

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION BASICS

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In the fast moving IT era, search engine optimization has changed fundamentally since the end of the 90s when the entry of relevant keywords in the title and in the metatags was often enough for good website ranking results. Times have changed although the majority of webmasters still believe that search engine optimization is a pure meta-title

thing. However, with the following article, I will disprove this thought.

Over the past few years, most search engines have changed their search engine ranking algorithm. This is a major factor why today, search engine optimization is really no longer just about metatags and titles. There are about 60 different HTML and design



elements of a Web page that can influence the search engine rankings, especially the text within <body> ... </body> and the link popularity.

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NOT ALL SEOS ARE CREATED EQUAL

As in any industry, there are such and such...

There are the hobby SEOs who try with their acquired knowledge to get to the top rankings, one or more of their own projects, with more or less success.

Then we have the amateur SEOs that show more talent by exploiting the ad-

vantages of niche marketing, even getting from time to time, a customer order.

And of course if there are amateurs, then there are obviously also the appropriate professional SEOs. They usually have a whole network of projects in the loop which allow them to live pretty well, but in addi-

tion they constantly receive more customer orders on top of this.

And still there is a level higher than these pros and this is where the true masters of search engine optimization are sitting – let's call them the "SEO gods".

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SEARCH ENGINES: AN EFFICIENT MARKETING TOOL

Search engine marketing increases the number of visitors to a site sustainable and is an efficient method to get publicity.

Search engines are the most widely used service on the World Wide Web. Globally, around 85% of

all Internet users access Google & Co to find information and search engine marketing harnesses this fact. The aim of search engine marketing is to appear with a Website or an offer in the top ranks on Google and lead consumer and interest groups

respectively directly to companies, products, and services.

Search engine marketing can be operated in two ways. First, with search engine advertising (also called keyword advertising or sponsored links), which

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BEST PRACTICES & STRATEGIES

The design and structure of a Web site are also important elements to achieve a high search engine ranking. Where and how a keyword is placed in the source text is as important as the frequency with which it occurs.

Search engines use so-called spiders or robots, which read the entire source code of a Web page through means of a so-called ranking algorithm, and index and file it in a database. Then, the spider follows the links on the Website and repeats the process.

The "feed" for a spider is the text-based content. However, graphics, Java applets, as well as links and text content in image maps and Flash are unreadable, and are often not tracked on a page with frames links.

In the following, I want to give you an understanding of the basics of search engine optimization and the search engine ranking algorithms as well as hints and tips on how you can achieve for your site a high search engine ranking.

Search engines change their algorithm constantly. Each search engine uses its own algorithm and therefore this introduction to optimization methods is tailored generally for the large and most important search engines.

No search engine operator publishes its ranking algorithm, and there is no universal formula to get a No. 1 ranking. But there are HTML and design measures by which there is a possibility of achieving a very high ranking.

Ideally, you should think about the optimization of your site before you

start programming. And during this stage of the site planning, you should pay attention to ensuring a "search engine friendly" design of the website.

Now let's assume that you have decided to create a "search engine friendly" page without frames, Flash, Java applets and JavaScript - then you should know in advance which keywords you want to use. This consideration is indeed one of the most critical aspects of search engine optimization.

Do you know what keywords an Internet user chooses for a search engine in order to find a page with the content of your site?

Do you know what words or combinations of terms most of the users in search engines would search for to see your page?

Have you figured out what keywords your competitors have used to optimize their websites?

Here are answers to the above questions:

There are 3 basic ways to find out what keywords or keyword combinations optimize your website.

1. Send your friends and colleagues an e-mail and invite them to answer the following questions!

"What 5 keywords or keyword combinations (1 to 3 words) would you choose to look for the subject and content of the website www.yourdomain.com in a search engine?"

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Enter for the answers 5wild-cards! (Experience shows that in most cases only 3 terms will be given without the 5 wild-cards.)

With this method, you have an excellent chance at hand to the most popular search terms. So you also get search terms that you have not thought of yourself. This method is especially successful, if you have asked at least 6 or more colleagues and/or friends. Studies and experience have proved that 65% of all search queries are looking for word combinations rather than single words. This is actually good news and I will explain it later, but first let's learn more about the other two methods for the identification of keywords.

2. One of your favorite sources should be the keywords which your competitors use! A good method is to take the first two terms that are in your opinion the most relevant and to search accordingly for these keywords in your favorite search engine. Take from these search results the first ten entries and look at the source code of the pages! Pay specific attention to the metatag <meta name="keywords" ...> and the metatag <meta name="description" ...> where you find the keywords and description of the page.

In the keyword tag you can see the keywords of the competitor. Look out for the keywords used in the



description tool. This approach should give you ideas for the use of your own metatags.

Be careful if you use keywords of your competitors. Don't use protected terms or product names of the competitors. Unprotected terms or product names are usually not a problem. Successful companies know their competitors. Be aware that your competitors are also interested in your activities on the Internet.

3. There is a keyword Research Service on the Internet, with several very large keyword databases in the background.

These databases are very valuable as they do not only provide you with keywords, but also provide informa-

tion which keywords or keyword combinations and their synonyms (thesaurus) in a given period have been looked up most in general. The company that offers this service is located in Great Britain and called Gold River Associates Ltd., and their service is called Word Tracker-<http://www.wortracker.com>.

Unfortunately or fortunately, the content of the databases are based on the results of English-language search engines, so most keywords are generally in English. Unfortunately, those of you who are not really familiar with the English language will have difficulty implementing the complex content of this page. The good news is that this service - with a few restrictions - is for free.

Of course it would be appreciated if such a search engine keyword database would be available in other languages as well and it would be great if Asian search engine operators pick up this idea.

There is a general rule for the selection of keywords and keyword combinations.

For websites with strong competition it is better to take up an optimization for a keyword combination of 2 or 3 keywords instead of concentrating only on one keyword. For example: You are a real estate broker from Singapore with a focus in the regional area. So, instead of pursuing a full steam optimization on the keyword "real estate", it is much better to include in the optimization of the word combinations such as "Singapore property" or "real estate broker Singapore". This has an additional advantage: The visitors to your Website have targeted their search according to real estate in and around Singapore, which means for you, targeted traffic. If there are not many websites with the same subject as your website, it is sufficient to optimize individual keywords. And as by this time, the appropriate keywords should already be found, then the next step can be made: worrying about the Web design, the structure and the HTML code and their effect on the ranking in search engines. ♦

By Daniela La Marca

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Mobile Security

Watch out for more information on this topic coming to you mid of 2008!

<http://www.mediabuzz.com.sg>



You ask what distinguishes these "SEO Gods" from "normal" professionals?

Well, they are simply always just a few steps ahead, compared to regular search engine optimizers. In the SEO Olympus, it's no longer about search engine optimization as much as just another tool they are proficient in. These "gods" simply know how optimization and ranking work and I mean they know it with surgical precision. Most of them usually don't make errors or run tests.

While pros-SEO's are happy about their success in having maneuvered a website to the top in a highly competitive area, this simply matters not to the SEO masters in the least, as they can virtually bring any site to where they want to - it is simply secondary for them.

Now many of you may wonder why these masters don't push their own projects upwards in order to earn good money. Well, there are certainly some who also have their own projects and make a lot of money with these, but usually these "virtuosos of the Internet" are somehow often more attracted by specific tasks or challenges which are simply interesting for them to solve. Money doesn't seem to be an issue. Who knows the daily rates of these SEO Gods (about \$6,000 - \$ 15,000)? But again, it's most often not about the money . For pros-SEO's however search engine optimization is still in the lime-light.

They master their job perfectly as well but that is for the "SEO gods" more a minor matter. For them a task to be solved is in the foreground, among other things, with search engine optimization as a tool. Getting a certain page at a specific keyword to the top is definitely not such a task.

An example of a "real" "SEO God" task would be more the pushing of a Hollywood movie. We all know that a movie-budget can be in the range of 2-3 digit million, so in order to ultimately generate profits, everything has to be perfect.



A lot of information has to reach many millions of people quickly through the Internet, so it is important to have someone "who knows exactly what he is doing".

Such a task is therefore most probably assigned to a member of the SEO Olympus.

The task now is to present the film flawlessly to the audience, nothing misleading should stop people from going to the cinema or to buy the DVD later. To ensure it, no negative critiques on the film should appear online - and in case it happens, it's time again for the master.

As already mentioned before, search engine optimization doesn't play a big role, it is just a tool to place many positive reports on the movie into search engines and to push that the negative reviews virtually disappear into the nirvana of search results. Of course it means that the master has to ensure that virtually all search results, in all

search engines, spit out only positive feedback - and that in such a way that no one notices it, as such a manipulation would be a golden opportunity for the press to jump on.

In case of emergency, these SEO's also use their bag of tricks, their knowledge and techniques to evict for instance unwanted competition from their place. All means are allowed in order to do this unnoticed. Solving the task at all means has absolute priority and justifies all actions.

Although Google has repeatedly assured in public that a business rival has no possibility of harming a competitor or negatively affecting the ranking, the practice proves that black is white.

To beat a competitor from the field is in professional circles known as "Google bowling" or as negative SEO. And that it is "theoretically" possible, and certainly can't be ruled out entirely, Matt Cutts (popular Google employees) has at least finally confirmed it once.

In the SEO Olympus the geniuses are dealing mainly with solving a problem or handling a certain higher task. All methods of the traditional SEO are only incidental tools that are used accordingly. The great masters of this "craft" are in the end also the most unknown, as they understand it excellently to leave no trace. They are neither good nor bad - but both -depending on the situation and the needed measures. But eventually they are among us - the Einsteins of search engine optimization - the "Gods of SEO".◊

By Daniela La Marca

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YES, ORGANIC IS GOOD IN SEO LAND TOO!

An "organic" search engine listing is a free listing of a site, usually found by a search engine's spider and then ranked by relevancy according to the search engine's methodology. In contrast, a paid listing is ranked according to how much an advertiser is willing to spend. The field of search engine optimization (SEO) is geared toward improving the rankings of sites' organic listings.

Search engine optimizers value natural, or so called organic listings for four main reasons:

- Lower cost compared to pay-per-click;

- Higher click-through rates;
- Consumers use organic listings to judge paid listings;
- Organic listings out-convert paid ones.

Lower cost compared to pay-per-click

As mentioned, organic listings resulting from search engine optimization are essentially free, meaning there's no cost-per-click (CPC) charged. The additional traffic generated from natural listings effectively lowers the CPC cost of paid search ads and can be seen as a

budget stretcher and potential campaign productivity booster.

A study of MarketingExperiment.com examined the additional contribution an organic search engine optimization effort made to an existing pay-per-click campaign using five search engines. Sponsored listings drew more than 90,000 clicks for a total cost of around US\$ 7,000, at an average click cost of 80 cents. The organic campaign generated in addition around 40,000 clicks at no charge, which means a gain of 43% and overall, reduced the per-click cost of the

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posts paid search terms on search engines. Second, with search engine optimization, which revises websites from a content and technical perspective so that the search engines can read and index each page best.

