



## **The Case for Cyfin's Custom Categories**

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The Advantages of Extending Cyfin's Already Extensive Capabilities

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## Abstract

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Used by numerous enterprises, Cyfin is a highly effective policy-based Web-use Management tool. Its strength lies in its ability to characterize the volume and nature of Web-site visits in a monitored network. The key element in Cyfin's characterization mechanism is a set of 55 built-in subject-matter categories. In operation, Cyfin sorts actual URL/site-visit data into these categories. While these standard built-in categories are eminently useful, a truly robust Web-visit management approach should also utilize user-specified custom categories and URLs that correspond to particularly important external or internal activities. Enterprise managers can establish and use these "special" categories and URLs to track visits of particular interest.

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There are many advantages to this approach. Custom categories can be devised to correspond to any function or subject desired, e.g., customer types, vendor types, technical functions, support services, etc. Users can track sites of particular interest, by category and by site name. Tracking can focus on Intranet activity as well as Internet activity. Management can utilize the resultant information to dramatically improve and sharpen decision-making in areas of particular interest.

## Cyfin's General Capabilities

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Cyfin is a robust policy-based Web-use management tool. A number of enterprises use it to determine the volume, type and appropriateness (i.e., propriety, suitability) of Web-visit activity. Some also use it to identify the individual network users who engage in this activity. To help it do its job, Cyfin contains a set of 55 built-in subject matter categories. These categories correspond to the types of content or subject matter found on the several million Web sites on the Internet. Also built into Cyfin is a list of the most frequently visited sites with their URL addresses. Each listed site "belongs to" one of the 55 categories.

In operation, Cyfin compares actual "visits-made" data (obtained from server log-files) with the built-in list. Where matches are found, Cyfin sorts the resultant data into the 55 built-in categories. The data is then provided to the user via a variety of reports that can be grouped and summarized in several ways. This methodology is the "engine" of Cyfin's reporting process, i.e., it determines the number, type, and originators of Web-site visits made during a specified period of time.

Obviously, the 55 built-in categories constitute an important part of Cyfin's design. With such a powerful built-in tool, one may well ask, "Why should I bother adding "custom" categories? And if I did, how do they work to my advantage?" The following paragraphs address these issues.

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## Rationale for Using Custom Categories

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As robust as Cyfin is by itself, it can be made even more productive through the addition of enterprise-specified custom categories. Custom categories greatly extend the usefulness of Web policy management systems by enabling Cyfin to do more than simply identify abuse. That is, they enable reporting and facilitate analysis of the more "positive" areas of enterprise activity. Such areas can include a variety of "external" activities such as customer contacts, sales volume, product preferences, billing, banking, resource management, and purchasing activities that are conducted via the Internet. These areas can also include numerous activities and communications conducted on the enterprise's Intranet.

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Using custom categories, Cyfin can automatically audit both types of activity. Such audits can be used by enterprise management to easily track very specific categories of core business functions and/or to closely monitor visits to sites of particular interest. In addition, if they so desire, enterprise managers can correlate the information in audit reports with other enterprise data, e.g., financial, sales, production, student grades, etc. In so doing, they can detect positive and negative trends and make well-founded strategic as well as tactical decisions in all areas, not just personnel administration.

Stated differently, custom categories recognize and respond to the fact that Cyfin can and should be used for constructive purposes, not just for "abuse identification." After all, abuse constitutes only a relatively small part of Web use in today's enterprises. The majority involves the use of extensive human and technological resources for legitimate enterprise-related Internet activity. As with any other valuable resource, Internet usage needs to be planned, monitored, and controlled. Cyfin's custom categories and self-designated URLs make this easy to do, as discussed below.

## How Cyfin's Custom Capability Works

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To facilitate Web-use management, users can create and define up to 12 "custom" categories and add them to Cyfin's built-in set. These add-on categories can relate to either Internet or Intranet activity. After establishing the custom categories, users can then append URLs of their own choosing to Cyfin's list of potential-visit sites. These additional URLs can represent external (Web) sites or internal (Intranet) sites. There is no limit to the number of URLs that can be added. Note also that custom categories and URLs can be modified at any time that changes in the enterprise's environment warrant. Working together exactly as Cyfin's built-in features do, custom categories and URLs detect and categorize actual site visits. But in this case, they are detecting visits of specific interest and/or particular importance to the enterprise. The process for tracking business- or mission-related trends is the same as that used to detect and identify abuse.

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## Benefits of Cyfin's Customizable Features

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*The information in Cyfin's reports can significantly increase management's ability to focus in on areas of particular interest to the enterprise.*

Custom categories and self-designated URLs benefit the enterprise in several ways. Being enterprise-specific, they maximize the specificity and thus the usefulness and efficacy of Cyfin's output reports. As a result, the information in Cyfin's reports can significantly increase management's ability to focus in on areas of particular interest to the enterprise. These areas can be either Internet-related or Intranet-related. In either case, the information can be used to track trends in legitimate areas of the enterprise's endeavors. Finally, and most importantly, management can use the trend information developed via custom techniques more effectively solve problems, identify opportunities, adjust strategies, improve processes and optimize resource utilization.

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