our collection of Eiffel Tower souvenirs and Eiffel Tower gifts offers everything ... Tower Blue Silk Scarf \$48 Eiffel Tower silk scarf Eiffel Tower Orange Silk Scarf \$48 See More Eiffel Tower Scarves Paris ...
<http://www.souvenirsofparis.com/eiffel-tower/souvenirs-gifts.htm>



[Sign in](#)



[Web](#) [Images](#) [Groups](#) [News](#) [Froogle](#) [Desktop](#) [more »](#)

is Madonna single?

Search

[Advanced Search](#)
[Preferences](#)

Search: the web pages from the UK

Web

Results 1 - 10 of about 3,010,000 for **is Madonna single?** (0.21 seconds)

[Madonna](#)

Official **Madonna** site with galleries, news, music, media, and fan club.

www.madonna.com/ - 19k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[BBC News | ENTERTAINMENT | Madonna single 'leaked' online](#)

Madonna joins the fight against MP3 internet firm Napster after her new **single** is made available for downloading months early.

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/774438.stm - 30k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Unreleased Madonna single slips onto Net | CNET News.com](#)

Unreleased **Madonna single** slips onto Net | The pop singer weighs in on the Net music piracy wars after a copy of an unreleased **single** finds its way onto ...

news.com.com/2100-1023-241341.html - 34k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Holiday \(Madonna song\) - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

Due to the success of "Holiday" in the clubs, the song became the first **single** from **Madonna's** debut album, receiving a commercial 7" **single** release. ...

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holiday_\(Madonna_song\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holiday_(Madonna_song)) - 36k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Madonna single leaked via Napster | The Register](#)

The **single**, to be **Madonna's** next **single** and the title track of her new album, Music, was due for a September or October release. But the song was apparently ...

www.theregister.co.uk/2000/06/02/madonna_single_leaked_via_napster/ - 30k -

[Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)




Web [Images](#) [Video](#) [News](#) [Maps](#) [Mail](#) [more](#) ▼

Google [Advanced Search](#)
[Preferences](#)

Web Results 1 - 10 of about 2,680,000 for **what time** is it

[TIME: Life in the Googleplex Photo Essay](#)
TIME: Life in the Googleplex: Inside Google Headquarters.
www.time.com/time/photoessays/2006/inside_google/ - 14k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[TIME: Life in the Googleplex Photo Essay \(1\)](#) 
TIME Photo Essay: Life in the Googleplex: Inside Google Headquarters . Desktop gizmos and. EROS HOAGLAND / REDUX FOR TIME ...
www.time.com/time/photoessays/2006/inside_google/1.html - 20k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)
[[More results from www.time.com](#)]

[Google Corporate Information: Culture](#)
Google's world headquarters building is located in Mountain View, California, ... **real time** searches rising from the surface of the globe toward space, ...
www.google.com/corporate/culture.html - 12k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Benefits](#)
Parental leave and take-out benefit also apply. See **Time Away**. ... **At Google headquarters** in Mountain View, there's on-site oil change, car wash, ...
www.google.com/support/jobs/bin/static.py?page=benefits.html - 19k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Wired 11.05: Inside the Soul of the Web](#)
The display sits on a shelf on the second floor of **Google's headquarters**, ... On the bottom,



[Sign in](#)



[Web](#) [Images](#) [Groups](#) [News](#) [Froogle](#) [Desktop](#) [more »](#)

How old is the Eiffel Tower?

Search

[Advanced Search](#)
[Preferences](#)

Search: the web pages from the UK

Web

Results 1 - 10 of about 1,150,000 for How **old** is the **Eiffel Tower**?. (0.27 seconds)

[Eiffel Tower in Paris France. When was the Eiffel Tower built ...](#)

Evoking the construction of the **Eiffel Tower**, operation of the **old** hydraulic elevator that ran to the top until 1983 and the current elevator. ...

[www.group-trotter.net/france/places/eiffel/eiffel.html](#) - 21k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Eiffel Tower](#)

The **old** 200-franc banknote (the equivalent of slightly less than \$US 40 at one time) has several pictures of the **Eiffel Tower** on it, as well as a picture of ...

[www.atkielski.com/main/EiffelTowerFAQ.html](#) - 50k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Travel Trivia](#)

It's probably one of the most recognizable structures in the world. And we've uncovered some interesting facts. **How old is the Eiffel Tower? 55 years old ...**

[www.offbeattravel.com/trivia.html](#) - 13k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Metropole Paris The Eiffel Tower](#)

The 106-year-**old Eiffel Tower** Is In Fine Shape. Paris:- Wednesday, 18. June 1997:- Without doubt, the best place to start a trip to the top of the Tour ...

[www.metropoleparis.com/1997/70623225/eiffel.html](#) - 31k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[The latest news](#)

Spreading holiday cheer to young and **old** alike, the **Eiffel Tower** offers a decorative visit of the monument during this holiday season. ...

[www.tour-eiffel.fr/teiffel/uk/actualites/page/news_list.html?Year=2003](#) - 30k -

[Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)



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add a fact (step 10)



← **back**

Please tell me about the source of the fact that Alan Wallace is a founder of Katalyst Ventures.

Are you the source for this fact?

- Yes
 No

If you are not the source, please enter the source of the fact here:

katalyst

If you know the fact because somebody else with direct experience told it to you, enter the **name** of that person.

If you got the fact from a **website**, enter the name of the site or the **web address** of the page where you saw the fact.

Or, for example, if you know it because you read it in a **newspaper**, or saw it on the **television**, enter the name of the newspaper or TV programme.

You can also enter additional information about how you know the fact here, to help other users understand where the fact came from. For example, if you have cited a newspaper as a source you can give the date and page number here.

Entering this information is optional. (Maximum 500 characters.)

This is mentioned on the company website. The company gave his name in an email listing the founders and he has also told me this himself.

submit →

[◀ Previous post](#)

[Next post ▶](#)

November 8 2007

True Knowledge Launches Natural Language Search Engine

Michael Arrington

[31 comments »](#)

Cambridge, UK-based **True Knowledge** released its natural language search engine into private beta yesterday (a story broken by **TechCrunchUK**).

Like the much-anticipated **Powerset**, the company aims to give appropriate answers to natural language queries, even if key query terms are not included in the data being indexed. Current search engines are unable to return appropriate results for these queries.

At first glance True Knowledge and Powerset are competitors - but in fact they really aren't. Powerset is both indexing the web and working to convert natural language queries into database-understandable queries. True Knowledge is only tackling half the problem - the conversion of queries. They are not indexing the web.

Instead, True Knowledge is grabbing data from structured databases, like, for example, the CIA Factbook. In many ways, they are more comparable with **Freebase**, a startup focused on gathering



Result of first attempt



- Competing directly with Google
- Great technology demo
 - but no significant consumer traction
- Company lacked product and UX expertise

Ugly baby syndrome



Just as people don't tell proud parents when they have an ugly baby...
...founders rarely get feedback about things they are doing badly.

Our website was *very weak* from a design point-of-view.
...a lesson we didn't learn until 2011

#2: Platform for 'Big Search' (~2008)



- Second attempt (first pivot):
 - License technology to “Big Search”
 - (Google, Bing, Yahoo, Yandex, Baidu....)
- Box at the top of search results
 - when direct answer possible



MUST READ: [Capture the Flag: Meet the team bossing one of the toughest ha](#)

Topic: [CXO](#)

Follow via:

True Knowledge API lies at the heart of real business model

Summary: *Semantically powered question answering start-up True Knowledge today made its Semantic Search API available for public consumption, taking the next step on the company's journey out of beta and providing a clear steer as to the way in which they intend to generate revenue. As the company's press release notes, "True Knowledge offers two distinct API services for developers: the 'Direct Answer API' and the 'Query API'.*



By Paul Miller for The Semantic Web | April 13, 2009 -- 22:01 GMT (23:01 BST)

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Semantically powered question answering start-up True Knowledge today made its Semantic Search API available for public consumption, taking the next step on the company's