Search Engine Advertising: precise and efficient

Search engine advertising reaches the precise target group. When a user looks for a defined term, a text-advertising appears accordingly in a prominent place. Linked with the right keywords, products can be promoted selectively and that, at attractive prices. Unlike traditional online advertising, there are only costs if the text ads are clicked, no matter how much advertising has been displayed.

The number of ad impressions and clicks on the ad (interaction) and the number of resulting actions (transactions) can always be measured and analyzed and allows that modifications and optimization can

be made immediately and at any time. Definitely it always allows advertising clients to invest their media budget in the best way possible and guarantees maximum ROI.

Search engine advertising suits sales promotions perfectly in the marketing mix. It requires no intervention in a website and can be operated at any time without the use of technical support.

Search engine optimization: sustainable and effective

Omissions in content and programming of the website have a direct impact on the ranking with the search engines. Through search engine optimization a Website achieves a better ranking in Google & Co.

Basically, each page should be designed as simple as possible to enable the robots of the search engines to read and index them. Regarding the content, please pay attention and use important keywords



multiple times or use them wherever possible as well as in the page title and the headlines. The more often another page refers to it, the higher the chances that search engines get through.

Although each individual search engine has different criteria for the indexing of sites, which they even also constantly change, search engine optimization is a sustainable measure. A periodic review of the positioning on search engines is essential as it allows web owners to decide if a revision of the Website is necessary and tells you what should be taken into consideration.◊

By Daniela La Marca

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campaign by 30%. So, combining organic and paid search can definitely generate advertising cost efficiencies.

Higher click-through generate additional traffic

People click more often on natural listings was the conclusion of search engine marketer iProspect's study, where the users of four search engines –Google, Yahoo!, AOL, and MSN-clicked. Researchers showed individual sample result pages for a “used car” search, and instructed them to click on the most relevant result. Consumers clicked text ads and organic listings, but in a 60/40 split favored organic listings. The organic listings were led by Google at 72%, followed by Yahoo! at 60%. Over at AOL, organic and sponsored clicks were evenly divided. MSN deviated from the pattern – only 29% clicked on organic listings. The key strategic point here: consumers click on natural and paid listings, but display preferences for organic.

Organic listings out-convert paid ones

Consumers value natural listings

more highly than paid ones and see them as more relevant. Searchers start out being skeptical toward paid ads and personally vet them by berry-picking among result listings and text ads. They perform their own cross-checks, evaluating sponsored listings in the context of the natural, organic listings, all the while gauging advertiser credibility and relevance.

Ideal situation

For advertisers of any size, high positions in the organic results potentially builds awareness. Let's create the ideal situation for a software company that grows its business online through an in-house search engine optimization program. The company uses targeted keywords, fresh content, benefits-oriented copy, extensive and often updated white paper collections, downloadable full-working demos, regular product updates, and a spider-friendly website.

Users type in the category, product name, or the specific task they have to perform into a search engine, then see the company's listings in the organic results. Its listings are often first or typically appear at



least within the first five listings on top, bracketed by well-known competitors. Through its program this highly reputable but lesser-known firm generates brand awareness and drives traffic to its site, where prospects learn more about the product through deeper content and deeper engagement, and most probably make a purchase later on. As this example portrays, search engine optimization is a family of techniques that aim to have search engines index your pages and assign them a high relevance score. The higher the relevance score, the higher they appear in the listings.◇

From:

The Online Advertising Playbook
(2007)

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Best Practices for organic search engine optimization:

- Choose the right keywords and phrases that are well-targeted and offer significant traffic potential;
- Focus individual pages on specific keywords;
- For sites that sell products or services, include a few lines of copy at the top of each offer page;
- Title tags should be keyword rich, with the most important at the beginning;
- Give your pages relevant names;
- Submit your site to DMOZ.org and as many specialized directories you can find. This creates relevant inbound links and helps spiders find your site;
- Encourage reciprocal linking.

From: *MarketingExperiments.com* (2006)

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BECOMING A SHINING STAR ON GOOGLE

It is becoming increasingly important for a company's success that it is well positioned in Google search. But as the past showed, Google is mercilessly even excluding prestigious companies from its index like for e.g. once, BMW. What types of measures support a good listing and which ones are jeopardizing the indexation in search results?



There is a lot of speculation on the Internet about Google's algorithm for the search engine results which is crucial as the commercial success of almost every company depends increasingly on the results of the search engine leader. Most consumers "google" first whenever a particular product or service is needed.

The Californian company guards its secret of being the top dog in the search engine market zealously, just like a state secret. After all, Google has an interest in displaying only the really relevant sites for searchers as far on top as possible. In order to keep the market leader position, the company intends to defend all kind of manipulative tricks.

Companies that promise to present a customers' website in a better way are around for a long time, but be careful as among the search engine optimization providers, there are many offering dubious services and whose actions could lead in the worst case, to your exclusion from the Google index. Though you can do a lot on your own to optimize

your website to search engines, professional support can of course be very helpful.

In order to shine on Google, there are mainly two crucial factors: One is the so-called PageRank, which indicates how relevant Google evaluates a particular page of the website. The other factor is the use of words and word combinations on the page, which Google uses to measure the relevance of page for a given search term.

But let's talk first about the PageRank system, which attributes independently to each sub-page of a site, a particular value regardless of the keywords: The maximum PageRank that a site can reach is 10, the lowest 0. World-wide there are only a handful of sites with a PageRank of 10.

It doesn't evaluate the entire Internet presence, but each individual sub-page receives an own PageRank. What kind of dimension the Google rating is can be figured out for example with "Google Toolbar. Who does not want to install it can also access Web tools like "popuri.us". To find out the PageRank only the address of the appropriate page has to be entered. In the case of the popular open-source browser Mozilla Firefox, there is also a corresponding extension that doesn't require the Google Toolbar to be installed.

Internally, however, Google works in a much more complex manner and doesn't reveal the actual PageRank of the sites at all. To avoid the possibility of webmasters measuring PageRank manipulations immediately, Google is in general, always releas-

ing data which is a few months old. The principle of Google PageRank is in theory quite simple: The more pages refer to a particular Web site, the more relevant it is.

Google's ranking system has made a decisive contribution to the success of the search engine: As the first search engine Google has developed an algorithm that does not only count the pure number of incoming links to a page, but also their relevance.

The higher the amount of links that point to a page, the more influence have these outgoing links to other pages - they inherited, so to say, their status to a small extent.

To improve the own positioning on Google especially, a lot of links from relevant pages that refer to the offer are needed. A good Google-ranking can be achieved for instance through public Web forums. They are often used by many private Web sites that deal with the same topic as the appropriate forum. And that's unfortunately also the reason why well-known public forums in particular, are increasingly in the radar of spammers, who only sign-up to leave links to the Web presences and improve their PageRank.

Thankfully, the administrators of such forums prepared long ago for such a scenario and delete such links straight away. Apart from a lot of work and trouble for forums administrators who are offering their time as volunteers, this method brings nothing really except a bad reputation in the community.

The best and ethically most proper method to be linked on Web forums, private websites and elsewhere, is

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by offering free content that is relevant and interesting. That can be, depending on the industry, entirely different things. In any case, it is worth it to offer your know-how, at least partially free, on the Web to promote your site and hence get better links. An agency for marketing could for example provide marketing tips or an introduction to the topic, a lawyer could present specialized articles on legal issues, etc.

The important thing is that the useful information for others stands in the limelight and not the advertising for your own company. Only in this way your measure achieves the desired effect of getting a high amount of links on the Internet. And only then does it become about promoting the newly created content on the network. So, information comes first rather than advertising content and once this is followed it becomes absolutely legitimate for instance to publish the link in theme-related Web forums and the "Usenet, as long as it's not exaggerated.

Here you should also respond briefly to the forum contribution, for example, what it is and what benefits the reader can expect. Promotional language and references to the company's commercial offers should be omitted in any case, as such contributions would anyway, soon be deleted.

Furthermore, there are link portals, where such links could be displayed to get evaluated by other users. The top dog In English-speaking countries is here e.g. Digg.com.

For the actual website presence an application for inclusion in the

"Open Directory Project" is highly recommendable.

And please pay attention to the appropriate category and acceptance criteria. Besides, the registration on online bookmark services like e.g. "del.icio.us" is a good offer and the entry into free industry-specific directories is definitely recommendable, too. Whether it is possible in your case, a search engine can tell you. However, too many links should be avoided to your pages, especially from foreign sites. Google itself recommends limitation to "a reasonable level" and gives an indicative value of less than 100 links. Link collections can, for example, be accommodated on several pages, too. One way to circumvent this restriction is the setting of so-called "no-follow attributes". They identify links as not being PageRank-relevant and in this way marked hyperlinks will simply be ignored by Google's calculation of the PageRank. How many links are on a page can be easily figured out e.g. with the free SEO analysis tool <http://www.seoworkers.com>.

The second important factor besides the PageRank is often used searched keywords on the site - depending on the industry they are of course very different. There are some tricks to guarantee that the own web presence appears in relevant search queries on top search engine positions. The relevant search words in the text could be, for example, highlighted in bold. If the relevant keywords are at the same time the most important words in the text, it helps the reader to orientate himself in the text, too and enables him to "scan" the text for key information.

However, it is not always necessarily

useful to focus on the obvious keywords. Often, there are already old bulls dominant on Google, whose pages have a PageRank hard to compete with. Studies show that search engine users barely notice more than the first three or four hits of a search engine result. Therefore, it can make sometimes more sense to be listed in less obvious but equally relevant searches on top than being in the middle-rank of prominent search queries.

Even more important than the words in the body text are the words used in headlines and the title of the page. The author of the Weblogs www.sistrix.com has even made the effort to analyze the relevance of the individual ranking factors in more detail and found out that words used in first order headlines have surprisingly no affect on Google's ranking. Obviously, even more relevant seem to be the headings from the second to the sixth order as they are displayed the largest in the Web browser. The most probably reason for this is that they have been abused too often for search engines manipulations that Google has decided to ignore them.

The page title especially is still an often underestimated instrument to push relevant queries more upwards, considering that a few sites still stick to completely meaningless titles like "index". The title should not only contain the name of the company, but if possible relevant keywords, too. But be aware that too long titles are ignored by most search engines as they assume in such cases a senseless accumulation of search words. Each sub-page can and should get its own title, aligned with the appropriate content.

BEST PRACTICES & STRATEGIES

Highlighted individual words or the use of bold/strong tags seem to have an influence on the ranking according to the analysis, as well as the alternative text for images.

The host name seems to be very relevant too, which means the part of the Web address up to the domain extension (for instance .com.sg or .sg for Singapore). The rest of the words in the path of the web address on the other hand, Google seems to ignore. When registering the domain it is therefore an advantage to have a Web address which has an often looked up term already in the title.

