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Search Engine Optimization

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Introduction

Search engine optimization (SEO) is an online marketing strategy used to increase a Web site's visibility to the millions of people who find information and services on the Internet. Search engine optimization can help position your Site among the top search results for a given query, which can dramatically increase traffic to your Web site and establish a Web presence for your practice. Among other things, SEO involves optimizing the structure of your site and the text that appears on it, as well as obtaining links to your site from other sites, to help its popularity rating with search engines.

Study Problem

Although Search engine optimization is a very important issue, marketers and webmasters are not paying attention to it.

The Problem is that a huge number of people find what they're looking for via search, that virtually all of these people only look at the first page of the results and that if you don't tweak your page, you're dead.

Other part of the problem is about search engines its self,

Search engines cannot come right out and openly agree with SEO services since SEO service providers may directly take away revenue search engines would gain from pay per click services. As well as taking revenue from the search engines some SEO services may also decrease the relevancy of search results.

There is no official guidance on how to do SEO. Search engines give brief vague guidelines, but they will never provide precise guidance. If they had exact rules one could find similar techniques to manipulate their search results that were still fine in their rule book. Search engines cannot set out a precise guideline that judges intent (1).

1- Importance of web site.

Do you have your own business?

Do you Want to increase your profit?

Do you Want the maximum number of customers?

Do you Want to be known all over the world?

You should have a web site for your business.

Having a web site is not only a decisive step into the future, but a necessary move to stay competitive in this fast paced world.

What is a Web site?

A web site is a collection of information stored on a computer and seen on the World Wide Web.

The web site can be viewed locally and internationally, it's a new media used to exchange and gather information and ideas.

What can a web site do for your business?

A web site can do a lot for you and your business.

A web site is an invaluable business tool for both you and your clients. Your web site enables you to make, as much information available to customers as you think is needed.

It can enable customers to find out all the information they need about your products.

A web site can give also contact facilities e-mail, phone, fax... so that your clients can reach you easily.

What do you need for your business?

- More Profit

- More Customers
- More Contacts
- More Orders
- Modern Up-to-date Marketing
- More Satisfied Customers
- More Business
- Bigger Market Share

All your objectives can be reached through your web site. You will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days of the year, without more employees or customer service. No need for a lot of money for advertising.

Your targeted clients will reach you through your web site anytime, anywhere.

You can save money that you would spend on catalogs, brochures and mails.

Save money:

You pay a lot of money on traditional advertising for a huge number of people even though very few of them may be interested in your products. Internet advertising is different, it is targeted. Everyone who visits your web site is there because he has specific interest in your product or service.

If your presence on the World Wide Web is beneficial today, it will be essential tomorrow. (2)

One of the questions we're asked most often is "Do I really need a website?". Whether you run a typical mom-and-pop operation or employ hundreds of people, your business can definitely benefit by having a website. Here are a few reasons why:

1. A website serves as an online brochure. Even if you don't plan to sell your products or services online, a website will get your name out there. This *branding* will have potential customers looking for *you* instead of your competition when they're in the market for the things you provide.
2. Selling on the web makes for high profits due to low overhead. Before you make the first penny in profits from sales in your brick-and-mortar store, you have to pay rent, utilities, salaries, and more. With an online store you pay a few bucks a month for web hosting and that's about it.
3. A website makes add-on sales easy. When someone makes a purchase from your store, you can toss a coupon in the bag offering a discount on items ordered from your website.
4. A professional website gives your business the appearance of success and authority and an edge over the competition. If your potential customers see a website address in your ads, they'll be impressed.

5. Your website will work for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. It's like having a salesman that never takes time off, calls in sick, or goes on vacation.(3)

2- Importance of Search Engines

What is a Search Engine?

Search engines send automated computer programs (called robots or spiders) to crawl the Internet in search of Web pages. Basically these spiders follow links to travel from URL to URL. When they visit your Web site, the robot indexes the text of your page or and stores it in the search engine's index. Later, when a user enters a search query at the search engine's Web site, the search engine scans Web pages in its index for pages that provide the best match.

In theory, the search engine spider is supposed to be able to find all the sites on the Internet. However, since new sites are being added daily, it's risky to assume that the spider will find you. Expedite the process by submitting your URL to the search engines.