True Knowledge

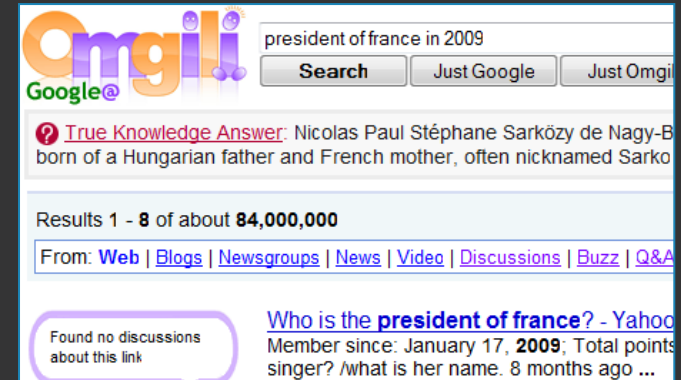
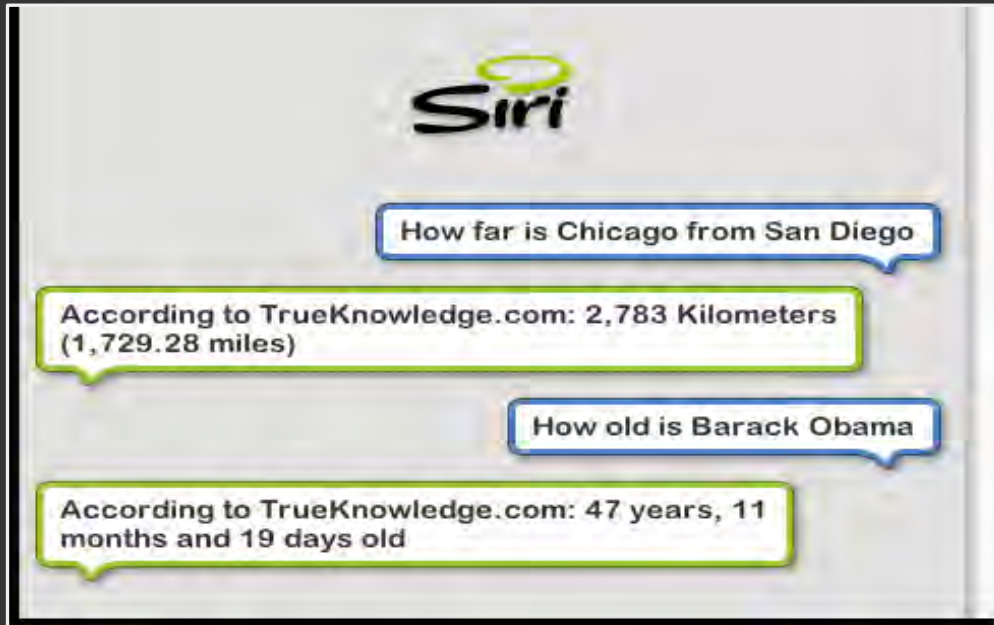
Result of attempt #2



- Solid engagement but no deal
- Not-invented-here
- Latency

- Some smaller (non Big Search) deals done though

API used in other products



Kosmix BETA-ISH

Full name Matthew Paige Damon	Height 5 feet and 10 inches	Starred in <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saving Private Ryan• The Departed• The Bourne Ultimatum• Ocean's Thirteen	Produced <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Battle of Shaker Heights• Feast• The People Speak• 5 feet and 10 inches
Born October 8th 1970 Cambridge Massachusetts	Spouse Luciana Boz n Barroso		

#3: SEO (June 2009-2010)



- Third attempt: get content into search by having it indexed
- SEO = Search Engine Optimisation
 - getting Google to send you free traffic
- No need to do deal with search engine
- Inferior user experience to direct integration
 - but much easier to achieve

SEO for trueknowledge.com



- trueknowledge.com/q/this_is_a_question
 - calls platform for “this is a question?”
 - Infinite questions -> Infinite pages
- Point Google at (millions of) valuable questions
 - Google indexes and sends customers to you
- (plus lots of black art)



population of iran 2010 - ...

www.google.com/search?q=population+of+iran+2010&btnG=Search

Web [Images](#) [Videos](#) [Maps](#) [News](#) [Shopping](#) [Gmail](#) [more](#) ▼

wreeve@gmail.com | [Settings](#) ▼ | [Sign out](#)

Google

population of iran 2010 Instant is on ▼

About 28,900,000 results (0.17 seconds) [Advanced search](#)

[population of Iran 2010 - True Knowledge](#) ☆ 🔍
Iranian Population Inside and Outside Iran 2010 - Topix. Jul 25, 2010. ... Facts and statistics about the Population of Iran. Updated as of 2010. ...
[www.trueknowledge.com/q/population_of_iran_2010](#) - Cached - Similar

[population of Iran in 2010 - True Knowledge](#) ☆ 🔍
What's the population of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2010? ...
[www.trueknowledge.com/q/population_of_iran_in_2010](#) - Cached - Similar

[What is the population of Iran in 2010? - True Knowledge](#) ☆ 🔍
Iranian Population Inside and Outside Iran 2010 - Topix. Jul 25, 2010. ...
[www.trueknowledge.com/.../what_is_the_population_of_iran_in_2010](#) - Cached
[+ Show more results from trueknowledge.com](#)

[Iran - CIA - The World Factbook](#) ☆ 🔍
9 Nov 2010 ... total population: 1.02 male(s)/female (2010 est.) Infant mortality rate: ...
conventional long form: Islamic Republic of Iran ...
[https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world.../ir.html](#) - Cached - Similar

Everything
Images
Videos
More
Show search tools



population of iran 2010 - ...

www.google.com/sea

Web [Images](#) [Videos](#) [Maps](#) [News](#) [Shopping](#)

Google

Everything
Images
Videos
More

Show search tools

popul
Iranian
about th
www.tr
popul
What's
www.tr
What i
Iranian
www.tr
+ Show

population of Iran 2010 - ...

www.trueknowledge.com/q/population_of_iran_2010

True Knowledge[®]

The Internet Answer Engine™ BETA

register sign in

@trueknowledge on Twitter True Knowledge on Facebook True Knowledge Blog Help/Contact Us

What would you like to know?

population of Iran 2010 ? answer


Share this: [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#)

Rate this answer: [vote up](#) [vote down](#) [report abuse](#)

population of Iran 2010

The population of Iran is approximately 74,196,000.

Iran wikipedia



Watch this video on [www.youtube.com](#)

Lexus LFA Official Video
A supercar unlike any other, for
experience.
OfficialLexusLFA

\$387/Day Part Time Work

Ads by AdSense [7]



WATCH THIS SPACE.

START HERE

Iran - [www.trueknowledge.com/q/population_of_iran_2010](#)

9 Nov 2010 ... total **population**: 1.02 male(s)/female (2010 est.) Infant mortality rate: ...
conventional long form: Islamic Republic of Iran ...
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world.../ir.html> - Cached - Similar

