FEATURE ARTICLE

The YPATH Story

By Istvan Siposs, Publisher

In the September, 2001 issue of the Yahoo! Store Newsletter (the one published by Yahoo! Inc.,) there was an article about the re-introduction of the YPATH variable (if you are not receiving the Yahoo! Store Newsletter, you can read it online at http://store.yahoo.com/newsletter.html or subscribe to it by clicking "Account" in the Store Manager and checking the options next to "Email me".) The article claimed that by using the YPATH variable, a Yahoo! Store merchant can better categorize his or her store within Yahoo! Shopping.

DOES IT WORK?

A month or so after the September newsletter, some of my clients began to complain that although they followed every step of setting up the YPATH variables for their products, they are still nowhere to be found in any of the Yahoo! Shopping departments. This fact was easy to confirm: I did a search for "Calculator Power" within the Books department. It returned a match and said that this book is not currently offered by any Yahoo! Store merchant. Noteworthy Investments, the publisher of the book "Calculator Power" has had a Yahoo! Store (www.notetools.com) since 1999 and "Calculator Power" has been in stock in their store ever since. What's more, their Yahoo! Store is included in Yahoo! Shopping, the store is categorized as a bookstore, and every product in their store (including "Calculator Power") is correctly classified using the YPATH variable. Because this seemed like an obvious discrepancy, I set out to find out the exact story of YPATH.

WHAT IS YPATH?

According to the September issue of the Yahoo! Store newsletter, "YPATH stands for Yahoo! Path and it refers to a method used in Yahoo! Shopping to categorize products so they appear in the correct Yahoo! Shopping department." For stores that sell computers, electronics and video games, Yahoo! also claims that the use of the YPATH variable can increase sales in some cases by as much as 84% (http://shopping.yahoo.com/ypath/compelec.html.)

HOW TO USE IT?

Using the YPATH variable is simple. Just override it for every product in your store (in Advanced Mode) and follow the format described at http://shopping.yahoo.com/ypath/ to enter the correct department for your items. You can provide the correct YPATH information for your products either manually or by using the CSV database upload method. Both of these methods are described in details at http://shopping.yahoo.com/ypath/.

Ok, so you set your YPATHs. Your products now should magically appear in the correct category of Yahoo! Shopping, right? Well, not quite. After a number of e-mail messages sent to Yahoo! Store tech support, I found out that putting your product into the department of your choice by using YPATH is far from being automatic. It is simply a suggestion reviewed by Yahoo!'s editorial board, and they make a decision if and when your product or