“With billions of web pages in existence today, it is no wonder that most web surfers rely on search engine to find what their looking for on the web.

Search engines are like the Yellow Pages - they help customers find you on the web. Getting listed on search engines is one of the biggest challenges facing a small business.

The web creates new challenges for information retrieval. The amount of information on the web is growing rapidly, as well as the number of new users inexperienced in the art of web research. People are likely to surf the web using its link graph, often starting with high quality human maintained indexes such as Yahoo or with search engines. Human maintained lists cover popular topics effectively but are subjective, expensive to build and maintain, slow to improve, and cannot cover all esoteric topics”(4)

“A report released in March of 2005 indicated that the search engines are being used between 2 to 3.5 billion times per day to find information online. If you run a business online, this information should be very important to your understanding of what it will take for you to succeed online.

Of course, the people using the search engines are on the hunt for some kind of specific information. At their favorite search engine, they type in their specific search query and hit Enter”. (5)

3- What is Search Engine Optimization ?

we can say that search engine optimization is the “process of updating HTML code and choosing targeted keyword phrases related to a site, and

ensuring that the site places well when those keywords are queried on search engines. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) involves the careful optimization of corporate web sites to effectively increase their visibility in the major search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Alta-Vista, Inktomi and many others. It makes the difference between a web site that has very little visibility and one that will be seen and found by millions of people”(6)

Or in other way we can say that it is “Designing a Web site so that search engines easily find the pages and index them. The goal is to have your page be in the top 10 results of a search. Optimization includes the choice of words used in the text paragraphs and the placement of those words on the page, both visible and hidden inside meta tags. Search engines use different criteria for indexing, and those criteria may change. Thus, it becomes increasingly difficult to satisfy every one equally. Yahoo! and other directory-oriented search sites manually index a Web site, which may provide the best results for the user.”(7)

The Importance Of Search Engine Optimization

As an online business owner, it is always our goal to make sure that our site turns up in the top 20 search results for the keyword phrases that will put our websites in the path of our targeted customers.

It helps to be the site that your potential customers will reach when they are looking for your types of goods and services. As an online business owner, you must strive to reach these customers and to strike while your product or service is large in the minds of your potential clients.

You must remember, you are competing with thousands of other websites who want to serve the same customers that you want to serve. Yet, the average search engine user will only look at the first twenty results that the search engines give them.

Forget thinking about the *of 8,256 results* on the search results page of the search engine. This only shows you how steep the competition is for your chosen keywords and keyword phrases.

Page one is often *1-10 of 8,256 results* and page two is *11-20 of 8,256 results.* Most searchers will only look at page one and two, and then they will type in a new search keyword phrase to narrow the search more specifically.(8)

History

SEO began in the mid-1990s, as the first search engines were cataloging the early Web. Initially, all a webmaster needed to do was submit a site to the various engines which would run spiders, programs to "crawl" the site, and store the collected data. The search engines then sorted the information by topic, and serve results based on pages they had spidered.

As the number of documents online kept growing, and more webmasters realized the value of organic search listings, it became imperative for search engines to sort the vast collection of pages they had spidered and display the most relevant pages first. This was the start of a search engine vs. SEO struggle that continues to this day.

Initially, search engines were guided by the webmasters themselves. Early versions of search algorithms relied on webmaster-provided information like meta tags. Meta tags provided a guide to each page's content and relevant keywords. Soon some webmasters began to abuse meta tags, causing their pages to rank for irrelevant searches. In response, search engines developed more complex algorithms, taking into account a wider range of factors, but they still relied largely on what are today known as "on-site" factors. Examples of on-site factors include:

- Keywords in the domain name
- Keywords in the site's directory and file names
- Page titles and tags: for example, a phrase marked up as an *H1* (heading) element was considered to contain keywords relevant to the page
- Ratio of the keyword (s) to other words on the page, the keyword density
- Proximity of individual keywords that appear in the search phrase to each other in the text, also known as "keyword proximity"
- Content of alternate text provided in the form of *Alt* tags for images, *no frames* text for browsers not able to display framed pages, etc.