Results

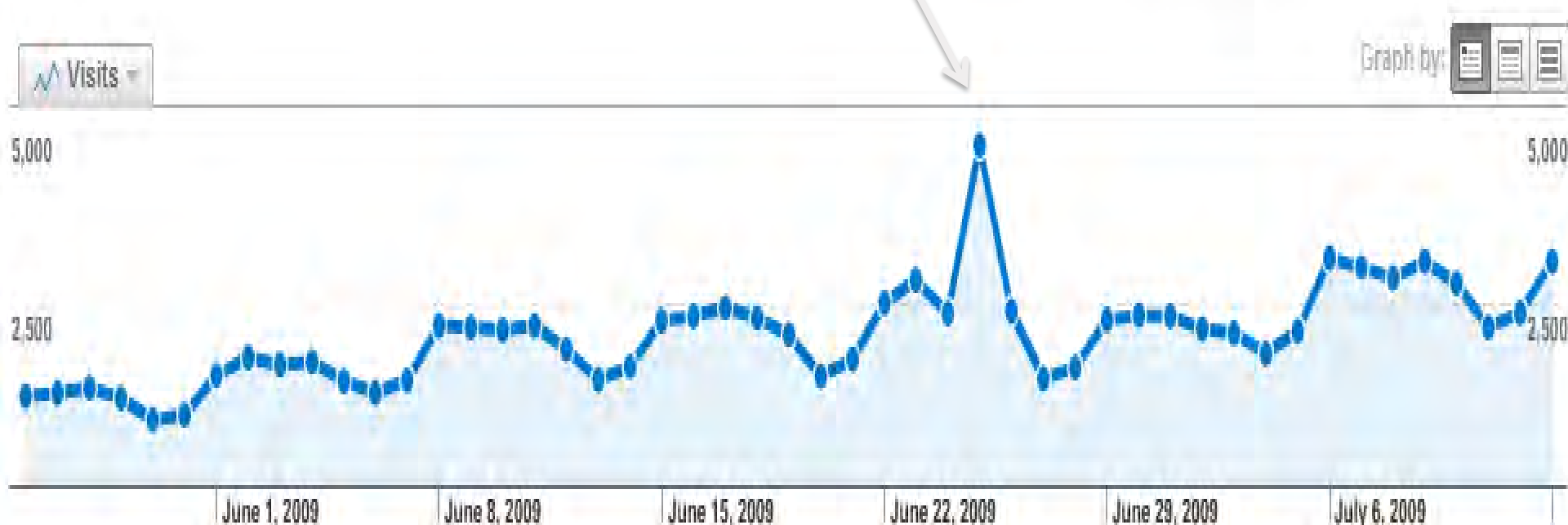


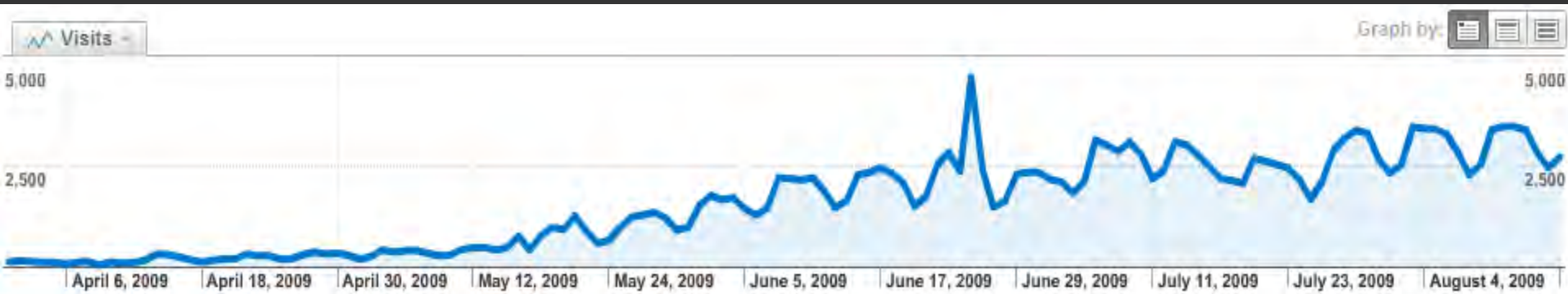
- Exponential growth for a long while
 - 10%+ per week
- Strange effects



Dashboard

“is Michael Jackson dead?” May 26, 2009 - Jul 13, 2009





Site Usage



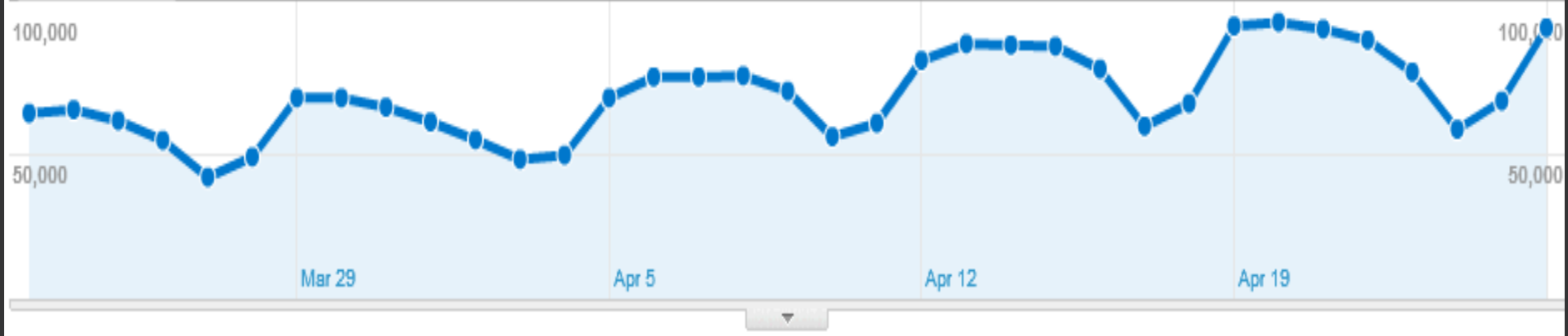


Visitors Overview

Mar 23, 2010 - Apr 26, 2010

Visitors

Graph by:



2,405,491 people visited this site

3.8m September 2010 4.4m October. 5.2m November.
19 consecutive record weeks only broken by Thanksgiving



Visitors Overview

Sep 15, 2010 - Dec 8, 2010

Visitors

Graph by:

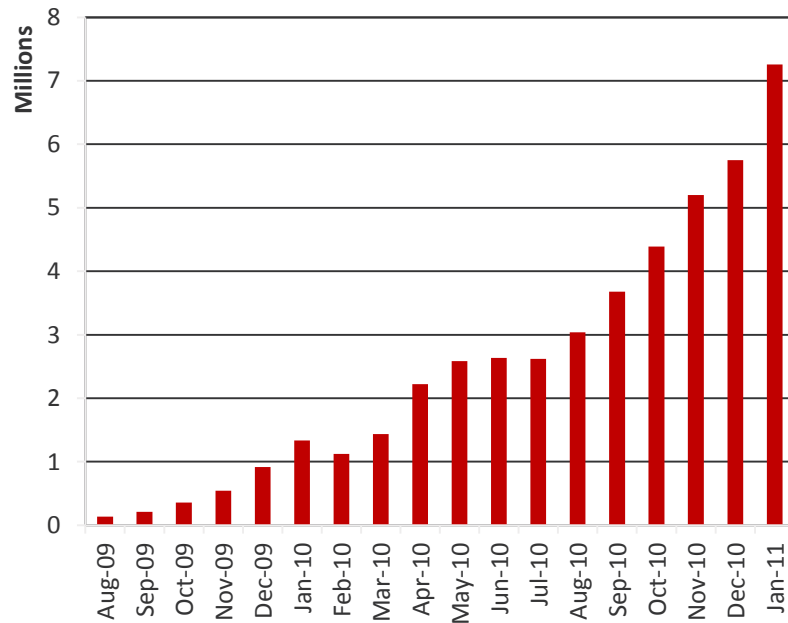


12,999,167 people visited this site

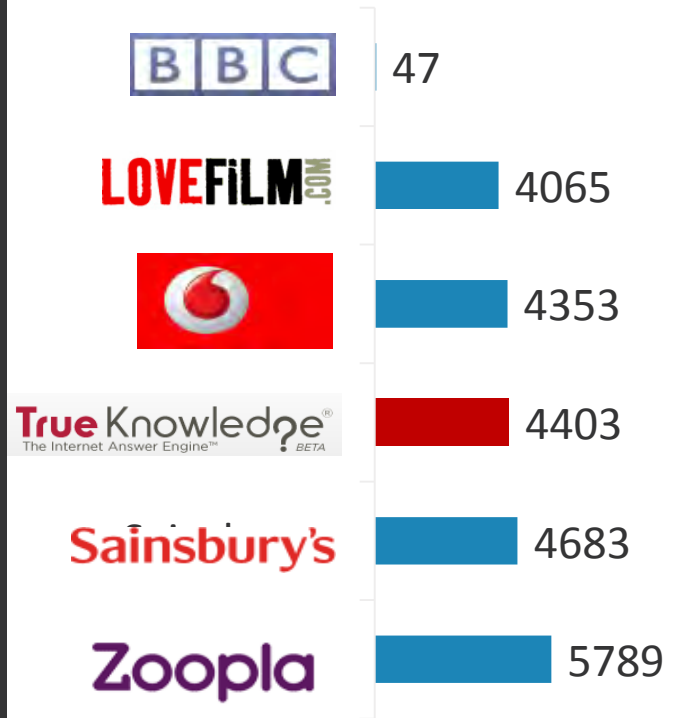
What we were able to say about size (Jan 2011)



Growth in traffic



Global Web Traffic: Alexa Rank



Fun things we did



- ‘Exponential’ purchasing of crates of beer...
- Buy ever growing increases when traffic grew >10% in a single week (to new record)
 - 1 crate, then 2 crates, then 3 crates etc.
- To be drunk at 2010 Christmas Party

Result



- Team highly focussed on growth
- So much beer at party it would have killed team if all drunk...



Result



- Team highly focussed on growth
- So much beer at party it would have killed team if all drunk...
- Still drinking it nine months later...

Second fun thing...



- SEO benefits from links to site
- PR about company is therefore helpful
- Used our technology to calculate the most boring day in history: April 11th 1954
 - and put out Press Release

Result



- Thousands and thousands of press mentions
 - in hundreds of languages



Here isn't the news

April 11, 1954... the most boring day of the 20th century

By Andrew Levy

IT WAS the year that Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile and food rationing came to an end.

The Queen became the first reigning monarch to visit Australia and Marilyn Monroe married Joe DiMaggio.

But amid historic events of 1954 was a date which can only today be classed as significant - for its insignificance.

April 11 of that year has been identified by experts as the most boring of the 20th century - a day when nothing of note happened.

After feeding 300million facts into a new computer search engine they have announced there were no key news events or births and deaths of famous people.

The best the machine could muster for the day was the fact that Belgium had its fourth post-war general election and a Turkish academic who taught electronics was born.

