SEO
Certification

Study Guide   2010

**Training and preparation for the
Search Engine Optimization Certification Exam**

Search Engine Optimization
Course Objectives

Introduction

The Search Engine Optimization study guide is intended to prepare students to pass the SEO Certification Exam administered by www.SEOcertification.org. Upon completion, students will have obtained a thorough knowledge of Search Engine Optimization practices, procedures, tools, and techniques.

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Chapter 1
Search Engines

1.1   Search Engine Basics

Introduction to search engines

As the Internet started to grow and became an integral part of day-to-day work, it became almost impossible for a user to fetch the exact or relevant information from such a huge web. This is the main reason why 'Search Engines' were developed. Search engines became so popular that now more than 80% of web-site visitors come from them. What exactly is a Search Engine? According to webopedia, a "Search Engine" is a program that searches documents for specified keywords and returns a list of the documents where the keywords were found".

For Example, if you want to know about the Automobile market in Canada, you will type keywords like automotive market, automobiles in Canada, automobile manufacturers in Canada etc... Once you click on the search button, you'll get the best relevant data related to those keywords.

On the eve of Google's initial public offering, new surveys and traffic data confirm that search engines have become an essential and popular way for people to find information online. A nationwide phone survey of 1,399 Internet users between May 14 and June 17 by the Pew Internet & American Life Project shows:

- 84% of internet users have used search engines. On any given day online, more than half of those using the Internet use search engines. More than two-thirds of Internet users say they use search engines at least a couple of times per week.
- The use of search engines usually ranks only second to email use as the most popular activity online. During periods when major news stories are breaking, the act of getting news online usually surpasses the use of search engines.
- There is a substantial payoff as search engines improve and people become more adept at using them. Some 87% of search engine users say they find the information they want most of the time when they use search engines.

- The convenience and effectiveness of the search experience solidifies its appeal. Some 44% say that most times they search they are looking for vital information they absolutely need.

COM Score Networks tracking of Internet use shows that among the top 25 search engines:

- Americans conducted 6.7 billion total searches in December.
- 44% of those searches were done from home computers, 49% were done from work computers, and 7% were done at university-based computers.
- The average Internet user performed 33 searches in June.
- The average visit to a search engine resulted in 4.4 searches.
- The average visitor scrolled through 1.8 result pages during a typical search.
- In June, the average user spent 41 minutes at search engine sites.
- COM Score estimates that 40-45 percent of searches include 1sponsored results.
- Approximately 7 percent of searches in March included a local modifier, such as city and state names, phone numbers or the words "map" or "directions."
- The percentage of searches that occurred through browser toolbars in June was 7%

Search engine market share:

Four times voted as Most Outstanding Search Engine, Google is an undisputed market leader of the search engine industry. Google is a crawler based search engine, which is known for providing both comprehensive coverage of web pages and most relevant information. It attracts the largest number of searches and the number goes up to 250 million searches everyday.

Yahoo! is the second largest player in the industry with 28% of market share. Yahoo! started as a human based directory but turned into a Crawler based search engine in 2002. Till early 2004, it was powered by Google but after that they started to use their own technology.

Yahoo stands next to Google in terms of number of searches per day. It is owned by Yahoo and attracts more than 167 million searches a day. Yahoo was the first search engine to come up with a PPC program. AskJeeves initially gained fame in 1998 and 1999 as being the "natural language" search engine that let you search by asking questions and responded with what seemed to be the right answer to everything. When launched, it was run by around 100 editors who monitored search logs. Today, however, AskJeeves depends on crawler-based technology to provide results to its users.

Major Search Engines and Directories

Google: Right from the establishment in 1999, until today, Google is still the most popular search engine on the internet. Since its beta release, it has had phrase searching for NOT, it did not add an OR operation until Oct. 2000. In Dec. 2000, it added title searching. In June 2000 it announced a database of over 560 million pages, which grew to 4 billion by February 2004. Its biggest strength is its size and scope. Google includes PDF, DOC, PS, Image and many other file type indexing. It also has additional databases in the form of Google Groups, News, Directory, etc.

Yahoo!: Yahoo! is one of the best known and most popular internet portals. Originally just a subject directory, now Yahoo! is a search engine, directory and portal. It includes cached copies of pages and also includes links to the Yahoo! directory. It supports full Boolean searching, but it lacks in providing some advanced search features such as truncation. It indexes the first 500KB of a web page and link searches require inclusion of http://

Bing: Bing Search by Microsoft is the search engine for the MSN portal site. For years it had used databases from other vendors including Inktomi, LookSmart, and Direct Hit. As of February 1, 2005, it began using its own, unique database including separate News, Images, and Local databases along with links into Microsoft's Encarta Encyclopedia content. Its large and unique database, query building Search Builder and Boolean searching, cached copies of web pages including date cached and automatic local search options are its strengths. However, limited advanced features, inconsistent availability of truncation are its weaknesses.

Ask: Debuting in spring 2001 and re-launching in April 2002, this new search engine has built its own database and offers some unique search features. It lacks full Boolean and other advanced search features, but it has more recently expanded and improved its search capabilities and added an advanced search. While Teoma results can show up in three separate sections, there is only the one single database of indexed Web pages. It may also include paid ad results (from Google's AdWords database) under the heading of 'Sponsored Links.' No additional databases or portal features are directly available. AskJeeves switched to Teoma instead of Direct Hit in January 2002 for the search engine results after its question and answer matches. Identifying Metasites and Refine feature to focus on web communities are the strengths while a smaller database, no direct URL submissions and no cached copies of pages are its weaknesses.

Directories

A Web Directory is a web search tool compiled manually by human editors. Once websites are submitted with information such as a title and description, they are assessed by an editor and, if deemed suitable for addition, will be listed under one or more subject categories. Users can search across a directory using keywords or phrases, or browse through the subject hierarchy. Best examples of a directory are Yahoo and the Open Directory Project.

The major difference between search engine and directory is the human factor. A web site search directory indexes a web site based on an independent description of a site. While directories perform many of the same functions of a web page search engine, although their indexing format is different. The main difference is that directories do not spider your site to gather information about it. Instead they rely on a few text entries, typically a site title, domain name, and description to determine which keywords describe your site. While sites in the search engines are scanned and resulted by program (crawler), they are edited manually in directories. Directories contain groups of websites according to theme or industry i.e. automobile related sites are placed in one sub-directory, sports sites are placed into the other sub-directory and so on. Directories do effectively help organize thousands of web sites together. A directory contained inside another directory is called a subdirectory of that directory. Together, the directories form a hierarchy, or tree structure.

There are 5 types of directories namely Human Edited, User Categorized, User Classified, Independently Classified and Pay Per Click (PPC). DMOZ and Yahoo! are the largest directories in the world today.

Search Provider Relationship

There are thousands of search engines available on the internet. Since it's not possible for all of them to create, maintain and update their own database, most display results from major search engines on their SERP (search engine results page).

It is not necessary that all primary and secondary results be provided by a single search engine. Different search engines can provide different results to other engines. Directories can also be used by a third party. The supplier and receiver relationship is demonstrated between many different search engines. These relationships are very important to understand if you want top rankings for your site.

Now let's check out the relationship between the top 10 search engines and top 2 directories i.e. which search engine is a supplier and which is the receiver.

Search Engines:

1. Google:

- Google's main search results are provided solely from Google's search technology, offering results from no other engine or source.
- The Google Directory is comprised of listings from The Open Directory Project (ODP, DMOZ).

2. Yahoo!:

- Paid and free submissions.
- Provides sponsored results from paid advertising sources.

3. Bing:

- Bing provides sponsored results from paid advertising sources.
- Paid and free submissions.

4. AOL:

- AOL results for "Recommended Sites" are listings that have been hand picked by AOL editors.
- AOL "Matching Sites" are supplied by Google results. The results in AOL may not always match the results in Google as Google often updates their database more frequently.
- AOL directory listings are provided by the ODP.

5. Alta Vista:

- Alta Vista receives sponsored listings from their own advertisers.
- Alta Vista will use results from their own database for the main search results.
- Alta Vista obtains its directory results from LookSmart.

6. HotBot:

- HotBot results contain three categories: Top 10 Results, Directory Results & General Web Results.

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• Top 10 results include popular sites and searches.
• Directory results are hand-picked by human editors.
• Web Results are provided by Inktomi.

7. IWon:

• IWon Spotlight results are comprised of web pages found within IWon or web sites that IWon has a direct business partnership with.
• IWon Sponsored Listings are provided by a variety of paid advertisements through third party pay for performance listings including Google, AdWords and Yahoo.

8. Lycos:

• Lycos provides directory results from The Open Directory Project.
• Lycos provides sponsored listings from Yahoo.
• Lycos provides Web Results from Fast and from the Lycos network.

9. Netscape:

• Netscape's sponsored links are provided by Google AdWords.
• Netscape's matching results include sites that are handpicked by ODP editors mixed with results powered by Google.

10. AllTheWeb:

• AllTheWeb crawls and index ODP results.
• AllTheWeb powers the main search results in Lycos.
• AllTheWeb provides results from Lycos.
• AllTheWeb also powers the Lycos advanced search feature, the FTP search feature and their MP3 specialty engine.

Directories:

1. Dmoz: Directory listings are provided to AOL, Google, Lycos and Netscape and many other web sites, directories & portals.

2. Yahoo!: Yahoo! Directory listings are supplied by Yahoo! editors and require a fee for commercial sites. Yahoo directory results are provided to Alta Vista.

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PA WebSearch™
Top 15 Search Engine and Directory
Submission Services
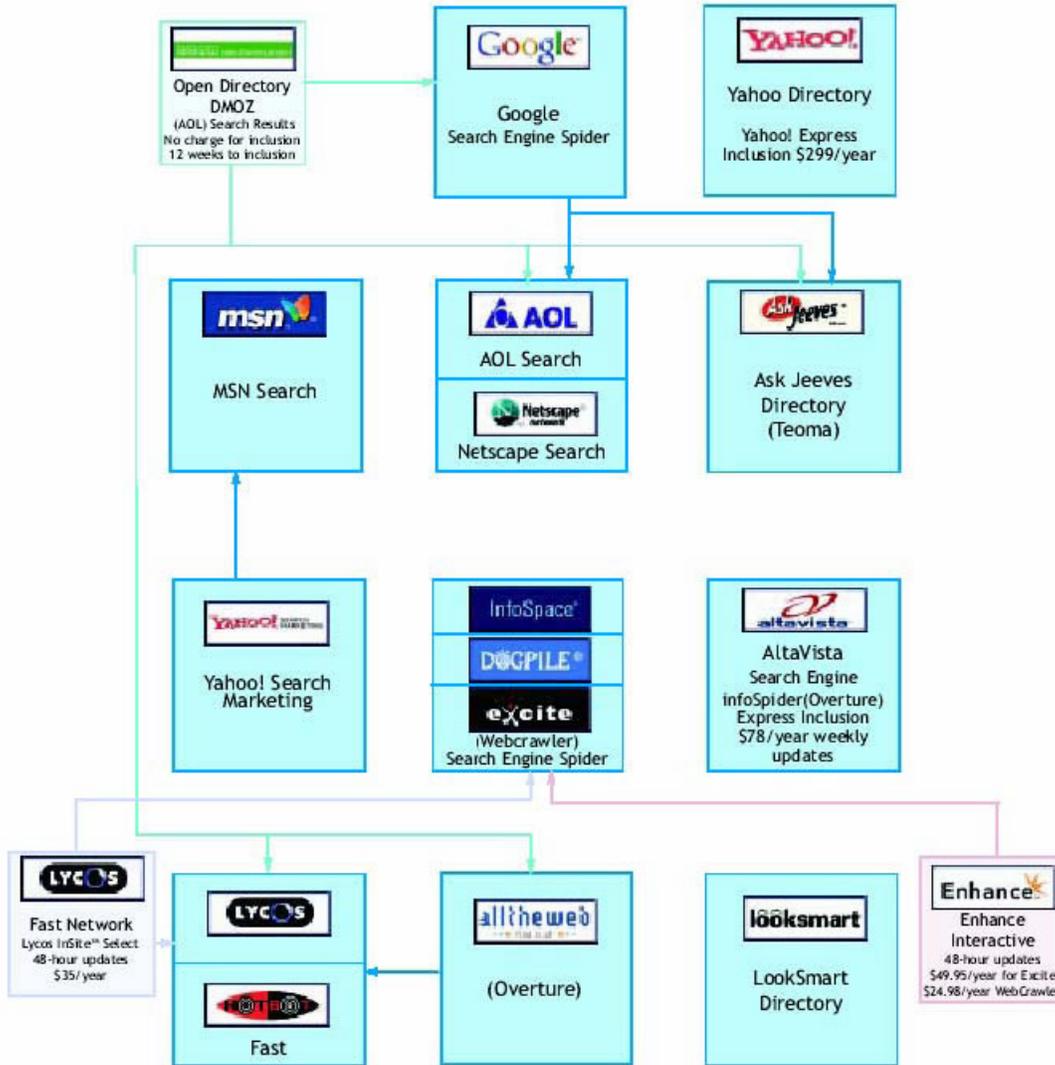
1.2 Components of Search Engine

How Search Engines Rank Pages

Broadly search engines are divided into 2 main categories:

a. Crawler based search engines
b. Human powered directories

Web crawler is a program, developed to scan the web page. The Crawler scans the entire page, indexes it and lists it on the search engine. It evaluates any particular web page based on several different factors such as keywords, table, page titles, body copy etc. Since listings are done automatically, it can change if you change some content of the website.

Manual listing is done in case of 'Human Powered Directories'. Human editors are responsible for listing any site in the directory. Webmasters need to submit a short description to the directory for the entire site and a search looks for matches only in the description submitted. Listings are not affected if you change some content in your web site. Listing in directories and search engines are totally different and hence parameters for listing are different in both cases. With either listing, it's still necessary to create an informative and content rich site to attract more visitors.

Any crawler based search engine is made up of 3 basic components.

a. Crawler or Spider
b. Index
c. Search engine software

All these components work one after one and list the page on search engines. Search engines find websites in 2 ways:
1. By accepting listings sent by webmasters
2. By crawlers that roam the internet storing links and information about each page they visit. Once the site is found by the search engine, crawlers scan the entire site. While scanning, the crawler visits the web page, reads it and then follows link to other pages within the site. Major search engines like Google, Yahoo and MSN use multiple search engines simultaneously.

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Google uses 4 spiders which crawl over 100 pages per second and generating around 600KBs of data each second.

Then index program starts after the crawler. Once a webpage is crawled, it is necessary to transfer them to the database. The index contains a copy of each web pages scanned by the crawler. If the webpage is changed, the index is updated with the new information. It is very important that your pages are added to the index. Until and unless it is indexed, it is not available to those searching with the search engines.

The search engine software performs a task of relevant listings. It searches the entire database i.e. indexed pages and matches it with the search. It then ranks and lists the most relevant matches. These listings are done on how the search engine software is programmed. It delivers listings according to what it believes the most relevant content is!

There are many more factors on which search engines rank a page but we will look at them in detail later.

Broadly, it depends on **On-page factors** and **Off-page factors**.
On-page factors include keyword targeting, HTML tags, Content, Anchor Text and URL while Off-page factors include Link Building, Link Popularity and Anchor Text.

Though these terms are explained later, right now let's see the strategies in which search engines opt to list a page. Crawler based search engines list the sites without any human interference. This means it ranks a page based on what it thinks the most relevant page is! There are few parameters on which crawlers check whether the site is relevant to the search query or not. This program is called Search Engine Algorithm. No one knows the exact algorithm of any search engine but studies and research has proven that there are few factors, which are common in most search engine algorithms.

Location of keywords: Once keywords are finalized the main task is 'placement of keywords'. The search engine algorithm mainly revolves around the location of keywords. The keywords can be placed in HTML tags, content, headline or in the first few paragraphs. The importance varies according to location. Keywords placed in the headline or first few paragraphs are more important than other locations in web site. If keywords are placed from the beginning, search engines assume that the page is more relevant to that particular theme.

Frequency: Though it's very important to place keywords in the most visible parts of the web page, it is important to limit the number of keywords. This is called frequency. Search engines also measure frequency of keywords while ranking a page. Search engine analyses how often

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keywords appear in relation to other words in a web page therefore websites with a larger number of keywords are considered to be more relevant than others.

Added features in Location and Frequency: Location and frequency are just the basics of search engine algorithm. Once search engines discovered that anyone can play around it and can successfully rank their pages, they increased the algorithm complexity. Different search engines now index different number of web pages. Some index more and some less. Since some index more pages than others, no search engine has the exact same collection of web pages to search through.

Once webmasters came to know about the frequency, they cracked the algorithm by using too many keywords in a page, just to get higher rankings. Hence, search engines started to penalize such sites with too many of the same keywords. Search engines termed it as 'spamming'. It became very necessary for SEO companies to keep the frequency more than others but less than spamming. Search engines watch for common spamming methods in a variety of ways, including following up on complaints from their users.

Off-page factors: Above mentioned are some on-page factors. Now let's look at some common off page factors. Crawler-based search engines have plenty of experience now with webmasters who constantly rewrite their web pages in an attempt to gain better rankings. Some sophisticated webmasters may even go to great lengths to "reverse engineer" the location/frequency systems used by a particular search engine. Because of this, all major search engines now make use of "off the page" ranking criteria.

Off the page factors are those that a webmasters cannot easily influence. Chief among these is link analysis. By analyzing how pages link to each other, a search engine can both determine what a page is about and whether that page is deemed to be "important" and thus deserving of a ranking boost. In addition, sophisticated techniques are used to screen out attempts by webmasters to build "artificial" links designed to boost their rankings.

• **Link analysis:** Web-based search engines have introduced one dramatically different feature for weighing and ranking pages. Link analysis works somewhat like bibliographic citation practices, such as those used by Science Citation Index. Link analysis is based on how well-connected each page is, as defined by Hubs and Authorities, where Hub documents link to large numbers of other pages (out-links), and Authority documents are those referred to by many other pages, or have a high number of "in-links"

• **Link Popularity:** Link popularity is a major parameter Google is using. There is simple logic behind it. If other websites are linking to your site then there has to be more relevancy in

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your website. Popularity utilizes data on the frequency with which a page is chosen by all users as a means of predicting relevance. While popularity is a good indicator at times, it assumes that the underlying information need remains the same.

There are few more factors such as:

• **Date of article published:** The more recent the content the importance is more! Search engines always believe that if the content is recent then it will be more valuable for visitor than others. The engines therefore present results beginning with the most recent to the less current.

• **Length:** While length per se does not necessarily predict relevance, it is a factor when used to compute the relative merit of similar pages. So, in a choice between two documents both containing the same query terms, the document that contains a proportionately higher occurrence of the term relative to the length of the document is assumed more likely to be relevant.

• **Proximity of query terms:** When the terms in a query occur near to each other within a document; it is more likely that the document is relevant to the query than if the terms occur at greater distance. While some search engines do not recognize phrases per se in queries, some search engines clearly rank documents in results higher if the query terms occur adjacent to one another or in closer proximity, as compared to documents in which the terms occur at a distance.

• **Proper nouns** sometimes have higher weights, since so many searches are performed on people, places, or things. While this may be useful, if the search engine assumes that you are searching for a name instead of the same word as a normal everyday term, then the search results may be noticeably slanted.

Search Engine Spam

Search engine spamming is the unethical practice for optimizing the site to rank it high on SERP. Spamming is used to trick search engines for higher rankings with the use of some tactics such as repetitive keywords, hidden text and links etc. All search engines penalize websites that use spam. Since time immemorial --or at least since the Internet first began-- webmasters have been using these stratagems to dupe search engines into giving irrelevant pages high search engine placement.

Each search engine's objective is to produce the most relevant results to its visitors. Producing the most relevant results for any particular search query is the determining factor of being a popular search engine. Every search engine measures relevancy according to its own algorithm, thereby producing a different set of results. Search engine spam occurs if anybody tries to artificially influence a search engine's basis of calculating relevancy.

Each of the major search engines provide specific guidelines describing what webmasters should and should not do to their web pages in order to achieve a better search engine ranking, though that has not always been the case.

There are overall sixteen tactics that are considered search engine spam. These techniques are:

- Keywords unrelated to site
- Redirects
- Keyword stuffing
- Mirror/duplicate content
- Tiny Text
- Doorway pages
- Link Farms
- Cloaking
- Keyword stacking
- Gibberish
- Hidden text
- Domain Spam
- Hidden links
- Mini/micro-sites
- Page Swapping (bait &switch)
- Typo spam and cyber squatting

Not to be confused with the canned, processed meat, spam is the use of redundant or unethical techniques to improve search engine placement. Fortunately or unfortunately --depending on your point of view-- search engines are quickly catching on. Some won't index pages believed to contain spam; others will still index, but will rank the pages lower, while others still will ban a site altogether. Of course, not all search engines take a hard-line on spam. Tricks that are perfectly acceptable on one search engine may be considered spam by another.

