

SEO-SEM - A Primer

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Getting found by Google (Yahoo/MSN/Bing/Ask)

These days getting found by Google (search) is critically important in any marketing plan. Having a search engine marketing campaign (**SEM**) has become the cornerstone of an online marketing campaign, whether alone, or in tandem with a traditional advertising / PR plan.

A solid online marketing initiative builds on the core principles of search engine optimization (SEO). **SEO** is an understanding of how Google finds your website content to be optimized to get found (within relevant search queries) by people searching for things using search engines.

The websites the most effective at optimized are database driven – they are called CMS site (content management systems) The best **CMS** sites are built on the same technology used currently by Google. That technology is called **LAMP** – the acronym stand for **Linux-Apache-MySQL-PHP** – a database structure are not only found more easily by Google, but these type of sites allow much deeper integration with a given business or client.

We build these type of sites using **WordPress** and **Drupal**. These sites are much easier to write, edit and configure these sites than sites built in the past. The dreaded webmaster is cut out of the loop and the client can take controls of their website if and when they like without having any type of painful learning curve.

Content creation: In addition to building these powerful websites, we also research, write and edit the type of text (content) needed for this type of online marketing initiatives. Keyword research is the backbone of any successful online campaigns.

Good keyword research involves delving into the natural search space (NSO) to get insight into who is searching for what, when they are finding it, and when they looked. In short, popularity of search terms and sentences, who is looking and what they are looking for. These days, with so many rich and diverse social networks, some of the most interesting information comes from user groups and personal blogs.

Keyword research: the life blood of search marketing.

Keyword research is a practice used by search engine optimization professionals to find and research actual search terms people enter into the search engines when conducting a search.

Keyword research truly is the life blood of Internet marketing. If you know who is searching and what they are searching for then it makes your choices as to "what and where" to offer your products much more obvious. For the purposes of this tutorial however we will strictly concentrate on evaluating the best keywords to use in order to increase conversions from visitors that come by way of the major search engines.

What is SEO

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the volume or quality of traffic to a web site from search engines via "natural" ("organic" or "algorithmic") search results. Typically, the earlier a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search

engine. SEO may target different kinds of search, including image search, local search, and industry-specific vertical search engines. This gives a web site web presence.

As an Internet marketing strategy, SEO considers how search engines work and how and what people search for. Traditionally, optimizing a website has primarily involved editing its content and HTML coding to both increase its relevance to specific keywords and to remove barriers to the indexing activities of search engines. While the basics of optimizing a website relative to original content remain the backbone of any online marketing initiative, much has changed over the last 5 years since Google started to dominate search.

Traditional SEO is dead. Long live SEO !

Today, SEO has had to change with the way users interact with the Internet and how Google (search engines) index websites, CMS sites, social networks, RSS feeds, and microblogs (twitter). The Web is a dynamic and rapidly changing network, and SEO has had to change to adapt.

In this new world of post **Web 2.0**, with the rise of open and closed social networks (Twitter is open, FaceBook currently closed) and constantly changing search algorithms, the task can be overwhelming in both the approach and the sheer diversity of changes, presenting time management challenges, not to mention resources.

Web analytics is the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of internet data for purposes of understanding and optimizing web usage.

Web analytics is not just a tool for measuring website traffic but can be used as a tool for business research and market research. Web analytics applications can also help companies measure the results of traditional print advertising campaigns. It helps one to estimate how the traffic to the website changed after the launch of a new advertising campaign. Web analytics provides data on the number of visitors, page views etc to gauge the popularity of the sites which will help to do the market research.

Landing Pages

In online marketing a landing page, sometimes known as a lead capture page, is the page that appears when a potential customer clicks on an advertisement or a search-engine result link. The page will usually display content that is a logical extension of the advertisement or link, and that is optimized to feature specific keywords or phrases for indexing by search engines.

In pay per click (PPC) campaigns, the landing page will also be customized to measure the effectiveness of different advertisements. By adding a parameter to the linking URL, marketers can measure advertisement effectiveness based on relative click-through rates.

Online PR

Online PR reflects the same power that traditional PR. With online press releases we have the ability to include links directing the reader to relevant websites, micro sites, images, podcasts and videos. The better online PR systems take advantage of twitter, FaceBook and other social networks, as well as utilizing traditional syndicated feeds that broadcast to established industry verticals.

As will any public relations campaign, generating event driven press releases are often the most effective use of marketing and PR dollars. The better online PR systems create one page micro sites that get picked up an open search and rise over time in the organic search space.

The company that I prefer to use is **PRWeb** and the SEO PRWeb press release package.