The inherent flaw in relying so extensively on those factors was that webmasters and SEOs had full control over them and could "optimize" their pages for better rankings. Search engines had to adapt again to ensure their SERPs showed the most relevant pages rather than the best optimized ones.

A new search engine emerged with a new kind of thinking. Google brought a new concept to ranking web pages. This concept, called Page Rank, was, for many years, the mainstay of the Google algorithm . Page Rank relied heavily on incoming links and used the logic that each link to a page is a vote for that page's value. The more incoming links a page had the more "worthy" it was. The value of each incoming link itself varied directly based on the PageRank of the page it was coming from and inversely on the number of outgoing links on that page. PageRank proved to be very good at serving relevant results. Google became the most popular and successful search engine. Because PageRank measured an off-site factor, it was more difficult to manipulate - at first.

But manipulated it was. Given time, and the realization that PageRank was the new game in town, webmasters focused on exchanging, buying,

and selling links on a massive scale. Page Rank's reliance on the link as a vote of confidence in a page's value was undermined as many webmasters sought to garner links purely to influence Google into sending them more traffic, irrespective of whether the link was useful to human site visitors. It was time for Google—and other search engines—to look at a wider range of off-site factors. There were other reasons to develop more intelligent algorithms. The Internet was reaching a vast population of non-technical users who were often unable to use advanced querying techniques to reach the information they were seeking and the sheer volume and complexity of the indexed data was vastly different to the early days. Search engines had to develop predictive, semantic, linguistic and heuristic algorithms.

The PageRank metric itself is still displayed in the Google Toolbar, but it is only one of several factors that Google considers in ranking pages.

Today, most search engines keep their methods and ranking algorithms secret. A search engine may use hundreds of factors in ranking the listings on its SERPs; the factors themselves and the weight each carries may change continually.

Much current SEO thinking on what works and what doesn't is largely speculation and informed guesses. Some SEOs have carried out controlled experiments to gauge the effects of different approaches to search optimization.

The following, though, are some of the considerations search engines could be building into their algorithms, and the list of Google patents may give some indication as to what is in the pipeline:

- Age of site
- Length of time domain has been registered
- Age of content
- Regularity with which new content is added
- Age of link and reputation of linking site
- Standard on-site factors
- Negative scoring for on-site factors (for example, a dampening for sites with extensive keyword meta tags indicative of having being SEO-ed)
- Uniqueness of content
- Related terms used in content (the terms the search engine associates as being related to the main content of the page)
- External links, the anchor text in those external links and in the sites/pages containing those links
- Citations and research sources (indicating the content is of research quality)
- Stem-related terms in the search engine's database (finance/financing)

- Incoming back links and anchor text of incoming back links
- Negative scoring for some incoming backlinks (perhaps those coming from low value pages, reciprocated back links, etc.)
- Rate of acquisition of backlinks: too many too fast could indicate "unnatural" link buying activity
- Text surrounding outward links and incoming backlinks. A link following the words "Sponsored Links" could be ignored
- Use of "rel=nofollow" to suggest that the search engine should ignore the link
- Depth of document in site
- Metrics collected from other sources, such as monitoring how frequently users hit the back button when SERPs send them to a particular page
- Metrics collected from sources like the Google Toolbar, Google AdWords/AdSense programs, etc.
- Metrics collected in data-sharing arrangements with third parties (like providers of statistical programs used to monitor site traffic)
- Rate of removal of incoming links to the site
- Use of sub-domains, use of keywords in sub-domains and volume of content on sub-domains... and negative scoring for such activity
- Semantic connections of hosted documents
- Rate of document addition or change
- IP of hosting service and the number/quality of other sites hosted on that IP
- Other affiliations of linking site with the linked site (do they share an IP? have a common postal address on the "contact us" page?)
- Technical matters like use of 301 to redirect moved pages, showing a 404 server header rather than a 200 server header for pages that don't exist, proper use of robots.txt
- Hosting uptime
- Whether the site serves different content to different categories of users (cloaking)
- Broken outgoing links not rectified promptly
- Unsafe or illegal content
- Quality of HTML coding, presence of coding errors
- Actual click through rates observed by the search engines for listings displayed on their SERPs
- Hand ranking by humans of the most frequently accessed SERPs (9)

Search engine optimization is in no way an exact science. The ranking algorithms of the search engines are well kept secrets, and they change often. You will never be able to make the perfect page. Next week your pride and joy – the number one listing in AltaVista – may have dropped

to number 65, and you will have to start fine-tuning your page once again.