Journeyman footballer Jack Shuffebotham, who played a handful of games for Oldham Athletic and



HOLD THE FRONT PAGE

APRIL 11, 1954 was so dull that the theft of a silver cup worth £50 made it on to the following day's front page of the Daily Mail, left.

We reported that a thief had pushed a hooked pole through an open window to steal the cup from a home in West London.

The lead story detailed U.S. support for the French army in Indo-China against 'Communist aggression in the Far East' - a confrontation which would later escalate into the Vietnam War. Another item which would feel familiar to today's readers is a story about complaints over BBC repeats.

DORIS DAY TOPS CHART

ONE in seven families owned a car back in April 1954 when the average salary was just £101.

The family norm was 2.2 children - a big fall from 3.5 children in 1905, but more than the 1.7 figure in 1997. The population of the UK stood at around 50.2million and the world population numbered 2.52billion.

Doris Day's single Secret Love was Number One on April 11 - but Elvis Presley had only just left high school and would not release his first hit for three more years.

Top films included White Christmas and 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea.

Notts County, died, aged 69, and plans for a coup d'etat in Yanaon, a French colony in India, are believed to have been agreed.

But it could all have been so different for April 11. History notes that Bill Haley and the Comets recorded Rock Around The Clock the next day.

It is not the first time a particular day has been singled out for its lack of moment.

According to BBC Radio, April 18, 1930, was the dulllest day of the 20th century after an announcer

informed the nation at the 6.30pm bulletin: 'There is no news.'

But the experts claim this date fell in the midst of the Great Depression and witnessed the death of Joaquim Arcoverde de Albuquerque Cavalcanti, the first Cardinal to be born in Latin America.

There was also the birth of Clive Revill, the New Zealand-born actor best known for his Shakespearean performances on the London stage.

William Tunstall-Pedoe, founder

of the new search engine True Knowledge, which is based in Cambridge, said: 'When the results came back, the winner was April 11, 1954 - a Sunday.

'Nobody significant died that day, no major events apparently occurred and, although a typical day in the 20th century has many notable people being born, for some reason that day had only one who might make that claim - Abdullah Atalar, a Turkish academic.

'The irony is, though, that - hav-

ing done the calculation - the day is interesting for being exceptionally boring.

'Unless, that is, you are Abdullah Atalar.'

True Knowledge, which provides a direct answer to a question instead of providing a list of links like other sites such as Google, was launched online in February this year.

The system can store hundreds of millions of facts about people, places, events and businesses.

a.levy@daily mail.co.uk

The most boring day ever? 1954

Friday 26 November

As scientists Channel 4 News asks can it be

11 April 1954

All the days in a

"Experts", we're

1954 - the day l

Only 20th Century date with no news...except a Belgian poll and death of, er, Jack Shufflebotham.

THE DAY NOTHING HAPPENED

Was April 11, 1954, Really 'The Most Boring Day'?

Categories: History, Fun

Friday, November 26, 2010 **Sun** 23



SCIENTISTS have pinpointed the 20th Century's most boring day — April 11, 1954.

It was the only 24 hours in the momentous hundred years with NO major event, birth or death.

In a century that saw two world wars, space exploration, and the invention of the telly and the internet, the spring Sunday could only boast a general election in Belgium.

There was the death at 69 of journeyman footballer Jack Shufflebotham, who played a few games for Oldham — but a planned coup in Yanoon, a French colony in India, failed to go ahead.

The main birth was that of Turkish academic and microwave electronics expert Abdullah Atilar.

Boffins in Cambridge arrived at the

No news... possible Sun on day

By EMILY NASH

date after feeding 300 million facts into a new search engine called True Knowledge.

Founder William Tunstall-Pedoe said yesterday: "When the results came back, the winner was April 11, 1954."

"Nobody significant died that day and no major events apparently occurred."

"Although a typical day in the 20th Century has many notable people being born, for some reason that day had only one. The irony is that the day is interesting for being exceptionally boring." The news soon picked up. In May 1954, Sir Roger Bammlister broke the four-minute mile.

● DID anything eventful happen to you on April 11 1954? RING The Sun on 0207 782 4104 or EMAIL exclusive@the-sun.co.uk or search@the-sun.co.uk

Born... Atilar



Interestingly, boredom is not so boring



INTERESTING: William Tunstall-Pedoe

is interesting or at least potentially useful. Boredom, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

For reasons too complex to go into here, I was once trapped into spending a whole Sunday in Trullio, which the guide books led me to believe was the most boring small provincial town in all Peru, if not the world.

Yet as soon as I set foot in Trullio that Sunday morning I was swept up in a day-long succession of astonishing events in which meeting a presidential

candidate and finding 5,000 people enraptured by the old playground game of 'status' were among many others.

Forgive me if at this point I recall yet again that greatest moment in my career when, many years ago I was invited by undergraduates to address the annual dinner of Cambridge University Anti-Society because, they explained with great politeness, I was the most boring writer in the city.

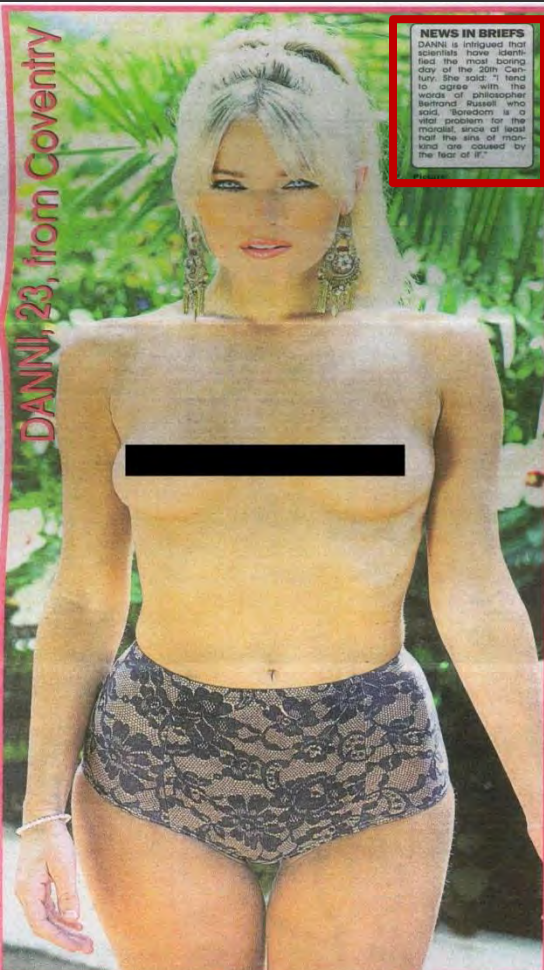
As soon as I began to address them on the role of the semi-colon in spoken English they shouted me down because I shouted me down because I was too interesting. They were right; even semi-colons can be interesting.

I now firmly believe that nothing, even boredom itself, is boring. Boredom does not exist unless you let it sneak into your soul. April 11, 1954 must have been wonderful because there is nothing in my teenage diary for that day. Happy days!

True Knowledge sets out to find the most

1 Comment

... well ... nothing great happened on 4-11-54.



DANNI, 23, from Coventry

NEWS IN BRIEFS
DANNI is intrigued that scientists have identified the most boring day of the 20th Century. She says "I tend to agree with the words of philosopher Bertrand Russell, who said, 'boredom is a vice peculiar for the mortal, since at least half the sins of mankind are caused by the fear of it'".

NEIL BOOZE RANT ON JET FROM OZ

Celeb behaving badly



Jet Me Outta Here . . . Neil got drunk leaving Oz

DRUNKEN Neil Morrissey shocked Club Class passengers with a series of foul-mouthed rants as he jetted back from commenting on I'm A Celebrity.

The champagne-swigging star of Men Behaving Badly, 48, was so rowdy that crew were ready to handcuff him before he finally fell asleep. A British Airways source said: "When he woke up five or six hours later he seemed very shame-faced. It was like Jekyll and Hyde." Morrissey - the voice of kids' TV favourite Bob the Builder - hit the free booze in a BA lounge before take-off. He made a "special effort" to appear sober when he boarded flight BA612 from Singapore to Heathrow on his way back from Australia. But, sitting just two rows from the flight deck, he soon turned to a passenger and declared: "Travelling Club is f---ing great, mate. Free f---ing wine - all you can f---ing well drink!" After a steward's plea to "cool it" went unheeded, crew members including the captain decided he should

The Sun Says - Page Eight and see TVBiz pullout



Brand is driven to pass test

RUSSELL Brand is taking driving lessons because he wants to be "independent" of new wife Katy Perry. The 35-year-old comedian is fed up of asking Katy, 26, to chauffeur him around Los Angeles. An insider said: "He wants to be an independent husband. He is taking lessons daily." A witness who saw Brand driving said: "A homeless man was begging by a stop light and Russell gave him \$20. He then jokingly told the man to wait in the same spot the next day."

bizarre ASHLEY'S ON DUTY ALL NIGHT



Star role for Ross on Beeb

FORMER television chat king Jonathan Ross is returning to the BBC for a **REALLY** re-studied show - on astronomy. He will appear in the series Stargazing Live in January. Wosley, 50, was suspended over the Andrew Sachs phone calls scandal, then quit in July when his contract ended. He revealed yesterday that working for the BBC involved "a lot of pressure". But the Corporation's TV boss Jann Bennett said: "He left on good terms - we never shut the door."