Further references:

Search engine marketing, or SEM, is a form of Internet marketing that seeks to promote websites by increasing their visibility in search engine result pages (SERPs) through the use of search engine optimization, paid placement, contextual advertising, and paid inclusion. Usage of the term "search engine marketing" has been inconsistent. The trade association Search Engine Marketing Professional Organization (SEMPO) includes search engine optimization (SEO), and SEO is also included in the industry definitions of SEM by Forrester Research, eMarketer, Search Engine Watch, and industry expert Danny Sullivan. However, the New York Times restricts the definition to 'the practice of buying paid search listings

LAMP is an open source Web development platform that uses Linux as the operating system, Apache as the Web server, MySQL as the relational database management system and PHP as the object-oriented scripting language. (Sometimes Perl or Python is used instead of PHP.)

Because the platform has four layers, LAMP is sometimes referred to as a LAMP stack. Stacks can be built on different operating systems. Developers that use these tools with a Windows operating system instead of Linux are said to be using WAMP; with a Macintosh system, MAMP; and with a Solaris system.

CMS used in this primer refers technically to Web Content Management System which is content management system (CMS) software, implemented as a Web application, for creating and managing HTML content. It is used to manage and control a large, dynamic collection of Web material (HTML documents and their associated images). A WCMS facilitates content creation, content control, editing, and essential Web maintenance functions.

The software provides authoring (and other) tools designed to allow users with little knowledge of programming languages or markup languages to create and manage content with relative ease.

PRWeb is a Vocus company, which distributes press releases over the Internet via RSS. Distribution partners include Yahoo! News, Google News, Lycos News, Topix.net, Excite News and eMediaWire.

PRWeb also owns international web sites to distribute press releases in Spanish (Ambos Medios), French, Chinese, and to French-Canadian and English-Canadian markets.

Trackback technology was added so press releases which are discussed elsewhere on the Internet will contain links to those conversations, SEO Wizard, an SEO tool, was added to help press release writers optimize their word choices for search engine attractiveness, and added Tags space to press releases to enable them to be accessed from Technorati, Digg, del.icio.us, and other Web 2.0 sites.

PRWeb announced a set of new features to make it easier for customers to send a release. These features make it easier to for customers to upload their press releases, specify a distribution time and increase the SEO value of images to enhance the visibility of customer's news.

WordPress is an open source blog publishing application powered by PHP and MySQL which can also be used for content management. It has many features including a plugin architecture and a templating system. Used by over 2% of the 10,000 biggest websites, WordPress is the most popular blog software in use today.

It was first released in May 2003 by Matt Mullenweg as a fork of b2/cafelog. As of September 2009, it was being used by 202 million websites worldwide.

Drupal is a free and open source content management system (CMS) written in PHP and distributed under the GNU General Public License. It is used as a back-end system for many different types of websites, ranging from small personal blogs to large corporate and political sites, including whitehouse.gov and data.gov.uk. It is also used for knowledge management and business collaboration.

Web 2.0: The term "Web 2.0" (2004–present) is commonly associated with web applications that facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. Examples of Web 2.0 include web-based communities, hosted services, web applications, social-networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, mashups, and folksonomies. A Web 2.0 site allows its users to interact with other users or to change website content, in contrast to non-interactive websites where users are limited to the passive viewing of information that is provided to them.

The term is closely associated with Tim O'Reilly because of the O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 conference in 2004. Although the term suggests a new version of the World Wide Web, it does not refer to an update to any technical specifications, but rather to cumulative changes in the ways software developers and end-users use the Web. Whether Web 2.0 is qualitatively different from prior web technologies has been challenged by World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee, who called the term a "piece of jargon" — precisely because he intended the Web to embody these values in the first place.

Content and Content Value

Original content (previously unpublished text) on the web is the fuel that fires user and search engine interest on the Internet. Creation and publishing of original content is the most critical factor in the process of optimizing websites for search. The phrase 'relevant text within context' is key to getting results in the organic search space.

The author, producer or publisher of an original source of information or experiences may or may not be directly responsible for the entire value that they attain as content in a specific context. For example, part of an original article (such as a headline from a news story) may be rendered on another web page displaying the results of a user's search engine query grouped with headlines from other news publications and related advertisements. The value that the original headline has in this group of query results may be very different from the value that it had in its original article.

It is possible for a person to derive their own value from content in ways that the author didn't plan or imagine. User innovation makes it possible for users to develop their own content from existing content.

Not all content requires creative authoring or editing, through recent technological developments such as mobile phones and automated sensors that can record events anywhere for publishing and converting to potentially reach a global audience on channels such as YouTube, most recorded or transmitted information and experiences, can be deemed as content.