Spamming Techniques

Invisible Text: Hiding keywords by using the same color font and background is one of the oldest tricks in the spammers' book. These days, it's also one of the most easily detected by search engines

Keyword Stuffing: Repeating keywords over and over again, usually at the bottom of the page (tailing) in tiny font or within Meta tags or other hidden tags.

Unrelated Keywords: Never use popular keywords that do not apply to your site's content. You might be able to trick a few people searching for such words into clicking at your link, but they will quickly leave your site when they see you have no info on the topic they were originally searching for. If you have a site about Medical Science and your keywords include "Shahrukh Khan" and "Britney Spears", that would be considered unrelated keywords.

Hidden Tags: The use of keywords in hidden HTML tags like comment tags, style tags, http-equiv tags, hidden value tags, alt tags, font tags, author tags, option tags, no-frames tags (on sites not using frames).

Duplicate Sites: Content duplication is considered to be search engine spamming also. Sometimes what people do is, they copy the content and name the site differently. But search engines can find it easily and they mark it as a spam. Don't duplicate a web page or doorway page, give them different names, and submit them all. Mirror pages are regarded as spam by all search engines and directories.

Link Farms: Link farm is a network of pages on one or more Web sites heavily cross-linked with each other, with the sole intention of improving the search engine ranking of those pages and sites.

Many search engines consider the use of link farms or reciprocal link generators as spam. Several search engines are known to kick out sites that participate in any link exchange program that artificially boosts link popularity.

Links can be used to deliver both types of search engine spam, i.e. both content spam and Meta spam.

Link content spam: When a link exists on a page A to page B only to affect the hub component of page A or the authority component of page B, that is an example of content

spam on page A. Page B is not spamming at all. Page A should receive a spam penalty. Without further evidence, page B should not receive a penalty.

Link Meta spam: When the anchor text or title text of a link either mis-describes the link target, or describes the link target using incoherent language, that is an example of link Meta spam.

Repetitive Submitting: Each search engine has its own limits on how many pages can be submitted and how often. Do not submit the same page more than once a month to the same search engine and don't submit too many pages each day. Never submit doorways to directories.

Redirects: Do not list sites using URL redirects. These include welcome.to, i.am, go.to, and others. The complete site should be hosted on the same domain as the entry page. An exception may be made for sites that include a remotely hosted chat or message board as long as the bulk of the site is hosted on its own domain. Actually redirecting of page was not developed for spam, but it is becoming popular technique for spamming.

There are many means of redirecting from one Web page to another. Examples of redirection methods are HTTP 300 series redirect response codes, HTTP 400 series error vectors, META REFRESH tags and JavaScript redirects. As studied earlier these are used to move visitor from one page to another without giving them a single second. In this case the page made for search engine is a spam. Everything on it is an example of either content spam or Meta spam.

Alt Text Spamming: Tiny text consists of placing keywords and phrases in the tiniest text imaginable all over your site. Most people can't see them, but spiders can. Alt text spamming is stuffing the alt text tags (for images) with unrelated keywords or phrases.

Doorway Pages: Doorways are pages optimized only for search engine spiders in order to attract more spiders, thus more users. Usually optimized for just one word or phrase and only meant for spiders, not users.

Content Spam: It is possible when different URLs delivers same content i.e. content duplication and same URL can deliver different content as well. Both HTML and HTTP supports it and hence spamming is possible. For example, IMG support and ALT text within HTML means that image-enabled visitors to a URL will see different content to those visitors that, for various reasons, cannot view images. Whether the ability to deliver spam results in the delivery of spam is largely a matter of knowledge and ethics.

Agent based Spam: Agent based delivery is certainly not spam. But it is spam when the use of agent based delivery to identify search engine robots by user agent and deliver unique content to those robots. Since the content is only created for search engines and it is not visible for users, it is always spam.

IP Spam: Identification of search engine robots by IP name or address and delivery of unique content to those robots is considered to be spamming. As in agent based spam, though this technique is also spam when you deliver unique content only to search engines and not the users or visitors.

No Content: If sites do not contain any unique and relevant content to offer visitors, search engines can consider this spam. On that note, illegal content, duplicate content and sites consisting of large affiliate links are also considered to be of low value to search engine relevancy.

Meta Spam: Meta data is data that describes a resource. Meta spam is data that mis-describes a resource or describes a resource incoherently in order to manipulate a search engine's relevancy calculations.

Think again about the ALT tag. Not only does it provide content for a HTML resource, it also provides a description of an image resource. In this description capacity, to mis-describe an image or to describe it incoherently is Meta-spam. Perhaps the best examples of Meta spam at present can be found in the <head> section of HTML pages. Remember though, it's only spam if it is done purely for search engine relevancy gain.

Meta spam is more abstract than content spam. Rather than discuss it in abstract terms, we will take some examples from HTML and XML/RDF in order to illustrate Meta spam and where it differs from and crosses with content spam. Generally, anything within the section of an HTML document, or anything within the section that describes another resource, can be subverted to deliver Meta spam.

To make sure you are not spamming, you need to check a few things. First and foremost you should know whether your content is really valuable for your customers and visitors or not. Try and make websites according to user's tests and preferences. Always remember that, Internet users are information seekers and they want the latest content all the time. Think and build a site as if there are no search engines and avoid automated pages. Google and many other search engines do not index auto generated pages.

Inktomi does accept information pages into their free index and into their paid inclusion programs. For example, if a site contains PDF documents, and you create an information page in HTML with an abstract of each PDF document, that HTML page is acceptable to Inktomi.

How to report Search Engine Spam

Since spamming practices are constantly evolving, it is important to know what the major search engines specifically say about spam and what practices are definitely not allowed if you would like to rank in top-tier search engines. Plus, every ethical SEO should know how to properly report any spam that they see so the search engines can correct their algorithm accordingly.

How Google Defines Spam

As part of their Webmaster Guidelines, Google outlines techniques to use to help Google locate, index and rank your website. They also specifically state that the following techniques may lead them to remove your site from the Google index:

- Hidden text or hidden links.
- Cloaking or sneaky redirects.
- Automated queries to Google.
- Pages loaded with irrelevant keywords.
- Multiple pages, subdomains, or domains with substantially duplicate content.
- "Doorway" pages created just for search engines, or other "cookie cutter" approaches such as affiliate programs with little or no original content.

However you should keep in mind that these aren't the only practices that Google disapproves of. Generally, Google doesn't like their results manipulated by deceptive practices. Their recommendations for webmasters are:

Webmasters who spend their energies upholding the spirit of the basic principles listed above will provide a much better user experience and subsequently enjoy better ranking than those who spend their time looking for loopholes they can exploit.

To combat common search engine spam practices employed by rogue SEOs, Google has also posted a list of practices that should raise a red flag when you are looking for a search engine optimizer. According to Google, feel free to walk away from an SEO who:

- Owns shadow domains.
- Puts links to their other clients on doorway pages.
- Offers to sell keywords in the address bar.
- Doesn't distinguish between actual search results and ads that appear in search results.
- Guarantees ranking, but only on obscure, long keyword phrases you would get anyway.
- Operates with multiple aliases or falsified WHOIS info.
- Gets traffic from "fake" search engines, spyware, or scumware.
- Has had domains removed from Google's index or is not itself listed in Google.

How to Report Spam to Google

Google has a form that allows you to report spam to Google or you can e-mail Google at spamreport@google.com. Note: Google rarely manually removes websites from the engine. Instead, it tweaks the search engine algorithm and spam detection software to try and eliminate the spam technique that is clogging up the engines.

How Yahoo! Defines Spam

NOTE: AltaVista, All the Web and Inktomi are all owned by Yahoo!, so the Yahoo! Spam policies and Webmaster guidelines also apply to these search engines. According to Yahoo!, search engine spam is webpages "that are considered unwanted and appear in search results with the intent to deceive or attract clicks, with little regard for relevance or overall quality of the user experience." Officially, Yahoo! does not want to index sites with:

- Text that is hidden from the user.
- Misuse of competitor names/products.
- Pages that have substantially the same content as other pages.
- Multiple sites offering the same content.
- Pages in great quantity, which are automatically generated or of little value.
- Pages dedicated to redirecting the user to another page.
- Pages that give the search engine different content than what the end-user sees.
- Pages built primarily for search engines.
- Pages that use excessive pop-ups, interfering with user navigation.
- Pages that use methods to artificially inflate search engine ranking.
- Sites with numerous, unnecessary virtual hostnames.
- Excessive cross-linking with sites to inflate a site's apparent popularity.
- Pages that harm the accuracy, diversity, or relevance of search results.
- Pages that seem deceptive, fraudulent, or provide a poor user experience.

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How to Report Spam to Yahoo!

If you find a site that is spamming in Yahoo!, you can report the spam through a form on their website.

NOTE: In addition to reporting spam, you can also report copyright violations to Yahoo! To request that they remove any content published in violation of copyright protection, e-mail them at copyright@yahoo-inc.com.

How Teoma / Ask Jeeves Defines Spam

One of the most definitive sources of the Teoma / Ask Jeeves spam policy is on their Site Submission Terms page. Among the techniques that will keep you from being ranked are:

- Having deceptive text.
- Having duplicate content.
- Having Metadata that does not accurately describe the content of a web page.
- Including off-topic or excessive keywords.
- Fabricating pages to lead users to other web pages.
- Showing different content than the spidered pages to users.
- Using intentionally misleading links.
- Using self linking referencing patterns.
- Misusing affiliate or referral programs.

How to Report Spam to Teoma / Ask Jeeves

To report search engine spam to Ask Jeeves or Teoma, e-mail them at jeeves@askjeeves.com.

How MSN Defines Spam

MSN Search has recently added content guidelines to their website, explicitly stating that the MSNBot will see the following techniques as search engine spam:

- Stuffing pages with irrelevant keywords in order to increase a page's keyword density, including ALT tag stuffing.
- Using hidden text or links.
- Using techniques such as creating link farms to artificially increase the number of links to your page.

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Also, in an e–mail announcing the second preview release of the new MSN search, Microsoft mentioned cloaking and having duplicate content on multiple domains as things that will lead your site to being penalized or removed from the MSN Search index.

How to Report Spam to MSN

To report search engine spam to MSN, use the form on their website.
Have you seen any search engine spam lately? Instead of submitting spam reports to each engine, you can also simply submit a spam report through SEOToolSet™.

Even those who are spamming right now and think they are getting away with it, should keep one thing in mind, when competitors check out your site (and they do), they will see it is spam and they may choose to report you. Once you have been reported to a search engine, you are likely to be penalized in search engine results for using your spam technique.

1.3 Test Questions

1) State True or False.

    a) Yahoo is powered by Google
    b) Dmoz is a Crawler based search engine
    c) AOL displays search results from Yahoo!
    d) Yahoo! displays paid results from Overture (now part of Yahoo!)
    e) MSN is the biggest directory project
    f) Crawlers help to index pages in the search engines
    g) Yahoo! and Google display the same results for the same keyword
    h) Google was the first search engine ever introduced

2) Which of the following are parts of a search engine.

    a) Crawler, Index, Search engine software
    b) Spider, Content, Link Building
    c) Search engine Algorithm, Spider, Index
    d) Keyword, Keyword Generator, Scanner

3) Divide the following factors in On-page and Off-page.

    a) Keyword research
    b) Link popularity
    c) Meta tags
    d) Link building
    e) Anchor text optimization
    f) Content optimization

4) Search engine optimization consists of

    a) On-page optimization
    b) Off-page optimization
    c) Link building
    d) All of the above

5) Dmoz is another name for

    a) Open Directory Project
    b) Open Directory proposal
    c) Open Project of directories
    d) Free Directory Access

6) …………… is the best search engine in terms of number of pages indexed.

7) …………. And ……………… are the two types of search engines.

8) SEO is the process of improving …………………… So that it ranks ……………..in search engines for targeted ………………………

9) Crawlers can scan each and every element present in the page including flash, animations and graphics - State True or False.

10) Two main ways to optimize for search engines are

    a) On-page and Off-page optimization
    b) On-page and Link Building optimization
    c) On page and content writing optimization
    d) On page and flash optimization

Chapter 2
Search Engine Optimization

2.1 *On-Page Optimization Factors*

Search Engine Optimization consists of some factors which can be changed and modified by webmaster and some which can't. The first is called On-page factors and the last is Off-page factors.

In this chapter we are going to study 'On Page Factors'.

On page factors include:

- Keywords
- HTML tags
- Content
- CSS
- URL rewrites

As we know, on page factors are related directly to the content and structure of the web site. This normally consists of pages written in HTML but also applies to other document formats that are indexed by search engine such as .pdf or .doc. Along with all the aspects mentioned above, it may also include reducing redundant HTML codes produced by web page authoring tools and restructuring the site to produce better linked and focused page content.

Keywords

Keyword list is a list of significant and descriptive words that will be used to render the content to users in searches. The words should be similar to the theme of a web site and should be easily integrated in the web site content. Keywords are mental images linked to what lies in the heart of your customer. Keyword selection is based on consumer persuasive research.

The first step of any SEO campaign is 'Keyword Research' i.e. determining and short-listing the most relevant keywords to the product/service. To generate maximum ROI from online marketing campaign, careful selection and focused efforts on specific keywords is very

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important. Keyword selection mainly depends on the theme of website, your target audience, which search engine they are likely to use and finally what keywords they might use to find your product or service.

There are many tools available to generate keywords, known as keyword suggestion tools. The most commonly used keyword suggestion tools are Wordtracker, Yahoo and Google suggest. The keyword suggestion tool helps to choose relevant and popular terms related to your selected key terms.

Let's study them one by one.

1. Wordtracker: Wordtracker is the first and considered to be the best keyword suggestion tool in the world. Wordtracker was introduced in 1999 by Andy and Mike Mindel with a motive to assist SEO's finding multiple keywords with the help of a single keyword. Wordtracker helps web site owners and search engine marketers identify keywords and phrases that are relevant to their or their client's business and are most likely to be used as queries by search engine visitors.

Wordtracker offers a database of over 300 million search queries from which you can choose to build keyword lists for use in SEO and PPC. All search terms are compiled from the major Meta crawlers, Dogpile and Metacrawler. Wordtracker offers simple, precise, compressed, comprehensive, misspelling, lateral and thesaurus search. It gives a list of similar keywords that bear any relation with the search query with the search count. Also its competition search feature finds keywords that have few competing web pages in major search engines.

The most important advantage of using Wordtracker is that it gives you a list of the most popular terms used by visitors while searching for your products or services. This is invaluable insight to help you target your customers in your search engine optimization efforts and pay per click search engine advertising. It also offers competition analysis. It also helps you find keywords that have few competing web pages in major search engines. And the fewer pages you have to compete with, the easier it should be to get top rankings. Wordtracker even offers a misspelling search to help you find misspelled keywords. Sprinkle these into a web page to ensure your page comes up in search results.
URL: www.wordtracker.com

2. Yahoo: Yahoo's keyword research tool is basically for Pay-per-Click advertisement where bidding takes place for top rankings in SERP of major search engines and websites including Yahoo!, MSN, AltaVista, AllTheWeb, Dogpile, CNN and ESPN. Yahoo can make you reach over 80% of the active net population. It only charges if someone clicks on the text advert.

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This way marketers can get a guaranteed top rankings in search results of major search engines and websites. At present, Yahoo is delivering more than 215 million targeted leads each month.

The biggest benefit it offers is not only guaranteed top ranking but you only have to pay if a visitor clicks on the listing. Since the advertisements are placed contextually, marketer can receive a lot of targeted customers within days of advertising. Also its huge network is an added advantage. It's partnered with some big names like Yahoo, MSN, AltaVista, CNN etc. If the objective is lead generation in quick time then Yahoo could be the best way to achieve that.

It offers self service and paid service options. In self service, the marketer has to do all the work like selecting keywords, bidding and optimizing etc. Whereas in paid service Yahoo looks after the entire campaign to assure maximum ROI.
URL: http://advertising.yahoo.com/smallbusiness/ysm

3. Google Suggest: Google suggest is another tool for keyword research introduced by Google Inc. Though it is promoted by Google, this tool is not so popular among marketers. As you type in the search box, Google suggest guesses what you are typing and offers suggestions in real time. This is similar to Google's "Did you mean" feature that offers alternative spellings for your query after you search. The only difference is Google Suggest offers it in real time and can make your searches more convenient and efficient by keeping you from having to reformulate your queries. It also gives the precise traffic on the particular keyword by means of which marketers can get to know the popularity of the keyword/phrase.
URL: www.google.com/webhp?complete=1&hl=en

4. Digital Point Tool: This is a handy little tool will show you the results of your query from both Wordtracker and Yahoo for determining which phrases are searched most often. Enter a search phrase to see how often it's searched for, as well as get suggestions for alternate (but similar) keywords.

Once you know the keywords you want to target, you can use their keyword position tracking tool to monitor your keyword placement progress on major search engines.
URL: www.digitalpoint.com/tools/suggestion

Keyword Finalization:

Keyword finalizing strategy includes

- Keyword Phrase Popularity
- Keyword Competition Analysis
- Marketing Relevance

Keyword Phrase Popularity:

Visitors who are searching for information use many different keywords to fetch the information. Therefore it is important for SEO to select the most popular keywords amongst users. For example if some one wants to search for automobile industry, he/she will perform multiple searches with multiple keywords like automobile Germany, automobile industry, four wheelers, two wheelers etc.

But all these keywords do not attract huge traffic. That means all these keywords are not equally popular among the target audience. Only few of them are very popular and frequently used while searching for that particular content. Wrong search phrases may get you better search engine ranking but have no search request.

To research and shortlist these keywords is the primary task of an SEO and the first step is to come up with keywords about your web site and their popularity.

Keyword Competition Analysis:

Competition analysis is necessary at every stage in SEO campaigns right from keyword research stage. It gives insight to what strategies your competitor is adopting and why he is ranking high on those keywords. You can review the HTML code by selecting 'view source' option in the menu bar. This code includes the keywords, the title and the descriptions tags. The key onsite factors that must be considered in competition analysis are Title and Meta tags, Keyword density, content, special formats and positioning.

Marketing Relevance:

Providing the most beneficial information is the primary purpose behind creating a web site. But the ultimate goal is final sales! While selecting keywords for SEO campaigns, the basic criterion is to choose the most relevant keywords to the site. The belief behind doing it is to

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drive lots of traffic, which will ultimately convert into sales, although it's not as simple as it looks. Let's look at this example: For a site selling broadband services, 'telecom' is a relevant keyword. It gets quite a lot of searches, and you can drive huge amounts of visitors to your site but finally there is no way you will get any customer who have visited your site because of this keyword. People who type this keyword may be looking for telecom operators, telecom policies and things related to telecom and they are least interested in your broadband services. Hence selection of keywords from a marketing perspective is also very important.

USE OF HTML Tags:

HTML Tags:

As we know, spiders or crawlers can only read text. When spiders scan a website it actually scans the HTML code of that particular website. There are several HTML tags such as Title tag, Meta tags, Alt tags etc. which should be integrates with the keywords, in terms of greater optimization of the website.

Title Tags:

The Title tag plays a very crucial role in optimizing any web site. Title tag is an HTML code that shows the words that appear in the title bar at the top of the browser. The Title tag is generally the first element of the web site. After that come the Meta tags and Header tags. Title tags contain the theme of the website and hence search engines give substantial importance to this tag. Title tags are the first impression of the web site for crawlers and all the major search engines evaluate the relevance of the website on the basis of the keywords present in the Title tag. This tag is also displayed on the SERP and results contain the text included in Title tag.

Title Tag holds significant weight and must be created carefully to ensure that they hold maximum SEO effectiveness and they appeal to the searchers. Since the Title tag plays a vital role in determining your site's ranking in the SERP, you need to pay a lot of attention to the words and the order in which they appear. You need to develop a crisply worded Title tag that includes your most relevant keyword phrases and performs the function of announcing the summary of your web page's content.

The words encoded in the Title tag do not appear anywhere else on the web page. For example if the web site is about SEO, then the appropriate Title tag would be "Search engine

optimization: HTML tags optimization" etc. Title tag - first element of the website is generally followed by the Meta Description tag and Meta Keyword tag. A Title tag code is described as bellow: (in HTML)

<Head>
<Title> Search Engine Optimization: HTML tags optimization </Title>
</Head>

Search Engine crawlers consider this tag as the most important element. Since the Title tag communicates the theme of the webpage to the human visitors, search engines believe that the information entered must be true. Though Title tag is not a Meta tag, it's the most important tag amongst all HTML tags and a well described tag increases the relevance significantly. All major search engines use the title tag to evaluate the relevance of a website.

As stated earlier, the Title tag is also displayed on the SERP which is the same text that explains the website in brief. The Title tag is also used as the text when you 'bookmark' a page or add a certain web page to your 'favorites' list in your browser.