However, most webmasters do nothing in order to improve their rankings. This is why even a modest attempt at search engine optimization may help a lot – especially outside the most competitive phrases.

We distinguish between two “schools” of search engine optimization (SEO): “pragmatic SEO” and “systematic SEO”. If you engage in pragmatic SEO you will follow certain general rules in order to optimize your pages for all search engines, hoping that this work will lead to better listings in at least some of these engines.

Professional optimizers with a large budget and much time on their hands will often engage in systematic SEO. They will try to reconstruct the ranking algorithms of the individual search engines and code web pages tailor-made for each individual engine.⁽¹⁰⁾

Before you begin planning your search engine strategy it's worth considering exactly how important the results are to you. This is because you need to decide how much energy and resources to put into SEO, so you need to know what sort of results to expect for your efforts. If the benefits are likely to be minimal then you might be better off spending your energy on other areas of the website. On the other hand, if your entire business plan relies on good search engine results, you had better be prepared to spend a lot of time and money getting them.

It's easy to assume that by having good search rankings, lots of people will find for your website and become customers. You need to test this thinking and make sure you're not just being optimistic. Who exactly is the type of person you expect to attract? Imagine them as a single real person, sitting at a computer. Why will this person use the internet to find your product? What will they expect to find? If they do find your website, will they buy from you or will they just use you for information and buy somewhere else?

In most cases good search engine results will benefit you, but it pays to be realistic about how significant the benefit will be.

What Are Your Chances of Getting Listed?

Getting a basic listing isn't hard and you should be able to get at least a small presence in the main search engines. The question is how many actual visitors will result from your listing.

If you have something reasonably unique to offer, or if you are targeting a particular geographical region, your chances of getting visitors are fairly good. Most businesses could expect to attract at least a few visitors each day through search engines.

To get more than a few visitors per day (up to around a hundred) will take a lot more effort but is still quite achievable.

If you are aiming to attract hundreds of visitors per day, you will need to have something a bit more special - either some very unique content or a very good optimization strategy.(11)

Remember, unlike almost any other medium, a visit to your web site is in most instances intentional, and this-along with the fact that the visitor is actively interacting with your site-compounds the brand perception that results, either positively or negatively, and it takes a lot more effort to persuade a visitor to come back after a poor experience.(12)

4- Search Engine Optimization Techniques.

As we said before SEO is the process of ensuring that the site places well in the search engine results, and this can be done with the following methods:

Meta Tag

- 1- Key wording
- 2- Link Popularity
- 3- SE Submission
- 4- Pay Per Click

We can explain more, By following the directions in this paper, your site will soon be at the top of the search results:

1- Optimize page content with phrases

- Start with your top key phrase
- Incorporate your top key phrase into your content 5 or 6 times, use them towards the top of the page, and at the beginning of paragraphs or sentences. Also use the key phrase in the page title Meta tag and in page headings or bullet points.
- Use your other key phrases through out the text 2 to 4 times. Your secondary phrases should be related to your top key phrase, you do not want to "confuse" the search engine about your page theme.

2- Page Meta Tags - humans do not see these, except title

- Keywords - just list the 3 to 4 key phrases you have already come up with, also any variations of those phrases. Only provide keywords that appear in your page content. Additional words not in the page content will hurt, not help. (1024 max length)
- Description - Write a short description of your page theme; use at least your top key phase in the description. (255 character max length)
- Title - your top key phase

3- Linking Strategy

Internal Linking

- Within page content refer to other important pages in your site. Use the keywords of the landing page (page to which you are linking) for your hyperlink text.
- Navigation, use keywords in navigation structure

External Linking (Links from other sites to yours)

- Have content that people find useful, and they will link to you. But you need to ask them to do it!
- Ask organizations, associations you belong to put a link on their site to you.
- Directories (13)

5- How To Design a Search Engine Friendly Web Site?

