



University of Wisconsin-Madison

***UW E-Business Consortium***

*"Helping Industry Gain Competitive Advantage Through E-Commerce and E-Business"*

www.uwebc.org

Project Report

**Improving Web Site Search Experience on  
AmericanGirl.Com**

Project Sponsor

*American Girl*

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**December 2005**

## **Executive Summary**

The objective of this project was to help American Girl enhance the on-site search experience on its Web site. Therefore, the University of Wisconsin student team performed a benchmark analysis of best-of-breed search experiences for a set of sixteen multi-channel retailers. Additionally, the team reviewed leading on-site search solution vendors to compare the capabilities of each vendor and establish a fit with American Girl's web site needs. Finally, the student team compiled insights on leading on-site search practices from other member companies of the University of Wisconsin E-Business Consortium (UWIBC).

The web site experience benchmarking was done under the guidance of American Girl's Web Director who provided us with the lists of leading online retailers as well as important search criteria and attributes to include in the benchmarking tool.

The analysis and comparison of leading on-site search vendor solutions was based on vendor responses to a Request-for-Information (RFI), which was tailored to American Girl's requirements. The vendor analysis provided insight into what leading vendors in the on-site search segment of the market have to offer. The list of vendors researched, as well as the questions for the RFI, was jointly developed by the student-team and American Girl.

The UWIBC member companies that were interviewed emphasized the significance of understanding the connection between time and resource management with customization abilities. Consequently, although customization and flexibility are usually the most important criteria for vendor partnerships, they may also require significant investment of time and capital. Although a customized vendor package for content search to meet American Girl needs will provide the greatest breadth of opportunity to handle change in the future, it must be balanced with the initial investment in preparation and time.

# Acknowledgements

The team would like to thank the following people for their support on this project:

**Mike Grasee and David White**, of American Girl, for providing a learning opportunity for the project team

**Professor Raj Veeramani**, of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, for providing support, advice and guidance for to us and also for giving us the opportunity to gain real world experience

Thank you,

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