Though there are many views and opinions about on-page factors and its importance in SEO, most experts agree that the Title tag is significant in any SEO campaign. Perfect placement of keywords or key phrases can make a significant change in rankings and keywords in a Title tag are given highest weight.

Using the same keywords throughout the web page is very important for SEO. The keyword placement in Title tag should be done in such a way that the keyword or key phrases should appear in the entire content of the site. You should use the same keywords not just in your Title tag, but also in your page content and the Meta Description tag of your web page. If keywords in Title tag are different than that of a web page, they have no use at all. If the keywords are not matching then the weight of the keywords in the title tag gets diluted.

Not just placement but the sequence of placement is also very important from an SEO point of view. The most important keyword should appear at the beginning of the tag, then the secondary keywords and then least important keywords. If you follow this kind of placement, it will certainly create greater impact in ranking.

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Generally search engines read about 80-90 characters, therefore the Title tag should not be longer then this. In addition keyword density should be kept in mind while working on the Title tag because it has to be relevant to the 'webpage' rather than 'website'.

Since each page contains different information, try to vary the keywords in the Title tag accordingly. There is no algorithm for considering plural form and singular form and search engines like Google think in two different terms i.e. according to Google 'apple' and 'apples' are two different terms and it's advisable to use both plural and singular forms of keywords but they are not case sensitive; hence we can use any appropriate case (Upper case or Lower case).

Ideally it should read like a phrase that makes some grammatical sense, not just a collection of keywords. This is all the more important as the Title tag usually appears as the text when you 'bookmark' or add a page to your 'favorites' list and it should make sense when a person reads it later. For instance, if you want to include the keywords Home Loans, Fast clearance, No credit check in your Title tag, you could write:

Home Loans: fast clearance with no credit check

Since internet visitors are looking for information, it's advisable to put some informative summary rather than a company/product name. If it's necessary to include the company name then place it at the end.

The Title tag consists of a summary of the webpage content, it should read like a crisply worded sales pitch that is enticing enough to make the users click on your link when it is displayed in SERP. This is the reason it should include your most important keyword phrases or search terms, the sequencing of the keywords should make logical sense and each page of your website should have different and customized Title tag relevant to the context of that page.

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Meta Description Tags:

The Meta Description Tag is part of the HTML code that allows you to give a short and concise summary of your web page content. The words placed in this Meta tag, are often used in the Search Engines result pages, just below the Title tag as a brief description of your page.

Some Search Engines prefer to ignore your Meta Description tag and build the description summary on the basis of the search term for the SERP on the fly. They usually pick up parts of the text on your page wherever the search terms appear. The only exceptions are the Flash, Frame or All Image sites that have no content, and some high importance websites, where the search term is not found in the text. In such case, Google picks up your entire Meta Description Tag and displays it.
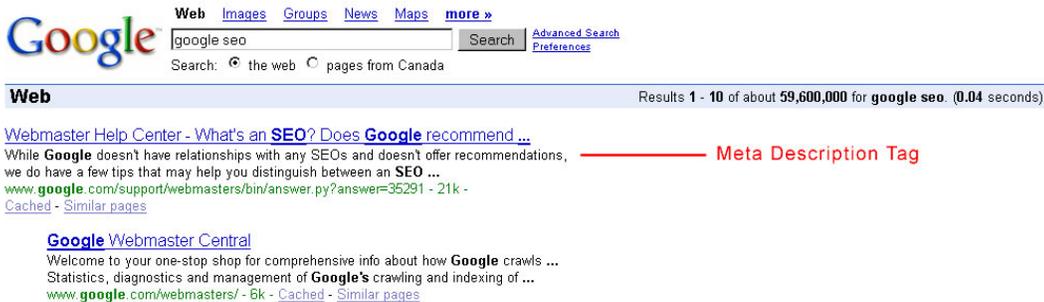
This is the way the Meta Description tag appears in your site's HTML code:

<Head>
<Meta name="description" content="Meta Tag Optimization: Title Tag Optimization and Meta Description Tag Optimization. Tips on how to optimize your most important Tags.">
</Head>

Importance of the Meta Description Tags

Search Engines don't give very high prominence to the Meta Description tag and may generate a description on the fly while listing your web page in SERP. However, in some Search Engines, a good Meta Description tag might help a page to rank higher for your targeted search terms. This holds true for Flash, Frame or All Image sites that have no content as well as some high importance websites, where the search term is not found in the text. In such cases, some search engines pick up the exact Meta Description tag and display it in its SERP, just below the Title tag. Hence, it is important to write a crisp and enticing Description tag that includes your important keyword phrases and manages to interest your user.

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Working with Meta Description Tags

Keyword Phrases and Meta Description Tags:

Include your most relevant and important keyword phrases in your page's Meta Description tag. As in the case of a Title tag, focus on the same keyword phrases as you used in your page's Title tag and body text. Fewer and highly targeted search phrases can boost your web page's relevance in the Search Engines results.

The Meta Description tag of your web page should not read like a collection of keywords, but should be as an informative and interesting summary of your web page.

Dos and Don'ts of good Meta Description Tags:

1. Excessive keyword repetition should be avoided. Instead, pay attention to the sequence in which your keywords appear. The most important terms should be placed in the beginning.

2. Make sure each page on your web site has a different and a unique Meta Description Tag using the keyword phrases that are relevant to that web page.

3. A Meta Description Tag of 25-30 words should do fine.

4. The most important keyword phrases should ideally be placed at the beginning of your Meta Description Tag, which increases your chances of better Search Engine Rankings.

The Meta Keywords Tag:

Meta keyword tags are comparatively less important than other Meta tags. SEO's add up some extra information in Meta Keyword tags to make the site more search engine friendly but most crawlers do not consider this tag.

Meta Keyword tag is useful in a sense of providing support to the keywords and content; in a nutshell, they are support tags to other HTML tags as well as content of the page. For example, if the site is about SEO, and search engine optimization is your keyword, then mentioning 'internet marketing' in Keyword tag might help boost the page a bit higher for those words.

Remember, if you don't use the words 'internet marketing' on the page at all, then just adding them to the Meta keywords tag is extremely unlikely to help the page do well for this term. The text in the Meta Keywords tag, for the few crawlers that support it, works in conjunction with the text in your body copy.

The Meta Keyword tag is also sometimes useful as a way to help your page come up for synonyms or unusual words that don't appear on the page itself. For instance, let's say you had a page all about 'Google Features' and you never actually mention the word "algorithm" on this page. By having the word in your Meta Keywords tag, you may help increase the odds of coming up if someone searched for 'Google features and algorithm'. Of course you would increase the odds if you just used the word 'algorithm' in the body copy of the page itself.

Another example would be if say you have a page about horseback riding, and you've written your page using "horseback" as a single word. You realize that some people may instead search for "horse back riding" with "horse back" in their searches being two separate words. If you listed these words separately in your Meta Keywords tag, then for the few crawlers that support it, your page might rank better for "horse back" riding. Sadly, the best way to ensure this would be to write your pages using both "horseback riding" and "horse back riding" in the text -- or perhaps on some of your pages, use the single word version and on others, the two word version.

Far too many people, new to search engine optimization, obsess with the Meta Keywords tag. Remember few crawlers support it. For those who do, it MIGHT help improve the ranking of your page. It may also very well do nothing for your page at all. In fact, repeat a particular word too often in a Meta Keywords tag and you could actually harm your page's chances of ranking well. Because of this, it is strongly advisable that those new to search engine optimization not even worry about the tag at all.

Even those who are experienced in search engine optimization may decide it is no longer worth using the tags. Search Engine Watch doesn't. Any Meta Keywords tags you find in the site were written in the past, when the Keywords tag was more important. There's no harm in leaving up existing tags you may have written, but going forward, writing new tags probably isn't worth your trouble.

```
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Stamp Collecting World</TITLE>
<META name="description" content="Everything you wanted to know
about stamps, from prices to history.">
<META name="keywords" content="stamps, stamp collecting,
stamp history, prices, stamps for sale">
</HEAD>
```

Meta Robots Tag:

One other Meta tag worth mentioning is the robots tag. This lets you specify if a particular page should NOT be indexed by a search engine. To keep spiders out, simply add this text between your head tags on each page you don't want indexed. The format is shown below.

```
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Page I Don't Want In Search Engines</TITLE>
<META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX">
</HEAD>
```

You do NOT need to use variations of the Meta robots tag to help your pages get indexed as they are unnecessary. By default, a crawler will try to index all your web pages and will try to follow links from one page to another.

Most major search engines support the Meta robots tag. However, the robots.txt convention of blocking indexing is more efficient, as you don't need to add tags to each and every page. If you use a robots.txt file to block indexing, there is no need in using Meta robots tags. For more information please visit:
URL: www.robotstxt.org/wc/robots.html

Other Meta Tags:

There are many other Meta tags that exist beyond those explored in this article. For example "author", "channel", "date" etc. These mean nothing to web-wide crawlers such as Google. They are specifically for an internal search engine used by a particular website to index its own content.

There are also "Dublin Core" Meta tags. The intent is that these can be used for both "internal" search engines and web-wide ones. However, no major web-wide search engine supports these tags.

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How about the Meta revisit tag? This tag is not recognized by the major search engines as a method of telling them how often to automatically return. They have never supported it.

In Conclusion:

Overall, just remember this. Of all the Meta tags you may see out there:

Meta Robots: This tag enjoys full support, but you only need it if you DO NOT want your pages indexed.

Meta Description: This tag enjoys much support, and it is well worth using.

Meta Keywords: This tag is only supported by some major crawlers and probably isn't worth the time to implement.

Meta Everything Else: Any other Meta tag you see is ignored by the major crawlers, though they may be used by specialized search engines.

Alt Tags:

"Alt Tag" is defined as the alternative text that the browser displays when the surfer does not want to or cannot see the pictures present in a web page.

For years, search engine optimizers have included their important keyword phrases in ALT text for images, feeling confident that many of the search engines considered the contents of ALT text when determining relevancy.

But some researches have found out that none of the major search engines now considers Alt Text when determining relevancy. According to research by expert SEO researcher Jerry West of Web Marketing Now, using ALT text for SEO purposes has not only diminished, but adversely affects the rankings in the SERPs [when used incorrectly].

According to a Google engineer, what you should do is create an ALT [text] that is relevant to the picture, so it gives the user a good experience, including the visually impaired. The ALT text is indexed, but it is down graded in the algorithm.

That means Search engine optimizers no longer need to use keyword phrases in the ALT text of images on their Web pages. However Alt Text can be used to describe the image. Who knows it might give you an advantage over others.

Anchor Text Optimization

As discussed earlier, anchor text is the visible hyperlinked text on the webpage. Anchor text links to a page where the same topic is discussed or it is related to that topic. That means anchor text takes visitor to another site or page where he/she can get some more insights about the topic he/she is reviewing. For example let's take the four lines written above.

As discussed earlier, **anchor text** is the visible hyperlinked text on the webpage. Anchor text links to a page where the same topic is discussed or it is related to that topic. That means anchor text takes visitor to another site or page where he/she can get some more insights about the topic he/she is reviewing.

Here in the above paragraph, 'anchor text' and 'webpage' are anchor texts. These words are hyperlinked to the pages which are related to anchor text and webpage respectively. Therefore these words are 'anchor text' in that paragraph.

Anchor texts are very important from SEO point of view. The page, which is linked to anchor text, is believed to be highly relevant for search engines. But not only the linked page but also the page containing anchor text gains some importance while ranking on SERP, provided it is using keywords.

The website containing different information on different pages can be optimized very easily by using anchor text. We will call it as 'anchor text optimization within the site'. Generally we use 'About Us', 'Click Here', 'More..' and such kind of words to link the desired page within the site. Instead of that, if we use the keywords there, it will certainly help the site to rank higher in SERP. So the game is all about linking appropriate keywords to right pages.

Anchor text optimization can be done while link building campaign also. Since presence of keywords in the links pointing to your site also has greater importance, we need optimize that text as well. So it is advisable to write keywords in the title and vary the description accordingly.

It is observed that anchor text is the deciding factor in ranking pages. The site will rank fair if you don't optimize anchor text. But it will rank much more higher, if we do anchor text optimization. Take the example of 'miserable failure' case. Biography of George Bush is linked with 'miserable failure' and still it is ranking number one for that keyword. It's all done without any on-page optimization but only on Anchor text optimization.

Comment Tag optimization

Comment tag is an html code that describes or documents content. The code is written in between <! -- -->. Comment tag is invisible to the user and can only be seen in the code itself. Browser doesn't display any code within comment tag. However search engine indexes all text within comment tag. You can use comments to explain your code, which can help you when you edit the source code at a later date.
Generally comment tag is written as,

<!—this is comment tag -->

Since search engines indexes the text in comment tag, we can use keywords and key phrases in comment tag. This will increase the keyword density and ultimately page can rank higher than others.

Comment tag can be used anywhere in the document right from title, description and head tag. It is generally used when it is not possible to place keywords in these tags. For example is the site is about HTML and keywords are HTML, comment tag, SEO, and Web Designing. The page is about 'Comment tag' and title is 'HTML tags'. In this case we can use comment tag <! -- It is about Comment tag -->. Here this text will not be displayed to the use but search engines can read this text and certainly believe that the content is more relative. We can also use it before the starting of important content like before flash content, programming in JavaScript, ASP or Applet, images and for those sections we need to identify for easy access.

But using comment tag to optimize the website is becoming outdated practice. Many of the search engines have changed their algorithms and they are not ranking pages based on use of keywords in comment tags. Inktomi is the only search engine that still considers comment tags to boost search engine rankings of the web site. The main reason behind changing algorithm is its misuse. Often inserting a comment tag inside a font tag will not make it a comment tag anymore. It will get treated as any other text in the document.

Content

The Importance of Content

Content is what makes the website good or bad and content is the major factor which attracts more and more visitors to the site. Search engines also give very high importance to the sites, which are full of relative content. Considering the main reason behind the website i.e. information, search engines emphasis more on content than anything else.

But just writing some simple text is not enough to rank the page in the search engine. There are several factors on which a search engine evaluates the content and ranks the site. The main aspect any search engine looks in the content is its benefit to the visitor. Also original and well written content is highly appreciated by the search engine. This is because, search engines believes that users are always looking for new and original content. Submitting articles is also becoming popular because of its ability to get linked o other sites. The quality of the content also plays a vital role in search engine rankings.

Lets look what advantage the well written and original content provide! Before writing any content, one thing should be kept in mind that content is the backbone of the site. The main purpose of creating a website is to provide all the possible information as deeply as possible. Therefore before writing the content you should know what exactly your target audience is and what their interests are.

Original & Well-Written Content:

1. What does your audience want to find?
2. Will you have to do additional research?
3. Are you an expert writer or do you have one on staff?

What Does Your Audience Want To Find?

Assessing your potential visitors' want does not require a crystal ball. If you have completed and spent quality hours on Step One of this series, fully researching your keywords, you are already well on your way. Delving into those keywords you will often find hints that will push you in the right direction.

If you have a site that provides information on skin problems such as "acne" and you found a number of people searching for "acne treatment" and "natural acne treatment" and have thus

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chosen these as your targeted keyword phrases you already understand your visitors current situation and more importantly, their needs. Similarly, if you are a Real Estate Agent and have chosen "Los Angeles real estate" as your phrase you know more than simply characters strung together and dropped into a search box. You know that you are dealing with people wishing to purchase or sell a home in Los Angeles. In both scenarios you know what your visitors want and, assuming you are already successful in your industry, you know what you have to do to convert that desire into a client.

What has to be done is to create solid, compelling content that will both grab your visitor's attention and at the same time, make them want what you have to offer. This is not the same as selling to them when you have the opportunity to speak face-to-face. You are working without the benefit of watching their expressions, speaking to them about their objections or even understanding whether they are looking for information for a friend or if it is they themselves who require your services.

This leaves you with a lot of room for content. In the online environment you have to deal with every question before they ask it, and make every person feel that you can help them even though you've never met.

What does your audience want to find? They want to find a solution to their problem. How do you provide that? You do that by supplying them answers to the questions they don't have the opportunity to ask and may not want to give you their email address to find out. FAQ pages are good but often used as sales pages, which is fine as long as you are still providing good content which your visitor is not reading as "sales" but rather "solutions". Perhaps create pages of replies to emails you have received. Perhaps place a related "fact of the day" on your homepage with a link to an archive of facts related to your industry, product and/or business. You might even want to add a blog to your site.

Regardless, give your visitor the answers they're looking for and keep this information updated as you get new information and you will stand a much better chance of keeping that person surfing through your website. The longer you can keep them on your site, the greater the chance that you will build trust, and once you've got that you can help them with a solution to their problem.

Do you need to do additional research?

No matter how much you know there is always more out there and your visitors are probably well aware of that. If you fail to address all their questions, your visitors may very well leave

your site in search of the answer. Once they've left your site it is the other webmasters who now have the opportunity to present the benefits of their products or services.

Find all the information that you can and make sure that you include as much as possible on your site. The additional benefit in doing this is that constant new information on your website will not only keep visitors coming back to find new information but the search engines spiders too. If your site changes often the spiders will pick up on this and will visit you more often. While this by itself will not improve your rankings it does give you an advantage. The more often search engine spiders visit your website the faster changes you make will be picked up. The faster these changes are picked up the quicker you will be able to react to drops in rankings. If you know the spiders visit your site every second day and you drop from #8 to #12 you know that with proper tweaking to your content you may be able to recover that loss in as little as two days.

Use professional writers:

When you need a doctor do you read a book entitled "Heart Surgery For Dummies" and buy yourself a very sharp knife. Of course you don't and while your website may not be quite as important as your heart, it is how your company is being perceived online. This perception can be the make-or-break of all your online marketing efforts.

If you are committed to attaining high rankings, to making money online and/or promoting your business through your website, shouldn't you also be committed to insuring that your conversions are maximized. High search engine positioning is important but so too is converting those visitors once they get to your site. You may be an expert in your field but if that expertise isn't getting communicated effectively, and you don't have a writer on staff, be certain to at least consider hiring one to make sure that your website is conveying the message you want in verbiage that your visitors will understand. Assuming you choose your writer well, you will not only have a well-written site but you will also gain the advantage of having an outsider, who is more likely to write for people who aren't experts, creating your content.

If you feel that you are qualified to write your own content then be sure to have it proofread by someone from the outside. Find someone from within your target market and demographic, and have them go through your content giving suggestions and criticism. Every change they recommend is earning you extra money. Whether you implement the changes or not you are learning something new about what people will want and expect to see on your site.

With Articles Come Links

Writing content is not just an exercise for your own website. We all know that inbound links to your site help rankings. Additionally, if those links can be ones that provide genuine targeted traffic you're doing very well.

There are a number of methods for driving traffic to your site with paid advertising, PPC, etc. however one of the most cost-effective methods is to publish articles. Article writing is no simple task however the rewards can be enormous. Articles serve two great purposes:

1. **Increased Link Popularity** – When you write an article and submit it to other websites to post, they will generally link to your website from the page the article is on. Here's a completely legitimate, relevant, and quality link to your site.
2. **Exposure & Credibility** – The added credibility that article writing lends to your business coupled with the added benefit of the visitors who come to your site directly from your article are invaluable.

When it comes to article writing there is little in the way of more effective advertising. You will have to find sources to publish those articles on, but once you've done this time-consuming task you can reuse the same list for future articles. Get those articles on a number of quality resource sites and enjoy watching your stats and your rankings improve.

With Quality Content Comes Even More Links

Yet another benefit that derives from having a website with great content and writing articles is that, with time, your website itself will become a resource. If you provide great information that other people will find useful people will link to it naturally. With so much emphasis in recent times on reciprocal linking some might think this is the only way to get links at all. Believe it or not there are still webmasters out there who will link to sites for no other reason than they feel their visitors will be interested in its content.

Build a good site with quality content, keep it easily navigated and create sections for specific areas (articles for example) and you will find that people will link to your site and may even link to specific articles or your articles index. Perhaps then your articles index is a good page to target an additional keyword phrase.

Content Optimization

There are aspects of the optimization process that gain and lose importance. Content optimization is no exception to this. Through the many algorithm changes that take place each year, the weight given to the content on your pages rises and falls. Currently incoming links appear to supply greater advantage than well-written and optimized content.

While currently having a bunch of incoming links from high Page Rank sites will do well for you on Google you must consider what will happen to your rankings when the weight given to incoming links drops, or how your website fares on search engines other than Google that don't place the same emphasis on incoming links.

While there are many characteristics of your content that are in the algorithmic calculations, there are a few that consistently hold relatively high priority. These are:

1. Heading Tags
2. Special Text (bold, colored, etc.)
3. Inline Text Links or Anchor text
4. Keyword Density

Heading Tags

The heading tag is code used to specify to the visitor and to the search engines what the topic is of your page and/or subsections of it. You have 6 predefined heading tags to work with ranging from <H1> to <H6>.

By default these tags appear larger than standard text in a browser and are bold. These aspects can be adjusted using the font tags or by using Cascading Style Sheets (CSS).

