

10 Minutes With: CORENTIN THIERCELIN Founder & CEO, DirectIndustry.com Marseille, France

Bio :Corentin Thiercelin founded DirectIndustry in 2001. Before DirectIndustry, he founded AllAccess (a precursor to DirectIndustry) and Access Technology--a free quarterly journal distributed to 20,000 opinion formers in the automation sector. He previously served as the head of research and development for the conception and implementation of quality-control machines in commercial agriculture for MAF Inc., and he has also worked at ELM Leblanc in France on the development of industrial gas heaters. Thiercelin earned a degree in design and engineering at the National School of Advanced Design and Engineering (ENSAM) in Paris. About DirectIndustry: Accessible in five languages, directindustry.com is a database presents all the industrial equipment and components available on the international market. It is aimed at purchasing, R&D, production, maintenance professionals, offering them an up-to-date search engine to source of information, wherever they are located. The B-to-B site can be linked to a permanent exhibition, creating direct links between manufacturers and buyers all over the world. FastFacts about DirectIndustry.com: * 5,600 exhibitors online showing 49% come from Europe, 21% from North America 15% from Asia 11% from South America 4% from other continents * 40,000 individual products * 24 industrial sectors. * 2.1 million unique visitors per month * 30% now return at least once a month Timeline: Search Engine History December 1990: www server prototype August 1993: Mosaid Web Browser July 1994: Lycos August 1994: Yahoo! December 1995: AltaVista 1996: Dogpile April 1997: Ask Jeeves September 1998: Google September 1998: MSN Search 2001: DirectIndustry Q: Where did it all start? A: I was a research and development engineer in California from 1995 to 1997. We were spending too much time chasing information from once source to another. I realized that there was a real need to centralize and rationalize it all. Burgeoning globalization meant this need would only get more urgent. The Internet seemed the perfect tool. I returned to France and teamed up with two other engineers. We launched the portal worldwide in 2001. Q: Why do engineers need specialized industrial search engines--can't readers find the information they want from search engines such as Google? A: Google is an amazing tool, and anyone who says otherwise can't be taken seriously. But the Internet isn't standing still. Like all media before, it's evolving from general to more specialized usage. Google is so exhaustive that it sometimes lacks the order and logic necessary for professionals to compare products and brands. As a search engine specialized for industry, DirectIndustry returns this order to the search, saving professionals time and headaches. Q: Do you have any immediate plans for introducing new features? A: Soon we will launch a virtual technical library containing 3000-plus PDF catalogs from the major manufactures across the world. Engineers aren't really looking for a whole catalog, or even a section of a catalog, but for a kernel of information buried somewhere within. On DirectIndustry you can search a dense, 400-page catalog by key word and find the right page or pages in seconds. You can print out the page, browse the surrounding pages, or send an email request directly to the manufacturer. This demonstrates our principle of

organizing information intuitively to engineers, for fast and effective research. Q: How does the site work? A: If you search DirectIndustry by the key words "infrared sensor," you get a list of product images in order of keyword relevance. Do the same thing on other industrial portals and you get a text-only list of company names in alphabetical order! That makes no sense. You're only going to select companies early in the alphabet that you already recognize because there's nothing about the products to draw you in and compare. What's more, other sites mix up distributors and resellers with manufacturers so you don't really know whose products you're enquiring about. It just a fancy paper directory slapped online and not at all what the engineer's Internet is really about. Q: What is your policy towards visitors--do you protect their information, and is access free, or is there a membership fee? A: DirectIndustry is a free access site open to anyone, anywhere. No fee, no cross selling, and no registration. You can search as much as you like without anyone knowing you were there. Other specialized search engines require you to register before you can even get past the homepage, resulting in Spam from companies you never contacted! Q: What projects do you plan for the future? A: We resist the pressure to constantly change and add new features to the site in order to make bit of noise. Our aim is to become the most comprehensive and authoritative industrial portal in the world, PERIOD! The basic model is highly effective, so we need to keep growing while keeping the fundamentals in place--keeping it fast, intuitive, and focused on the products. Just keeping the exploding content up to date is a daunting undertaking and easily enough to keep us busy. We're always listening to engineers, and we'll keep evolving by anticipating their needs as evidenced with the virtual technical library idea. We won't lose sight of our own engineering roots--that's our unique insight and the litmus test for building on our success.

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