However, an already registered domain should not be lightly abandoned. The older a domain, the more reliable it appears to Google. New sites are initially only "on trial" in the index and appear often very far at the end in the results of the search engine giant because SEO spammers save every day, hundreds of domains in order to link with external PageRanks of the page.

If relevant search words are used too excessively, Google evaluates the appropriate page down, or does-

n't show the page at all anymore if there is a search for a specific word that appeared on the page too often.

In this case the automatic Google algorithm suspects a so-called "keyword stuffing", which means, a deliberate accumulation of search-relevant words on a page. Only a naturally diversified language helps to avoid this.

But if the sites are primarily written for the readers and not for search engines, you can be assured that it can't be entirely wrong. With Web tools like e.g. <http://www.linkvendor.com> the quantity of a certain keyword on the page can be investigated. The measured keyword density should remain in the ideal case around 3 to 4 percent for the most frequently used keywords. A value above this is usually interpreted as keyword stuffing and punished accordingly.

An in-depth analysis of the visitors of a website is often very helpful, too. Google Analytics, for example, evaluates the traffic of your site for free and allows in this way to find out, among other things, which search terms is used how often for a site and from which countries and cities the visitors of your Website are.

With these and similar tools, whose JavaScript code is built into the page, it is possible for instance, to experiment with different keywords in the title and to analyze what combination of words directs most visitors via search engines to the site.

The pure number of visitors however isn't really important, rather the number of visitors who become customers of the company later.

For this you can establish with Google Analytics, a so-called conversion goal, which can include for e.g. the registrations on the site, subscription for the company newsletter or the purchase of a product in the online shop. It is also possible to define different conversion goals which means that a certain monetary value is assigned to specific goals. So you not only can examine what measures pulled the most visitors to your page, but also what measures transformed most Website visitors to customers. Ultimately, the company is only interested in those visitors which come across an offer they were looking for and really want. ♦

By Daniela La Marca

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ASIAN CHANNELS

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE FOR TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIPS

With a circulation of 24,000 across the Asia Pacific region, it is targeted at top management, executives, professionals and key decision makers, and driven by news, channel and technology best practices, channel and business strategies, technology feature articles and profiles on ICT/channel companies and leaders.





The Rise of WAN Optimization— April 29, 2008



The WAN market has been heating up, seeing a lot of activity and hogging the news over the last year and a half, with more vendors jumping into the space, newer technologies being seen and a lot of interest being drummed up. But WAN optimization is not something new, so why all the buzz around it now?

MediaBUZZ Pte Ltd is organizing a half-day seminar on WAN optimization that aims to delve deeper into this technology and the other technologies impacted by it, discover why it's so important to enterprises, how it actually helps improve network traffic, how businesses can increase their performances and ROI through WAN and asks how businesses really can be revolutionized with it.

Topics that will be discussed are:

- ▶ **WAN application delivery and WAN optimization – What's the diff?**
- ▶ **WAN Optimization: Then & Now**
- ▶ **What's next for WAN optimization?**
- ▶ **WAN optimization and the Remote Office**
- ▶ **WAN optimization and Security**
- ▶ **Panel Discussion: The WAN optimization dilemma**

Ensure you have the edge over your competitors!

Grab the chance to be part of MediaBUZZ's half-day seminar!

The Rise of **WAN Optimization** will be held on **April 29th** in Singapore and sold fast to our sponsors, thus enabling us to offer **50 complimentary seats** to you **on a first-come-first-served basis**.

Complimentary registration for this dynamic event opens early next month only but you can save a seat by contacting michelle@mediabuzz.com.sg

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NETWORKS

5 DO'S AND 5 DON'TS FOR SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION



Rules there are many, but not all of them are equally important.

Who is eager to reach one of the top positions on the hit lists of search engines is well advised to know the correct order of the five main DO's and DONT's of SEO.

The five most effective tricks of search engine optimization:

1. Title

The search word in the title tag is still the most important element.

2. Link text

If you sell glasses, links on your page should also contain the word "glasses or spectacle". If there are many links with the keyword "glasses" on your pages, a search engine assumes that your pages are relevant for anyone who is looking for glasses. Try whenever possible to influence the text link and ask, for example, to combine the word "spectacles" with the link.

3. Link popularity

The more links refer to a page, the more relevant it will be classified. The bigger and more important the referring pages are the better it is. Make your pages as interesting as possible so that major portals report about you.

4. Age of the page

The longer you provide interesting content on your domain, the better. For optimization choose therefore, the oldest domain to the topic you have.

5. Topic of the page

Not only the sheer mass of links to your site, but also their quality counts. If a page, which has good information on "glasses/spectacles" on their own, links to your site, it is better than if the link comes from a car dealer. When looking for link partners see that they suit you regarding content as well. ◇

These results have been generated by SEOmoz who conducted a survey of experts in the United States. The order reflects the importance of the factors for the algorithm of Google.

<http://www.seomoz.org/article/search-ranking-factors>

The five DONTs that Google uses to classify your page down:

1. Slow server

The more often the server constricts the Google bot in reading the page due to too long dead time, the less Google likes to refer to this site. Make sure that your server works like clockwork.

2. Double content

If your page contains a lot of content which can be also found somewhere else, Google devaluates your pages. The same applies if you operate the same site under a different address.

3. Links to spam sites

If you link to pages that Google pages consider as spam sites, it has a negative effect on your image. Only link to reputable websites.

4. Sale of links

Those who get caught selling links or participating in link sale programs get punished. So, it's like at schooldays – don't get caught doing this.

5. Catchword spam

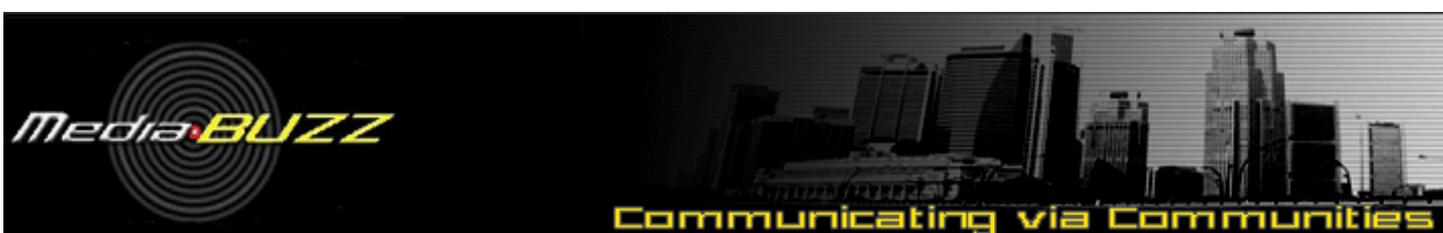
If you apply your search words too often, you look suspicious. Only two percent of the text may consist of the search word and not more.

Extra Tip: Double Title

Each site should have a separate and unambiguous title. If the entire web page uses always the same title and same metatag, it has a negative effect. ◇

By Torsten Schwarz

(<http://www.marketing-boerse.de/Fachartikel/details/5-SEO-Tipps>)



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SEARCH: ALMOST EVERYBODY IS DOING IT!

Just about everybody who goes online does it. More than any other online activity, search reflects people's far-ranging interests and motivations guided by who they are, where they live, their interests and events in the world at large. Search is not an end in itself. It works through ads and listings, provides gateways to websites large and small, social to technical, pop to highbrow, mass to class that are not merely sites, but destinations and immersions.

Search is the second most popular internet activity, right after e-mail, which is no surprise. Expanding online offerings make search even more necessary than ever. It's estimated that today, searchers comprise 80% of the total online population and this is expected to grow further. eMarketer forecasts the searcher population climbing to 166 million in 2010 which means 85% of all online users.

Along with the number of searchers, the frequency of searches will grow as well as search engines expand to become the primary interface between online and the internet and also as people use search more and more for navigational purposes.

The power of search is for buying advertising targeted at a context, interest, or category.

Studies conducted by Pew Trusts in conjunction with comScore Media Metrix found out that over 60% of all adult web surfers, about 60 million, use search engines on any given day with an average of two searches per day. You probably know from your own experience that most people type into the search box several times throughout the

day by checking stocks, movie listings, doing business research, or simply looking for new products or services.

And while there exist hundreds of search engines, too, it is interesting that around 44% of searchers use just one engine, about 48% use up to three engines, and only about 7% use more than three. Differences exist among these groups for sure. More engaged searchers often match their search questions to individual engines and evaluate information by cross-checking different results and sources. Less engaged searchers often typically search for less important information and use the results they are given at face value.

Most people who search every day use broadband connections: cable, DSL, office networks, satellite, or mobile web-enabled handsets, like pocket PCs, Blackberry, or Apple iPhones. High speed connections contribute to searching in a big way as research shows, which means the "killer searcher" take advantage of broadband at work and at home.

While search is the second most popular online activity, people spend far less time with search than they do with other internet activities, accounting for a shade below 5% of their total time according to the experts at eMarketer. But how can it be then, that search advertising spend commands currently about half of all online ad spend? Why should advertisers allocate so much money to an activity where people spend such little time?

When you think about it, spending much less time on search sites makes sense. Like fast-food meals,

people look to "grab and go". Contrast that with email, which is more of a sit-down meal. So it was tested once that people spend in general 24 minutes on email but only 3.5 minutes with search engines a day, whereas 6.4 seconds are spent on an entire search results page before clicking through to another page. Not to mention that search interests are as diverse as online searchers and each individual has usually its own preferences. However, research reveals that the majority of searchers show the tendency to balance their online search attitudes like in real life that means searching for trivial things for having fun and important things for doing business. And as the search interests are so complex, the big search engines list popular keyword searches providing keyholes through which marketers and general users can glimpse searchers' myriad interests. AskIQ, Google Zeitgeist, AOL Hot Searches, Lycos 50, and MSN Search Insider are some of the many lenses advertisers use for getting insights into searcher trends.

Going beyond individual terms, search engine marketer iProspect examined the popularity of search categories and identified travel and health as the most popular search categories. In addition, more than half of search activities relate to news and information services, and just about half concern entertainment-oriented websites or activities.

And always keep in mind – consumers search for personally relevant information, searchers usually have a high level of interest in what they are searching for, yet they also want to find and act on the best results quickly.◊

By Daniela La Marca

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WILL THE END OF SEO'S TIPPING POINT USHER IN A NEW ERA?

The market for SEOs is already for quite some time at a turning point, but the fact is that the gold rush times are definitely drawing to a close and real conceptual work is increasingly in great demand.



End of the manipulations

It casts a positive light on SEO and will be ultimately beneficial for each search engine user.

The change and new era was heralded by the current market leader in Internet search. Google and its chief developer Matt Cutts boosted the hunt on Internet pages which have got the top positions in search results by using dirty tricks. They did not even shy away from banishing big players, for e.g. a renowned German Automobile Manufacturer, which had been absolutely undiscoverable on the results pages of Google for a short term. Can you imagine that from one day to the other, the Websites of this manufacturer wasn't available neither in the international nor in the German language search results? The same happened almost at the same time to a large Asian manufacturer of computer accessories.