Due to their abuse by unethical webmasters and SEO's, the weight given to heading tags is not what it could be however the content between these tags is given increased weight over standard text. There are rules to follow with the use of heading tags that must be adhered to. If you use heading tags irresponsibly you run the risk of having your website penalized for spam even though the abuse may be unintentional.

When using your heading tags, try to follow these rules:

- Never use the same tag twice on a single page
- Try to be concise with your wording
- Use heading tags only when appropriate. If bold text will do then go that route
- Don't use CSS to mask heading tags

Never use the same tag twice on a single page. While the <H1> tags holds the greatest weight of the entire heading tags, its purpose is to act as the primary heading of the page. If you use it twice you are obviously not using it to define the main topic of the page. If you need to use another heading tag use the <H2> tag. After that the <H3> tag and so on. Generally try never to use more than 2 heading tags on a page.

Try to be concise with your wording. If you have a 2 keyword phrase that you are trying to target and you make a heading that is10 words long then your keyword phrase only makes up about 20% of the total verbiage. If you have a 4-word heading on the other hand you would then have a 50% density and increased priority given to the keyword phrase you are targeting.

Use heading tags only when appropriate. If bold text will do then go that route. If overused the weight of the tags themselves are reduced with decreasing content and "priority" being given to different phrases at various points in the content. If you have so much great content that you feel you need to use many heading tags you should consider dividing the content up into multiple pages, each with its own tag and keyword target possibilities. For the most part, rather than using additional heading tags, bolding the content will suffice. The sizing will be kept the same as your usual text and it will stand out to the reader as part of the text but with added importance.

Don't use CSS to mask heading tags. Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) serve many great functions. They can be used to define how a site functions, looks and feels however they can also be used to mislead search engines and visitors alike. Each tag has a default look and feel. It is fine to use CSS to adjust this somewhat to fit how you want your site to look. However one should not adjust the look and feel to mislead search engines. It is a simple enough task to define in CSS that your heading should appear as regular text. Some unethical SEO's will also then place their style sheet in a folder that is hidden from the search engine spiders. This is secure enough until your competitors look at the cached copy of your page (and they undoubtedly will at some point) see that you have hidden heading tags and report you to the search engines as spamming. It's an unnecessary risk that you need not take. Use your headings properly and you'll do just fine.

Special Text (Optimization using Bold, Italics, Underlines etc.)

When a search engine is scanning page its looking for several factors to determine what is important and what is not. In particular, it looks for text tags such as bold, underline, italics etc to help rank the page.

The reason behind it is quite simple! As the text is formatted specially, search engines think that it is important for users. And hence it is important for Search Engines as well.

"Special text" is any content on your page that is set to stand out from the rest. This includes bold, underlined, colored, highlighted, sizing and italic. This text is given weight higher than standard content and rightfully so. Bold text, for example, is generally used to define sub-headings or to pull content out on a page to insure the visitor reads it. The same can be said for the other "special text" definitions.

Search engines have thus been programmed to read this as more important than the rest of the content and will give it increased weight. For example, on the homepage we begin the content in the bold text. This serves two purposes. The first is to draw the eye to these words and further reinforce the "brand". The second purpose is to add weight to the "Search Engine Positioning" portion of the name. It effectively does both.

Reread your content and, if appropriate for both visitors and search engines, use special text when it will help draw the eye to important information and also add weight to your keywords. This does not mean that you should bold every instance of your targeted keywords nor does it mean that you should avoid using special text when it does not involve your keywords. Common sense and a reasonable grasp of sales and marketing techniques should be your guide in establishing what should and should not be drawn out with "special text".

Inline Text Links (Anchor Text)

Inline text links are links added right into text in the verbiage of your content. For example I can link some text of this article to other articles for reference.

Like special text this serves two purposes. The first is to give the reader a quick and easy way to find the information you are referring to. The second purpose of this technique is to give added weight to this phrase for the page on which the link is located and also to give weight to the target page.

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While this point is debatable, there is a relatively commonly held belief that inline text links are given more weight than a text link which stands alone. If we were to think like a search engine this makes sense. If the link occurs within the content area then chances are it is highly relevant to the content itself and the link should be counted with more strength than a link placed in a footer simply to get a spider through the site.

Like "special text" this should only be employed if it helps the visitor navigate your site. An additional benefit to inline text links is that you can help direct your visitors to the pages you want them on. Rather than simply relying on visitors to use your navigation bar as you are hoping they will, with inline text links you can link to the internal pages you are hoping they will get to such as your services page, or product details.

Keyword Density

"Keyword density" is the percentage of your total content that is made up of your targeted keywords. There is much debate in forums, SEO chat rooms and the like as to what the "optimal" keyword density might be. Estimates seem to range from 3% to 10%.

Knowing that search engines operate on mathematical formulas implies that this aspect of your website must have some certain number associated with it that will give your content the greatest chance of success.
With this in mind there are three points that you should consider:

1. Since the algorithm is very complex and hard to explore, you will never know 100% what this certain number is.
2. The optimal keyword density algorithm change regularly. Therefore even if you know the stats today, there is no guarantee that the same number will give the same ranking after some time. Therefore rather than running after optimal keyword density its better to keep it in between 3% to 7%.
3. The optimal keyword density for one search engine is not the same as it is for another. Chasing the density of one may very well ruin your efforts on another.

So what can you do? Your best bet is to simply place your targeted keyword phrase in your content as often as possible while keeping the content easily readable by a live visitor. Your goal here is not to sell to search engines; it is to sell to people. If you are simply aware of the phrase that you are targeting while you write your content then chances are you will attain a keyword density somewhere between 3 and 5%. Stay in this range and, provided that the other

aspects of the optimization process are in place, you will rank well across many of the search engines.

Also remember when you're looking over your page that when you're reading it the targeted phrase may seem to stand out as it's used more than any other phrase on the page and may even seem like it's a bit too much. Unless you've obviously overdone it (approached the 10% rather than 5% end of the spectrum) it's alright for this phrase to stand out.

This is the phrase that the searcher was searching for. When they see it on the page it will be a reminder to them what they are looking for and seeing it a few times will reinforce that you can help them find the information they need to make the right decision.

In the search engine marketing literature, keyword density is defined as

$$KD = \frac{tf_{i,j}}{l_i}$$

Where $tf_{i,j}$ is the number of times term i appears in document j and l is the total number of terms in the document. Equation 1 is a legacy idea found intermingled in the old literature on readability theory, where word frequency ratios are calculated for passages and text windows - phrases, sentences, paragraphs or entire documents - and combined with other readability tests.

2.2 *Off-page Optimization factors*

Off-page optimization is the term used for the actions taken off the actual web page that positively affect the performance of the page and the site. This includes everything from links from other sites, exchanges of links and the actions taken offline that affect performance of the web site.

Due to the ease with which on-page factors can be manipulated search engines now place more weight on so called off-page factors. Google made this form of ranking famous with its patented PageRank algorithm but researchers discussed using ideas such as link anchor text as far back as 1994. Off-page criteria are obtained from sources other than the website.

Probably the most important of these criteria are the quantity of inbound-links using anchor text containing your target keywords. These should come from pages covering similar topics, preferably from large, long established authority sites. Link popularity is a score that adds up the total number of links you have pointed to your site over various search engines. Search engines heavily weigh how many links there are pointing to your site. Search engines believes that more the links more useful the site for visitors. The inbound links are like recommendation to view your site. However, all links aren't equal in terms of quality. The more links you have the better. Evaluating a links importance is quite complex and is determined on various factors. Some of them include content relation, page rank and page traffic.

Content Relation: Any link from content rich site is most valuable in terms of quality. Of course the content should be related to the topic of your page/site. Any website that operates the same target audience is very valuable. For example if you are 'SEO' company, then the links from SEO related sites will certainly create more value for your rankings.

Page Rank: Google assigns to every web page in its index a number somewhere between 0 to 10. In the case of Google the higher the PageRank the better! All other things being equal, a link from a PR6 site is worth around eight to ten times that of a PR5 site. But determining a links value solely on page rank is unwise as there are lots of PR0 pages that might have lots of targeted traffic. Remember that Google uses all inbound-links in its ranking process, not just those shown by the 'back links' option of the Google toolbar. If the page has the luxury of many inbound-links then mixing target keywords to cover different queries is a good idea. Since Yahoo! acquired Overture and dumped the Google index it has published an index called WebRank. This is based on the number of incoming links to a site. It would seem likely that this is also a factor in their ranking process.

Page Traffic: Page traffic refers to how many potential buyers may come across a page on the web that you want to target.

Some search engines also rank sites based on usage information. This is called Click Density and was pioneered by the DirectHit engine. The search engine monitors the results pages to see which links users actually follow. This is a kind of quality control although is affected by on-page factors such as the Description META tag and other summary information the search engine uses to describe the page.

Off page factors have evolved to form complex parts of search engines' algorithms, but some of the most important factors include:

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1. Building link popularity
2. Google Page Rank
3. Measuring link popularity
4. Anchor text optimization.

Let's study all these factors one by one.

Building link popularity

Link popularity is the number of external links that links to your site. Here quantity is the only concern and not quality. We will look into the quality later.

Link building requires dedication and consistent effort. It is the most difficult, time-consuming and important task an SEO performs to get a website ranked well. Certain strategies are well known to SEO's, while others are in the realm of the experts or forward-thinkers who puzzle them out. We have attempted to list here many of the link building tactics used by the SEO community.

Content Development: The best way to build long term link popularity is to offer good content and features that provide real value to your audience. As people discover your web site and realize its benefit the likelihood of them linking to your web site naturally increases. Link importance helps filter out the spammers who set up dozens of free sites and then link their bogus sites to the main Web site. Spamming is such a problem that some search engines don't count free Web sites at all in their link popularity scores.

Directories: There are several critical targets if you want to build up your link popularity without appearing to be a spammer. The most important is good links for Yahoo! and Dmoz directory. These are human compiled and very well reputed online directories. The listing in these directories is very important provided that they are listed in correct category with a good description. Links from these two websites are seen as validating you are the real thing.

There are several other directories than Yahoo! and Dmoz. Many directories are industry specific or topic specific. So to have a link from such topic specific directory also matters a lot. For example, if you have a news and entertainment site then linked to the site focused on news and entertainment is important.

Many times other people are not aware about your site. Hence it becomes very difficult to get linked to niche sites. The best solution for this problem is to send a request to link to your site. You must explain what your site is all about and the benefit their users will get from your site. Also make sure that the message is personalized. Another part of the web that helps build your link popularity is resource sites. Resource sites are lists of links that people put up on their own. Though it sounds like directories there are many differences between directories and resource pages. Resource pages are for a specific topic while directories contain many sub-topics. These pages are often spread amongst friends and readers who find good information available from the resource. The visitors to these pages are highly targeted and are always in search for better information. In order to reach this audience, a good PR campaign and press releases can ensure that these individuals know you exist and have a link to your website that they can easily include.

One more way to get links is from your partners. They could be your suppliers or vendors for your business. Since you already have established a relationship with these people, there are more chances that you will receive link from them. These websites help validate your place online and also establish you within a community of websites online. The major advantage of this linking is increase in reliability. If you are linked within your community search engines believe that you are more reliable and community trusts you. Hence more the visibility among your community, more the chances that you will rank better.

Internal link building is as important as external one. Search engines scan the site following your links. Hence your link structure should be solid and easily followed by search engines. The easier you make it on your audience to find good information, the more likely they are to link to it.

Forum participation: The final way you can work to increase your link popularity is to participate in newsletters and online forums that relate to your website. Generating links through forums is often considered spam, but forums are valuable tools for link builders as long as the proper methods are employed. You don't want to just jump in and give a plug for your URL. You must participate in the discussion as an expert or authority who gives good advice. When you sign your name at the bottom of your posting, be sure to include a signature that includes a link to your website. If these forums and newsletters are archived and remain online, search engines continue to see them and the links they contain. The forum signature of a member is certainly a fair place to promote your site, and while doing so may not provide a worthy backlink in the search engines' eyes, it does offer visitors on the forum a chance to see your site. In SEO forums, people constantly plug their new directories, tools, articles, etc. These are all appropriate as long as they are subtle, relevant and not overdone.

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Blogging and Comments: Web log is another very effective way of getting backlinks. Create a personal blog on your site and you can more easily make notes or comments at other sites that link back to you. But remember that this is not for your product promotion or advertisement. If you do so it will be considered as spamming. Try to put as much information as possible on the blog. It will certainly push up your reputation in the market. The well researched and well written blog is always appreciated. And these kinds of blogs can only generate links for the site. A well thought-out response to a relevant blog or article can bring not only search engines, but more importantly other readers of the blog to your site through the link. If your content proves interesting, you could build much more than just a single link through your comments.

Another important thing to remember is that your link in blog comments may not count at all in the search engines. Many blogs prevent access to these comments or don't provide direct, spiderable links for blog visitors. This, combined with the fact that these comments are buried at least 2-3 links deep from the main page means that you should keep your focus on the visitors you might generate, rather than the search engine optimization you might get.

However, you should still be as SE friendly as possible. If the subject matter deals directly with your keyword phrases, you're in fine shape, but if they are on related subjects, it can't hurt to use your keyword phrases once or twice in a longer comment/entry. You should also try to make your 'name' - which is typically the anchor text for your link contain at least one of your keyword phrases, but remember to keep it varied and never let it overtake the importance of getting visitors.

Unique Tools and Services: By offering specific, relevant free Internet tools/services at your site, you can generate naturally built links. It is recommended to find a tool or service that isn't currently offered or that you believe you can improve upon. For some industries, this will be much harder than others, but creativity is your best tool. Imagine what automated web service, list of resources or submission-type tool would best benefit you and then build it and offer it on your site.

The possibilities are endless, and there is little doubt that the web can automate and make easier hundreds of tasks in any industry. The key, after you have built your tool, is to promote it with industry leaders - send it to bloggers who discuss your subject matter, ask people to use and evaluate it on forums, etc. You can even try to promote it by writing an article about your findings, development or the simple existence of the tool and submitting it across the newswires.

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Automated link building program: This is very risky way to go for link popularity. It is found that search engines penalize for automated link building. But it follows the principle of risk and return. If you are willing to take the risk, the returns could be highly substantial. Well-built and well hidden link networks often bring higher rankings in a short amount of time. The key is to select a provider who will offer the following:

1. A vastly distributed network that is not interlinked and doesn't share any C-Block IP addresses.
2. Linking pages that contain some relevant content that has been well-linked through a sitemap system.
3. Pages that are as close to naturally-designed and built as possible.
4. A company that can speak at an expert level about SEO and the tactics they use to avoid detection - call them and talk to them first; their knowledge and competence should be instantly apparent.
5. Someone you trust and have researched thoroughly - I DO NOT recommend posting on forums about these companies, as you could damage your chances for success. Just ask for recommendations from trusted members of the SEO community.
6. Pages that link not only to your site(s) but to other relevant, related sites as well - even if they are your composition. That way, if you get penalized, at least your competition is suffering as well.

This is one of the riskiest strategies that can be pursued in link building and I recommend it only with extreme caution. You are breaking the search engine's printed rules by "intentionally manipulating the search results" and you should have a contingency plan in the event of disaster.

Natural link building: Although undoubtedly a difficult and time consuming method, as well as one of the more unreliable ones, natural link building is what powers most of the top sites on the Internet. This method involves developing the most useful, relevant content that provides the best resources, tools, services, prices, etc. in the industry. By offering the web community the best possible site, you can gain natural links through the power of having others on the web link to you.

Sadly, this tactic is somewhat usurped by the search engines, as newer sites often fair exceptionally poor in the search results, especially for popular terms. In order to have natural links, people must be exposed to your site. At one time natural link building was the very best method to get traffic and links, but in the current state of search and traffic, it is more of a boost that you use to help convert some of the webmasters & bloggers who might visit your site into link builders.

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Building valuable content is no easy task, and building an industry-leading resource is even more challenging. However, the long-term benefits can be spectacular, assuming you have the money and time to maintain your resource without proportional income. Remember to ask yourself what someone who comes to your site might want and try to provide the absolute best service/information in your industry in the cleanest, most usable site possible.

Press releases: Press releases are a very effective and popular tactic to get links to the site provided that it is a professionally written and keyword rich article. Generally articles consist of well placed keywords and a link to the sites that are the subject of the article. It grabs lots of attention and hence results with highly targeted traffic.

The article must be relative and should provide good value to visitor. It is generally recommended to hire content writer or journalist to write the article. Distribution sites are the only way to release these articles. There are many popular sites such as 'Prleap.com', 'Prweb.com', 'Free-press-release.com', 'pressworld.com' in which you can submit the article. These sites offer links, serve to a large variety of sites and provide enough flexibility to allow an SEO to perform well.

The distribution that is achieved will determine the value of the links and the article. It's also important to keep in mind that duplicate content penalties may hurt you - DO NOT re-publish the press release on your own site.

Article writing and Submission: Article writing and content development is considered to be the major on-page factor for SEO. But this is one of the various ways to get links to your sites as well. Many websites are designed around hosting the content of others and providing links back to them. These sites are known as 'third party article hosting' sites. These sites cover a wide range of coverage and accept articles on variety of topics.

Some of the major 3rd party sites are IdeaMarketers.com, Buzzle.com, ebooksnbytes.com, thewhir.com, amazines.com etc. There are many topic specific sites are also available on the Internet. You can get a high visibility and exposure on Internet after submitting articles to these sites. There are many more such sites available for article submission.

Anchor Text Optimization

Successful search engine optimization employs many factors. However, one of the most important factors is the anchor text of inbound links. Because Google, among other search engines, puts a significant amount of weight on the anchor text of inbound links, anchor text can be a decisive factor when going after top ranking on extremely competitive search terms.

Precisely how powerful is anchor text of inbound links? It is entirely possible to achieve top ranking for extremely competitive keywords without any hint of on-page-elements SEO.

Monster.com currently sits in the #1 spot for the search term Jobs. The word "jobs" does not even appear on that page in text form; the only occurrence is once in the form of ALT text.

Search Google for Computers. At this time, six of the top ten pages do not contain the word Computers in the page copy. They are there due solely to anchor text of inbound links.

Search Google for Profit. At this time, 7 of the top ten pages do not contain the word Profit in the page copy. They are there due solely to anchor text of inbound links.

Search Google for Promote. At this time, 5 of the top ten pages do not contain the word Promote in the page copy. They are there due solely to anchor text of inbound links.

Search Google for Advertise. At this time, 6 of the top ten pages do not contain the word Advertise in the page copy. They are there solely due to anchor text of inbound links.

Search Google for Click. At this time, 9 of the top ten pages do not contain the word Click in the page copy. They are there due solely to anchor text of inbound links.

Search Google for webhosting. At this time, four of the top ten pages do not contain the word webhosting in the page copy. They are there due solely to anchor text of inbound links.

Search Google for hits. At this time, the top three pages do not contain the word hits in the page copy. They are there due solely to anchor text of inbound links.

Do a search for exit. All of the sites on the first page are there due solely to anchor text of inbound links.

Same thing applies when you do a search for leave, for which Yahoo! is listed in the #1 spot. Yahoo is also #1 for the search term exit, due solely to the anchor text of hundreds of mature content sites.

Use: So how do you, as an SEO, utilize the power of anchor text? The easiest - most cost effective - way is to choose a descriptive name for your site, and by descriptively naming your folders and files.

Domains: We are currently analyzing data from market research into consumer behavior in regard to domain names. The completed analysis will be published in an article entitled Descriptive Domains for SEO. As a preview of things to come, let me say that preliminary data shows descriptive domains - keyword domains, that is - to benefit from a much higher CTR than non-descriptive domains.

File Naming: Looking through the traffic logs of websites we maintain, is a daily chore. Early detection of shifts in search engine ranking is a must in this business. One thing I've often noticed is search strings containing words that appear neither on the page, nor in anchor text of inbound links - except where the URL of the page has been used as anchor text. This is where we see the benefit of descriptive file naming.

Measuring link popularity

If you want to measure the "link popularity" of your Web site against similar ones in the same "industry" there is nothing better than the online Link Popularity Check tools by various companies. This free online facility allows you to input the URL of your Web site while providing you back with a precise report of the total number of inbound links as measured across all of the major search engines. You can compare your site with lots of personally selected competitors in addition to pre-selected list of the popular destinations on the Web.

Measuring link popularity is important to know before attempting to submit to search engines. Track down your referral links from by using search engines. This method will give you an idea of how "popular" a search engine believes your web site is to them. That's important for those search engines that rank sites in part by the site's link popularity. Some sites are Google, AOL Search, HotBot, IWon, MSN Search, LookSmart, Inktomi, Alta Vista, and Northern Light.

1. **AltaVista:** In order to find out the number of sites linking to the domain mysite.com in AltaVista, you would type in link: mysite.com in AltaVista's search box. If you wish to exclude links from pages within the mysite.com domain, you would type in link: mysite.com - URL: mysite.com.

