

Experts-Exchange (<http://www.experts-exchange.com>), founded in 1996, is an online "ask an expert" site for computer related questions. The free access is limited, while fee-based premium service is available without such limitations. Experts-Exchange went bankrupt in 2001 after venture capitalists moved the company to San Mateo, CA, and was brought back largely through the efforts of unpaid volunteers. The period following the bankruptcy recovery was marked by a rapid growth and expansion of the knowledge base and in November 2007 the number of solutions on Experts-Exchange reached 2,000,000.

LivePerson (<http://www.liveperson.com>), founded in 1995 and is headquartered in New York City, is a leading provider of online communication platforms that facilitate real-time engagement and live expert advice. In June 2007 LivePerson agreed to acquire the Israeli online expert advice provider Kasamba Inc. for about \$40 million. LivePerson have acquired the company for \$9 million in cash and about \$31 million in stock to expand its global presence. More than 7,000 companies and over 35,000 individual experts rely on LivePerson to maximize the impact of the online channel.

BitWine (<http://www.bitwine.com>), a service launched in late 2006, lets people ask questions to experts for a fee. Originally the service was tethered to Skype; more recently it began letting users connect to experts via Skype, other VoIP service, or normal phone lines. Experts can charge their clients either by the minute or a simple flat fee. Clients pay by PayPal and the money gets sent to experts as soon as the sessions end. BitWine is privately held with headquarters in Tenafly, New Jersey, and venture backing from Crossbar Capital and individuals.

TechRepublic (<http://techrepublic.com>) is an online trade publication and social community for IT professionals, designed to provide timely and relevant information, advice, tools, and services for the day-to-day needs of IT professionals. TechRepublic was founded in 1997 by Tom Cottingham and Kim Spalding, and debuted as a website in 1999. The site was purchased by CNET Networks in 2003 for \$23 million. TechRepublic is marketed alongside BNET and ZDNet as a member of the BNET Business Network.

eXpertist.net (<http://www.expertist.net>) was privately initiated in May 2000 by Mr. Bernd Bieber and Partners and headquartered in Berlin, Germany. The objective of eXpertist.net is to facilitate a public and interdisciplinary network of experts on sustainable development and international cooperation, who are prepared to share their knowledge with others, irrespectively if they offer their expertise voluntarily or commercially, if they work as freelancer or as a member of an expert team (e.g. consultancy firms), if they offer expert service or purchase it (project investors or donors). It enables these experts to become a member of the network, by presenting their professional profile and/or detecting other member experts as qualified counterparts for various kinds of cooperation.