

Search Engine Optimization

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Search engine optimization, SEO, is the science of obtaining a higher page rank within the search engine requested by the user. Basically, when a user requests a search the search engine produces a list of results that are most relevant to the requests. Search engine optimization has many aspects to it, good and bad, which drives improvement and change. To optimize a web pages higher rank, companies usually employ SEO firms that specialize in search engine optimization. Search engine optimizers often execute many tactics to produce higher page rankings such as, inbound links, keyword density, cross linking, meta descriptions and a whole host of other tactics.

SEO is not to be used as the only way to drive traffic to a website. It is merely a piece of the internet traffic puzzle. A good website should have “organic” traffic first and foremost. SEO will add to the placement and attraction of the website, depending on the website operator’s goal. SEO is not usually a single defining marketing strategy. However SEO will help, sort of like a belt helps hold up your pants, after all what is the use of having a belt with no pants? SEO has been around since the 1990’s; as the internet grew so did the competitiveness for page rank. Before SEO Webmaster’s only needed to submit the address of a page or URL to search engines and a spider would crawl the

page resulting the page to be indexed. However, with the explosion of the internet was the explosion of SEO tactics.

There are good SEO tactics, whitehat, and villainous SEO tactics, blackhat. The whitehat SEO developers are so called good guys who just want to make content easily accessible to users and return the best results. Whitehat coders often expose lacks or flaws and report this to the companies for the betterment of computer usage. Blackhat developers use disapproving techniques in an attempt to obtain a higher page rank, usually involving deceptive methods like, keyword stuffing, cloaking and link farming. For instance, a blackhat developer may create and position a div container off screen or color words the same as the background color; since the search engine spiders use relative words as one way of ranking pages. It is deceptive to overload words that are relative to search requests. This battle between the whitehats and blackhats has fueled search engines to constantly revise their algorithms and enact undisclosed methods of page ranking.

Black hat SEO works by exploiting search indexing algorithms, and I think search engine providers work hard to try and tweak their processes to cut down on misleading search results, but it's a cat and mouse game," said Marc Fossi, manager of research and development for Symantec Security Response. "When search engine providers fine-tune their algorithms or make other changes to try

and reduce black hat SEO effectiveness, the bad guys counter these adjustments by making minor adjustments of their own” (How).

In the world of search engine optimization, change is both constant and inevitable. Sometimes these changes result in dramatic shift rankings which can have major effects on the success of a business or organization. Some recent shifts in the SEO landscape that marketers need to take into account when creating SEO strategies are Google Caffeine's new web-indexing system and the recently announced partnership between Yahoo! and Microsoft Bing. To succeed in amidst these changes, SEO marketers need to focus on more than simply improving organic search placement. Right now, no shift in SEO is more significant and ubiquitous than social media, so it's critical to ensure that social marketing and SEO marketing efforts support and strengthen each other. Social media campaigns that are highly interactive can improve SEO rankings, both organically as well as a source of inbound links. Simultaneously, the application of effective SEO practices to the content of social media--such as frequent updates that are rich in keywords--can improve the visibility and reach of social media marketing efforts (Shift).

In summary, the science and battle of search engine optimization is a never ending one. While there are people who want to make the internet a safe and positive place there are always the forces of evil who want to disrupt it. SEO can be a way to improve a websites placement or even a means for companies

to survive. Many people argue that SEO is ruining the end user experience. Just about every search ends in a commercial sale of some kind or someone's opinion of something. It's going to be a long time before we see the end of SEO. All in all SEO is a tool that web developers must employ and be familiar with to stay in tune with the World Wide Web.

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