If you want to find out how many sites are linking to a particular page (say mypage.html) in the mysite.com domain, you would type in link:mysite.com/mypage.html. Again, in order to exclude links from pages within the mysite.com domain, you would type in link:mysite.com/mypage.html - URL: mysite.com. Note that you should not type in the "www" or the "http://" prefixes.

2. **AOL:** AOL is a directory based engine. It takes its results from the Open Directory. Hence, the concept of link popularity is not very meaningful in AOL.

3. **Direct Hit:** There is no way you can find out the link popularity of your site in Direct Hit. This is because Direct Hit does not return the number of sites which match the search criterion.

4. **Excite:** There is no way you can find out the link popularity of your site in Excite. This is because Excite does not have a special command to measure the link popularity of your site.

5. **Fast** (www.alltheweb.com): In order to find out the number of web sites linking to the domain mysite.com in Fast, click on the Advanced Search link. In the "Word Filters" section of the Advanced Search page, select "Must Include" from the first combo box. In the text box besides the first combo box, type in mysite.com. In the combo box to the right of the text box, select "in the link name". If you want to exclude links from pages within the mysite.com domain, type in mysite.com in the "Exclude" text box in the "Domain Filters" section. Then, click on the "FAST Search" button.

In order to find the number of links to mypage.html in the mysite.com domain, you would type in mysite.com/mypage.html in the text box besides the first combo box. Again, in order to exclude links from within the mysite.com domain, type in mysite.com in the "Exclude" text box. Note that you should not type in the "www" or the "http://" prefixes.

6. **Google:** In order to find out the number of sites linking to mysite.com in Google, you would type in link: mysite.com.

If you want to find out how many sites are linking to the page mypage.html in the mysite.com domain, you would type in link:mysite.com/mypage.html.

However, there is no way you can exclude links from pages within the mysite.com domain from being counted.

Google considers www.mysite.com to be different from mysite.com. This means that typing in link: mysite.com will not include the links to www.mysite.com. If you want to find out the number of links to www.mysite.com, you have to type in link: www.mysite.com. And typing in link: www.mysite.com will not include the links to mysite.com either.

This is in contrast to AltaVista which includes links to the www.mysite.com domain when you try to find the number of links to mysite.com.

7. **HotBot:** There are two methods of measuring link popularity in Hotbot.

In the first case, in order to find out the number of sites linking to mysite.com, you can type in linkdomain: mysite.com. In order to exclude links from pages within the mysite.com domain, you can use linkdomain: mysite.com - domain: mysite.com.

Make sure that you do not use the "www" or "http://" prefixes when you use this method.

However, this method cannot be used to find out the number of links to specific pages in your site, i.e. you cannot use this method to find out the links to the page mypage.html in the domain mysite.com.

In order to find out the number of links to specific pages, choose "links to this URL" from the "Look for:" drop-down combo box and then type in the complete URL (i.e. http://www.mysite.com/mypage.html) in the search box. In order to exclude links from within the mysite.com domain, type http://www.mysite.com/mypage.html -domain: mysite.com in the search box after choosing "links to this URL" from the combo box. Note that for the second method, you need to use the "http://" prefix.

Lastly, you should note that in the second method, typing http://www.mysite.com will only find links to the home page of the www.mysite.com domain. If there are some sites which have linked to some of the internal pages in your site rather than your home page, this will not be included in the link popularity count.

8. **IWon:** The method of measuring link popularity in IWon is the same as the first method in HotBot. However, unlike HotBot, IWon does not have an alternative method which can be used to measure the number of links to specific pages in a domain.

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9. **Lycos:** In order to measure link popularity in Lycos, first click on the Advanced Search link to the right of the search box. To find out the number of sites linking to mysite.com in Lycos, you would type in ml: mysite.com in the search box. If you wish to exclude links from pages within the mysite.com domain, you would type in ml: mysite.com -h: mysite.com. If you want to find out how many sites are linking to a particular page (say mypage.html) in the mysite.com domain, you would type in ml:mysite.com/mypage.html. Again, in order to exclude links from pages within the mysite.com domain, you would type in ml:mysite.com/mypage.html -h: mysite.com.

Note that you should not type in the "www" or the "http://" prefixes.

10. **MSN:** The method of measuring link popularity in MSN is almost the same as that in Hotbot. The first method is exactly the same. For the second method, click on the More Options tab, type in the complete URL in the "Search the web for:" text box and choose "links to URL" from the "Find:" drop-down combo box. However, unlike Hotbot, you cannot eliminate links from pages within the same domain using the second method.

Note that the More Options tab is displayed only after you search for something in MSN. It is not displayed in MSN's home page.

11. **Netscape:** Netscape is a directory based engine. It takes its results from the Open Directory. If no results are found in the Open Directory, it takes its results from Google. Since it is a directory based engine, the concept of measuring link popularity is not all that meaningful. You can type in link: mysite.com to measure the number of links to the domain mysite.com. In this case, Netscape will simply take its results from Google.

12. **Northern Light:** There is no special command for measuring link popularity in Northern Light. To get a very approximate idea of the number of sites linking to the domain mysite.com, you can type in mysite.com. In order to eliminate the references to the mysite.com domain from within the domain, you can type in mysite.com - URL: mysite.com.

To get an approximate measure of the number of links to the page mypage.html in the domain mysite.com, you can type in mysite.com/mypage.html in the search box. Again, to eliminate the references to the page from within the mysite.com domain, you would type mysite.com/mypage.html - URL: mysite.com doesn't type in the "http://" or "www" prefixes.

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13. **WebCrawler:** There is no way you can find out the link popularity of your site in WebCrawler. This is because, like Excite, WebCrawler has no special command for measuring link popularity.

Other than search engines, there are numerous tools available in the market for measuring link popularity. But there are flaws in link popularity measurement.

- To appear in link popularity results, the site upon which the link sits must have been indexed by search engines. But search engines still index only a fraction of all the web pages available. If your link sits on this 'invisible web', it won't be returned.
- Even if the site on which your link sits has been indexed, there are still problems. First, if the link was added since the site was last indexed then it won't show up. And second, if your link is buried deep within the site, it may not appear.
- Sites with restricted access or membership only areas - often sources of rich information and links - will not be accessible to search engines.
- Many link popularity tests return internal links - links from within the site itself. This shows that the content has been well-structured and optimized for search engines, but it does distort the scores on link popularity. AltaVista, for one overcomes this with the command - link: www.yoursite.com -URL: www.yoursite.com.
- Search results can be inconsistent. This is because different searches may be carried out on different indexes. As Craig Silverstein of Google writes, "There are many reasons why one might see a difference in the estimated number of pages returned for the same query. It's most likely the queries ... were sent to different Google datacenters. Depending on which datacenter finishes a query, the estimated number of results may vary."

Link popularity checkers are very useful as a guide and for research purposes they can be tremendous. However, using them as a metric to judge the effectiveness of your linking work should be treated with caution.

By all means use them to give you a rough idea, but build some solid metrics into each linking project you undertake.

Here are some things you should think about:

- Analyze the type and quality of the links that currently exist. Look for any information you can use to measure effectiveness.
- Identify the top 20, the top 50 or the top 100 sites that you would like to link to you. How many of these currently link to your site? Use that as a benchmark - so if 20 of the top 100 sites currently link to you, set yourself a target of 40.

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• Check your referrer logs frequently and keep a note of referring URLs. Note: URLs drive most traffic to your site.

Measuring return on investment is a key business discipline that we all have to address. Putting some thought into what you should measure for each individual linking project will not only prove your worth, but will give you valuable insights into how you can sharpen and improve your linking strategy.

Google Page Rank

Page rank is one of the methods Google uses to determine a page's relevance or importance. It works by counting links and text of the links pointing at a page and/or domain. PageRank is a vote, by all the other pages on the Web, about how important a page is. A link to a page counts as a vote of support. If there's no link there's no support.

Google uses software called "PageRank" for ranking pages. The founders of Google, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, had developed it. Though it is very advanced now, the basic logic remained as it is.

Quoting from the original Google paper, PageRank is defined like this:

We assume page A has pages T1...Tn, which point to it (i.e., are citations). The parameter d is a damping factor, which can be set between 0 and 1. We usually set d to 0.85.

Also C(A) is defined as the number of links going out of page A. The PageRank of a page A is given as follows:
PR (A) = (1-d) + d (PR (T1)/C (T1) + ... + PR (Tn)/C (Tn))

Note that the PageRanks form a probability distribution over web pages, so the sum of all web pages' PageRanks will be one.

PageRank or PR (A) can be calculated using a simple iterative algorithm, and corresponds to the principal eigenvector of the normalized link matrix of the web.

PageRank relies on the uniquely democratic nature of the web by using its vast link structure as an indicator of an individual page's value. In essence, Google interprets a link from page A

to page B as a vote, by page A, for page B. But, Google looks at more than the sheer volume of votes, or links a page receives; it also analyzes the page that casts the vote. Votes cast by pages that are themselves "important" weigh more heavily and help to make other pages "important."

Important, high-quality sites receive a higher PageRank, which Google remembers each time it conducts a search. Of course, important pages mean nothing to you if they don't match your query. So, Google combines PageRank with sophisticated text-matching techniques to find pages that are both important and relevant to your search. Google goes far beyond the number of times a term appears on a page and examines all aspects of the page's content (and the content of the pages linking to it) to determine if it's a good match for your query.

Google's complex, automated methods make human tampering with the results extremely difficult. And though we do run relevant ads above and next to our results, Google does not sell placement within the results themselves (i.e., no one can buy a higher PageRank). A Google search is an easy, honest and objective way to find high-quality websites with information relevant to your search.

There are two types of PageRank numbers that Google currently will give for a specific page. One is the toolbar PageRank shown on the Google toolbar. This number varies from 0 - 10. The other type of PageRank is in the Google directory. There is no number for it, but by using the chart below - you will be able to figure it out. In the Google directory, if a site is ranked high enough, it has a green bar listed to the left of it. The Google directory is a copy of the Dmoz. If you are in the Dmoz, then you will be added to the Google directory automatically.

If your site is not listed in the directory and you cannot run the Google toolbar, you can get a rough estimate by simply looking at Google search results. Find the largest keyword that your site is listed under and compare it to other pages that are listed in the Google directory. Google displays a link to the directory if a page has a directory listing. By comparing your page to pages listed above and below you, you can get a very good idea about the PR value.

2.3 Test Questions

Select the right Option:

1) The optimal keyword density should be

    a) 10-12%
    b) 3-7%
    c) There is no defined optimal keyword density
    d) None of the above

2) It helps an SEO to add many keywords to

    a) Anchor tag
    b) Meta Keyword and description tag
    c) Bold tag
    d) All of the above

3) One of the first steps in the SEO process is

    a) Keyword Research
    b) Keyword Selection
    c) Keyword Placement
    d) Keyword density check

4) Which of the following is most important with regards to SEO.

    a) Doorway Pages
    b) Flash and Pictures
    c) Grammar, Spelling
    d) Spamming

5) The site summary you see on the SERP, is derived from

    a) Text written specifically for Google crawlers
    b) Text in the Title tag
    c) Text in top banner
    d) Search engine code

6) Site submission can be done

    a) Manually
    b) Automatically
    c) All of the above
    d) None of the above

7) If your site is ranking first, when you type your company name in the search engine, then your site is optimized.

    a) True
    b) False
    c) Can't say
    d) None of the above

8) If you want to rank your site high in the search engines, your best option is to

    a) Submit to search engines
    b) Use Flash
    c) Use 'No Frame'
    d) Sell advertisement

9) Keyword competition analysis means determining the

    a) Competitive analysis of the website
    b) Competitive ability of the finalized keywords
    c) Competitive analysis on different search engines
    d) All of the above

10) One of the on-page factors is

    a) CSS
    b) UPS
    c) CMS
    d) PDF

Fill in the blanks:

1) There are many tools available to generate keywords. The primary is known as the keyword ……………. Tool.

2) Theme pyramid consists of 5 levels according to the ……………. of the page.

3) ……………………… is a part of HTML code that allows you to give a short and concise summary of your web page content.

4) ……………………. lets you specify that a particular page should NOT be indexed by a search engine.

5) "Alt Tag" is defined as the …………………… that the browser displays when the surfer does not want to or cannot see the ……………………..present in a web page.

6) Anchor text is the ……………………. on the webpage.

7) While there are many characteristics of your content that are in the algorithmic calculations, there are a few that consistently hold relatively high priority. They are ……………………………, ……………………………., ……………………………….., …………………….

State whether the following statements are True or False:

1. Allintitle is an HTML Meta tag
2. We can search the keywords present in the URL by using AllinURL
3. Allinanchor is a text present in the anchor tag
4. 301 is a permanent error page
5. 404 is the 'not found' page
6. Keyword density is defined as

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i. KD= $\dfrac{tf_{i,j}}{l_i}$

Where *tfi, j* is the number of times term *i* appears in document *j* and *l* is the total number of terms in the document.

Select from the options bellow:

1) Given the importance of inbound links, what is the best way to boost the number of sites who link to yours?

    a) Participate in FFA
    b) E-mail a link request to like minded sites
    c) Seek out appropriate link farms
    d) Look for guest books to sign
    e) Set up 'link to us' page from your site

2) Find the most important factor according to search engines while ranking a site.

    a) Meta description tag
    b) Alt tag
    c) Incoming links
    d) Outgoing links

3) Which is the best?

    a) Getting 10 sites that are related to your site to link to you
    b) Getting your selected keywords on your page
    c) Putting links on your site to 10 related sites
    d) Link farming

4) One of the key ways to generate links for a website is

    a) Content donation
    b) Content description
    c) Content writing
    d) All of the above

5) Link Popularity is

    a) The number of links pointing to your site
    b) The number of links pointing to other sites from your site
    c) The number of links on your page
    d) The page rank of your page

6) When you put a link on other site without exchanging another link, this is called

    a) One way linking
    b) Reciprocal linking
    c) Triangular linking
    d) Square linking

7) Reciprocal linking is also known as

    a) Link swaps
    b) Link co-operation
    c) One way linking
    d) All of the above

8) Good quality links consist of

    a) Relevant themes and good page rank
    b) Competitive sites
    c) All of the above
    d) None of the above

9) Triangular links manipulate

    a) One way into reciprocal
    b) Reciprocal into one way
    c) One way and reciprocal into link popularity
    d) Square into one way

10) Press releases are a very effective and popular tactic to

a) Establish relations
b) Increase page rank
c) Get links to your site
d) Get banned from search engines

Fill in the blanks:

1) The …………………. describes only the recent phenomenon of a site ranking highly for the all in searches at Google and searches at the other major engines (Yahoo!, MSN, Ask) while ranking exceptionally poorly in Google's normal results.

2) Global …………………. simply measures how popular a website is based on all the links it receives throughout the World Wide Web.

3) Google made the off page optimization form of ranking famous with its patented ………………..algorithm.

4) Page rank is one of the methods Google uses to determine a page's …………… or ……………..

5) PageRank software was developed by …………. And ……………

6) Yahoo! acquired Overture and dumped the Google index. Now they publish an index called …………………..

7) If you are not in the position to exchange links then you can simply ………………..them.

8) Link popularity is the number of ……………………. that link to your site.

9) …………………………. is a very risky way to build link popularity.

10) The biggest advantage of one way linking is you are automatically protected from……………….

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Chapter 3
Site Readiness

3.1 Google Toolbar

Types of Links:

The link building campaign can be done in three ways:

    a. One way linking
    b. Reciprocal Linking
    c. Triangular Linking

One way linking:

When we say one way links, it is all about putting your link on the site without exchanging any other link i.e. one way links are links to your sites from sites which do not receive a link from your site. Since no one will place any link like that, it is considered to be the toughest job in link building campaign. But one way linking is the best way to improve the ranking in search engines. Since other web sites are recommending your site without linking back, search engines believe that your site is very important and can provide excellent value to customers.

The biggest advantage of one way linking is you are automatically protected from bad back links. If the back linked site is not good enough then you can actually lose out your page rank as well as rankings in the search engine. Some sites are very generic and have links to various irrelative sites. Hence with lots of irrelative sites search engines think that this is just link popularity exercise and it is simply useless for visitors. Since there is no value added for the search engine's users, they in turn give no value to these links.

Long term output is another advantage that one way linking offer! Since one way linked sites offer tremendous value it is more likely to be stay there for a longer period of time unlike reciprocal links. Website owners add these links because they think that it is a value add to the user experience. Reciprocal links could be dropped when it no longer suits to the website's linking strategy.

To gain the most benefit from your links, the link back to your web page should be one that can be followed by the search engine robots. Plain old text links and image links usually can be followed by the search engine robots. More exotic types of links, like JavaScript links, cannot typically be followed by the search engine robots. When you provide suggested linking code, the simpler the better. Don't be afraid to suggest linking formats to owners of sites that link to you. The types of links that serve your purposes best will generally provide their visitors with the best experience as well.

Check to see if the page where the link will be located can be found in the search engine results. You can search via the entire website or by individual page. Different search engines use different syntax in looking for individual pages and links; refer to the advanced search function for each search engine for details.

Google Search Example:
Shows indexing of all pages listed in website
Site: www.websitedomainname.com

Shows indexing of a specific web page in website
Info: www.websitedomainname.com/pagename.html.
If the page is listed in the search engine results, this means the page has been indexed by the search engine robots. This means the web page is valid for indexing and that your link will be picked up as well.

One-way link building means hard work and long term determination to achieve good link popularity. By improving the quality of your website, you improve the chance to obtain good quality natural links. Spend a set amount of time each week to seek out quality one-way links to achieve your goal. By using this long-term game plan you will be able to safely build links for optimum link popularity success.

Reciprocal Linking:

This is the most popular practice in linking building campaign today. Reciprocal linking means two web sites that agree to link to each other. It is also known as 'link swaps', 'link exchanges' and 'link partners'.

A reciprocal link is an assurance about your site. This link basically explains that the site at the other end of this link feels that my site is important enough to link to, and I feel that their site is important enough that I am willing to let visitors leave my site via this link. It involves an element of trust! Few Webmasters have the time or patience to constantly monitor the sites

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that link back to them, so you trust the other site to maintain the link on their site, and not bury it under other information or delete it during a site upgrade.

A reciprocal link is not a quick fix to bring more traffic. There are many sites with over 100 banner and text links on a single page - now how much traffic do you think the sites featured on that page were getting from those links? Many of theses linked sites offer the same scenario: a cobbled together mishmash of links and graphics, many of them broken or out of date, none benefiting the relevant sites.

Getting quality links is the very important in reciprocal linking. Since it's like a barter system, reciprocal links are comparatively easier to build. Reciprocal links help in driving traffic to the web site as well as boosting rankings in the search engines. In case reciprocal links search engines emphasis more on quality of the links.

The good quality links consists of relevant theme, good page rank and good value add to customer. Rather than competitive, complementary sites should be considered.

Before entering into reciprocal linking there is basic groundwork to do. As any other campaign competitive analysis is very important. Study your competitor's site, complementary sites and examine their link pages; this will give you valuable input regarding potential link partners.

While setting up reciprocal linking the first step is to find good quality and complementary sites. After you have placed a link to their site, e-mail the site owner and let them know you have linked to them. Once this is done you can ask for a link back to your site, suggesting a page where a link would be appropriate. If the other party is interested, they will revert back and place the link to you.

To boost the Page Rank of a web site, some webmasters concentrate on getting links only from sites that have a high Page Rank. If you want to try this approach, PR search is a free and useful tool to use. It gives you Google search results PLUS Page Rank.

Triangular Linking:

Once one way linking became almost impossible for webmasters, triangular linking was introduced. This is great technique, which can manipulate reciprocal linking into one way linking. Triangular link trading is an attempt to fool the search engines into thinking that you haven't really engineered a reciprocal link trade. The way this trick is played is that you use two websites. You have your cohort link to your website A and you link back to him from

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your website B. This way the search engine will not see the trade, and will instead think that you "earned" the link.

In triangular linking, we place a link on a website but put the other's link on different web site, i.e. I'll put my link on your web site and in exchange of that, will put your link on some other site but not mine.

With the help of this technique webmasters pretend it's a one way link. Soon after, search engines found out about this technique and are now developing algorithms to combat this problem.

Dynamic page optimization:

Unlike a normal HTML website, where the content of static pages doesn't change unless you code the changes into your HTML file: open the file, edit the content, save the file, and upload back the server. A dynamic web page is a template that displays specific information in response to queries. The database is connected to the web site and the response is generated through the connected database. These sites are easy to update for webmaster since they're directly connected to a database where one change reflects all pages. The problem with dynamic sites started when content rich sites failed to rank higher in search engines. The problem lies in its advantage itself. As studied earlier, dynamic pages execute on query.

Users send queries through search engines or they are already coded into a link on the page. But a search engine spider doesn't know how to use your search function - or what questions to ask. Dynamic scripts often need certain information before they can return the page content: cookie data, session id, or a query string being some of the common requirements. Spiders usually stop indexing a dynamic site because they can't answer the question.