No doubt about it, design a Website with search engines in mind right from the start and you will save future marketing time and money. The most likely scenario most of us encounter however are lofty initial objectives with scant follow through.(14)

A Friendly Website

1-Make effective use of your page "title meta tag", choose a title that reflects your business and includes 2 or 3 of your primary keywords.

2-The "Description Tag" should be a logical sentence that contains your keywords, not just a list of keywords.

3- Place links to all of your pages on your homepage as well as every other page on our site.

4- Create a site map page and link to it directly from your homepage.

5- Near the top of your page, you should use your primary keywords in an <H1> header tag, also use <H2> tags although not counted as well as <H1>

e.g.: <H1> Distinctive birdhouse and birdfeeders </H1>

<H2> we offer the finest handcrafted birdhouses </H2>

6- Photos don't help your ranking. But you can use <ALT> tags to describe your photos; use a keyword or two in your <ALT> tag that describes the photo or Google may consider it a spam.

e.g.:

7- The websites that we exchange links with must be:

- Have a PR of at least 5
- They are not using hidden text, hidden links, doorway pages .
- It must be in your same general field.
- Don't exchange links with a direct competitor, or you will lose sales, instead exchange with a site with other products that compliment yours without directly competing with you.

8- Pay Per Click

PPC sites allow you to place an ad with a link on their site. You select and bid on keywords that will drive visitors to your site, the higher you bid for each keywords, the higher on the page your ad will appear when that keyword is searched on by someone looking for your widgets.

6- How to prevent getting banned from Search Engines?

What not to do or how to prevent getting banned search engines:

1- Do not Submit multiple URLs for some site

E.g.:

arado.org.eg

arado.org.eg / index.html

We had to submit only one URL for the site

2- Do not use Cloaking techniques

It means having 2 separate pages 1 for the user, Google banned these pages.

3- Doorway pages

Do not load the home page with key world that redirect to another pages

4- Hidden text

Do not use hidden key world, it is often used in doorway pages, and it is a sure way to get banned.

5- Hidden links

As we know the number of pages that link to one of your pages has a direct effect on how high your page appears in the search results (page rank) , also hidden links is a sure way to get banned

6- Link farms:

Be careful who you link to , you can not control who link to you ,so incoming links will not hurt your site's ranking , but you control directly who you link to so Google will ban or penalize your site for linking to A bad neighborhood

7- Spamming

Do not send spam mail from your site

8-selling page rank

Selling advertising in the form of a link on your site is good, but selling a link for the stated purpose of increasing a site's page rank is not acceptable.

9- Multiple identical sites:

Do not create multiple pages with similar content to increase page rank .

10- Multiple domains

Creating multiple domains that redirect to one page is not allowed

11- excessive links

Google recommends having no more than 100 links on any given page

7- Conclusion

By using the information contained in this SEO guide, you will have your site listed in the main search engine results within 6 weeks, and quite possibly on the first page of the listings within 60 days. All it takes is determination, an open mind, and a little hard work. But the benefits will be well worth the effort!

Leave the shady tactics like hidden text and keyword stuffing to the Spammers. Their sites may outrank yours for a short time, but when (not if) they're caught your site will be at the top of the SERPS while theirs fall by the wayside.

And remember, search engine optimization (SEO) techniques aren't static. The search engines are constantly changing their algorithms. What works for good placement today could send you plummeting to the depths of the SERPS next month (or even cause your site to incur a penalty).

Stay up-to date on all the changes in the SEO world and continue tweaking your site accordingly.⁽¹⁵⁾

Glossary

Algorithm - A complex mathematical formula used by a search engine to rank the web pages that it finds by *crawling the web*.

ALT Tags - Used to display a short text description of an image when you hover your mouse over it. The ALT description is also displayed in place of the image if the user is browsing with image display turned off.

Image ALT tags are useful to your page's visitors. Equally as important, they can help with your search engine rankings by increasing the keyword density (if you use your keywords in your ALT tags).

Example:

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Bad Neighborhood - A web page that has been penalized by a search engine (most notably Google) for using shady SEO tactics, such as *hidden text* or *link farms*.

