

GeekWire

Google buys Sparkbuy, a search engine for consumer electronics

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Dan Shapiro (Randy Stewart photo)

Well, that sure was quick. Sparkbuy, the Seattle upstart led by entrepreneur Dan Shapiro, announced today that it has been acquired by Google in a deal of undisclosed size. The news comes just a little more than a month after [Shapiro unveiled Sparkbuy](#), an online service that allows users to compare the prices and features of various electronics gadgets. (TVs, laptops, etc.).

Shapiro declined to comment when contacted by GeekWire, but a message on the company's Web site says that they are "stoked about the opportunity to share our vision for search with a broader audience."

This marks a quick turnaround for Sparkbuy, and the second company that Shapiro has either sold or merged in the past 18 months. He also merged Ontela, a mobile photo sharing service, with PhotoBucket in early 2010.

Seattle-based Decide.com also is kicking around a stealthy idea in the electronics shopping arena, having raised [\\$6 million](#) in venture financing last month.



Technology companies like Google, Facebook and Zynga have been gobbling up startups for talent more so than the products they have built. It is unclear whether Google has big plans for Sparkbuy's technology, or just wanted its engineers. As a result of the deal, Sparkbuy says it plans to shut down the service.

Nonetheless, this marks one of the faster flips we've seen in recent years, right up there with Facebook's buy of stealthy mobile startup Rel8tion before it even launched.

Sparkbuy raised about \$1 million from Benaroya Capital, Founder's Co-op and angel investors such as Geoff Entress, Kelly Smith, Chase Franklin and others. It consisted of three people, Shapiro, Scott Haug, and Isaac Myers. All three will join Google's Kirkland offices.

Here's the full message from the Sparkbuy Web site:

We are pleased as punch to announce that Sparkbuy has been acquired by Google.

I know, right? We can hardly believe it ourselves.

When we built Sparkbuy way back in the waning days of 2010, we wanted to make it really easy to find the gadget that's perfect for your needs. Our idea was that you could combine huge piles of structured data with an intuitive interface, et voila: a few clicks to find the electronics widget with exactly the features you want. Have you tried to find a great laptop or TV recently? Crazy hard.

But when people started actually using Sparkbuy, we started to see that the opportunity was bigger. In fact, it was much, much bigger. There are so many "crazy hard" search problems out there we know it could take ages for us to deliver what our customers are asking for. So when Google showed up and suggested we could work together to turbocharge our efforts, we just couldn't pass it up.

We're stoked about the opportunity to share our vision for search with a broader audience. And while we won't be offering services at sparkbuy.com any more, stay tuned for truckloads of new awesome from our team at Google.

Thanks for coming by!