Search engines only believe in content and not flashy elements in your web site. Search engine crawlers are programmed in such a way that they can read only the text. Crawlers strictly ignore elements such as pictures, frames, video etc, and read it as an empty space, then move on. Some search engines may not even be able to locate the dynamic page very easily. But even if we make web sites only search engine friendly and not user friendly then most likely we end up losing out visitor. This presents a big problem for marketers who have done very well with their rankings in search engines using static pages but who wish to switch to a dynamic site. This is the reason SEO's came up with advanced SEO techniques to optimize dynamic pages.

Here are few methods you can use to optimize dynamic pages:

1. Use of software - There are various software available on the market, which will remove the "?" in the Query String and replace it with "/", thereby allowing the search engine spiders to index dynamic content.
Example:
http://www.my-online-store.com/books.asp?id=1190 will change to
http://www.my-online-store.com/books/1190.

The latter being a static URL, it can easily be indexed by search engine spiders.

2. Use of CGI/Perl scripts - One of the easiest ways to get your dynamic sites indexed by search engines is using CGI/Perl scripts. Path_Info or Script_Name is a variable in a dynamic application that contains the complete URL address (including the query string information). In order to fix this problem, you'll need to write a script that will pull all the information before the query string and set the rest of the information equal to a variable. You can then use this variable in your URL address.
Example:
http://www.my-online-store.com/books.asp?id=1190
When you are using CGI/Perl scripts, the query part of the dynamic URL is assigned a variable.

In the above example "?id=1190" is assigned a variable, say "A". The dynamic URL http://www.my-online-store.com/coolpage.asp?id=1190
will change to http://www.my-online-store.com/books/A through CGI/Perl scripts which can easily be indexed by the search engines.

3. Re-configuring your web servers -
(i) Apache Server - Apache has a rewrite module (mod_rewrite) that enables you to turn URLs containing query strings into URLs that search engines can index. This module however, isn't installed with the Apache software by default; therefore you need to check with your web hosting company if this can be installed.
(ii) ColdFusion - You'll need to reconfigure ColdFusion on your server so that the "?" in a query string is replaced with a '/' and pass the value to the URL.

4. Creation of a Static Page linked to an array of dynamic Pages - This approach is very effective, especially if you are the owner of a small online store selling products online. Just create a static page linking to all your dynamic pages. Optimize this static page for search engine rankings. Include a link title for all the product categories, place appropriate "alt" tag

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for the product images along with product description containing highly popular keywords relevant to your business (You can conduct keyword research for your site through http://www.wordtracker.com). Submit this static page along with all dynamic pages in various search engines, conforming to the search engine submission guidelines.

Technical methods:

There are a few technical aspects that need to be considered for optimizing dynamic websites.

Let's start with .htacess & mod-rewrite. These are the two concepts you will have to master in order to understand how to cloak search engine unfriendly URLs. Also keep in mind that these two components are implemented on the Apache server. However for IIS server, we have the equivalent available, as you will see later in this article.

Starting from the basics…

1. .htaccess File - An .htaccess file is just a plain text file. It has one directive per line like: RewriteEngine on

The "RewriteEngine" portion is the directive and "on" is a parameter that describes what "RewriteEngine" should do.

The .htaccess file usually lives in the root directory of a site and allows each site to uniquely configure how Apache delivers its content. Its directives apply to the entire site, but subdirectories can contain their own .htaccess, down through your entire sub subdirectories structure. You could have a different .htaccess in every subdirectory and make each sub behave a little different.

2. Mod_rewrite - Mod-rewrite is a redirect directive to the requesting object on an Apache server. Its typical format looks like:

Options + FollowSymLinks
Rewrite Engine on
Rewrite Rule ^url1\.html html$ url2.html [R=301,L]

The first directive instructs Apache to follow symbolic links within the site. Symbolic links are "abbreviated nicknames" for things within the site and are usually disabled by default. Since Mod_rewrite relies on them, we must turn them on.

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The "RewriteEngine on" directive does exactly what it says. Mod_rewrite is normally disabled by default and this directive enables the processing of subsequent Mod_rewrite directive.

In this example, we have a caret at the beginning of the pattern, and a dollar sign at the end. These are regex (regular expressions in *nix) special characters called anchors. The caret tells regex to begin looking for a match with the character that immediately follows it, in this case a "u". The dollar sign anchor tells regex that this is the end of the string we want to match.

In this simple examples, "url1\.html" and "^url1\.html$" are interchangeable expressions and match the same string, however, "url1\.html" matches any string containing "url1.html" (aurl1.html for example) anywhere in the URL, but "^url1\.html$" matches only a string which is exactly equal to "url1.html".
In a more complex redirect, anchors (and other special regex characters) are often essential.

Once the page is matched it directs it to replace the 'url2.html'.

In our example, we also have an "[R=301,L]". These are called flags in Mod_rewrite and they're optional parameters. "R=301" instructs Apache to return a 301 status code with the delivered page and, when not included as in [R, L], defaults to 302. Unlike Mod_alias, Mod_rewrite can return any status code that is specified in the 300-400 range and it REQUIRES the square brackets surrounding the flag, as in this example.

The "L" flag tells Apache that this is the last rule that it needs to process. It's not required in this simple example but, as the rules grow in complexity, it will become very useful. The Apache docs for mod_rewrite are at http://httpd.apache.org/docs/mod/mod_rewrite.html & some examples can be found at http://httpd.apache.org/docs/misc/rewriteguide.html.

Now if we rename or delete url1.html, then request it again. Mod_rewrite can redirect from non-existent URLs (url1.html) to existing ones. This is how essentially we cloak the dynamic pages. The first URL can be the dynamic page that we want to be replaced by the static looking 'url 2'. This then is how cloaking works on the apache server. Though there are other methods available however this remains the most popular & reliable.

3. IIS Server Redirects - As long as one uses one of the mod_rewrite cousins for IIS (iis_rewrite, isapi rewrite), the method will be mostly the same for IIS as it will for Apache. However the place and which rules are inserted will depend on the software being used (not obviously into httpd.conf or .htacess) but the rule generation pretty much remains the same either way.

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The most used framework for this genre is ISAPI rewrite. For more information on this consult www.isapirewrite.com. The site has a free download version of their code & a paid version for 69 USD. For IIS Rewrite functionality, Qwerksoft remains the most popular alternative (www.qwerksoft.com/products/iisrewrite). Again a basic free downloadable or a 99 USD purchase option exists with them.

However user experience suggests that the ISAPI_Rewrite product outperforms all others due to its ease of configuration. One of the biggest benefits with ISAPI_Rewrite is that you don't have to restart IIS each time you make a change to the .ini file. In other words, once ISAPI_Rewrite is installed, one can have the .ini file within the root folder so that changes can be made, as one goes along if necessary, without.

Also these products support shared hosting. So the hosting provider can be convinced to buy & install them. Some other products in this category can be found at:
www.pstruh.cz/help/urlrepl/library.htm (free isapi)
www.motobit.com/help/url-replacer-rewriter/iis-mod-rewrite.asp.

Also if you are using .NET platform, this works for free:
http://msdn.microsoft.com/msdnmag/issues/02/08/HTTPFilters

4. Dynamic URLs rewrites - Dynamic pages are roadblocks to high search engine positioning. Especially those that end in "?" or "&". In a dynamic site, variables are passed to the URL and the page is generated dynamically, often from information stored in a database as is the case with many e-commerce sites. Normal .html pages are static - they are hard-coded, their information does not change, and there are no "?" or "&" characters in the URL.

URL rewrites are programming techniques that allow the returned URL to be more search engine friendly by removing the question mark (?) and ampersand (&) from the returned URL found in the location or address bar. This enables the search engines to index the page without having variables or session id's interlaced into the URL.

Pages with dynamic URLs are present in several engines, notably Google and AltaVista, even though publicly AltaVista claims their spider does not crawl dynamic URLs. To a spider a "?" represents a sea of endless possibilities - some pages can automatically generate a potentially massive number of URLs, trapping the spider in a virtually infinite loop.

As a general rule, search engines might have a more difficult time indexing pages with a query string in the URL:

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- contain a "?" or "&"
- File types like: .cfm, .asp, .shtml, .php, .stm, .jsp, .cgi, .pl
- Could potentially generate a large number of URLs.

In these cases, where page should be dynamic it is possible to clean up their query strings. URL rewriting generally clean up '?', '&', '+' symbols in URLs to more user friendly characters.
Check out the following URL:
www.yourdomain.com/shop.php?cat_id=1&item_id=2
This dynamic URL can be converted into:
www.yourdomain.com/shoppinglist/apparels/shirts
This makes the page look static but is actually dynamic. URL rewriting needs some serious strategy and planning. There are a few tools available for URL rewriting like rule-based tools and the most famous tools are 'More Rewrite' for Apache and ISAPI rewrite for IIS. Mode Rewrite can be used to solve all sorts of URL based problems. It provides all the functions you need to manipulate URLs. But because of its complex rule based matching engine, it's difficult to learn. However once you understand the basic idea you can master all of its features. ISAPI Rewrite is a powerful URL manipulation engine based on regular expressions. It acts mostly like Apache's mod_Rewrite, but it is designed specifically for Microsoft Internet Information Server (IIS). ISAPI Rewrite is an ISAPI filter written in pure C/C++ so it is extremely fast. ISAPI Rewrite gives you the freedom to go beyond standard URL schemes and develop your own scheme.

There are two types of URL rewrites. Both are there to make a search engine friendly but the advanced URL rewrites is search engine friendly.

Non-URL Rewrite URL
www.yourdomain.com/shop.php?cat_id=1&item_id=2 The above URL indicates to the database that the returned information should be from the category with id equal to 1 and the item id equal to 2. This works fine for the system because it understands the variables. Many search engines however do not understand this form of URL.

Simple URL Rewrite
www.yourdomain.com/shop/1/2.html. The simple URL rewrite will take the URL and modify it so it appears without the question mark (?) and ampersand (&). This enables all search engines to index your all of your pages, but still lacks in some important areas.

Advanced URL Rewrite

www.yourdomain.com/oranges/mandarin_oranges.html The advanced URL rewrite enables your URLs to include your keywords. This is another location search engines look for important information about your pages. Being able to include keywords in your URL helps elevate your page to the top of the search engine result pages.

URLs can be cleaned server-side using a web server extension that implements content negotiation, such as mod_negotiation for Apache or PageXchanger for IIS. However, getting a filter that can do the content negotiation is only half of the job. The underlying URLs present in HTML or other files must have their file extensions removed in order to realize the abstraction and security benefits of content negotiation. Removing the file extensions in source code is easy enough using search and replace in a web editor like Dream weaver MX or Home Site. Some tools like w3compiler also are being developed to improve page preparation for negotiation and transmission. One word of assurance: don't jump to the conclusion that your files won't be named page.html anymore. Remember that, on your server, the precious extensions are safe and sound. Content negotiation only means that the extensions disappear from source code, markup, and typed URLs.

To avoid complications, consider creating static pages whenever possible, perhaps using the database to update the pages, not to generate them on the fly.

Cloaking and Doorway Pages

Cloaking:

When search engine optimization started evolving and search engines became more and more intelligent, webmasters came up with many techniques to rank their sites higher on search engines. Cloaking is one of those techniques. It is very difficult and time consuming to make a web site both user friendly and search engine friendly. In cloaking webmasters deliver one page to search engines for indexing while serving an entirely different page to everyone else. Cloaking is the process of serving different versions of a page based upon identifiable information about the user. Often, pages are based upon Agent name and/or IP address (ISP host).

There is no clear view whether cloaking is ethical or unethical but misleading spiders and search engines is considered to be spam. Hence cloaking techniques are not regularly

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practiced. A simple way to see if a web page is using a cloaking technique is to look at the cache. Google has a link called Cached next to almost every search result. Therefore if a web page differs from a cached version, the possibility that the website is using cloaking technique is evident.

A few reasons why webmasters use cloaking techniques would be:

Use of Flash/Splash/ Videos:

HTML days are gone and Flash days are in! Many sites are built using Flash, which is totally no-no for search engines. But does this mean you can't have Flash on the site??? Not exactly, the solution is to create simple HTML text documents for search engines and Flash pages for visitors. Google is currently the only search engine indexing flash pages.

Websites containing Images:

There are many sites that are full of pictures and images. These are image-oriented sites where the percentage of images is more than that of text. Obviously there is no way these sites will rank high on SERP. Hence cloaking comes first in the mind for optimizing these pages.

HTML Coding:

Many times there is more HTML code as compared to text. This again does not suit for search engine optimization. There has to be a substantial amount of text and lesser HTML coding. In this case rather than recoding the entire websites, cloaking is the best option.

Now that you know why cloaking is done, it's time to find out how it is done. A cloaking is done by modifying a file called .htaccess. Apache server has a module called "mod_rewrite". With the help of this module in .htaccess file you can apply a cloaking technique for your web pages.

Webmasters gather search engines' IP addresses (231.258.476.13) or User-Agents (Googlebot). If mod_rewrite module detects that an IP address or user-agent belongs to a search engine, it delivers a web page that is especially designed for search engines. If the IP doesn't belong to any spider, then it considers it as regular visitor and delivers a normal web page.

There are 5 types of cloaking:

- User Agent Cloaking (UA Cloaking)

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- IP Agent Cloaking (IP Cloaking)
- IP and User Agent Cloaking (IPUA Cloaking).
- Referral based cloaking.
- Session based cloaking.

All five have unique applications and purposes, yet all 5 can fit nicely within one program.

- **User Agent cloaking** is good for taking care of specific agents. Wap, Wml pages for the cell phone crowd.
  ActiveX for the IE crowd.
  Quality CSS from the Mozilla and Opera crowd.
  Nice black screen for the web tv'ers.
  Specialty content for agents (eg: NoSmartTags, Googlebot Noarchive).
  No sense sending js, java, or flash that a user can't actually run.
- **IP Address** Cloaking is good for taking care of demographic groups. Language files generation for various countries.
  Advertising delivery based on Geo data.
  Pages built for broadband users.
  Low impact pages for overseas users.
  User-time-of-day determination and custom content based on the Geo data (news, sports, weather etc…)
  Specifically targeting demo groups such as AOL, Mindspring etc….
- **IP and Agent cloaking** is good for a combo of the above. Custom content for AOL'ers using Wap phones.
  Ads based upon Geo data and user agent support.
  The possibilities are endless. You'll run out of ways to re-roll before you run out of IP's and agents to serve.
  Indexability. Just getting your site fully indexed can be a challenge in some environments (flash, shock).
- **Referrer based cloaking** is basing delivery on specific referral strings. It is good for content generation such as overriding frames (about.com, ask Jeeves, and the Google image cache).
  Prevent unwanted Hotlinking to your graphics.
- **Session based cloaking** are sites that use session tracking (either from IP, or cookies); can do incredible things with content. We have all seen session cloaking in action on dynamic sites were custom content was generated for us.

Cloaking is the gate keeper that serves your site in its best light, and protects your custom code from prying eyes.

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Search engine cloaking is just one aspect of a much bigger picture. This is why search engines can't even consider banning cloaking. It is so widespread and pervasive, they would have to delete 1/4th of the domains in their index - those would be the best sites they have listed.

Any time you hear a search engine talking about banning cloaking, listen to them very closely -- and remember. If they would bold face lie about something so pervasive, what are they doing with the really important stuff? They can't be trusted - nor can those that are out here carrying their water.

With the assault of rogue spiders most sites are under the growing trend of framing, agents that threaten your hrefs (smarttags). The majority of the top 2000 sites on the net use some form of the above styles of cloaking (including ALL major search engines).

Doorway Pages

Just like cloaking these pages are also specially created for search engines, the only difference is, these are 'gateway' or 'bridge' pages. They are created to do well for particular phrases. They are programmed to be visible only by specific search engine spiders. They are also known as portal pages, jump pages, gateway pages and entry pages.

Doorway pages are built specifically to draw search engine visitors to your web site. They are standalone pages designed only to act as doorways to your site. Doorway pages are a very bad idea for several reasons, though many SEO firms use them routinely. Doorway pages have acquired something of a bad reputation due to the frequent use (and abuse) in spamming search engines. The most flagrant abuses include mass production of machine-generated pages with only minor variations, sometimes using re-direction or cloaking so the visitor does not see the actual page requested. Doorways used in this manner add to the clutter that search engines and Web searchers must contend with.

The purpose behind building Doorway pages is just to trick search engines for higher rankings therefore doorway pages is considered to be unethical SEO practice. The fact is that doorway pages don't do a very good job of generating traffic, even when they are done by "experts." Many users simply hit the back buttons when presented with a doorway page. Still, many SEO firms count those first visits and report them to their clients as successes. But these very few visitors go ahead and visit their product's page.

There are various ways to deliver Doorway pages. Let's analyze them one by one.

Low Tech Delivery:

When webmasters create and submit a page targeted toward a particular phrase, it is called Low Tech Delivery. Here sometimes webmasters create pages for special search engines as well but the problem is users don't arrive at the desired page. And it is most likely that if any visitor lands on non-informative page, he won't navigate any further.

In such case 'Meta Refresh Tag' plays a vital role. It is an HTML tag which automatically refreshes the page in defined time. The Meta refresh tag they use here is of zero second delay. Therefore you most likely won't be able to see the optimized content before being sent elsewhere. These META tags are also a red flag to search engines that something may be wrong with the page. Because jump pages manipulate results and clutter indexes with redundant text they are banned by search engines. Now a days search engines don't accept Meta refresh tags. To get around that, some webmasters submit a page, and then swap it on the server with the "real" page once a position has been achieved.

This is "code-swapping," which is also sometimes done to keep others from learning exactly how the page ranked well. It's also called "bait-and-switch." The downside is that a search engine may revisit at any time, and if it indexes the "real" page, the position may drop. But there is another problem with these pages. As they are targeted to key phases, they could be very generic in nature and pages can be easily copied and used on other sites and since they are copied the fear of banning is always there.

Agent Delivery:

The next step up is to deliver a doorway page that only the search engine sees. Each search engine reports an "agent" name, just as each browser reports a name. An agent is a browser, or any other piece of software that can approach web servers and browse their content. Example: Microsoft Internet Explorer, Netscape, Search Engine Spiders.

The advantage to agent name delivery is that you can send the search engine to a tailored page while they direct users to the actual content you want them to see. This eliminates the entire "bridge" problem altogether. It has also the added benefit of "cloaking" your code from prying eyes.

But still the problem is there. Someone can telnet to your web server and report their agent name as being from a particular search engine and they will see exactly what you are

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delivering. Additionally, some search engines may not always report the exact same agent name, specifically to help keep people honest.

IP Delivery / Page Cloaking:

Time for another step up. Instead of delivering by agent name, you can also deliver pages to search engines by IP address, assuming you've compiled a list of them and maintain it. IP delivery is a technique to present different contents depending on the IP address of the client.

Everyone and everything that accesses a site reports an IP address, which is often resolved into a host name. For example, I might come into a site while connected to AOL, which in turn reports an IP of 199.204.222.123. The web server may resolve the IP address into an address: ww-tb03.proxy.aol.com, for example.

Frames:

HTML frames allow authors to present documents in multiple views, which may be independent windows or subwindows. Multiple views offer designers a way to keep certain information visible, while other views are scrolled or replaced. For example, within the same window, one frame might display a static banner, a second a navigation menu, and a third the main document that can be scrolled through or replaced by navigating in the second frame.

The layout of frames could be: Frame
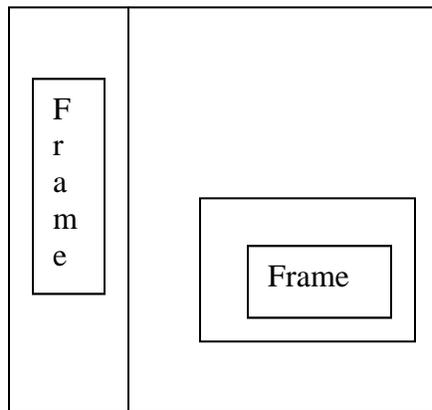
A framed page like the example shown is actually made up of 4 separate pages, a frameset page and three content pages. The frameset page tells the browser how big each frame should be where they should be placed and what pages should be loaded into frame. If the browser or

search engine can't display frames or is configured not to, it will render the contents of the NOFRAMES element.

The homepage or index page of a framed site is the document which contains the frameset and as you can see from the HTML above there is very little in the way of content for the search engines to read and index. What is needed is for more information to be added to the NOFRAMES element.

The best way of achieving this is to add a complete web page within the NOFRAMES tag including appropriate keyword rich headings and text. A navigation menu should also be included to provide links to all internal areas of your website. This will not allow the search engines to index all areas of your website and improve accessibility for those using a browser or alternate device that does not support frames nor has frames support disabled.

Placing nothing but a long list of keywords will not help your search engine position and may even be harmful.