Backlinks - Links *from* another web page *to* your web page. Most search engines provide an easy way to get a list of all of the backlinks to a specific page. Also referred to as *Incoming Links*.

Broken Link - A link that no longer takes the user to the destination page when it is clicked on. This is usually the result of the destination page having been renamed or deleted from the server. Also referred to as a *Dead Link*.

Cloaking - Serving one version of a page to a human visitor and a different version of the same page to the search engines. This is usually done to "fool" the search engines into giving the page a higher rank than it would normally receive while making sure the human visitor sees a useful and attractive page.

Note: Cloaking is discouraged by most major search engines, including Google.

Content - The information located on a web page. This includes text, images, and any other types of information that a webmaster places on the page.

Crawler - A program used by search engines to "crawl" the web by following links from page to page. This is how most search engines "find" the web pages that they place in their index. Also referred to as a spider or robot.

Crawling The Web - Search engines use *crawlers* to move from web page to web page by following the links on the pages. The pages "found" are then *ranked* using an *algorithm* and *indexed* into the search engine database.

Cross Linking - This is where the owner of two or more websites *interlink* the sites in order to boost their search engine *rankings*. If detected, cross linking often results in a search engine *penalty*.

Deep Linking - Linking to a page that is one or more levels removed from the *home directory*. Deep linking is often desirable to build PageRank to a specific page on a website.

Example:

```
http://www.yoursite.com/tutorials/diy-seo.html
```

Description - A short sentence or paragraph that describes a web page's content, usually used as part of a link to describe the page being linked to. See also *link anchor text*.

Description Meta Tag - A meta tag that describes the content of the web page in which it is found. Used by some search engines for keyword density purposes. Also, some SE's will use the description meta tag for the description provided to a user when the page is returned in a listing of search results. It is recommended that you use a couple of your targeted keywords in the description meta tag.

Example:

<META NAME="Description" CONTENT="This sentence describes the content on this page.">

Directory - A categorized list of websites that is maintained by human *editors* instead of *crawlers*. Yahoo.com is the most widely recognized directory on the web, but there are literally thousands of others.

Doorway Page - A page that is usually optimized for a particular search engine and search term. Multiple doorway pages are often used to help ensure that the same basic content is ranked well on several different search engines. The use of doorway pages *for this purpose* is frowned upon by most larger search engines, including Google.

Duplicate Content - Two or more separate web pages that contain substantially the same content are said to contain duplicate content.

Google and other top search engines have set up *filters* to detect duplicate content when their *crawlers* are active on the web. When pages containing duplicate content are detected, they are often assessed a *duplicate content penalty* which means a lowering of the page's ranking from what it would have received *naturally*.

Dynamic Content (dynamic pages) - Web pages that are often generated from database information based upon queries initiated by users. Dynamic pages often include the ? character in the URL.

The URLs of dynamic pages often use these extensions: .asp, .cgm, or .cgi. Most search engines don't index dynamic content very well (or at all). Google has recently been doing a better job at indexing them however.

Filters - A filter is a software routine that examines web pages during a robot's *crawl* looking for search engine *spam*. If the filter detects the use of spam on the page, a ranking penalty is assessed.

Common filters look for *hidden text*, links to *bad neighborhoods*, and many other *SEO techniques* that the search engine doesn't like.

Header Tags - HTML tags that help outline a web page or draw attention to important information. Keywords located inside header tags can provide a rankings boost in the search engines.

Examples:

<h1>This is an H1 tag.</h1>

<h2>This is an H2 tag.</h2>

Hidden Text and Hidden Links - Using a text font that is the same (or nearly the same) color as the background color, rendering the text or link invisible or very difficult to read. The same effect can also be achieved by using various HTML tricks. Hidden text and hidden links are often used to artificially increase a web page's keyword density for a keyword or key phrase and/or to artificially boost the link popularity of other pages on your site(s).

The use of hidden text and hidden links is frowned upon by Google and most other search engines. Using them will most likely result in your web page(s) incurring a *penalty* by the search engines.

Hits - The term hits is commonly misused. Many people think of a hit as a visit to one of their web pages. This is incorrect. A hit takes place every time a *file* is accessed on your website.