Fishy tricks

Although the responsible SEOs rely on common market procedures, it can be quite debatable whether the means still apply to the framework of good manners and common decency. The fact is, that the Internet sites showed to search engines other content than to a large part of the surfers, which have been forwarded to the final offer by JavaScript.

The range of tools, utilized by self-styled search engine optimizers or even some major carriers often even use less legal business ways. Of course, there are here again some special software tools that facilitate the manipulation.

So, is SEO bad?

Far from it! Search engine optimization is one of the most promising measures in the field of online marketing! For visitors that find offers on the Internet in a natural way, no additional advertising has to be paid. However, this success has to be scheduled rather in the long-term and expenses and costs shouldn't be underestimated.

How these costs can be quantified:

- Assumption of the actual condition
- Profound research
- Grouping and analysis of relevant search terms
- Conceptual preparation

The points above are the basis for all further action which usually take 2-3 business days, depending on the industry and competition, while the costs of the actual implementations depend a lot on the point of departure:

How is your page structure?;

Is a server software like e.g. a Content Management System or shop installed?

Is a Web agency hired that takes care of your pages, and if so, how is their readiness and cost approaches, to provide changes to the code of your pages?

Besides potentially necessary restructuring and changes to the code, it may be necessary to make amendments in the content too. After all, the content of your web pages decide on the classification of the relevance of your offer for certain keywords.

Cost Models

Some SEOs offer a profit-related cost model, others a fixed monthly amount or a mixture of both. Contracts are usually for a period of about 12 months, which makes sense as success in search engines usually do not happen overnight.

Furthermore, the success of the triggered steps have be analyzed continuously, resulting then in periodic adjustments.◇

By Daniela La Marca

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WHEN TECHNOLOGY PLUS CREATIVITY EQUALS VALUE

Started by a trio of good friends who have combined, twelve years of search engine marketing expertise; who envisioned and saw a greater opportunity in the Internet domain to create even more utilitarian products, Valuepitch may be small to some (with 20 staff) and young to others (having started 20 months ago), but the company brims with enthusiasm coupled with an extremely healthy dose of visionary and creative aptitude.



Venkat Ramana

In fact, according to **Venkat Ramana, CEO, Valuepitch Interactive**, who is also one of the co-founders of the company, these are some of the key factors

that gives them the edge over others in the industry.

Elaborating, he says the Mumbai-based company has the added advantage of freedom and flexibility in what they do and how. Their mantra and success factor is their key differentiator – Creativity enabled by Technology. “Lots of agencies are good in either one of these pillars,” Ramana explains, “but Valuepitch is powerful in both. We were clear from the very beginning that creativity along with technology can do wonders to campaign objectives. Moreover, access to key agencies, the so-called large agencies of the West, and their confidence to work with us as partners work strongly in our favor.” This strategy seems to have paid off for them as on February 22, 2007, Valuepitch became

the first company registered in India to be awarded "Adwords Qualified Company" status by Google. Online interactive marketing specialists, Valuepitch is extremely focused on results and driven by metrics. Their key areas of focus are in domain expertise, large scale project/SEO (Search Engine Optimization) architecting, implementation abilities and above all, technology as a driver.

The company's value proposition is ROI, says Ramana. “We give an estimated cost benefit analysis. Our go-to-market strategy has been 80% alliances and 20% direct. What this means is we get 80% business by making partnership arrangements with other agencies. We power up search marketing for 2 of the top 5 digital agencies in India and 1 in Singapore, 2 in UK and 1 in USA,” he notes.

Their list of clients include organizations such as MSN India, Tata Sky, Johnnie Walker, Franklin Templeton, Lenovo, ICICI Prudential and Tata AIG.

“Our biggest challenge is hiring,” shares Ramana. Elaborating on this, he adds that as the industry is nascent, getting the right kind of people is a huge task. “Another huge challenge is the lower levels of awareness of SEO in Asian markets (especially compared to USA and the UK). This leads to longer sales cycles and more investment in client servicing than in actual delivery.”

However, these challenges are not holding Valuepitch back in any way.

The company has home grown tools and applications in search marketing (SEO and Pay-per-Click) such as SVAT, SmarTags and InstaAds.

Elaborating on SVAT (Share of Voice Assessment Tool), Ramana explains that it is a competition analysis tool which gives a snapshot of the current competition on a set of key-phrases on Google and Yahoo! Paid Search results in over 40 countries. It measures the effectiveness of a search campaign based on the depth of keyword selection and the aggressiveness in the bidding strategy.

It categorizes the competition into 4 quadrants:

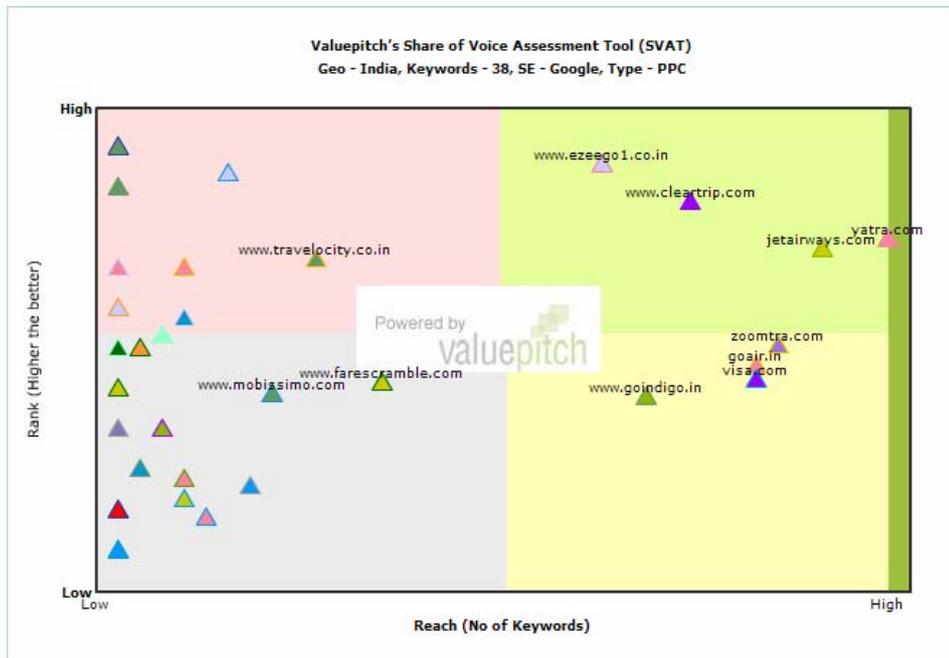
1. Novice: Very few words, very low bids
2. Inefficient: Few words, high bids
3. Aggressive: Lots of words, mid to high bids
4. Conservative: Lots of words, low bids

SVAT shows what Ramana refers to as the ‘Untapped Area’, that is keywords on which no advertiser is appearing at the point of time/analysis.

He adds that apart from an overall view, with SVAT, they can get the following data for each advertiser

1. Keywords appearing for and their positions;
2. Keywords not appearing for;
3. Number of keywords in each ad position.

TECHNOLOGIES & PRODUCTS



- Every company should type in some 10 phrases that it thinks its current customers or potential customers would look for in a Yellow pages/Search engine.
- If the results are satisfactory to the company, it need not hire an SEO company.
- If the results are not satisfactory, then millions of people seeking information about your company are being misled, or are misunderstanding your message, or even simply getting lost in the information overload that any search engine will provide them with.



www.bimadeals.com - (4/8)		Not Appearing For (4/8)	
Keyword/s	Position	Keyword/s	Position
life insurance	5	insurance	
best life insurance	3	affordable life insurance	
good life insurance	2	ing vysya	
health insurance	10	ing vysya life insurance	

If the above happens, it is absolutely necessary from a branding, marketing as well as reputation point of view to prevent a mishap and brand the website right.

Giving his views on SEO, Ramana's take on its definition is the process of ensuring the right visibility as well as timely access to one's current as well as potential customers using search engines.

He also believes that search engines are a highly sophisticated form of 'Yellow Pages' - "where users ask a question and get the answer to this question - no more, no less," he states. "This is exactly what search engines do and have to do. When someone asks for the best restaurant in an area, this person expects the best restaurant list. It's up to the businesses in this industry to make sure that they are 'found' by their prospective customers.

He also notes that a search is 'pull marketing', where someone is ready to take the information. "He is actively seeking you. It's like going to a mobile shop and asking for say, a Nokia n95. As such, the percentage of people that you can make a lasting impression on (recall) and persuade to buy (conversion) is far more in a search marketing campaign rather than say viral or offline marketing. In addition, a 360 degree marketing campaign will help further increase the ROI from a search marketing campaign," Ramana explains.

When should companies consider taking SEO into consideration? The answer to this is simple, says Ramana:

Ramana also feels that the most important key to getting found on search engines is the Meta title (i.e. the title of the page).

Commenting on how the pay-for-placement trend has affected the ability to get listed in the major search engines and directories, Ramana states that it does not matter for corporate sites and other large sites. "Pay for Placement was once popular when Yahoo first introduced it, but it has now lost its charm as Google refused to do the same stating that this would mislead users' understanding of a search engine's job. Yahoo now seems to have followed the same path," he says.

Personally, Ramana also feels that it is a tough time for SEO to be optimized for Web 2.0 technologies. The reason for this, he deduces, is

KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED FOR SPH SEARCH

If you are always wishing that your web content is more localized, and want to do more Singapore-based searches, than Singapore's very own search engine, SPH Search, which will be launched later this year, may just be the thing for you. SPH Search aims to be the prime online and mobile source and destination of all Singapore content/information, be it for people or businesses. In fact, its tagline says it all: 'Putting Singapore at your fingertips'

SPH's foray into the world of search engines is driven by the premise that much of the information needs of people are related to the environment around them, or in other words, 'local'.

This need is what spearheaded the collaboration between Singapore Press Holdings and Norway's Schibsted Group. For more than a century, both companies have established reputations of delivering information speedily. Since the 1990s, the platforms they use to spread their information have expanded to include the world wide web.

SPH Search Pte Ltd which was incorporated in September 2006, has its own technology team. The company's technologists are working on producing a system that will allow users of personal computers, PDAs and mobile phones, easy access to SPH Search's search and directory tools.

Emphasis will also be placed on speed, accuracy and relevance.

The company is also well into crawling and indexing relevant websites in Singapore. To do this, the company licensed search technology from Fast Search and Transfer ASA.

It'll be interesting how SPH Search measures up against Yahoo! Singapore and Google Singapore for example, which are doing a pretty credible job in this area, and see what kind of impact it'll have on the various search engine giants. One thing's for sure, SPH will create a buzz when it is finally unveiled. ♦

By Shanti Anne Morais

From Page 18 — When Technology plus Creativity equals Value



because any text has to be readable by a search engine in order to index it. And text has to be clearly attributable to a URL. "With Web 2.0, both of these are not met with properly – Ajax being the killer. This leads to the same problem of the flash - no flash debates of early times. I think websites should go for a mixture of web 2.0 (for the user) and search friendly parts (for the search engine)," he elaborates.