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SEE PAGE 24



NEWS IN BRIEFS

DANNI is intrigued that scientists have identified the most boring day of the 20th Century. She said: "I tend to agree with the words of philosopher Bertrand Russell who said, 'Boredom is a vital problem for the moralist, since at least half the sins of mankind are caused by the fear of it.'"

ALISON WEBSTER

Boring day...



- We were nominated for PR Industry award
- Have had more press (spontaneously) every April 11th since...

Still there several years later...

Google search from 8th February 2015



Google the most boring day in history

Web Videos News Images Shopping More Search tools

About 31,500,000 results (0.32 seconds)

The Most Boring Day In History Was April 11, 1954 - Gizmodo
gizmodo.com/.../the-most-boring-day-in-history-was-april-11-1... Gizmodo Nov 27, 2010 - The weekend after Thanksgiving/Black Friday is definitely relaxing but also a little boring. But it's not the most boring day in the 20th century.

Computer identifies the most boring day in history - Telegraph
www.telegraph.co.uk > News > Science > Science News The Daily Telegraph Nov 26, 2010 - Computer identifies the most boring day in history. Yesterday may have been a cold and otherwise unremarkable Wednesday in November.

Was April 11, 1954 the Most Boring Day in History? - CBS ...
www.cbsnews.com/.../was-april-11-1954-the-most-boring-day... CBS News Nov 30, 2010 - Next time you hear a friend complain that "today was the most boring day in history," you can tell them to prove it. A Cambridge scientist has ...

The most boring day EVER was... April 11, 1954 - Daily Mail
www.dailymail.co.uk/.../Revealed-The-boring-day-EVER--Ap... Daily Mail Nov 25, 2010 - Here isn't the news: April 11, 1954... the most boring day of the 20th ... History notes that Bill Haley and the Comets recorded Rock Around The ...

April 11, 1954 was most boring day in history - The Times of ...
timesofindia.indiatimes.com > World > The Times of India Nov 26, 2010 - LONDON: April 11, 1954 was the most uneventful and boring day of the 20th century. Every day something of significance occurs, but nothing ...

Was April 11, 1954 the Most Boring Day in History? - The Wire
www.thewire.com/national/...the-most-boring-day-in-history/18325/ Nov 29, 2010 - The most boring day in history, apparently, or at least of the past 110 years, was April 11, 1954. The Telegraph notes that "on that day a general ...

Freakonomics » April 11: The Most Boring Day in History
freakonomics.co... Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidd... Apr 11, 2011 - Wrong. Last year, the computer program True Knowledge concluded that the most boring day in human history occurred, 57 years ago today.

1954 - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1954 Wikipedia April 11 - This day is denoted as the most boring day in the 20th century by True Knowledge, an answer engine developed by William Tunstall-Pedoe. April 14.

How did the SEO pivot work out?



- Failed financing
 - despite hockey-stick graph, Silicon Valley not interested in SEO anymore
- Google 'Panda': 50% loss of traffic in Feb 2011
 - never made it to cash-flow positive
- What now?

#4: Evi (2011-2012)



- Fourth attempt: own branded mobile product
 - Powered by our core tech
 - UX and mobile product skills needed quickly
- Major pivot – we bet the company
 - Team changes/funding milestone

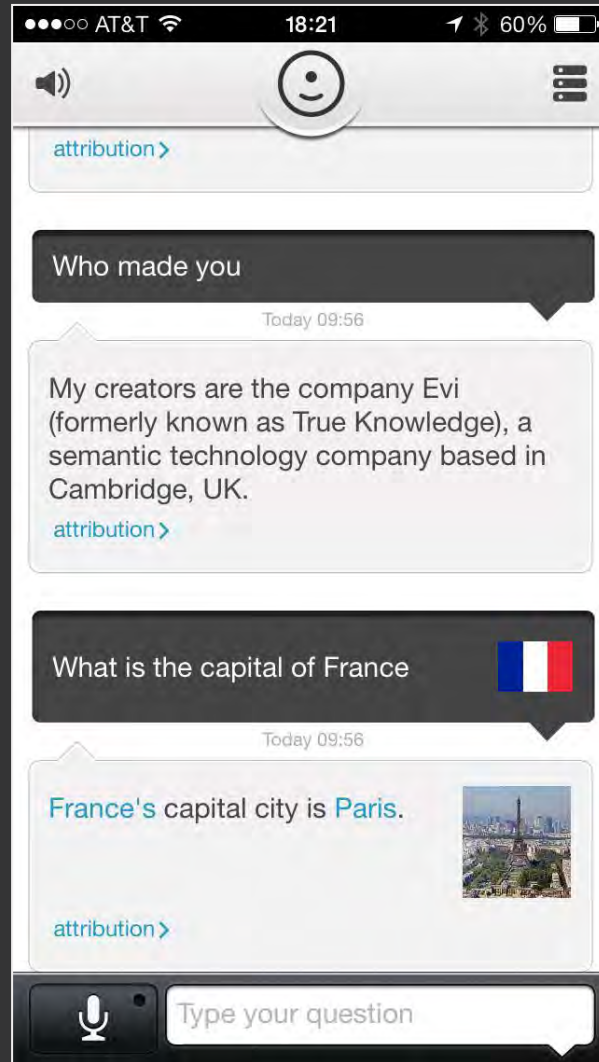
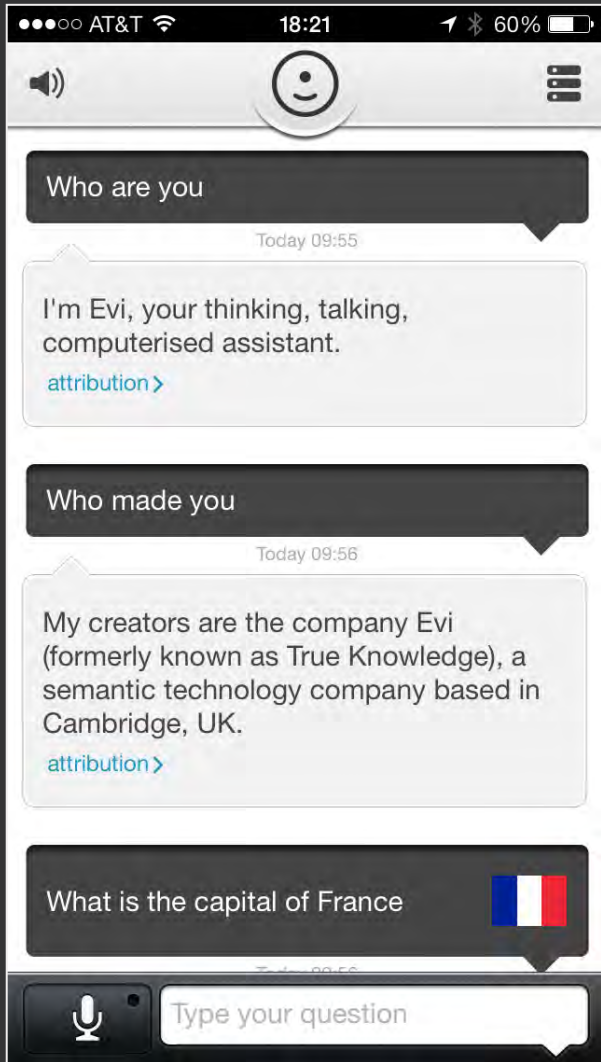
Evi timeline