For example, let's say your friend's home page has a logo gif and 12 pictures on it. Every time a *visitor* loads that page, 14 hits are recorded: 1 for the logo gif, 12 for the pictures, and one for the page itself. So don't be all that impressed if he boasts that his site receives 1000 hits a day. In our example, those 1000 hits could have been generated by as few as 72 *visitors* to the site.

The only meaningful way to evaluate the traffic flow of a site is to consider the

average *daily* or *monthly* number of *unique visitors* and *page views* a site receives.

Image Map - Placing separate hyperlinks on different areas of the same image. Clicking on different parts of the image will take the user to different web pages. Not very *search engine friendly*.

Index - The list of web pages stored and ranked by a search engine. Also known as a database.

Indexing - After a search engine has *crawled the web*, it ranks the URLs found using various criteria (see *algorithm*) and places them in the database, or index.

Keyword (Key Phrase) - A word or phrase typed into a search engine in order to find web pages that contain that word or phrase. A web page can (and should be) optimized for specific keywords/phrases that are relevant to the content on that page.

Keywords Meta Tag - An HTML meta tag that lists all of the main keywords and key phrases that are contained on that web page. Some search engines use the keyword meta tag to help rank web pages in their databases. Google does not.

Example:

```
<META NAME="KEYWORDS" CONTENT="small business,  
business,advertising,sales">
```

Link Anchor Text - The "clickable" part of the link structure. Using *keywords* in the link anchor text of your *inbound links* will help your search engine rankings for those keywords.

Example:

```
<a href="http://www.yoursite.com">This is the link anchor text for this link</a>
```

Link Exchange - Placing a link to another website on your own site in exchange for a return link back. Also known as *reciprocal linking*.

Link Farm - A web page created solely for search engine ranking purposes that consists almost entirely of a long list of unrelated links. These types of pages are penalized by almost all search engines, including Google.

Link Popularity - A measure of how "popular" a web page is on the internet as measured by the number of inbound links pointing to your web page. Link popularity is one of the main factors used to help determine search engine rankings.

Linking - Placing a link to another web page (usually on another web site) on one of your own web pages.

Links - URLs placed within a web page so that when they're clicked on the browser is served with a different web page, often on a completely different web site.

Log Files - Files that are constantly and automatically created and updated on your web server that provide very specific details about the activities taking place on your web site.

This includes referring URLs, IP addresses, pages visited, errors generated, number of unique visitors, total page views, total hits, and much more. Carefully reviewing your log files can provide valuable information about your site's performance and visitors.

PageRank (PR) - A proprietary numerical score that is assigned by Google to every web page in their index. PR for each page is calculated by Google using a special mathematical *algorithm*, based on the *number* and *quality* (as determined by Google) of the inbound links to the page.

Page Views - Each time a web page on a site is accessed by a visitor, it counts as one page view. It doesn't matter if the same user viewed the same page 5 minutes ago, it still represents another page view.

For example, let's say that a website receives two unique visitors in one day. The first visitor surfs around the site and views a total of six pages. The second visitor views

11 pages. This represents 17 page views for the day by two unique visitors. (This poor webmaster needs to do some serious SEO and site promotion!)

Paid Inclusion - Some directories will only consider placing your URL into their database if you pay them a fee.

Yahoo charges a \$299 per year *evaluation fee* for commercial sites. Note that this fee *doesn't guarantee* that your URL will be accepted and placed in the Yahoo database, but rather that Yahoo will *consider* your site for inclusion in a timely manner. If your site is rejected, you're just out your \$299. But you do have an opportunity to appeal the decision.

Other smaller directories will guarantee to list your site upon payment of their fee, provided that your site meets their guidelines (these are clearly explained ahead of time).

Many search engines also have a paid inclusion program, including Inktomi and Alta Vista. You *don't have to pay* to be included in search engines however. If you have a few quality *inbound links* to your site, the search engines will find and index your site on their own eventually.

The advantage of utilizing their paid inclusion services is they'll usually crawl and index your site within 48 hours or less instead of the weeks or even months that it often takes otherwise.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Search Engines - This is a traffic generating method where a search engine or directory places your link in their searchable database and charges you a fee *every time* your URL comes up in a search **and** it gets clicked on. The amount of the fee that you pay is usually determined by *bidding* on keywords or key phrases.

