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www.cpatechviews.com/2009/07/killing-microsoft/). He also notes Microsoft's latest entry in the search engine field with Bing.com. Just as I don't think Microsoft has much to worry about (yet) from a Google cloud-based operation system, I also don't think Google really has anything to fear from Microsoft's latest search strategy.

Bing isn't Microsoft's first attempt at a mainstream search engine, of course. It debuted its first serious system in 1998 with MSN Search, which offered traditional indexing, web crawling and search results from various partners, including Inktomi, Looksmart and AltaVista.

Then, in 2006, Microsoft unveiled Windows Live Search, part of their larger Windows Live offering, with more specific search functions enabling users to find file types and categorized information. It also offered a global mapping tool. About a year later, Microsoft dropped the Windows brand from the Live Search system and the company went through various reorganizations and staff moves that left the search engine seemingly in limbo. They did try a few additional options during this time, including a book search function that was soon discontinued, and a merchant product information upload tool, which was also discontinued.

Then, ta da, on June 3 this year, Microsoft announced the introduction of Bing, which it calls "the first ever decision engine."

I think Microsoft just doesn't get search. I don't think they understand what people use it for. We don't just buy things or "make decisions" using a search engine, we also look for information, old class buddies, sports statistics and other non-commerce driven activities. These activities can, of course, spur commerce through ad placement and sponsored listings, which Google is the king of.

It just seems to me that Microsoft, in its latest, latest attempt at search, is putting the cart before the horse. Some of the new features that Bing offers, including sublinks,

video thumbnail previews and “instant answers” will likely influence the evolution

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