He adds that the speed with which website owners accept Ajax and other Web 2.0 technologies can cause nightmares to SEO vendors. "What if the 53 million users of Facebook start using the search facility of Facebook and not Google?

What if they go with a different algorithm to rank sites?

What if all the social networking sites do the same thing?" Ramana poses. "I think this is one issue that no one can predict. We can't foretell yet what can shake things in the SEO industry," he continues.

According to Valuepitch, the current hot SEO trends are links, but this Ramana shares, will fade away in the coming 1-2 years. Another top trend right now is the need to ensure visibility. "However, one year from now, it'll be the opposite. Instead, then it'll be about getting rid of negative visibility," he adds. Continuing this thought, he explains, "For example, if you search for 'dell reviews', 30% of the results in Google are bad, and more than 70% of shoppers are going to depend on reviews on the Internet to make up their minds to purchase or not. According to Gartner, criminals will control the search results pages

and this industry will become big in the coming 3 years. (<http://www.gartner.com/it/page.jsp?id=531407>)

However, all is not gloom and doom. When it comes to where Asia stands in the SEO market, Valuepitch places Asia as holding between 25-30% of the search engine market share. Of course, different parts of Asia vary with Korea and Japan being the leaders here. Ramana calls China the "sleeping giant" and adds that India can be a dark horse in this scene in the long run.

There is also no doubt at all that the only way is up for SEO in the Asia Pacific region. The reason for this optimism? The numbers will get better and better with more quality results given to the users and an increase of Internet penetration," Ramana says brightly. ♦

By Shanti Anne Morais

[Click here to return to the contents page](#)

A LONG ROAD AHEAD FOR WIKIA SEARCH

Maybe some of you waited with bated breath for Jimmy Wales Wikia search engine. Well, the waiting finally came to an end on January 7, 2007 when it was launched publicly



(www.alpha.search.wikia.com).

Wikia Search is an open-source search engine which is operated by Wikia, a for-profit company co-founded by Wales, who is as you most probably know, a co-founder of online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, too. The project to build as he said “a freely licensed, completely open and transparent, community-driven search engine” has been in the making for more than a year and has no immediate relation to Wikipedia, though many tend to jump to this conclusion simply by linking Wikia Search in combination with Jimmy Wales.

That it will ever take on Google, which is Wikia Search’s ultimate goal, nobody considers as possible currently. However, who would have imagined 10 years ago that Alta-Vista would be beaten by a new search engine (Google)? And see what happened, so why not the same this time around?

Nobody expects that the initial service would ever match the capabili-

ties of the leading search engines. Jimmy Wales is clearly aware of this because the quality and quantity of the search results are still too low as the search tool needs time to evolve. It’s planned that contributors will develop the search platform over time, in a way like Wikipedia which needed time and enough entries before it became useful. As Jimmy Wales explained online “Wikia’s search engine concept is that of trusted user feedback from a community of users acting together in an open, transparent, public way.” And he even put the expectations immediately straight by admitting: “Of course, before we start, we have no user feedback data. So the results are pretty bad. But we expect them to improve rapidly in the coming weeks”.



Jimmy Wales

According to Wales “search is a fundamental part of the infrastructure of the Internet, and therefore it can and should be done in an open, objective, accountable way. It is one of the most powerful editorial functions in our society and therefore it should be done in an open and transparent way,” he said, “a way all should be looking for in an open society and an open Internet.” All this takes time and that’s why he estimates that Wikia Search will take a minimum of two years to reach industry standard quality.

Wikia Search represents for him only “the first draft of the future of search” and based his engine on four organizing principles, namely transparency, community, quality and privacy (TCQP):

- **Transparency** - Openness in how the systems and algorithms operate, both in the form of open source licenses and open content + APIs.
- **Community** - Everyone is able to contribute in some way (as individuals or entire organizations), strong social and community focus.
- **Quality** - Significantly improve the relevancy and accuracy of search results and the searching experience.
- **Privacy** - Must be protected, does not store or transmit any identifying data.

Those who want to be more involved in the project can sign up and get an account, Wales said. Through the account, people will have access to what will look like a social networking site.

There will be algorithmic search results on the page as well, which participants will be able to rank—from one to five—on relevancy and quality. “All that data will then be used to feed back into algorithms to improve the search results on the next update of the index,” Wales said.

[continues on Page 21](#)





Results 1-10 of approximately 839,734 for books ([discuss these results](#))

These rankings will be accessible to the public, so that the community will have a kind of feedback mechanism that they need to monitor the site," he added.

It's planned to store search data for a very short period of time, only "a day or something to process the logs for statistical purposes, and to analyze security and things like that," he noted, "as there is no need to store it any longer."

In general I think that Wikia Search is a great idea that has for sure some good potential, considering the community aspect, open and transparent way and the relevance ranking.

Honestly, I have my doubts that this dedicated project will be untroubled by scammers. I guess that it will at some point attract and face problems, especially once it starts to become successful in generating sales, so maybe a future requirement will be that editors have to identify themselves as anonymity runs the risk of being abused. However, the fact is that Wikia has still a long way to go. I am curious to see who will have the final say in the end. ◇

By Daniela La Marca

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Try another index
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The search engine is accessible from www.wikia.com

http://search.wikia.com/wiki/Search_Wikia

GUIDELINES TO PURCHASED LINKS

As links are very important for search engine optimization there is still a kind of link traded – and here are some rules:

- Never buy links from sites that openly admit it;
- Do not buy links which are then listed under "sponsored links";
- Avoid links from pages with more than five outgoing links;
- Only buy links from sites that still don't do it for a long time;
- Even then only from theme-related sites;
- Better than a link on the edge is a link in the body text;
- Do not always link to the same page;
- Don't always use the same link text.



By Torsten Schwarz

(<http://www.marketing-boerse.de/Fachartikel/details/5-SEO-Tipps>)



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HITTING THE BULLS-EYE WITH SEO

A paragraph on their Website sparked my interest in a local company which stated: "One cannot overstate the importance of an organization's search engine strategy, especially for small-to-medium sized companies. Search engine marketing, which includes search engine optimization to drive traffic from organic search results and pay-per-click (PPC) marketing, is becoming the cheapest and most-effective means of attracting target customers."



Manoj
Aravindakshan

As Asian e-Marketing has dedicated this issue to Search Engine Optimization, I was delighted to find On Target Media & Marketing Services, a Singapore-based company which specializes in online

marketing services. I was honored to get spontaneously an interview with Manoj Aravindakshan founder & director of On Target who was willing to give me some insights into his expertise.

The online marketing consultant has been active for more than 10 years in the Asia Pacific region, in various aspects related to the Internet, including content, product management and marketing. Primarily focused on business-to-business (B2B) marketing, besides search engine marketing, On Target offers media planning & buying in trade publications, handling marketing communications and also the execution of integrated marketing campaigns as well.

The three year old company found its niche in catering mainly to small to medium sized businesses in Singapore & overseas that choose to outsource SEM services. So far they have contributed to marketing efforts of both B2B and B2C clients in sectors as diverse as niche education services, online retail/e-commerce and process engineering.

When Asian e-Marketing asked him what he believes is the main strength and success factor respectively of On Target Media & Marketing Services, he came fast to the point by saying: "Our strength is our understanding of the Internet, and in particular search engines, as a marketing medium. For example, very often there is too much focus on the technicalities of search engine optimization or paid search advertising so that marketing gets pushed to the background. We try to keep the focus on marketing and devise means to exploit the medium to meet that objective. We operate with the philosophy that SEO/ SEM is the means to an end, not the end in itself." He added: "On Target is clearly understanding the customer's end goals for search marketing and meeting those objectives is an important success factor. This is very important because we have found a significant difference in the stated goals of many small businesses that are just beginning to use search marketing versus the actual need that they are trying to fulfill."

When we asked him to give us insights into the biggest challenges his company is facing in the search engine optimization sector right now he said that there are mainly two key challenges, particularly for the

small-to-medium sized business segment: "The first is to get prospects to clearly understand the benefits of search engine optimization/search marketing, and this is mainly a question of bringing about a change in mindset; the second, even though adoption of search engine optimization is just picking up, SEO has already been commoditized, with very low-cost, fixed-price SEO packages." A typical inquiry they receive would look like the following, he continued: "I have a website with pages in Flash. How much for SEO?" So, getting prospects and customers to understand value-driven pricing for the service is an interesting challenge in itself.

A related aspect is client expectations and this is also most probably an even bigger challenge. "While SEO is not rocket science, it is still a process that requires thought, effort, time & money. There are no shortcuts and no magic switch that will get somebody to the top of Google [often the stated objective] and make them stay there within one or two days, or months", Mr. Aravindakshan tells me to exemplify the often tremendous expectations of their clients

Of course Asian e-Marketing was interested to find out more on how On Target differentiates its offerings in order to stand out of the highly competitive search engine optimization provider market. Here, Mr. Aravindakshan claims that their professional strategic marketing input often serves as a differentiator, as they don't see themselves as only a manipulator of search results. They are result-oriented and are also quite flexible with their pricing and offerings, depending on their customer's needs and budget.

[continues on Page 24](#)

SEO: AN ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is certainly not a new kid on the block. In fact, it has been around since the mid-1990s – once the first search engines started cataloging the early worldwide Web and site owners began to appreciate the value of having their websites highly ranked, easily searchable and clearly visible in search engine results.

SEO has evolved over the years. No longer is it simply about submitting a URL and waiting for search engine spiders to crawl that page or URL. While not rocket science, SEO is

definitely not as straightforward as it used to be in the early years of the Web.

And if you think that SEO has not taken off in Asia or made its presence felt, think again. Its importance and impact in Asia can be seen in the various SEO specialist companies sitting in various seats across Asia.

Asian eMarketing caught up with 2 such companies which have been in this line for more than 10 years.

Robert J. Steiner is a Singapore-based Internet Marketing company with expertise in portal management and a leader in SEO. According to Firdhaus Akber, Creative Editor of Robert J. Steiner, the company has been engaged by both local SMEs as well as large MNCs in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Hong Kong.

“One recent example of our success in Asia is the new flower website – <http://www.floweradvisor.com.sg> which was launched 3 months ago.

[continues on Page 25](#)

From Page 23 — Hitting the bulls-eye with SEO

Out of curiosity – and due to the fact that so many different, interesting and confusing explanations work a circuit - I asked Mr. Aravindakshan to give our readers his very personal definition of search engine optimization: “Personally, I believe that search engine optimization should actually be called ‘optimization for search users’, since in effect, we are trying to optimize a website for its target users, not really doing anything with the search engines themselves. As a definition of SEO, I would say that “it is the means/ process for a website/business to reach its target audience by increasing visibility in “natural” or “not-paid-for” search engine results.”

I was impressed by his short, interesting, and precise answer and followed up with what he believes is the single most important key to getting found in search engines and directories. His answer was even more concise: “Relevant content!”