The two largest PPC search engines are Overture and Google Ad Words. There are also numerous smaller PPC engines on the net, some very good at delivering affordable targeted traffic, others not.

Penalty - A punishment levied against a web page by a search engine as a result of using an SEO tactic that it doesn't approve of. Tactics that most often result in penalties include using *hidden text*, *sneaky redirects*, and *linking to a bad neighborhood*.

A penalty usually results in a web page being credited for a lower *Google PageRank (PR)* than it has actually "earned". Penalties also result in a page being "buried" deep within the SERPS where it will almost never be found again by searchers.

Rankings - The order in which individual web pages are returned in the *SERPS* for a given search query. Search engines *rank* the web pages based upon *relevancy* to your search terms according to their proprietary *algorithm*.

Reciprocal Links - Links to another website placed on your site in exchange for links back to your site from theirs. This is a proven way to build *link popularity* which is instrumental in getting high search engine *rankings*.

Redirect - A tactic sometimes used to send a user to a different page than the one she found in the SERPS. For example, a webmaster optimizes a web page for a very popular keyword. When a user finds the page by searching on that keyword, she is subsequently redirected to a different, possibly non-relevant page that the webmaster stands ready to make money from.

Relevancy - The degree to which the content on a web page that is returned in a list of search results (*SERPS*) "matches" the topic of the information that the user was searching for. In other words, if you use the search phrase "small green widgets" and a page is returned that deals with "large red thingamajigs", the relevancy of that page is very poor.

Robot - A program used by a search engine to *crawl the web* in order to find, *rank*, and *index* new web pages.

Robots.txt - A special file that is commonly used to exclude some or all *robots* from crawling certain files or directories on a website. This file should be placed in your website's *root directory*.

Search Engine Friendly - A web page that has been designed and optimized for high search engine rankings. A *search engine friendly* page also makes it easy for search engines to follow the links on the page.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) - The process of optimizing a web page for high search engine *rankings* for a particular *search term* or *set of search terms*.

Search Engine Results Pages (SERPS) - The ranked listing of web pages that are returned for a specific search query.

Search Query - The *keyword*, *key phrase*, or list of words that you type into a search engine to find web pages on a topic that you're interested in.

Search Term - A *list of keywords* or a *key phrase* that a user types into a search engine to find a list of web pages related to topic that he/she is interested in.

Server - A computer that hosts web pages and delivers them to a user's internet browser when requested. A *dedicated server* hosts one website only. A *shared server* hosts multiple websites. Dedicated servers deliver web pages faster and provide more capacity and features than shared servers, but they're also considerably more expensive to use.

PageRank (PR) For Money - Selling or buying a link from a web page with a high *Google PageRank* for the stated purpose of increasing the other page's PR. This is highly frowned upon by Google and will result in a penalty for *both pages* if Google finds out about it.

Spam - When speaking of search engines, spam is loosely defined as any technique used to give your web page(s) an unfair *ranking* advantage over other pages.

Submitting Your URLs - This is the process of telling a search engine or directory about your web pages. The URLs that you submit are placed into a queue for later *crawling* or human review.

If you have *backlinks* pointing to your web pages, there is usually no need to submit your URLs to the search engines because their *crawlers* will find the pages on their own and index them. You *do* need to submit your URLs to directories however because they use humans instead of robots to visit the sites that you submit and evaluate them.

Title Meta Tag - This HTML tag is used to provide web browsers and search engines with an "official" title for the page currently being displayed. Using a couple of keywords in your title tag can help boost the page's search engine ranking for those keywords.

Example:

```
<META NAME="TITLE" CONTENT="Page title goes here">
```

Top-10 Ranking - A web page that is listed in the first 10 search results for a search *query*. Top-10 in Google also means *on the first page* using the standard search criteria

Traffic - A website's average rate of traffic flow within a given time period. It can be measured in a couple ways, including *unique visitors* and *total page views*. Don't confuse *hits* with unique visitors and page views. The term hits is virtually useless when evaluating website traffic statistics.(17)

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