

Resistance is not futile. It's voltage divided by current



Now kayaking is something we normally associate with getting somewhere, so I guess it makes sense that the new Kayak.com web site would have something to do with travel. You've seen the ads--it advertises that it searches everyone else's as well as the airlines' web sites for the best travel deals.

I wondered how they would handle Southwest airlines, which does not allow its fares to be posted on Travelocity, Orbitz, and other sites. Well, if you visit their site, you will see a link to the Southwest web site, allowing you to find the Southwest fare and then come back to the main site and "recompare".

What TRIZ principle are we seeing here? It's upward integration. First we had airlines that each had to be contacted separately. Then we had travel agents that did this for you. Then we had web sites that almost covered everyone, and now one that might actually do this.

This is a business application of the same principle that we see with the incorporation of added features into a cell phone or desk top "copier", displacing many separate machines and devices. This is an inevitable trend as seen by recent technology developments, but also through analysis of decades of analysis of the patent literature.

So, what should you be doing about this? LOOK UPWARD! Who are you selling your materials or services to? What will happen when they figure out how to incorporate the function or utility that you now provide within the product they make and sell? Don't wait for this to happen!

Do one of two things. First, think about acquisitions of your customers. Second, think about how you can help this inevitable happen. This may mean supplying a different material or service, but if you can patent that, you will have the upper hand as time goes by. And don't forget to think about your customer's customer, since the same kind of thinking and trends are in play.

Next public TRIZ classes:

Houston, March 3-5

Atlanta, May 21-23

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