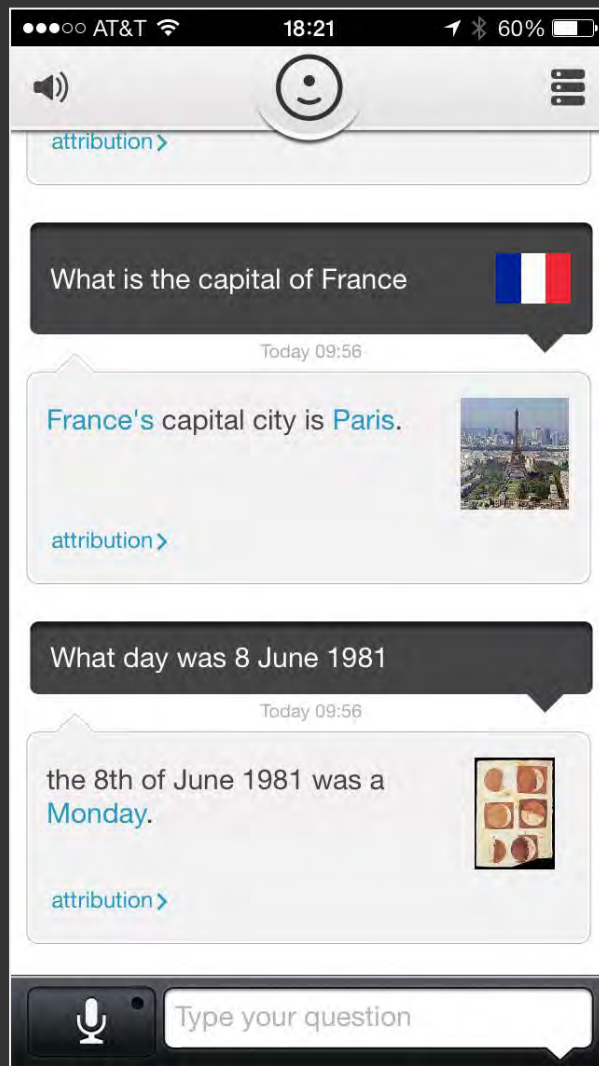


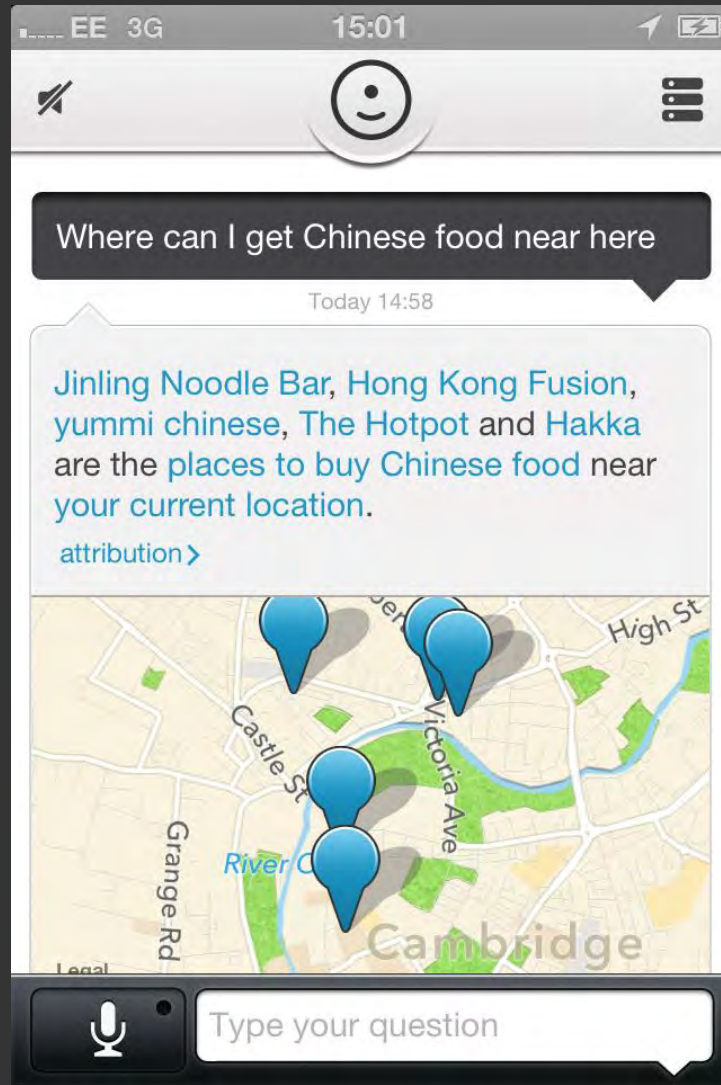
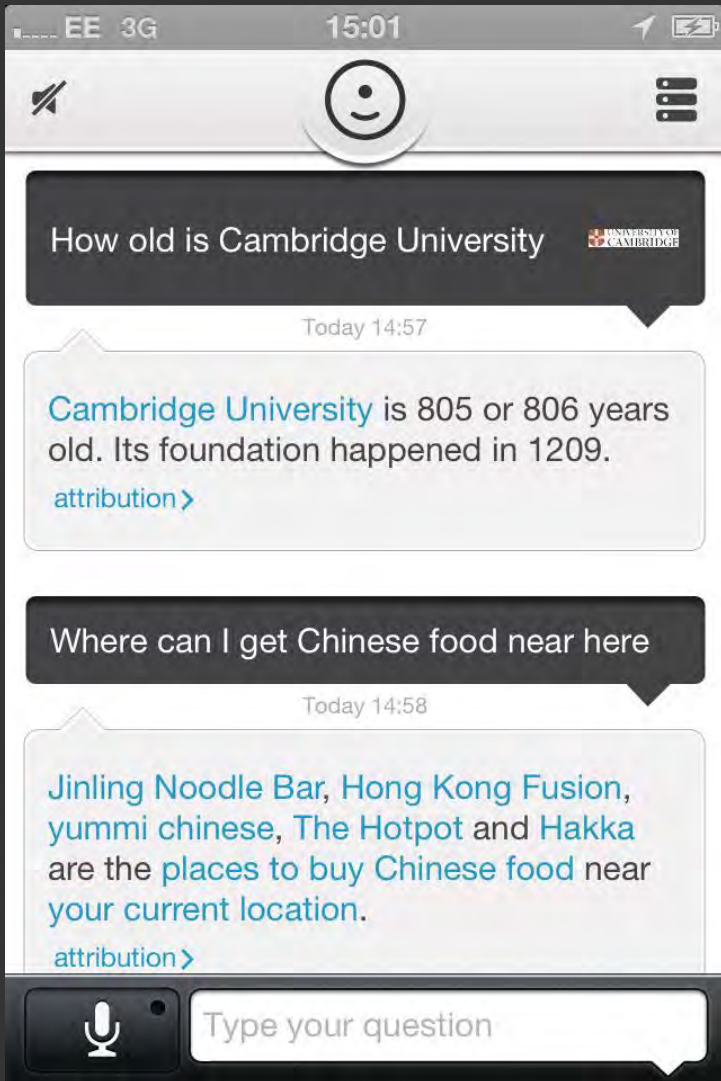
- Committed to pivot early 2011
- Funding milestone and first version June 2011
 - company 'lockdown'
- Apple launched Siri October 2011
- Evi launched January 2012

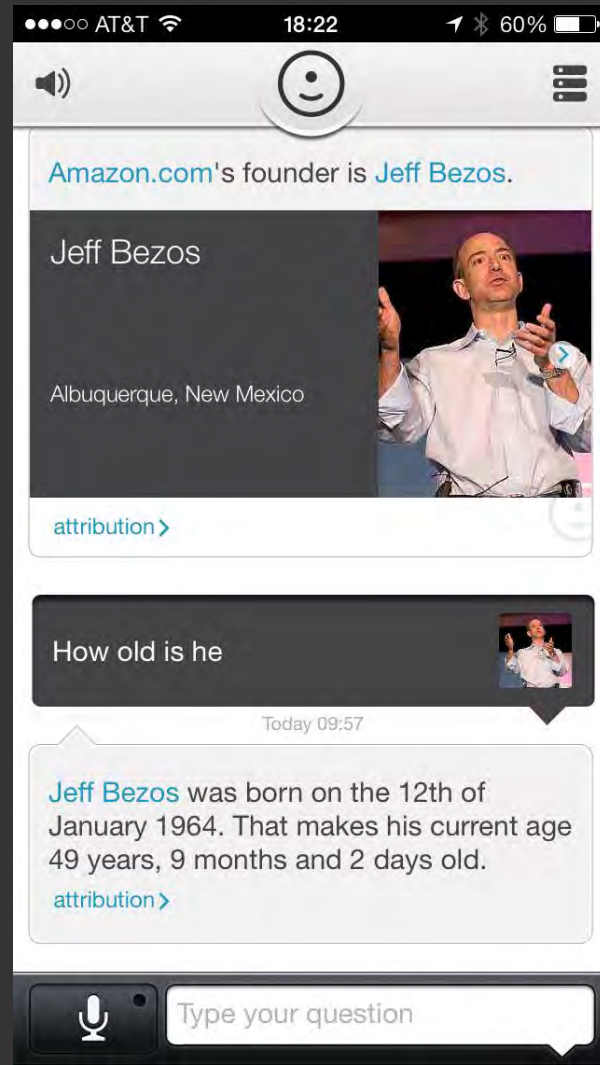
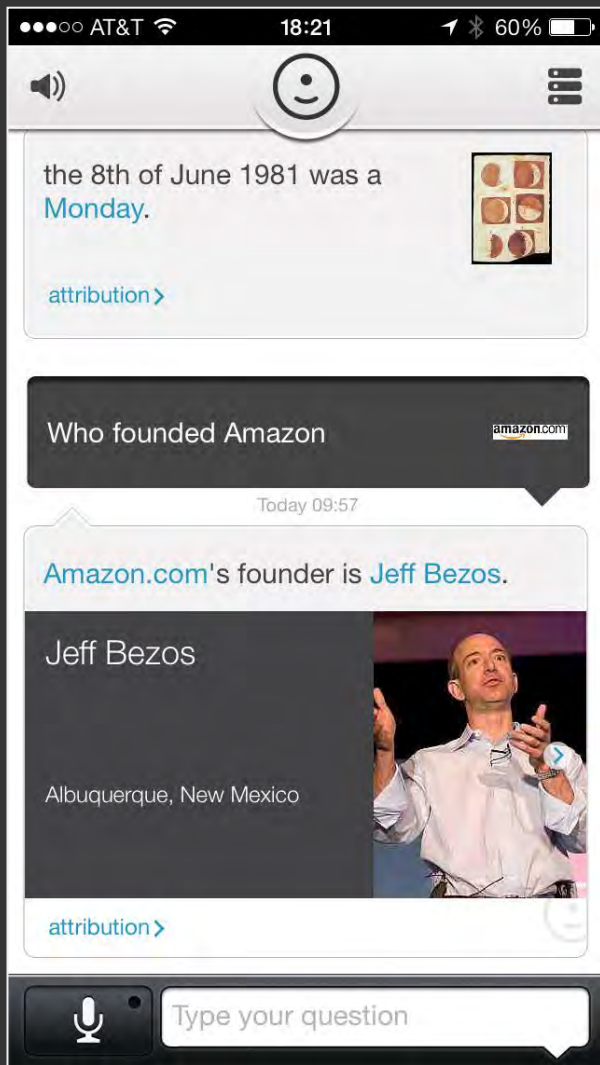


