



**Power Equipment Direct Inc.**

**Date launched**  
2002  
**2006 unique visitors (monthly)**  
258,794†  
**2006 web-based sales**  
\$15,000,000

**Vendor relationships**  
Site design



**E-commerce platform**

In-house

**Web hosting**

Rackspace US Inc.

**Site search**

In-house

**Content management**

In-house

**Order management**

In-house

**Payment processor**

Authorize.net

**Fulfillment**

In-house

**Affiliate marketing management**

NA

**Search engine management**

In-house

**E-mail marketing**

Mailchimp

**CRM**

In-house

**Customer service**

In-house, ShoreTel VoIP

**Security certification**

Hacker Safe, Thawte, Trusted Commerce



**Web analytics**

ClickTracks

**Content delivery network**

In-house

**Rich media**

In-house

**Site performance monitoring**

NA

**Site performance**

Performance data measured by Gomez Inc.

**Availability**

99.96%

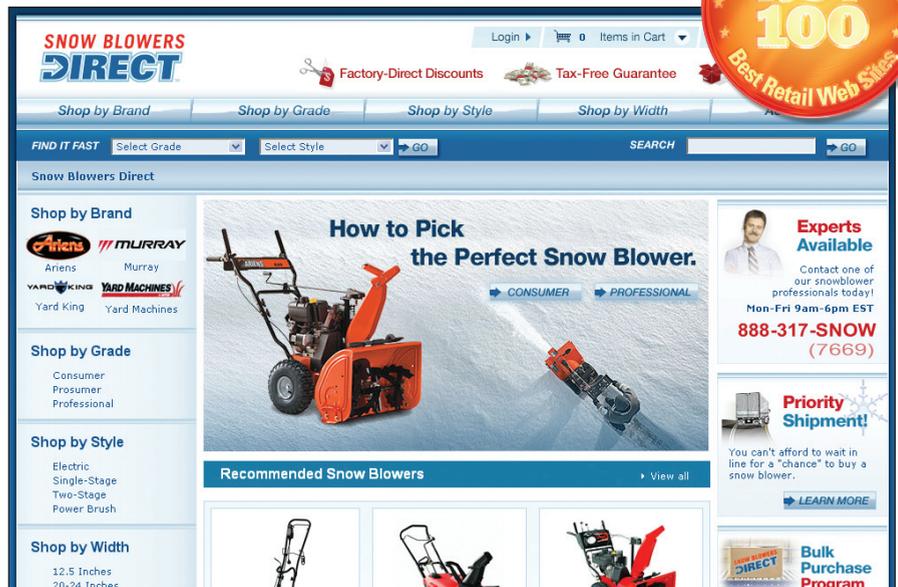
**Response time**

4.453 seconds

**Consistency score**

Good

† Combined total of company's four sites.



# Power play

With \$400 in winnings from a lucky night on a riverboat casino five years ago, Jon Hoch stepped into e-commerce with the purchase of several web addresses. But a lot more than luck supports his booming online business in selling bulky items like power generators and snowblowers.

Hoch had already started to forge his own path when, as a public relations manager for a manufacturer of power generators, he volunteered to redesign its information-only web site, realized the potential for e-commerce sales and set out to prove it to a skeptical industry. "At first manufacturers just rolled their eyes," Hoch says. "They didn't understand the potential of the Internet."

In 2002, Hoch founded Power Equipment Direct Inc. and a string of sites, ElectricGeneratorsDirect.com, PowerWashersDirect.com, AirCompressorsDirect.com and, this fall, SnowBlowersDirect.com.

Hoch's staff of 19 constantly monitors national weather reports for communities in the line of severe weather like hurricanes and snowstorms. Then they search the web for local radio stations and newspapers and e-mail them audio clips and print

ads that advertise Bolingbrook, Ill.-based Power Equipment Direct's web addresses. The strategy has helped drive overall sales to \$15 million in 2006, up from \$9 million in 2005.

Through a combination of dropshipping and fulfilling orders from its own warehouse, the e-retailer will guarantee next-day shipping and delivery times from two to 10 days. Shoppers on its web sites can click on a map that shows how long it takes to ship to their region.

For the many shoppers who know little about generators or even the differences among snowblowers, Hoch's sites offer plenty of how-to manuals, product demonstration videos and advice designed to ease the purchase process.

"The 'Good, Better, Best' shopping advice is a fantastic concept for making it easy for someone who needs a household air compressor but would not even know where to start," says David Schofman, an e-commerce consultant and founder and former CEO of Callaway Golf Interactive. "These niche plays that understand their products and their consumers will always have a place in e-commerce."