

<http://www.apnano.com/>

This is the website for a company called ApNano Materials. They specialize in selling materials made out of nanospheres and nanotubes that are made from inorganic compounds.

Most of the site is just reiterating the same thing over and over again. That is that they produce commercial applications of their proprietary inorganic nanostructures. Other than that they just promote their leading (and from what I can tell only major) product as of now, NanoLub. This is a nanoparticle lubricant that maintains a very low coefficient of friction no matter what the load. This means that it can be used to improve the efficiency of anything that currently uses a lubricant, such as engines and hydraulics. Plus the lubricant is self-healing which means it can last for a much longer time with less maintenance.

The main page contains highlights of different awards which the company has received from different organizations and magazines. It is clearly propaganda just to get visitors to believe that the company is highly notable. The website also has a section of links to different articles that mention the company and its advancements. This is just more propaganda, the company is trying to post as many links as possible so that they can make it look like they are very well known.

Then I was drawn to the question of how does the general public reach the site. And after going through the entire site, I have come to the decision that the site wasn't made for the general public. The site is just there for the company heads to be able to point to when talking to investors. The site is just a way to try and show off that the company is one of the first to commercialize nanotechnology. And the site creators probably hope that they will draw in more investors thru the site.

On a side note, I found it hard to navigate the website in general. The layout is generally confusing. The design has the company's contact information at the bottom of every page. But they have a section called Contact Us where that information should be contained, but no that link just opens your e-mail program instead. And forget trying to find much information there because there just isn't much. Yeah, they have some links to articles where the company or its products are mentioned and there is a page about their one, single product, but most of the site is just filling in the gaps between every time they mention their proprietary information... Well, that's just great.

<http://www.azonano.com/default.asp>

This site seems to be a large hub of nanotechnology news and information. According to the site itself its mission is “to become the primary Nanotechnology information source for the science, engineering and design community worldwide.”<sup>1</sup> I can’t tell if they are really generous in trying to translate complicated nanotech information into information the general public can understand or if they are just greedy because the site is lined with advertisements and when registering for membership you have to agree to receive some but not a lot of junk e-mail from the site’s sponsors.

The site has a group of “experts” whose job it is to gather information pertaining to nanotechnology. Through the site anyone can have a question answered by any of these experts for a fee, depending on how much the expert decides to charge. But anyone is able to access the news articles which get listed on the site for no charge. And there are a lot of articles to read. But most of the articles are highly technical and scientific, so really only people in the field would understand the articles. Of course since the articles are highly technical the only people who would care what was contained in the article would probably be people in the field anyway. So it is in an expert’s best interest to post an article which will cause people to have questions, at which time they can find the expert in the listings and then the expert can charge the people for answers to the questions they have.

The bias of this website should be obvious. The owners of the site collect a portion of each expert’s charge fees and the expert keeps the rest. Obviously those two groups have a bias to draw people in to the site and get them to ask questions to the experts.

The intended audience of the site is said to be the general public. I’m not too sure if this is true or not though because I doubt the general public will be able understand much that gets

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.azonano.com/aboutus.asp>

posted there. Of course there is the idea mentioned above, the experts want people to ask questions so they can make some money.

The site is pretty much set up as a huge database of articles of nanotechnology experiments and products with a search engine attached. But I was wondering what would draw someone to this website over some other article-searching database? And I really couldn't find an answer. Though the website does have a lot of information I am unsure of what makes this site rise above all the rest. The site does contain a lot of information, including a few things beyond articles such as a listing of some nanotechnology conferences (which I thought was pretty cool, plus there were several listings for Chicago). Really there is too much information to even attempt reading it all. Which I think presents a problem. If a member of the general public went to this place trying to find some information they would really have to know what keywords to use in the search engine to find whatever information they were looking for.