Elaborating on this, he added: “At a very high level, I believe SEO is only about three things: Content, Accessibility and Popularity. The extent to which a marketer gets these three components right will be the difference in success and failure of a SEO campaign.”

Asked if he sees any new technologies coming to power that could have an influence on search engine optimizers he commented that there will be a continuous evolution in the search engine business in order to ensure being able to present the most relevant results, which ‘optimizers’ have to be aware of and know how to respond to. However, according to him, On Target would rather be focused on how search users evolve, how they search, where they search, where they are most likely to go to find something. etc. Interesting approach I thought, but I decided to dig a little bit deeper to get his thoughts on the direction of Web 2.0 technologies with regards to SEO.

His response to this: “As Web 2.0 technologies evolve, search engines will also evolve to ensure that they are able to access the huge volume and types of content being created and figure out ways to determine their relevance to search users. Likewise, marketers have to figure out ways to make their content accessible and popular.” As long as more products and services are sold over the Internet here in Asia, and businesses recognize the value of the Internet as a marketing medium, demand for SEO services is bound to grow. In addition, On Target is convinced that the need for local language SEO services will grow as well.

Asian e-Marketing says thanks and wishes good speed. ◇

By Daniela La Marca

on target

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Firdhaus Akber

With SEO, we are able to garner 100 orders a day," states Akber. He also adds that their company has helped many clients achieve the number 1 spot for multiple keywords in Google and Yahoo!.

Their first client was Streetdirectory.com, which remains their major client to today. In fact, Robert J. Steiner has been entrusted with the job of running Streetdirectory.com's entire site. "Our work with Streetdirectory.com has led us to similar online portal management jobs with other sites, such as OhGenki.com, a Singapore movies portal," elaborates Akber.

The experience derived from Internet portal management led Robert J. Steiner into offering SEO services. "By making full use of our knowledge of the Internet and search engines, our company endeavors to help other organizations make their website friendlier for search engines like Google and Yahoo!, thus driving more free traffic towards their site," Akber explains.

The company conducts monthly SEO workshops and SEO training sessions for businesses interested in learning search engine optimization techniques.

Palazon Technology Pte Ltd was founded in 1997 as a web programming studio but evolved its services and products over the years and now is a professional IT services provider and web-based software products developer.

Stephen Mok, IT Manager of Palazon notes that the company's clients come from various industries such as banks, airlines, legal firms, motorcycle factories, real estate companies, restaurants, hotels and schools which are located in Singapore, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Australia, Indonesia, New Zealand, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, England and France.

Mok observes that SEO is fast becoming a trend especially in China, Thailand and Vietnam, and Palazon will thus place greater emphasis on these countries. Commenting on Palazon's business strategy in the region, he adds, "Since SEO is one of our core businesses, we have put much effort on the research of the related technologies, and have established many relationships and connections with the search engines, web directories and related organizations. This is to ensure that we can help our clients to achieve their maximum benefits."

Sharing their insights and perspective on the Asian SEO scene, here is what these two local SEO stalwarts have to say:

What do you think of Search Engine Optimization? Where do you think it stands in the Asia Pacific?

Firdhaus Akber, Robert J. Steiner: SEO is practiced with varying degrees throughout APAC. When we conduct SEO Trainings across APAC Companies, I have observed companies in Thailand and Philippines as having the most interest and passion in SEO. Singapore internet companies unfortunately don't seem to be that keen in the topic mainly because there are few internet players here.

Other countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Hong Kong are slowly picking up speed in terms of interest in this topic, and are getting more excited.

Stephen Mok, Palazon Technology: Before 2003, there were not many companies in the Asia Pacific that were willing to spend money on SEO. However, from 2004 & 2005 onwards, many companies started to see the benefits of SEO, and are now more willing to invest their money on SEO.

I think the SEO trend has just started in the Asia Pacific, but still is in its infant stage. We foresee that it will develop faster in the next few years, as we are currently getting an increasing number of requests for SEO services.

Why do you think SEO is so crucial to businesses?

Firdhaus Akber, Robert J. Steiner: I must first clarify this. SEO is crucial only to someone who sees value in it. Personally, I believe SEO is crucial to every business. After all, with the proper SEO knowledge, guidance and practice, a business owner can optimize their website to be in the main page of the major search engines for specified keywords. Getting in the search engines' main page means getting free "quality" traffic to your website. No other medium today can help you achieve this.

Stephen Mok, Palazon Technology: For a new business, it is important for it to be "found" on the Internet, no matter if it has quality products or good services. It does not matter if the website has been beautifully designed, because if nobody visits



Stephen Mok

it, or is able to call it up on the major Search Engines, or worse still, if its rankings get pushed far behind in the Search Engines results, then the beauty of the website is lost anyway and makes no difference at all. Hence, the importance of SEO.

SEO is even more crucial to modern businesses due to the global business environment, and as more and more businesses rely on the Internet. If done well, SEO can enhance your web presence and give you the competitive edge.

Do you think enough people pay attention to SEO? What more should be done in this arena?

Firdhaus Akber, Robert J. Steiner: Generally, people are not paying enough attention to it. This is good for those of us who are paying attention because for Search Engine Optimization companies like us, of course, less competition is good! On a serious note though, the problem starts because many companies today are still not taking their website seriously. They treat their website as a “good to have” business tool and not a “critical business” tool. This is where the problem starts. Once you don’t see value in your website, you are not going to put in the proper resources to manage them efficiently and effectively.

For more to be done, first, companies must take their website seriously, hire proper internet managers (which I agree is extremely hard to come by) and understand that it is a key marketing tool.

Hiring students to manage your website during their vacation is the last thing you should do.

Stephen Mok, Palazon Technology: No, most companies do not budget for SEO when they first establish a web presence on the Internet. Normally they realize the importance of SEO only a few months after the launch of their web presence. So educating the business owners on the relationship of their websites and SEO is very important.

What do you think are the common misconceptions of SEO? Why do you think they exist?

Firdhaus Akber, Robert J. Steiner: One of the most common misconceptions of SEO is that this is a “junior job”. Many businesses think that they can simply hire anyone who has some knowledge in SEO to help them with their SEO work.

Other common misconceptions amongst businesses is that SEO is all about changing website page titles, doing some keyword insertions and getting as much links from 3rd party sites. By doing this, many think they are on their way to becoming number 1 in the major search engines.

The worst misconception in my book is that businesses think it’s cheap and easy to be number 1 on Google.com when they cannot even be in the ‘top 10’ of their local Google search engine e.g. Google.com.sg. Companies who practice SEO this way will most likely fail miserably and then blame the internet cheats out there.

Stephen Mok, Palazon Technology: Most of the business owners think that SEO is a one-time job, in the

sense that if we help them to push their position to the Top 10 rankings, then they will be in the Top 10 position forever. Thus, they are only willing to invest one-time on SEO. They do not understand the importance of SEO maintenance. This is therefore a major misconception.

Likewise, what do you think are the common mistakes businesses make in SEO? What should be avoided when it comes to SEO?

Firdhaus Akber, Robert J. Steiner: There are many mistakes companies make when practicing SEO. The first common mistake is that many businesses fail to appreciate that for a SEO Strategy to work, 3 parties must come together. These are: the marketing department, the tech department and the top management. Unless, you can get this tripartite to come together, no SEO guru can help your internet business. The second common mistake is to hire a so-called SEO guru who in actual fact, has no real experience. Generally, a very good SEO expert is quite reluctant to share his knowledge and he is someone who has been managing large sites before. Someone who claims to be an SEO expert but who has hardly any experience in managing large sites will not be able to help your company in very competitive SEO environments.

Finally, the third mistake is to set your expectations too high. SEO is not a sprint, SEO is a marathon. Some keywords take months before they can get you to the main page of Search Engines. Furthermore, once you are on the search engines’ main page, if you don’t continue to optimize it, you will lose your ranking.

Stephen Mok, Palazon Technology: Some SEO companies only seek

high traffic volume and therefore invest most of their efforts on 'links' farms. They know how to have the client see the traffic result, but they do not pay attention to the traffic quality and therefore sacrifice on this. Normally, SEO should target at getting business-specific traffic and not any traffic.

What can be done to improve a company's SEO and what are the important things they should bear in mind?

Firdhaus Akber, Robert J. Steiner: Companies' must first agree to get the tripartite to come together. They need to get a proper SEO expert with the proper skills and knowledge to first understand their internet objectives. The expert must then be given some time to understand how the website works and how the site is structured and coded with the tech team, before developing a proper plan with the marketing team.

Management must always be involved because on many occasions many serious decisions have to be made. Unfortunately, IT & marketing will at times be at logger-heads. This is where Management will have to come in. Management must believe that SEO is a crucial form of marketing and must take their website seriously.

Stephen Mok, Palazon Technology: A company's SEO must target to its business-related keywords, and put more focus on the right audience.

What do you think are currently the main challenges in SEO? Do you think these challenges are different here in Asia than in the rest of the world? Why?

Firdhaus Akber, Robert J. Steiner: The main challenge in SEO is that the Search Engines never really explain their methodology in detail. Many of the methods to get high rankings are deduced from reading their white papers or patent documents. SEO experts then agree on the implications and start testing it. This is why the SEO expert that you hire must have experience in managing large websites and possess actual hands-on experience in SEO.

Also, people are getting used to the term but many still don't understand the complexities of SEO.

Stephen Mok, Palazon Technology: In the western countries, most people can speak or read English and hence, it is easier for them to adopt SEO.

However, in Asia, people in different countries speak different languages and thus, this is the challenge for SEO in Asia. That is why we are currently doing more and more localization services.



What do you think are the important milestones in SEO especially in Asia?

Stephen Mok, Palazon Technology: I think an important milestone is that SEO has now become a formal course or is being taught as a module in many marketing and IT schools in Asia.

How do you think SEO is evolving? Stephen Mok, Palazon Technology:

Search engine technologies are becoming more and more advanced and sophisticated, and so SEO services have to follow and keep up with all the new and evolving web technologies out there. ♦

By Shanti Anne Morais

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SPAMDEXING: A SCOURGE OF SEO

Spamdexing also called search engine spamming is the practice on the World Wide Web of deliberately modifying HTML pages to increase the chance of them being placed high on search engine relevancy lists. People who do this are called search engine spammers.



The term spamdexing was first coined by Eric Convey in 1996, in an article in The Boston Herald. It is a merging of the word spam and the Internet's term for unsolicited information, indexing.

The importance of a high search engine position started driving webmasters to use a variety of tricks to improve their ranking in the middle of the 1990's and resulted in the birth of spamdexing.

Spamdexing often gets confused with legitimate search engine optimization (SEO) techniques, which do not involve deceit. To be sure, there is a lot of gray area between the two extremes. The main problem is that search engine administrators and web site builders have different agendas: the search engine wants to present valuable search results

while the webmaster just wants to be ranked first, particularly if he/she runs a commercial website and needs visitor traffic from search engines and directories.

Some people consider spamdexing a black hat method of Internet search engine classification.