Every web page has a unique makeup and location, which is easily definable, except frames. Frames are multiple pages listing on the same page, and why they can make site navigation simple, they do not show the pages current address. If you have an interesting article deep within your site using frames makes it hard for me to link to it. If you force me to link to your home page then I am probably not going to link to you.

You can get around frames by having a site map from the home page that links to all the framed pages, but even if these pages list high they will probably lack good navigation since the framework that contained it is not located with it in the search results.

There is an HTML tag called the NOFRAMES tag, which, when used properly, gives the search engine spiders the information they need to index your page correctly. I believe it was designed to give frames-incapable browsers - early versions of browsers that cannot read or interpret the FRAMESET tags - the ability to "see" the information on a framed site.

Unfortunately, too many sites that utilize this NOFRAMES tag put the following words into it: "You are using a browser that does not support frames. Update your browser now to view this page." It might as well say, "We are putting the kiss of death on our Web site and have no interest in being found in the search engines for relevant keywords regarding our site! Thanks for not visiting our site because you couldn't find it!"

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What happens when you do the above is that the engines will read your TITLE and META tags (if you even included them) and the above information that the browser is frames-incapable, and that is what they will index for your site.

Try a search at AltaVista for the following: "does not support frames" and guess what? Nearly all of them are framed sites that used those words in their NOFRAMES tag. I bet that the circular-saw maker whose site is ranked number 1 for those keywords doesn't have a clue that he has put the kiss of death on his Web site! I also bet his site is nowhere to be found under the keyword "circular saws."

If you want to have a framed site for whatever reason, then for goodness' sake, use your NOFRAMES tag properly! The proper usage of this tag is to take the complete HTML code from your inner page and copy it into the NOFRAMES tag.

The above information takes care of your front page. However, there are other issues having to do with getting the rest of your pages indexed properly when you use a framed site.

Most Web designers use frames for ease of navigation. That is, they have a left-hand frame with a static navigational bar or buttons that never change. When someone clicks on a button on the left, the frame to the right brings up the new page accordingly. Because of this type of design, there are usually **no** navigational links on any of the inner, framed pages.

Why is this bad? It's bad because you could (and should) optimize these inner pages to rank high in the search engines. But if you do, and someone searching in the engines finds them, they will be what I would call orphaned pages.

I'm sure you've come across these at one time or another in your searches: a page that has a bit of information about what you were searching for but offers no way to get to the rest of the site!

Savvy Internet users might look at the URL and try finding the root directory, but most users don't have a clue about doing that. It's too bad for the site owner, who just lost some potential eyeballs - or worse, a potential customer.

If you use a framed design, it is absolutely imperative to place navigational links on all your inner pages. At the very least, include a button that links back to your home page. However, I would recommend that you have links to all your major category pages, as this will help the search engine spiders visit all the pages, index them all, and rank them high!

3.2 Test Questions

Select the right option:

1) Dynamic web pages are templates that

    a) Displays results without execution of queries
    b) Convert HTML files into PHP
    c) Display specific information in response to queries
    d) None of the above

2) If my actual URL is http://www.yourdomain.com/shop.php?cat_id=1&item_id=2 and I convert it into http://www.yourdomain.com/shop/1/2.html, this is a form of

    a) Display URL
    b) Attractive URL
    c) Simple URL
    d) Advanced URL

3) The two types of URL rewrites are

    a) Simple and Advanced
    b) Advanced and display
    c) Simple and Attractive
    d) Simple and display

4) If a webmaster delivers one page to search engines for indexing while serving an entirely different page to everyone else, this is an example of

    a) Cloaking
    b) Doorway pages
    c) Splash pages
    d) URL redirecting

5) Which of the following is a type of cloaking

    a) HTML page cloaking
    b) Dynamic page cloaking
    c) IP agent cloaking
    d) Active X cloaking

6) The purpose behind building Doorway pages is

    a) To get more visitors to your site
    b) To make website more attractive
    c) To trick search engines for higher rankings
    d) None of the above

7) Which of the following is considered spam

    a) Invisible text
    b) Original text
    c) Anchor text
    d) Text in URL

8) If I use a link farm for a link building campaign then it is

    a) Completely ok and will increase by page rank
    b) Spamming
    c) Cloaking
    d) Measuring link popularity

9) Invisible text is

    a) Hiding keywords by using same color font and background
    b) Comment tag in HTML
    c) Hiding keywords in Meta Description tag
    d) Hiding keywords in Meta Keywords tag

10) Duplicate sites contain

    a) Duplicate content
    b) Duplicate URL

    c) Duplicate session ids
    d) Duplicate webmaster

Fill in the blank:

1) HTML frames allow authors to present documents in multiple views, which may be independent ………………… or ………………….

2) There is an HTML tag called the ……………….. tag, which, when used properly, gives the search engine spiders the information they need to index your page correctly.

3) A cookie is a file in which web server place the information and this stays there in the……………………..

4) A ……………………… is a unique identifier that is usually placed in a cookie or in a URL as a parameter that will help you collect data about a particular visitor as they go along through your website.

5) Session Ids are commonly stored in………………, …………………… and …………………

6) You can ………….the size of the page by using CSS.

7) CSS is an abbreviation of ……………. ……………… ……………

8) The major concern for any SEO is to maintain a good ratio between HTML code and content. The code should be …………… and content should be…………………….

9) Cookies can be blocked completely via the browser, or selectively via a cookie manager. – True or False

10) URL rewriting through php/asp programming can also be used in the removal of session ids. – True or False

Chapter 4
Pay Per Click

4.1   Pay Per Click Campaigns

Pay per Click (PPC) campaigns are advertising campaigns that run on search engines results pages. These are also known as search engine advertising in which payment is based on the number of times the ad is 'clicked' from the results list. You bid the amount of money you are willing to pay per click for each. The one with a greater bidding amount receives the top position in the list. It allows you to choose keywords you would like your ad to appear for when a search is performed.

PPC campaigns are positioned at the top and right hand side of the SERPs. They are two-three lines of keyword rich text advertising campaigns that are linked to any page on a website where advertiser want visitors to land. PPC is another mode of online advertising where the media is sold only on clicks not on impressions or actions taken.

Famous of all these is Paid Placements. Your site appears based on search results generated from selected keywords that refer to your product or service. For each keyword you determine how much you are willing to spend on a per-click basis.

Many search engines run PPC campaigns, but the major players are Google, Yahoo, MSN and AltaVista. Today, the major pay per click advertising programs are offered by Google and Yahoo. Google's program called AdWords delivers targeted pay per click ads via its own search engine and a host of partner sites. Yahoo owns Overture which has a selection of specialized PPC advertising programs. These PPC advertising, programs offer the best quality traffic for most website marketing campaigns.

Small search engines like FindWhat and Sprinks offer direct paid placements. The link position is directly proportional to your bidding amount. The logic is simple - the more you bid the better position you will get and effectively will receive maximum click through. Google AdWords is different. They allow user opinion on how relevant and well-targeted ads for each keyword are by counting the CTR (Click through Rate) as a percentage and multiplying that by your CPC (Cost-Per-Click) to determine the rank of the results. Popular portals and search engines usually combine PPC listings with unpaid listings to ensure any given search produces sufficient paid and non-paid results. Typically, non-paid listings are provided by algorithmic search engines such as Inktomi, Google, FAST, AltaVista or Teoma.

PPC is a quick and cost effective advertising method if you know how to use it to your advantage. With a small investment you can get targeted traffic to your website right away. Generally it takes 5-6 months for search engine optimization of any site, while PPC campaigns can be set up in 5 minutes and you get your ad at the top of SERP. PPC campaigns can also be executed during the SEO process for greater traffic generation.

While setting up any PPC campaign, bidding on the right keywords is the most important consideration. The ad must be attractive, persuasive and the linked page must be informative enough. The bidding price varies from keyword to keywords. Bids on some keywords might touch sky high whereas some might be very low. So biding on the particular keyword depends on your perception and experience.

4.2 <u>*Setting up a PPC Campaign*</u>

It's not easy to set up effective PPC campaigns. There are certain things that you need to consider while setting one up. The first and major aspect is keyword selection.

Keyword Selection

Before going any further, the basic task is to perform - market analysis. Market analysis includes a competition analysis. Figure out what your competitors are doing, what keywords they are targeting and what their strategy is! It is very confusing to determine whether the campaign is successful or not if the objective is not clear. Decide whether you want more exposure, traffic, clicks or conversion.

Just like SEO planning, keyword selection is the first step while setting up a PPC campaign. The main thing to keep in mind is you can select out keywords that directly relate to your product or service unlike SEO where you tend to use a semantic approach. While selecting keywords try to use qualifiers for more precise targeting. Though there are many keyword-generation tools available, you should be clear in your mind about the nature of keywords.

Selecting persuasive and specific words is the key to effective keyword selection. One should deliberate upon the kind of keywords customers could use to search your or your clients product or service. Google, Yahoo, Wordtracker are the most famous tools for keyword generation. The campaign tracking is also done on keywords. It is considered the basic tracking system in any PPC campaign.

To make the PPC campaign successful you must know your pay per click results. You should know the performance of each and every keyword i.e. you must know on which keywords your ad receive the maximum number of clicks and conversions. This is important because only a small number of keywords might be generating maximum results.

Unlike SEO where similar keywords help you in greater rankings, in PPC you can actually face a big loss if keywords are not specific enough. For example, if you select 'mobile phones', you may get a number of unqualified clicks.

Therefore use terms like 'mobile phone manufacturer' or 'mobile phone retailers USA' etc. to get targeted and useful traffic. Understanding the product or service you are offering is the most important aspect. List out all the product or services you are offering and prepare a list rather than depending on the client.

Also look at your core competencies and the differentiating points between you and your competitor. Keyword stemming involves the interchanging of singular and plural forms of a keyword or the derivation of a verb from the gerund form (the "-ing" word).

For example, if "educate" was part of a keyword phrase, "educated", "educates", "education" and "educating" should also be considered. Location qualifiers are highly effective in PPC campaigns. Location keywords are less expensive and produce tremendous results as they attract highly targeted traffic.

Bidding Strategies:

After keyword selection, bidding on those keywords becomes highly important. The crux of a PPC campaign lies in bidding strategies. Though we will go into details later, this paragraph will give you an overall idea of bidding. The placement of your ad depends on the amount you offer to search engines on those particular keywords. The higher the bid the higher your position will be.

There are many bidding tools available on the market such as Atlas One Point, BidRank or PPC Pro. These tools monitor the campaign through out and adjust your bids although they are more helpful in big campaigns and can be less effective for smaller campaigns. Constant monitoring and campaign testing is also very important. Ideally the PPC campaign should be monitored 4 times a day. The process of monitoring and optimizing should go for a month at least. The targeting is also important. It includes site, Geo and duration targeting. Check

where you want to display your ads, whether its region specific, audience specific or time specific. This means if your target audience is professionals, then display ads only in office hours and don't publish it on weekends, holidays and nights.

Rather than struggling for the top position, figure out keyword performance. Even if the top position advert is attracting more click through-s, it is not necessary that it's conversion rate is also higher. Lower position might be attracting less traffic but its conversion rate can be high. Therefore keyword performance tracking and lead conversion metrics study can increase your ROI.

Advertising Text:

Writing advertisement is immensely important as only after reading the ad text, visitors are going to click on it. Never rely on one advert. Make at least 3-4 adverts and use them at different times on different search engines and observe their effectiveness. The advertising copy is divided into two parts. The first is 'Title' and second 'Ad Text'. The title should be keyword rich. If the title is keyword rich it is more likely visitors will click your ad.

Ad copy should be created in such a way that your ad will stand out among the competitors. If they are looking for Holiday packages then write something, which states both Hotels and Transportation. Similarly if they want to know about jewelry then include buying information to help them. This will certainly differentiate you from your competitors.

General tendency of writing ad copy is offering discounts, cheap deals, free gifts etc. but remember the function of Internet - Information. Try to include informative keywords to attract more click-through-s. As mentioned earlier, trying different permutations and combinations of keywords helps in receiving greater click-through-s. Interchanging words in the title and text can make a huge difference.

For Google Adwords, try split-testing two different titles and descriptions and add a unique tracking code to each one so you can identify which one performs better. Even a single word change on your ad can create a significant jump to your sales or lead conversion rate. Mention clearly what you want from the visitors after he clicks on the ad. This will give you immensely targeted traffic. If you want them to play a game on the website then mention that clearly. By means of this you can actually filter the traffic and can avoid those who don't want to play games. Also if there is a need of registration then mention that too.

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Develop proper landing page:

The PPC advert is linked with the web page of the product or service it is promoting. It could be any page according to the campaign. Once a visitor clicks on it they will land to the linked page and point of purchase. Hence a landing page is more important than anything.

Landing pages are simply web pages designed specifically for a keyword or related group of keywords. They are highly relevant to the keyword searched and consistent with the ad's claim. They immediately focus a visitor's attention to a primary call-to-action (most wanted response). In essence – landing pages ask your visitors to take an action.

Still many campaigns are linked to the home pages, which is strictly avoidable. Home pages are meant for a wider audience and not the highly targeted audience you are trying to capture. When a visitor clicks the PPC ad, he expects to land on a particular page. He relates the keywords in the ad to his needs and feels that you might be providing the solution. But when he lands on the home page, it's very unlikely that they will navigate further or check out the entire site. Hence the page liked to the ad must be relevant to the ad. Relevancy and consistency are essential for an effective pay-per-click marketing program. If you are able to engage customers and give them as promised in the advert then you will convert the clicks into your customers.

To motivate visitors, the landing page should be attractive, easy to navigate and contain relevant information. You don't need flash and animation to coax your visitor into buying your product, instead focus on simple clean navigation that will allow your visitor to find what they want in the shortest time possible.

You may need to use trial and error methods in landing pages as well. Link the advert to 3-4 different landing pages and evaluate each page's performance. Check out which page is producing more conversions and why.

Tracking:

The success of a PPC campaign also depends on optimization. For optimizing any campaign you need all the data regarding campaign performance. You can use free Google and Yahoo tracking tools that allow you to track from click to conversion. But there are many more tools, which give much more detailed data and analysis.

There are few client side-tracking tools such as Webside Story's Hitbox Professional or Hitbox Enterprise. With Hitbox, you can accurately track all of your marketing campaigns with one system - PPC, SEO organic, email campaigns, affiliate marketing campaigns, banner ad media buys, direct mail, etc.

The success of a PPC campaign depends on all these elements. Keyword selection, bidding, landing page, ad copy and optimizing, all these elements should go hand in hand and the balance is very important. If you missed on any one of these, your conversion rate will fall.

4.3   *Major PPC search engines*

There are several search engines that offer PPC advertising programs. Google and Yahoo are undoubtedly the market leaders. They offer the best PPC program in the industry because they return with sufficient results for most of the campaigns. Also there are product or service specific search engines that can deliver better value for your campaign. In both search engines the maximum bidding amount is $100. Basically you create a small text ad using their tools and bid on a series of keywords that will trigger your ad to be displayed.

If you chose Google your ad will be shown in the search engine result pages of google.com. If you go to google.com and run a search, you can see the AdWord ads along the top and right column.

Google AdWords

Google's PPC program known as 'Google AdWords' is currently considered the best in the industry. What differentiates it from others is its ad positioning strategy. Unlike other search engines it is not just the bidding amount that decides the ad placement but also the quality which plays a crucial part. Google offers discounts to those with a higher click-through rate.

As we know keywords can be generic and targeted. Generic keywords or general phrases are less targeted but more popular and hence their bidding amount is much higher. Google's broad matching system means wide varieties of buyers are competing for the same phrases, even though they are selling completely different products or services.

Ultimately hundreds of thousands of advertisers bid on similar keywords and try to bid higher from others. This is why you need to use a systematic testing approach which is necessary for AdWords to perform well for you. If you don't have a system for discovering the best quality

keyword phrases, you'll be spending a lot more money. On a large campaign it is essential to quickly discover what makes people click. Another reason is click fraud. There are estimates that 20% of all click-throughs are fraudulent, so expect 20% of your budget disappearing.

Google's PPC program is complicated, even troublesome at times. However, it does have an automated feature called AdWords Discounter that allows you to let them manage the bid price at a competitive level. Some of the more general and well-used keyword phrases have a set minimum bid which makes some phrases very unattractive. That's why you won't see ads on Google for certain keyword phrases. It's just too expensive given the type of sales transaction that results from clicks on that phrase. The word 'free' can sometimes be very expensive on Google AdWords.

The Google AdWords System

AdWord's bid prices and click through costs are not synonymous. That's because your bid could be on a variety of phrases and because their discounting system attempts to keep bid spreads from getting too large. Your specified maximum bid of $3.99 per click may actually result an average of only $2.65 per click instead. Ads can contain 25 characters for the title, 70 characters for the ad text, and 35 characters for a display URI. America Online shows the title and ad text all on one line.

The most important fact is, decide on objective and target audience. It's very important to communicate the message clearly to customers. For more detailed Google AdWords guidelines go to:

https://adwords.google.com/select/guidelines.html

To receive the maximum ROI from advertising on Google, you must know and learn the system. Proper keyword selection, writing text copy and linking the right page will give added advantage once you learn the system. You must calculate the visitor value of your site. This will certainly help you in drafting the budget and biding amount. It could be calculated by sells made by your site divided by number of visitors to your site.

Google AdWords is just about everything you could want in an advertising system. It is quick, responsive, offers free tracking, cheap to start, offers geo-targeting, syndication of ads is optional.

Do not get in bidding wars for generic terms. Opt to bid on more specific terms. Send people to targeted landing pages when possible.

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GoogEdit is a free downloadable tool, which helps format your Google AdWords ads. It has many useful features such as number and phrase stripper. GoogEdit also wraps your AdWords ads in the various matching levels so that you can better track your traffic and conversions.

Why Google AdWords

Within a very short period of time Google has become popular among searchers community. Their user base is huge and more importantly they are loyal. Also the average time spent on google.com by a user is much higher that that of other search engines. There is no doubt that Google is the best search engine at this point of time. They are so popular that whenever you think of search, Google comes first in mind.

Google is popular because of its most relevant results. It is the best value for time and hence attracts serious visitors. Though Google is a global search engine they offer many features to attract local advertiser. They also offer Geo-targeting i.e. targeting the ad to specific geographical location such as country, state etc. With all these features, Google certainly give more than 60-70% relevant traffic to your site.

Google AdWords is also integrated with their AdSense program. Therefore if you need more exposure you can chose that option as well. Google AdWord ads are also displayed on AOL, Ask Jeeves, Earthlink and business.com.

Google has stated that their click-through rate is 5 times higher than their competitors. Your bids have to be among the top four in order to get listed on AOL. Up to ten ads may be shown on Google with ad placement at the top of the screen and downward along the upper right of the page in pink or green text boxes.

AdWords default to broad match ad listings. Using broad match search terms do not need to exactly match the keyword you are bidding on for your ad to show up. However if you want to bid for the exact keyword you can do that too. Google also offers free ROI tracking tool.

Google AdWords have a negative keyword tool that prevents you from paying for clickthroughs on irrelevant terms. Good terms to cancel out are usually: cheap, free, download, cracks, mp3s and wallpapers etc. The type of terms where it is obvious the searcher would not likely convert to a sale or performs the desired action.

Google has automatic approval of all ads - and will list them as long as they follow the guidelines. Although Google has partnered with many sites and search engines, the ad is

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displayed only on the sites selected by the advertiser. Google allow syndication to be on or off. Their web reach is very high and there is no minimum spend on bidding amount and they don't demand a minimum monthly budget. You can bid as low as you want and can assign any amount of budget.

Key points in Google AdWords:

- Always remember that advertisement is a group of keywords. Therefore write custom ads for each keyword phrase you bid on and create landing pages accordingly.
- Target your ad using qualifiers and you can avoid unwanted clicks. Use brand names, locations etc to get more relative traffic. Try to fill the gap between existing solution and desired needs.
- It's advisable for new advertisers to start up with higher bids. Initially you need to know where the clicks are coming from. If you start with lower bids, the CTR will reduce.
- If the performance of your ad is poor i.e. you are not receiving any clicks, try to better you position by increasing the bidding amount. Lower position means less click-throughs and may be cancelled by Google.
- ROI is more important than CTR, meaning actual sale is more important than clicks.
- Tracking user behavior is essential in online advertising. Users can react in many ways such as just navigating a site, subscribing to a newsletter, downloading etc. AdWords provide all this data, which can be used in further research.

Yahoo PPC Ads

Overture introduced Pay Per click advertising to the world. Overture is now acquired by Yahoo! and working as a search marketing solution arm of Yahoo! With the first ever PPC program, Overture showed the way of making money for search engines.

Yahoo PPC Ads System:

Unlike Google, Yahoo has defined its minimum level for every single aspect of advertising. Their minimum cost per click is .10 cents.