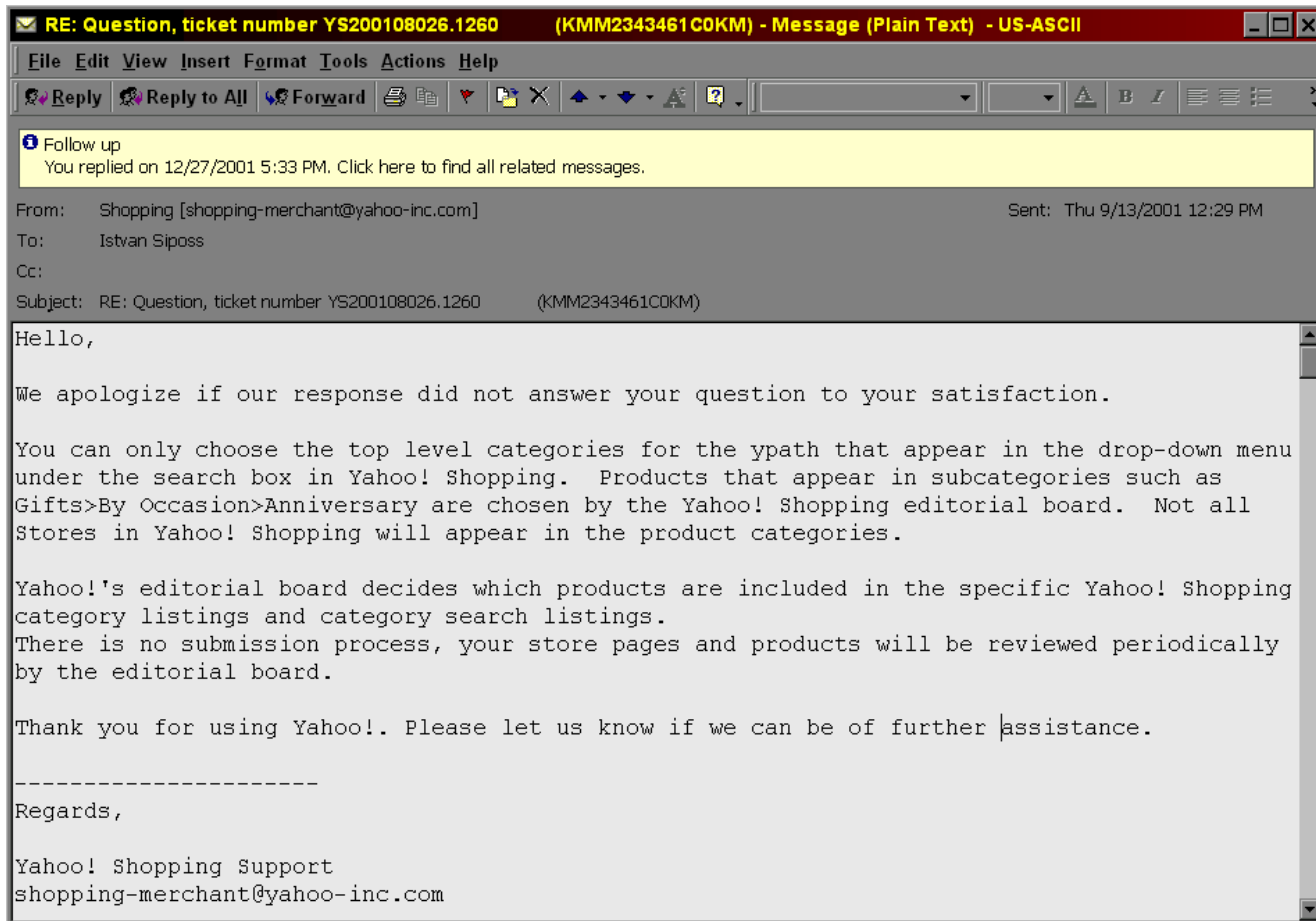---

Inside this issue:

Did You Know?

- Internet Universe in November, 2001: 181.4 Million

- Top 3 Online Properties:
  AOL:
   81 million unique audience
  Yahoo!:
   73 million unique audience,
  MSN:
   67.5 million unique audience

- Top 3 reasons why online shoppers abandon a shopping cart:
  1) High shipping prices
  2) Comparison shopping
  3) Changed mind

(Source: CyberAtlas)

products will be listed in any Yahoo! Shopping department.

Note that YPATH is only used in connection with the departments of Yahoo! Shopping. You can opt into Yahoo! Shopping by clicking the "Yahoo! Shopping" link in the store manager. Opting into Yahoo! Shopping will make your products available in top-level searches at http://shopping.yahoo.com. For your reference, the entire text of the tech support's e-mail on the subject is included below:

```
RE: Question, ticket number YS200108026.1260    (KMM2343461C0KM) - Message (Plain Text) - US-ASCII

File  Edit  View  Insert  Format  Tools  Actions  Help

Reply   Reply to All   Forward

Follow up
You replied on 12/27/2001 5:33 PM. Click here to find all related messages.

From:     Shopping [shopping-merchant@yahoo-inc.com]          Sent: Thu 9/13/2001 12:29 PM
To:       Istvan Siposs
Cc:
Subject:  RE: Question, ticket number YS200108026.1260      (KMM2343461C0KM)

Hello,

We apologize if our response did not answer your question to your satisfaction.

You can only choose the top level categories for the ypath that appear in the drop-down menu
under the search box in Yahoo! Shopping.  Products that appear in subcategories such as
Gifts>By Occasion>Anniversary are chosen by the Yahoo! Shopping editorial board.  Not all
Stores in Yahoo! Shopping will appear in the product categories.

Yahoo!'s editorial board decides which products are included in the specific Yahoo! Shopping
category listings and category search listings.
There is no submission process, your store pages and products will be reviewed periodically
by the editorial board.

Thank you for using Yahoo!. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

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Regards,

Yahoo! Shopping Support
shopping-merchant@yahoo-inc.com
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MARKETING TIP

"Back End" Your Customers

By Jon Richards, NoteWorthy Investments

Jon Richards, publisher of NoteWorthy Newsletter, can be reached at jon@noteworthyusa.com.

Do you "back end" your customers? You should and most businesses fail to do so. You need to sell your customer something else or get them to contribute again. This may sound cynical, but it is a powerful way to increase your company's income. Your hottest prospect is someone that has just bought from you. This is your best opportunity for another immediate "sell." The key to successfully doing this is having products that offer solutions to problems your customers have. You could offer, for example, a discount on the next purchase. How simple it would be for the cashiers at the local discount store to suggest another product that may help solve the customers' problem? All they have to do is notice how related the products are that the customer is currently buying, and be knowledgeable enough about what the store has to offer to be able to suggest another product that could solve the customer's problem. The buyers

that just bought from you offer you a prime opportunity to sell again.

Your services must be good, however, and you must prove to them that your "back-end" product or service will also solve their problem. Here again we are talking about knowing what your prospects want and desire. Your job isn't over once you've sold your customers their first service. You should constantly be striving to ascertain prospects' problems, and be creative in developing/proposing the appropriate solution. If you are focusing on what your customers want, and are offering them another solution to a related problem, they will not resist as you try to "upsell" them. They'll be grateful for your desire to solve their problems. Just remember: your customers are never "hotter" than when they first order your service.

Immediately acknowledge their first purchase and tell them how appreciative you are. Then, offer them something else so they'll have the chance to solve more of their problems and to spend even more money with you!

You should look for logical product or service extensions to offer your customers. Using the back-end will turn one-time sales into repeat customers. Amazingly, few businesses try to sell their current or previous customers anything again. The really smart marketers do it constantly.

Remember that Yahoo! Store provides a feature called Cross-sells, which allows you to create "families" of related products and have the shopping cart automatically recommend these related products upon checkout. Read about this feature at http://store.yahoo.com/vw/july01.html#l3

WEB DESIGN TIP

Stop Right-Clicking on Images

Many Yahoo! Store owners are interested in a solution to disable the right mouse click on images of the page to protect their artwork. While there is no sure-shot method to completely protect your images or html source from anyone, the following method will disable the right mouse click in Netscape and Internet Explorer. To make this work, paste the following script inside the head-tags variable of your store:

```
<script language=javascript>
<!--
function disable_right_click(e)
{
    var browser = navigator.appName.substring ( 0, 9 );
    var event_number = 0;
    if (browser=="Microsoft")
        event_number = event.button;
    else if (browser=="Netscape")
        event_number = e.which;

    if ( event_number==2 || event_number==3 )
        {
        alert ("Right Mouse Button Is Disabled");
        return (false);
        }

    return (true);
}

function trap_images_mouse_events ()
{
    if ( document.images )
        {
        for (var pic=0; pic<document.images.length; pic++)
            document.images[pic].onmousedown = disable_right_click;
        }
}

window.onload = trap_images_mouse_events;
//-->
</script>
```

This trick will only protect your images or HTML source from the casual user. There are a number of ways a more savvy visitor can copy your images:

1. Select View Source from the browser's menu, and find the images from the HTML source.
2. Click on an image, and drag it into the address bar of the browser. This will bring up the image in blank page by itself. There, you can right-click the picture and save it
3. Click the image of an item in your store. The image will come up on a page by itself. Again, here you can right-click and save the image.

RTML TIP

The RTML Tip section is intended for advanced Yahoo! Store users. It assumes that you have a basic understanding of how custom templates work and how to enter and change templates. If you are new to RTML, visit www.ytimes.info for information on how to get started. Look at http://www.ytimes.info/ howtomodtem.html for a brief tutorial on how to modify and use customized templates. You will also find books and other Yahoo! Store resources there.

Graphical Order Button

Ever wanted to replace the drab-looking order button with a nice image? While the store editor does not provide you with a method to do this, it is quite easy to modify a template and swap out the default order button for a custom image.

To begin, you will need an order image. You can either make your own or copy one from a web site. You can make your own order image with any graphic design program. Make sure you save the image as a gif or jpg file. Also, don't make the order button too large. While there are no set rules, you don't want your button to dominate the page. If you want to pick up an order button from another web site, make sure you ask the web site's web master for permission to use it. You can

also just change an image you find. In most cases, that would not constitute a copyright infringement unless specifically prohibited by the web site's owner. Finally, there are many free image collection CDs you can buy for a few dollars in any office supply store.
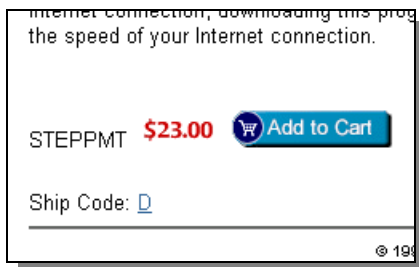
Once you have your order image, edit your store in Advanced Mode. Click the "Files" button and upload the image into your store. You can name the image anything in your store. For the sake of simplicity, name it order.gif (or order.jpg, if your image is in jpg format.)

The template that puts the order button on the page is called **order.** That's the template you will need to change (or, rather, a copy of that template as built-in templates are non-editable.) Towards the end of the **order.** template, you will find the following expression:

```
INPUT type :submit
      value @order-text
```

This is the expression you will have to replace with the following:

```
TEXT "<input border=0 type=image
alt='Add to Cart' src=/lib/YOURSTOREID/
order.gif>"
```

where YOURSTOREID is the Yahoo! Store ID of your store and order.gif is the name you gave your order image when you uploaded it.

To see how all this works in action, visit http://store.yahoo.com/noteworthyusa.

In Next Month's Issue:

- Improve your meta tags (and what are they anyway?)
- Marketing: How to write a press release
- RTML: Quantity box next to the order button