Many search engines check for instances of spamdexing and will remove suspect pages from their indexes. Also, people working for a search-engine organization can quickly block the results-listing from entire websites that use spamdexing, alerted perhaps by user complaints of false matches.

The success of Google at both producing better search results and combating keyword spamming through its PageRank link analysis system, helped it to become a dominant force in the realm of search engines in the 1990s.

Yet, even Google has not been immune to more sophisticated spamdexing methods. For example, they succumbed to 'Google bombing, another form of search engine manipulation which involves placing hyperlinks that directly affect the ranks of other sites. Google first algorithmically combated Google bombing on January 25, 2007.

There are two types of spamdexing:

Content spam

This is the use of techniques that alter the search engines view of the pages content. Some methods of content spam include the use of hidden text, keyword stuffing, Meta tag stuffing, doorway pages, and scraper sites.

Keyword stuffing is a favorite type of content spamdexing. Key word stuffing refers to the inclusion of a key word hundreds of times on a single webpage. Given the sheer volume of the word, the search engine automatically gives that particular webpage a higher ranking than one that might use the word legitimately. Most websites that employ keyword stuffing place the words at the bottom of the page or write it with text that the person surfing the web can't see. Some search engines try to discourage keyword stuffing by ranking websites with an excessive number of keywords at the bottom of the ranking.

Link spam

Taking advantage of link-based ranking algorithms which in turn gives a higher ranking to a website the more other websites link to it is called link spam. Link spam methods include link farms, hidden links, Sybil attack, wiki spam, spam blogs (also referred to as splogs), web blogs page hijacking, buying expired domains, and referrer log spamming. These hyperlinks are usually submitted by anonymous or pseudonymous users.

Many hyperlinks on your page are good when they come from reputable sites. However, under no circumstances should you try to push the number of links on your page up with the help of "link farms" (which involves creating tightly-knit communities of pages referencing each other). Moreover, don't be part of link programs, which serve to improve your ranking or your page rank value.

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LEGISLATION

In particular, avoid links to web spammers or "bad areas" on the web, as your own ranking may be affected adversely by these links. Of course, do not link to dubious pages yourself.

In addition to the above, some web masters like to include the name of a famous person on their site as a keyword. The name attracts the attention of search engines and web surfers even though the web site has nothing to do with the person.

In addition, some websites try to steal web surfers from their competitors by including their name as a keyword in the body text and Meta tags. By doing this the webmaster has guaranteed that the search engines will index it accurately. Using the name of a competitor in the body of a website is normally a direct violation of copyright laws in most countries.

Here are some other common spamdexing techniques:

Hidden or invisible text

Disguising keywords and phrases by making them the same color as the background, using a tiny font size or hiding them within the HTML code such as in no frame sections, alt tags and no script sections.

Meta tag stuffing

Repeating keywords in the Meta tags more than once and using keywords that are unrelated to the site's content.

Hidden links

Uses the same principle as hidden text but with links. It involves putting

links where visitors will not see them in order to increase link popularity.

Mirror websites

This is the hosting of multiple websites all with the same content but using different URL's.

Gateway or doorway pages

Creating low-quality web pages that contain very little content but which are instead stuffed with very similar key words and phrases. They are designed to rank highly within the search results. A doorway page will generally have "click here to enter" in the middle of it.

Scraper sites

Scraper sites, also known as 'Made for AdSense' sites, are created using various programs designed to 'scrape' search-engine results pages or other sources of content and create 'content' for a website. The specific presentation of content on these sites is unique, but is merely an amalgamation of content taken from other sources, often without permission. These types of websites are generally full of advertising (such as pay-per-click ads), or redirect the user to other sites. Some scraper sites have even outranked an original website in its own information and organization name.

Page redirects/Page hijacking/URL redirection

Taking the user to another page without his or her intervention, e.g. using META refresh tags, CGI scripts, Java, JavaScript, or server side techniques. It is also a form of cloaking (see following).

Cloaking

Sending to a search engine a version of a web page different from what web surfers see. It can be an attempt to mislead search engines regarding the content on a particular web site. However, cloaking can also be used to ethically increase the accessibility of a site to users with disabilities, or to provide human users with content that search engines are not able to process. It is also used to deliver content based on a user's location. Google for example, uses IP delivery, a form of cloaking, to deliver results.

Code swapping

This refers to optimizing a page for top ranking and then swapping another page in its place once a top ranking is achieved.

Referrer log spamming

When someone accesses a web page i.e. the referee, by following a link from another web page, i.e. the referrer, the referee is given the address of the referrer by the person's internet browser. Some websites have a referrer log which shows which pages link to that site. By having a spider/robot randomly access many sites enough times, with a message or specific address given as the referrer, that message or internet address then appears in the referrer log of those sites that have them. Since some search engines base the importance of sites by the number of different sites linking to them, referrer-log spam may be used to increase the search engine rankings of the spammer's sites by getting the referrer logs of many sites to link to them.

[continues on Page 31](#)

Although Asian e-Marketing doesn't usually present kind of news - as it is quite unrealistic when coming out only every two months - I decided to make an exception this time to make sure that you got some really interesting news. So...

DID YOU KNOW THAT NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR WEB BROWSER IS DEAD?

End of last month the team of Netscape officially announced the "Off" of Netscape Navigator and that they will stop support for the Netscape products "Netscape Suite", "Netscape Browser" and Netscape Messenger". It has been assured that there will be still security updates and patches till February 1, 2008, but afterwards the entire support will be discontinued and no further updates, new versions and/or assistance will be provided. However, the main website <http://www.netscape.com> will remain in business as a "common" web portal.

That's the end of a piece of Internet history as AOL (which has bought Netscape Communications Corporation in 1999) finally abandons its fight for market share against Microsoft's Internet.◇

DID YOU KNOW THAT GOOGLE KICKED FEEDS OUT OF THEIR SEARCH RESULTS?

Google only recently announced that they will remove all feeds from the search results or rather already have removed them. In this way they want to prevent that visitors constantly come across all kind of different feed variants although they want ultimately visit the source which means the original website. That explains e.g. in part the significant fluctuations in the search results, that can quickly be responsible for changes in the total number of search results of a few hundred thousand. How and whether Google's action will have an effect on the actual search results still needs prove, since many websites have used feed syndication for their link structure. And whether Google now simply "hides" the feeds or will devalue the appropriate links, only the future will show. However, something is happening and going on ...◇

[From Page 30 — Spamdexing: A Scourge of SEO](#)



risk of being banned/black-listed from search engines.

It is therefore important to be aware of the various search engine tricks and ensure you are not using them unwittingly.

While SEO is a vital business tool, unfortunately, black sheep amongst search engine optimizers use tricks to catapult their customers quickly to the top despite the heavy

risk of being banned/black-listed from search engines.

Avoid any kind of tricks that intend to improve your search engine rankings. Remember that complaints against your website/company can be filed easily on Google's Spam Report page. If this happens the website will then be examined by employees of the search engine and removed from the index if the accusation gets confirmed.

Another important point to note: do not use special software for the submission of pages or for ranking checks. These programs usually consume a lot of search engines' computing power and are therefore something they frown upon. An example of such a program/service is Webposition Gold.

If you have used any of the above mentioned spamdexing tricks and have been punished by the search engines' all's not lost, you can submit a clemency plea and guarantee the search engines that you do not commit them again. Be warned however that a repeat act will result in an index exclusion of about six months at the very least.◇

*By Daniela La Marca &
Shanti Anne Morais*

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WHAT'S ALL THE BUZZ ABOUT SEO, SEM, SMM, SMO, AND ONLINE MARKETING

Or should I say confusion? For clarification let's examine the terms briefly.

Again and again I hear and read about various terms and abbreviations used in a completely wrong context and/or false definitions. It leads partially to confusion and considerable misunderstanding, but I hope the following scheme explains the differences.

online marketing		
internet marketing	email marketing	newsgroup marketing

Part of online marketing are all measures which are implemented via online media, so it includes P2P file-sharing platforms (Morpheus, eDonkey, Limewire, BitTorrent, etc. ..) or online games like Second Life, too.

internet marketing		
SEM (search engine marketing)	SMM (social media marketing)	AM (affiliate marketing)

Internet marketing is a particularly large field and covers areas such as OAM (online article marketing), OPM (online press marketing), banner and layer advertising - therefore, only the three most important are mentioned here. Another important area is still the SMO (social media optimization) as a sub-item to SMM.

SEM (search engine marketing)			
SEO (search engine optimization)		SEA (search engine advertising)	
OnSO (On Site Optimization)	OffSO (Off Site Optimization)	AdWords	YSM (Yahoo Search Marketing)

SEA places advertising directly at the search engines. The two listed (AdWords and YSM) are here the most prominent ones. Of course there are some others as well, but they can be neglected due to their low percentage in market share.

The boundaries to internet marketing are sometimes very fluent, e.g. there is in AdWords, besides the normal advertising placement in the search results (SEA), also advertising on the content network (if other webmasters include AdSense on their site). This is then again part of the "normal" internet marketing.

The area SEO spans all measures for a good searchability and thus placement (ranking) in the "normal" or so-called "organic" search results (SERPs).

To OnSO count all methods that can be implemented directly to the website, as e.g. LPO (landing page optimization), internal links, etc.

The opposite of it is OffSO, which comprises all strategies that are not directly related to their own Internet presence, such as the link structure, etc. ◇

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Google, Yahoo! and MSN (now Live Search) may be the names that spring quickest to mind when we think of search engines, but you may be surprised just how many more actually exist (or existed). It's also apparent that the SEO world has not remained unscathed by mergers and acquisitions, and shows who the dominant forces in the industry are at the moment. Here's a list of some of the search engines that are popular and are more likely to be better maintained and upgraded than others.

Google -

<http://www.google.com>

Google, a leading search engine, uses PageRank™ technology to rank pages based on how many other sites link to a site. Users can restrict searches to web pages written in 35 languages, and from over 88 interface languages. What's more, Google expands its search into the "deep" or "invisible" web, which consists of more than 35 million non-HTML documents, i.e. PDF, Word, Excel Spreadsheets, Flash and other new formats of electronic information. Use Advanced Search to restrict your query to specific domains or file formats, or find out who links to your page. Google also offers site search, for instance, narrowing searches within university sites, a local example being Singapore's own Nanyang Technology University.

Since 2001, Google has acquired several small start-up companies, often consisting of innovative teams and products. One of the earlier companies that Google bought was Pyra Labs, the creators of Blogger, a weblog publishing platform, first launched in 1999. This acquisition led to many premium features becoming free.

In early 2006, Google acquired Upstartle, a company responsible for the online word processor, Writely. The technology in this product was used by Google to eventually create Google Docs & Spreadsheets.

In February 2006, software company Adaptive Path sold Measure Map, a weblog statistics application, to Google. However, registration to the service has since been temporarily disabled.

In late 2006, Google bought online video site YouTube for US\$1.65 billion in stock. Shortly after, on October 31, 2006, Google announced that it had also acquired JotSpot, a developer of wiki technology for collaborative Web sites.