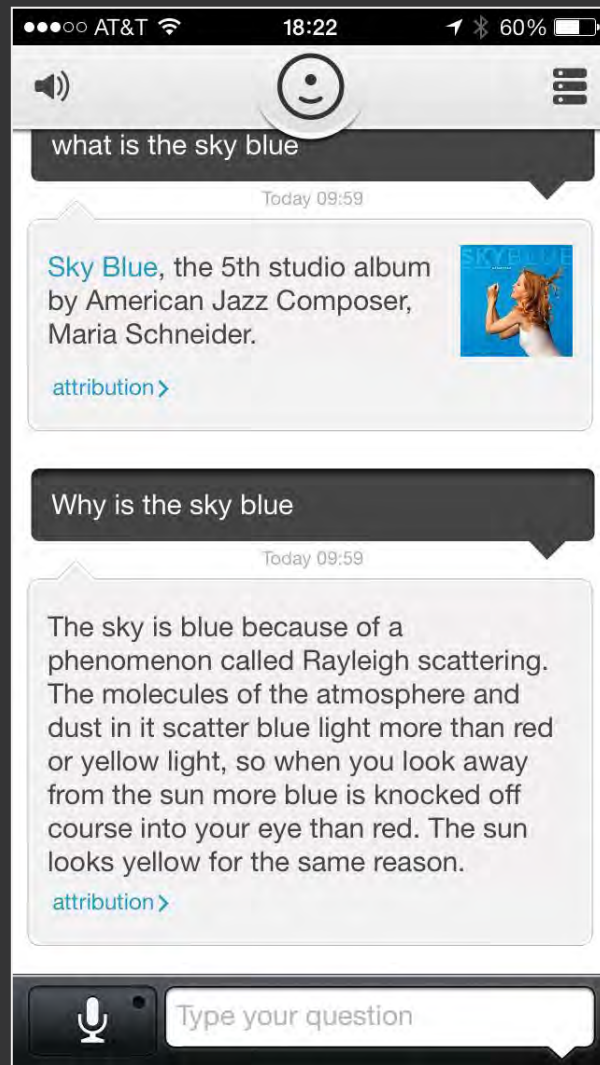
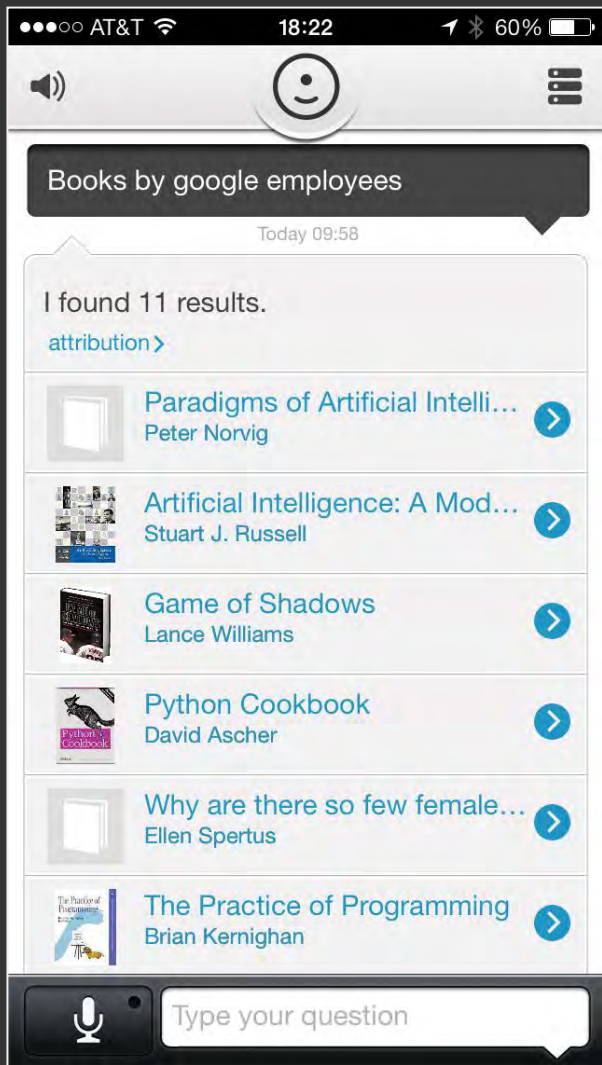
Demo

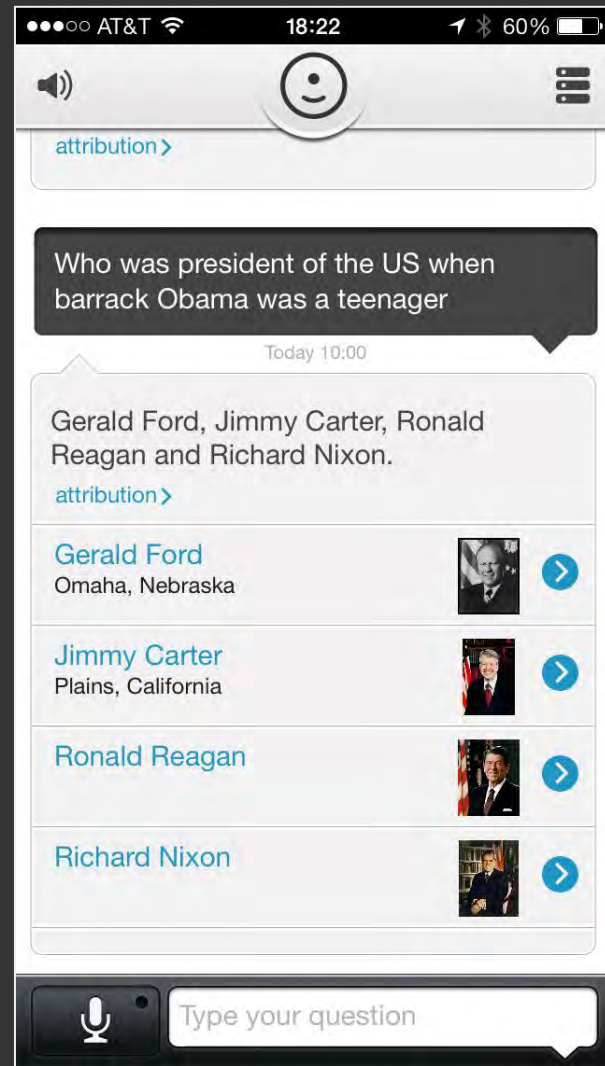
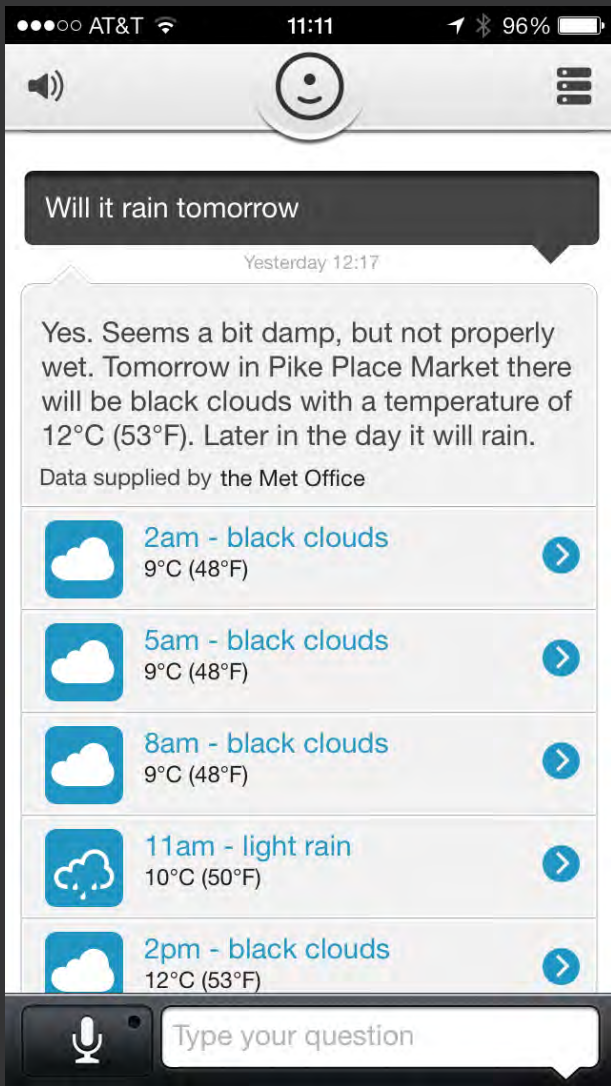












Result of fourth attempt



- Success!
- Enormous interest:

Business

A billion facts Evi has the ans

THEY were up all night at True Knowledge (TK) in Cambridge's Hills Road after the launch of Evi, coping with the massive number of downloads from around the world.

"She is an artificial intelligence, she is not an app. She is based in the port of Boston, UK. Evi is not perfect because AI is not perfect. Pedoe says about his client which means Evi will most often be wrong."

of people downloading the app, making it into the top five in the app charts both sides of the Atlantic.

"Evi can compare different facts and come up with new information," Williams says.

"For instance, if you asked her who was president when the moon was first seen, she knows



Apple's Siri has a new British rival - Evi

Cambridge firm True Knowledge outsmarts tech giant with phone app that copes with variety of UK accents



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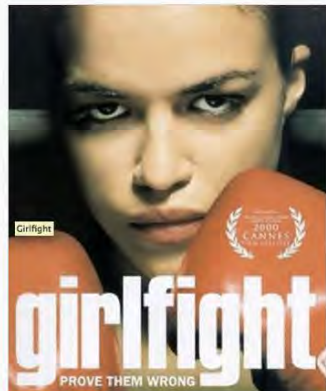
The Steve Jobs Movie With Seth Rogen And...
4 days ago

Next Touts Three Studios Claiming

Evi Arrives In Town To Go Toe-to-Toe With Siri

Posted Jan 23, 2012 by Mike Butcher (@mikebutcher)

2,084 SHARES



When Siri arrived on the iPhone 4S I thought to myself, who else could do this? It would need to be a search engine with natural language processing, but also behave in the manner of artificial intelligence and respond to voice recognition. One company that sprung to mind was True Knowledge. I pinged them. Are you working on a Siri type application, I asked? Interesting question, was their response. And then they went quiet.

Now they can reveal what they've been building. Evi is a new iPhone (iTunes link) and Android app in Beta (link) which might just give Apple's Siri a run for her money. She - we'll call this Artificial Intelligence a she - returns amazing results when

consulted. Given that Siri is just not very good at giving answers which are about the US, Evi

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true knowledge

DESCRIPTION
True Knowledge is a service intelligent answers to your

WEBSITE

IDEAS TECHNOLOGY DESIGN BUSINESS
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The Brit taking on Siri

William Tunstall-Pedoe's Evi claims a bigger knowledge base than Apple's assistant app

The quest to beat the Turing Test, which tests a machine's ability to engage in intelligent conversation with a human, took a step forward in January with the launch of Evi. Developed by Cambridge-based company

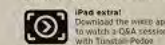
True Knowledge, Evi has gone head-to-head with Apple's Siri and Google's voice-search app. But Evi - available for iPhone (all models) and Android - claims a better understanding of real English and returns results in the same conversational style. Ask it a question (by speaking or typing) and it aims to give a real answer, rather than a list of links (Google) or the suggestion that you use the web (Siri).

The app uses the same Nuance voice-recognition technology as Siri, but relies on a far wider knowledge base. "The platform draws on a vast store of ideas, lexical uses and common sense that lets it understand a plain-English question much more accurately," says William Tunstall-Pedoe, 43, True Knowledge's CEO (above). Using the phone's location capability, you can ask Evi "Where is the nearest petrol station?" and get an actual address.

Tunstall-Pedoe is something of an artificial-intelligence prodigy; he has been making and selling software since he was 13, such as Crossword Maestro.

Evi was almost victim of its own success - more than 250,000 downloads in its first week meant early users found its servers often unresponsive, before more server space eased the congestion. Extra features are on the way, including Siri-like command functions for Android. Tunstall-Pedoe is positioning Evi as a multipurpose platform. "A personal assistant product is a framework in which you can do almost anything," he says. "Evi is the final app."

David Baker [eviv.com](#)



Download the wired app to watch a Q&A session with Tunstall-Pedoe

THE WIRED INDEX

84 MILLION
Views for 2011's most-watched YouTube video in the UK (a talking dog)

25 MILLION
Views for 2011's second most-watched YouTube video (a road-wedding spoof). For sources see Colapiano (p152)

Result of fourth attempt



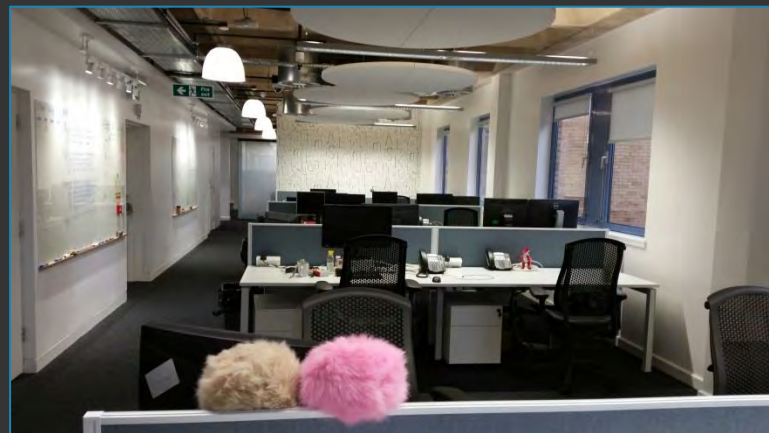
- Success!
- Enormous interest:
 - >1 million downloads
 - 40 serious approaches from big companies
- New CEO
- Company name change (True Knowledge -> Evi)
- Acquisition by Amazon
 - completed October 2012



The adventure continues...



Amazon's new Cambridge development centre (Castle Park)



Amazon Echo launch



- Amazon doing amazing things in speech and language space
- Echo launched in November 2014
 - the project I work for

Amazon just surprised everyone with a crazy speaker that talks to you

It's called Echo, and it's shipping 'in the coming weeks'

By [Chris Welch](#) on November 6, 2014 11:56 am [Email](#) [@chriswelch](#)

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Well this one came out of nowhere: Amazon is building a speaker that's controlled with



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And more processing power per rack²

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Amazon Echo review: A perfect 10

Summary: *This unique device from the folks at Amazon wants to be your invisible friend in the room. In some ways it probably will be.*

By [James Kendrick](#) for Mobile News | November 20, 2014 -- 12:22 GMT (12:22 GMT)

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Image 1 of 5 [Previous](#) | [Next](#)

A photograph of the Amazon Echo speaker sitting on a wooden table next to a laptop. The speaker's blue ring is illuminated.

Other teams hiring in Cambridge



- Prime Air (www.amazon.com/primeair)



Amazon.com

Final thoughts



- Very big ambitions can carry you a long way
- A great idea often needs multiple iterations to hit success

Questions?



- William Tunstall-Pedoe
 - wpedoe@amazon.com
- <http://amazon.jobs/location/cambridge-uk>

Spare slides



True Knowledge