The company continued its acquisition streak in 2007, reaching an agreement on April 13, 2007 to buy DoubleClick for US\$3.1 billion. In July 2007, Google signed a definitive agreement to acquire enterprise messaging security and compliance company, Postini.

Google is well-known for its web search service, a major factor of the company's success. According to Nielsen Netratings, as of August 2007, Google is the most used search engine on the web with a 53.6% market share, ahead of Yahoo! (19.9%) and Live Search (12.9%).

Google has also employed its Web Search technology into other search services, including Image Search, Google News, the price comparison site Google Product Search, the interactive Usenet archive Google Groups, Google Earth, Google Maps, Gmail, Google Video and more.

In 2007, Google launched Google Apps Premier Edition, a version of Google Apps targeted primarily at the business user. It includes such extras as more disk space for e-mail, API access, and premium sup-

port, for a price of US\$50 per user per year.

Google Scholar -

<http://scholar.google.com/>

Google Scholar is different from the standard Google Advanced Searches as it searches for scholarly literature from a databases of peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, abstracts and technical reports. Sources come from a variety of undisclosed academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories and universities, etc.

Released in beta in November 2004, the Google Scholar index includes most peer-reviewed online journals of the world's largest scientific publishers. It is similar in function to Scirus from Elsevier, CiteSeer and getCITED. However, Google Scholar claims to cover more websites, journal sources and languages.

Yahoo!

- <http://www.yahoo.com>

According to Web traffic analysis companies (including comScore, Alexa Internet and Netcraft), Yahoo! has been one of the most visited websites on the Internet, with more than 130 million unique users per month. The global network of Yahoo! websites receives 3.4 billion page views per day on average as of October 2007, making it one of the most visited U.S. websites.

Yahoo! offers diversified services; it provides vertical search services such as Yahoo! Image, Yahoo! Video, Yahoo! Local, Yahoo! News, and Yahoo! Shopping Search. As of August 2007, according to Nielsen Netratings, Yahoo! is the second-most used search engine, after Google.

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As of December 11, 2007, Google and Live Search (formerly MSN Search) "store personal information for 18 months" and Yahoo! and AOL retain search requests for 13 months".

Like its major competitors, Yahoo! has seen its share of acquisitions, starting from 1997 with the acquisition of Four11, which resulted in the birth of Yahoo! Mail. The company has also bolstered its search services with the acquisition of other search engines like Inktomi, Overture Services, AltaVista, and AlltheWeb. Acquisitions have also helped Yahoo! expand their range of services, particularly in Web 2.0.

Live Search -

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

Live Search is Microsoft's web search engine, the successor of MSN Search. The first public beta of Live Search was unveiled on March 8, 2006 and the final release on September 11, 2006, where it officially replaced MSN Search.

In March 2007, Microsoft separated its Live Search developments from the Windows Live services family. Live Search was then integrated into the Live Search and Ad Platform and also consolidated with Microsoft adCenter.

Microsoft has stopped using Picsearch as their image search provider and started performing their own image search, fueled by their own internal image search algorithms.

Live Search offers some new features, such as the ability to view additional search results on the same web page (instead of needing to click through to subsequent search result pages) and the ability to dynamically adjust the amount of in-

formation displayed for each search result (that is, the choice of a long or short summary, or even, just the title). The search engine also allows users to save searches and see them updated automatically on Live.com.

In addition, Live Search allows webmasters to manage the web crawling status of their own websites through Live Search Webmaster Center. Users can also submit their web contents to Live Search via

- **Live Search Local Listing Center** – which allows businesses to add business listings onto Live Search Maps and Live Search Local.
- **Live Product Upload** – which allows companies to upload product information onto Live Product Search.
- **Live Search Books Publisher Program** – which allows book publishers to upload information onto Live Product Search.
- **Soapbox on MSN Video** – which allows users to upload videos for searching via Live Search Video.

Besides Web pages, Live Search provides searches for the following: entertainment, books, classifieds, videos, health, images, feeds, maps, news, video, products and so on.

Live Search also allows search results to be displayed onto a mobile device. Other search tools include Windows Desktop Search.

Alltheweb—

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

AlltheWeb (which resulted in the formation of the company - Fast Search and Transfer) indexes billions of web pages, hundreds of millions of multimedia, Audio and FTP

files, as well as tens of millions of PDF and MS Word files. It grew out from FTP Search. It is said to rival Google in terms of size and technology, but has never reached the masses as its direct competitor has.

Some feel that AlltheWeb had a few advantages over Google, such as a fresher database, more advanced search features, search clustering and a completely customizable look. In February 2003, Fast's web search division was bought by Overture. In March 2004 Overture itself was taken over by Yahoo!. Shortly after Yahoo!'s acquisition, the AlltheWeb site started using Yahoo!'s database and some of the advanced features were removed, such as FTP search.

Altavista -

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

AltaVista's search technology was debuted as the first full-text Internet search service in 1995. It provides multilingual search with support for 25 languages and multimedia (audio/video/image) search. It is the only major search engine that now offers wild card or truncation. In February 2003, AltaVista was bought by Overture Services. In October 2003, Overture itself was taken over by Yahoo! Soon after this, the AltaVista site started using Yahoo!Search technology.

AOL Search -

<http://www.aol.com>

A global interactive services provider offering AOL services in 16 countries in 8 languages. The Company pioneered technologies like Keywords for simple navigation, and the Buddy List to enable instant messaging by showing which of a members' contacts are online.

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AOL Search provides users with editorial listings that come from Google's crawler-based index. In fact, the same search on Google and AOL Search will come up with very similar matches. So, why would you use AOL Search? The answer: primarily because you are an AOL user.

The "internal" version of AOL Search provides links to content only available within the AOL online service. In this way, you can search AOL and the entire web at the same time. The "external" version lacks these links. Why wouldn't you use AOL Search? If you like Google, many of Google's features such as "cached" pages are not offered by AOL Search.

Ask.com -

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

Founded in 1996, Ask.com was formerly known as Ask Jeeves. However, in February 2006, Ask.com formally disassociated itself from the character Jeeves that was based on a butler character from P.G. Wodehouse.

Ask.com owns a variety of sites including country-specific sites for UK, Germany, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands and Spain along with Ask for Kids, Teoma (now defunct), Excite, MyWay.com, , iWin.com, Bloglines and several others. As of June 5, 2007, the site underwent a revamp, opting for a new, simplistic look. In June 2007, Ask released its AskEraser feature, a new privacy feature from Ask.com. When AskEraser is enabled, your search activity will be deleted from Ask.com servers. This means users can opt-out from the tracking of their search queries and IP as well as cookie values.

Hotbot—

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

HotBot was one of the early Internet search engines. It was launched in May 1996 as a service of Wired Magazine, using a "new links" strategy of marketing, claiming to update its search database more often than its competitors. It was one of the first search engines to offer the ability to search within search results. It also offered a free webpage hosting, but only for a short time. It was acquired by Lycos in 1998.

HotBot has in recent years reduced its scope. Today, the website is merely a front end for third-party search engines Ask.com and MSN.

Lycos -

<http://www.lycos.com>

Lycos is a search engine and web portal centered around broadband entertainment content.

Near the peak of the internet bubble in May 2000, Lycos announced its intent to be acquired by Terra Networks, S.A., the internet arm of the Spanish telecommunications giant, Telefonica, for US\$5.4 billion. The transaction closed in October 2000 and the merged company was renamed Terra Lycos. In US, the Lycos brand still stuck while overseas, the company continued to be known as Terra Networks.

In October 2004, Terra sold Lycos to South Korean-based Daum Communications, and the company name was changed back to Lycos. Under its new ownership, Lycos began to refocus its strategy in 2005, moving away from a search-centric portal, toward a community destination for broadband entertainment content.

During much of 2006, Lycos focused on introducing first-to-market products and services including the launch of Lycos Phone, the Internet's first free VoIP integrated communication platform, combining IM, video chat, real-time video on demand and MP3 players. In August, 2006, Lycos also released its new Lycos Mail an email system built for sending and receiving mega files, including unlimited size file attachments for video, music and photos. In Nov. 2006, Lycos began to roll out Web 2.0 applications centered around social media, including the Web's first watch & chat video application, with the launch of its Lycos Cinema platform. In Feb. 2007, the second iteration of its watch & chat proprietary technology launched with Lycos Mix, a tool allowing users to pull video clips from YouTube, Google Video, Yahoo Video and MySpace Video, creating playlists where other users can add video, comments and chat in real-time.

Gigablast -

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

Compared to Google or Yahoo!, Gigablast has a tiny index of the web. However, the service is constantly gaining new and interesting features. Give it a try, if you want to try something experimental yet dependable. Gigablast has an index of approximately 10 billion web pages and serves millions of queries per day. It is designed to be capable of indexing a high number of webpages per server. However, while Gigablast says it has succeeded in this area, the engine doesn't have all the options of many other search engines, the most notable among them being the lack of an image search and the lack of special tools to bring targeted results for a user.◊

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EDITORIAL

Empowering
Asian eMarketing
Asia's Electronic Marketers

Dear Readers,

Since the end of the 90s, when only the entry of relevant keywords in the title and in the meta-tags was often enough for good website ranking results, search engine optimization has changed fundamentally.

The purpose of search engines is to give directions through hundreds of millions of Websites which is used daily by millions of users in finding certain information in the "vast sea of knowledge. Considering these gigantic figures, it is more important than ever to get your Website listed in the top positions of search engines, attracting many potential customers to your offers. As every day millions go online to search, browse and click, it is vital which keywords or word combinations you choose to be found and how to stand out of the crowd of thousands of search results that pop up if a hotly fought general term of your industry is used.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) attends to the growing challenge of getting a good ranking in an dynamic and exploding market that continuously evolves. Be it the fact that search engines change their ranking algorithm often, or that there are about 60 different HTML and design elements of a Web page that can influence the search engine rankings, the design and structure of your Website to achieve a top positioning, or where and how a keyword is placed in the source text which is as important as the frequency with which it occurs.... or other factors that complicate matters only further. Times have definitely changed although the majority of webmasters still believe that search engine optimization is a pure meta-title thing. So, to be in the know, read this issue of Asian e-Marketing and ensure you have the edge over your competitors.

As our valued readers, you are the first to get a chance to learn exactly how WAN Optimization improves your web traffic and can keep your business ahead. The Rise of WAN Optimization held on April 29th in Singapore sold fast to our sponsors – Blue Coat, Packeteer and Juniper Networks, thus enabling us to offer 50 complimentary seats to you on a first-come-first-served basis. Grab the chance to be part of MediaBUZZ's half-day seminar that aims to delve deeper into this technology.

Complimentary registration for this dynamic event opens early next month only but if you would like to save a seat now, feel free to reserve your seat by contacting michelle@mediabuzz.com.sg and keep your eyes trained on <http://www.mediabuzz.com.sg> for more information.

Best regards,




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Editor, Asian e-Marketing

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