Ad positioning in Yahoo is purely based on bidding the amount. Yahoo does not consider the click through rate while positioning your ad on SERP and doesn't consider click volume when determining an ad's position in search results.

In recent developments, Yahoo started deactivating ads with poor click through rate. However their critical click through volume is lower than Google.

Why should one go for Yahoo PPC program:

A PPC campaign is all about words and keywords. It is the only tool by which you can attract your customer. The more you explain in the ad the more conversion rates you can expect.

And this is where Yahoo has an edge over Google. Yahoo allows title tags up to 40 characters and description up to 190 characters, while Google allows 25 characters in title and 70 characters in description. Longer copy in the Yahoo ad allows advertisers to more carefully qualify their clicks. This can eventually improve conversion rates from Yahoo clicks.

Yahoo's network consists of Yahoo, MSN, CNN, AltaVista and Infospace, which means you, might reach up to 80% of all Internet users. But since Yahoo offers a monthly budget system, it can create a negative impression among advertisers as Google is offering daily budgets. Therefore, on Yahoo if your monthly budget expires before 10th of the month, your ad won't appear for the remaining days or until you refill your account.

You can place exact bids and know right away what your rank will be. If you want to appear in Yahoo! top three results, you must have one of the top three bid positions. There is an auto bidding feature that allows Yahoo to handle your bids automatically.

Yahoo also offers a keyword search volume reporting tool that helps find keywords that are actually used. Jimtools.com offers a combined volume/price comparison service that is very handy.

Yahoo PPC System and Tips:

In Google AdWords, ads are added automatically whereas in Yahoo human editors review your keywords and your site. You may bid on a search term only if the web site has substantial content that is clearly reflective of the search term. Also Yahoo asks their advertiser to rewrite the ad if they are not receiving proper click through and the landing page for visitors must be according to the query phrase.

They may or may not allow you to bid on misspelled words either and tend to reject three or four word phrases that don't have sufficient search volume from searchers. Although they don't have minimum click through requirements, you could end up spending money repeatedly

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on losing phrases. On the other hand, some phrases may have a very low click through rate, yet still produce some good sales. That's in contrast to Google AdWords where you may have some good sales from a .04% click through rate.

Yahoo will reject superlatives in your titles or descriptions that tend to make the listing appear matter of fact. There is no keyword exclusion option which means your site will come up in irrelevant searches.

While advertising on Yahoo you must make sure that the site is not framed, as you can't directly connect to the inner pages. If you bid several related phrases then your ad might appear multiple times on the same page. Also make your landing page according to the promise you made in the advert. If you are offering free white papers then don't ask your visitors to subscribe to your site or else mention it in the ad. If you don't offer detailed information and easy navigation your conversion rate will go down.

Other PPC Advertising Resources

With the growth PPC advertising has seen in the last few years, additional services have appeared to help advertisers simplify the management of different PPC ad programs.

There are other PPC advertising programs available such as Enhance Interactive, e-Pilot, Kanoodle, e-spotting, ePilot and Search123.

Shopping Search Engines:

Shopping search engines have become popular destinations for consumers.
To list some:

- Froogle which charges a price per click-through from their search function offers a great place for selling products online.
- Yahoo's Product Submit charges from 20 cents to 50 cents per click. You'll have to create and upload a list of your products, called a product feed. If you sell products, this is one of the most valuable locations to sell.
- Shopping.com has a merchant program where it charges anywhere from 15 cents to 1 dollar per click. This site also offers good exposure to product shoppers.
- Bizrate offers a variation on the fixed bidding scheme of the other shopping search engines by allowing merchants to bid on top rankings.

- MySimon is the winner of "Forbes Favorite" and "Best Internet Shopping Service" Eppy awards, is a prime Net shopping engine.
- Kelkoo comparison shopping search engine has a strong market share in Europe, which is why it was purchased by Yahoo. You can bid on top placement for your products and appear across the European market.

PPC Bid Management

If you use all of the available pay per click advertising programs, it can become a headache to manage your bids without spending all of your time. There are services that can add greater functionality for your AdWords and Yahoo campaigns, allowing you to do things they don't offer.

Two companies lead the way in, PPC bid management programs. Atlas One Point provides an all-in-one interface for managing PPC bids. Formerly called Go Toast, they offer a free 14 day trial of their service which includes bid management and campaign optimization.

BidRank is another useful automate pay-per-click search engine management tool that takes the pain out of PPC bid management. BidRank will check and change your PPC bids according to your preferred ranking. You can set target ranks and bid maximums based on time of day and/or day of week. Basically the primary settings are used when inside the times that you have specified and the secondary settings take effect when outside of those times.

Other Useful PPC Advertising Resources

Clicktracks offers a PPC tracking and reporting feature for any PPC campaign. It can even help you calculate important e-metrics such as return on cost, return on keyword phrase for each search engine. You can compare your returns on paid versus organic search engine listings.

Bidding Strategies

As of now we know that bidding is what decides fate of your PPC campaign. Now let's see what aspects should be considered while bidding for keyword or key phrase. There are several

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PPC bidding strategies to apply. Each has its merit, and in some cases, may be more effective with one PPC search engine or with a set of terms. This is just not enough. There are different bidding strategies for Google and Yahoo! Their PPC programs are quite different and hence the bidding strategies also have to be different.

For example, let's suppose you're bidding on the keyword phrase "search marketing" but do not know your max CPC. One way to estimate a max CPC involves taking the top 5 bids on Yahoo and computing the average. The current bids are: $0.51, $0.50, $0.33, $0.32, $0.31. The average is 39 cents. Use that as your max CPC to begin with.

The reverse calculation is very effective to determine how much we can spend per click. Reverse calculation means; calculate the amount to be invested on the basis of revenue you are generating from clicks. Past experience, market understanding and proper research will certainly help to calculate you CPC. Let's suppose you sell SEO package for Rs.100k and your profit margin is 20%. That leaves Rs.20k of profit for each package. Also, assume that your conversion rate will be 1%. For every 100 visitors from a PPC ad, you expect 1 sale. If you have Rs.5k of ad spend to spread over 100 visitors, you have Rs.50 to spend per click.

Also you can decide on it by calculating overall online marketing budgets. If you are willing to spend 10% of revenue on website then your total ad spend is Rs.10k. The conversion rate we have calculated is 1%. Therefore with 100 clicks in mind we can spend Rs.100 per click.

As your campaign progresses and you determine your actual conversion rate, adjust the CPC accordingly.

You need to use different bidding strategies for Yahoo and Google as their programs are different. Google considers past performance and click through rate of the campaign, whereas Yahoo only considers your bidding amount. For Google, use the Yahoo bids as your starting point in the short term and reduce the bids for the long term if your CTR is high enough.

Biding for a position gives you more CTR and not the number one position. By this you can get higher ROI since top positions are very expensive. Just think of searcher's behavior. They don't have any specific query in their mind but they use different combinations of keywords they can think of. Bidding has a phenomenon that there are always some big gaps in between the bidding amounts. This is again because of race to reach to the top position. Consider a bidding scenario where biding started at the price of Rs.10. Someone else will bid Rs.11 again someone will bid Rs.12. But the point will certainly come when some aggressive bidder will bid on Rs.30 to obtain the top position without any fear of competition. This gap between Rs.12 and Rs.30 will be beneficial for us.

If you are concern about the first position only then initially bid higher and achieve it, which is very easy to do in Yahoo. And then by constant monitoring the biding you can maintain the top position. On generic keywords it is very difficult to monitor the campaign constantly as they are popular and high traffic terms. But you can do it on specific keywords, which are comparatively less competitive with higher conversion rate.

If you are biding on very specific keywords, which have less competition and low traffic, then one option is, position the advert and rely on the visitors. This strategy can be considered because, anyone who will search into such a specific query, is keenly looking for that particular information.

Sometimes you bid relative to your direct competitor's offerings and listings. If you find your direct competitor at position 3 and you have a better offering for this particular search query, bid just above your competitor, but not necessarily at the top position, thus engaging the searcher's attention with a compelling ad. Terms in this category fall into Quadrants 1 and 2 depending on how compelling the offer is once the searcher have landed on your web site. The bidding strategy works well for price and feature competitive offerings.

Google AdWords Bid Management Strategy

The most important step before bidding for any PPC program is, understanding the market value of your keywords. And best way to know it is Yahoo. But there are several bids going around for a keyword. So you can take an average of some top biding amount and can determine the market value of your keywords. If you can afford the market value you derive, use it. Otherwise, use your max CPC. That max CPC could be set for an entire ad group or for a specific keyword phrase.

Track the ad carefully for a few days. Assuming the bid is high enough and generates sufficient traffic, you should have a good idea of the CTR within a few days. If the CTR is good (at least 2%), lower the CPC and see where your ad falls in the search results. If the CTR is sufficient, lowering the CPC should not result in your ad dropping many positions. Then use trial and error method with different combinations. Run a query and observe the position. Drop the bid by some amount and check the position again. Again drop it and check it.

Follow the procedure until you remain in the top 3-4 or whatever desired position you want to be. If your ad's CTR is very good (better than 7%) you will likely be able to drop your CPC in half without a noticeable drop in ranking.

If your ad group has many keyword phrases and there's a divergence in CTR, consider creating multiple ad groups. The more tightly focused your ad group is, the lower your CPC will ultimately become as you weed out poorly performing keyword phrases. Adding negative keywords to each Google ad group will also help increase the CTR and thereby allow you to reduce your CPC.

Performance matrix:

The main aspect of PPC advertising is not exposure, but clicks and sales conversions. The click-through rate is defined as the percentage of times a paid search ad is clicked on out of the total number of paid search ad views within a given period of time.

Click-through Rate (CTR) = Click-through-s (i.e. Total Visitors) / Impressions.

Website conversion is defined as the percentage of users who visit your website and complete your primary objective (i.e. purchased a product) out of the total number of users who visit your website in a given period of time.

Website Conversion (Sales conversion) = Sales / Click-through-s (i.e. Total Visitors).

So what role does each play in understanding the effectiveness of a paid search campaign?

Standard practice among advertisers is to concentrate on writing ads that achieve a high click-through rate to send more visitor traffic to their website. Unfortunately this general assumption, "more traffic equals greater positive results", is flawed. Consider this.

Which of the click-through rate is better?

• A 20% click-through rate for a paid search ad that achieves zero sales (0% website conversion).

<center>OR</center>

• A 0.2% click-through rate for a paid search ad that achieves 10 sales (10% website conversion).

The answer is obvious. The click-through rate, especially for newly setup PPC campaigns, is relative - it is the website conversion rate resulting from visitors clicking through a particular paid search ad that defines success or failure.

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Successful paid search advertisers take a different approach. They start with the end in mind by asking, "what primary objective do I want a visitor to complete on my website?" and then they work backwards. They identify the type of visitor and buying behavior that will most likely result in a completed action (i.e. sale, registration, etc.)

In addition, they perceive their ads as automated salespeople who "qualify" visitors. Regardless of high or low click-through rates, the focus is on generating a positive return from the advertising dollars spent.

For instance, let's review two different ads. Ask yourself, which ad best qualifies visitors?

A. <u>Pride Scooters</u>
Low prices and huge selection of
scooters and other mobility equipment.

B. <u>Pride Scooters</u>
From $1850 while stock lasts.
Houston, Texas, USA.

If you selected B. you are correct.

Ad B. qualifies visitors based on their buying behaviors and customer type most likely to purchase a Pride Scooter from the business' website.

First, the ad states a price point (i.e. from $1850) to attract visitors seeking the website's premium product while disqualifying ones seeking discounted or lower-priced scooters. A user researching scooters does not have to click-through the ad to find out a general price range.

Second, the ad targets a geographic region since the majority of people who buy scooters demand an actual test ride. If the company is located in Houston, Texas then users from other locations will not feel compelled to click-through the ad. (Ideally a geographically-targeted PPC campaign, like using Google Adwords Regional-targeting, works best in this situation).

In essence, ad B's goal is to pay "per click" for only visitors most likely to purchase their product. This ad attempts to "filter" unqualified visitors thereby increasing the return on investment per click-through.

Ad A. instead spends money on attracting and generating click-through-s from all visitors and relies on the website to filter qualified versus unqualified ones. This is not a wise economical approach especially if no "visitor exit strategies" are pursued.

Last, successful paid search advertisers rely on testing different ads to determine which appeal generates the best website conversion for a particular keyword. They rely on actual visitor feedback to help them determine which appeals are most effective. Once a positive return is achieved then focus is shifted to increasing the click-through rate for the best converting keywords so more sales can be realized.

So "Are you spending money to bring just anybody to your website or visitors ready to buy from you?" Think about it. Is your Paid Search Advertising Generating Positive Financial Results for your website?

Targeting Usage Demographics to Increase Paid Search Conversions

Targeting the campaign to the proper target audience is very important in terms of conversion rate. Website conversion is when a visitor takes action on your website after clicking through your ad. It is important because it leads to financial results for your web business and generates a return on your advertising spend (ROI).

On internet and for PPC ads, to be very precise, we can target the audience geographically and demographically. Targeting through ads is another part. First we should study the demographic profile of search engine's users.

User demographic profile study means why visitor chose one search engine over other. It could be because of the functionality, relevance and many other factors that user can perceive and prefer one search engine over other. If you can research into user demographics of Google and Yahoo then you can create message accordingly and increase your ROI.

To study that, you must know what Google AdWords or Yahoo consists of! Though there are many sites and search engines in these networks, but very few of them are famous and most popular.

Below are the primary search engine usage demographics to consider when developing your PPC strategy:

1. Gender: Male versus Female

In the search engine world it is very often said that 'Men are from Google and women are from Yahoo! and MSN'. And it seems to be very true.

A May 2004 study by Hitwise showed that "55% of women prefer MSN Search while a majority of men favor Google Search". Yahoo! Search was split even on gender with a greater focus on people 18-34 in age.

A 2004 MarketingSherpa study indicated that MSN's user profile consisted of time-limited, married females who searched less frequently yet performed greater e-commerce searches. While Google Search was favored by professional males who performed greater news, media, entertainment and education searches with a lesser intent to purchase.

For AOL and Ask Jeeves, AOL is favored by women with less buying intent than MSN Search while Ask Jeeves is preferred by children.

Furthermore, an April 2004 iProspect study uncovered that, "women found paid ads to be more relevant than men did when searching across Google, Yahoo!, MSN and AOL." These statistics are startling when considering their influence on your PPC strategy since women represent roughly 75% of major household purchases and as stated in a Women.com study, control 80% of all purchasing decisions.

2. Relevancy: Paid versus Organic Listings

Another usage demographic to consider for your PPC strategy is "perceived relevancy" of paid versus organic listings. Ads perceived as having greater relevancy lead to higher website conversions.

The iProspect study referenced earlier also discovered that "Internet users are more likely to click on an organic search link on Google, and a paid search result on MSN." Organic listings on Yahoo! were considered 61% more relevant than paid listings while AOL was split 50/50.

3. Age: Young versus Adult versus Seniors

A third usage demographic to review is age. Preferences among the top five search engines are fairly mixed among age groups; Yahoo! is a strong favorite with 18-34 year olds; while MSN and AOL have a stronger preference among the 35-55+ age group. As stated earlier, AskJeeves is favored by teens and adolescents which is growing in their buying power within American households as stated in a recent Business Week research study.

Conclusion:

- Google and Yahoo offers the best PPC programs and always prefer them.
- Google has the greatest reach but conversion rate on Yahoo is high.
- Go for both programs simultaneously.
- Ad copy, keywords and landing page all are equally important.
- Consider customer demographics and psychographics while writing copy.
- Use relevant qualifiers to get mote targeted traffic.
- Usage data generated from your website is the best market research.
- Use keyword-level tracking systems to determine which PPC search engine generates the most cost effective and best converting visitors.

4.4   Test Questions

Select the right option:

1) In PPC programs, advertisers are paid on the basis of

    a) Number of times visitors land on the page
    b) Number of times visitors view your ad
    c) Number of times visitors click the ad
    d) Number of times visitors make a transaction on the site

2) Two major PPC programs are

    a) Google AdWords and Yahoo PPC program
    b) MSN and DMOZ PPC program
    c) MSN and Yahoo PPC program
    d) Both options (a) and (c)

3) Which of the following are important while setting up a PPC campaign

    a) Keyword selection
    b) Landing page development
    c) Ad copy
    d) All the above

4) If I want to run PPC ads, the search engines fees are based on

    a) Per keyword lump sum
    b) Per line lump sum
    c) Bidding
    d) Any of the above

5) The position of a PPC ad is first decided on the basis of

    a) Relevancy of the ad copy
    b) Keyword density
    c) Age of site
    d) Content of the site

6) Which of the following is a PPC bidding tool

    a) Atlas One Point
    b) Atlas Eight Point
    c) BidPoint Atlas
    d) Atlas Google

7) The best thing about Google's PPC or AdWords program is

    a) You can get lots of extra traffic
    b) You can get cheap bids
    c) You can quickly test keywords headlines, etc
    d) You can get extra exposure for your site

8) The advantage of PPC advertising is

    a) Maximum exposure
    b) Budget control
    c) Search engine positioning
    d) All the above

9) If I want to advertise on Google AdWords then

    a) I can invest any amount
    b) I need to invest minimum of $100
    c) I need to invest minimum of $1 a click
    d) I need to invest at least $50 CPM

10) The maximum bidding amount in the Yahoo PPC program is

    a) $10
    b) $50
    c) $0.5
    d) $100

Fill in the Blanks:

1) Minimum cost per click in Yahoo is …………..

2) Click through rate=……………………

3) In Google AdWords, ads are added …………………….. Whereas in Yahoo human editors review your keywords and your site.

4) In Yahoo titles cannot exceed ……………… characters and descriptions cannot exceed …………………….characters.

5) BidRank is another useful automated …………………… tool that takes the pain out of PPC bid management.

6) Clicktracks offers a ……………… and ………………… feature for any PPC campaign.

7) Yahoo purchased Kelkoo search engine because of its big market share in Europe. –True or False

8) Website conversion = Sales / Click throughs – True or False

9) Conversion rate is directly proportional to click through rate. – True or False

10) PPC ad campaigns should be constantly tested and monitored. – True or False

Chapter 5
SEO Monitoring

5.1   *SEO Reporting and Conversion*

SEO campaigns offer an advantage over traditional internet advertising methods, such as email campaigns, banner advertising or pay-per-click services. Search Engine marketing offers a unique promotional advantage when it comes to overall return on investment.

A well optimized page can typically deliver thousands of targeted visitors to your website every month. Unlike purchasing mailing lists or other expensive website marketing methods for higher search engine rankings, SEO allows you to deliver long term success and a better ROI.

Most of the time confusion occurs because the success of the campaign is not clearly defined. At the end of the campaign you should know that the performance would be measured on. Number of visitors or the total number of conversion i.e. actual sales made on the web site.

First thing to keep in mind is that ranking is not the only parameter to measure the success of a campaign. The success of a campaign needs to be measure on rankings, percentage of traffic from different search engines, traffic from different keywords. All of this should be considered while tracking ROI.

By measuring non-branded search traffic, we learn more about how your audience looks for you, and can further refine your campaign. There are many search engines through which you attract traffic. But most of the visitors come through big search engines like Google, Yahoo, MSN and AOL. Therefore it is very important to know which search engine is generating the kind of results you are looking for. The more traffic search engines are generating the more the ROI. Let's see how to calculate ROI for an e-commerce site.

Determining ROI for an e-commerce site is very easy as the aim of e-commerce is to make actual transactions or sell. Generally e-commerce sites sell a variety of products, hence calculate the average price of the sale, then calculate the total sales the web site is making before optimization. After the search engine optimization calculate the number of items sold. Again multiply it with the average price and you will know the actual sales figure. After calculating the difference between sales pre optimization and post optimization, you can calculate the increase in sales. Now look at the money you have invested in the SEO

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campaign. If your sales figures can recover the investment in a short period of time, you are generating a very good ROI, else not. I.e. Pre-optimization -- Average price is $100 and 100 units sold per month, the total sales are $100 x 100 = $10,000 per month. Post-SEO campaign, if sales went up to 300 units, you are earning $100 x 300= $30,000 per month.

After the SEO campaign, you are able to increase sales by 20,000 and you have invested 50,000 for the SEO campaign, then you can recover it within 2.5 months. Many companies develop different websites simply for lead generation. Not far behind from e-commerce websites with regards to the simplicity of ROI calculations are websites developed to generate leads. If the value of the generated lead is known then the ROI can be easily determined. If the lead value is not directly linked to a dollar value, a dollar value will need to be determined. Let's assume a website generates 25 leads per month pre-optimization, and each lead is valued at 50. The website was generating $1,250 per month before the search engine optimization campaign launched. Now, the website increases its leads generated to 100 per month post-optimization launch. We can then see that the search engine optimization campaign is responsible for an additional $3,750 in leads per month. If the optimization campaign cost $25,000, we can then estimate the ROI to be seen within 7 months.

Now let's see how we calculate ROI for the corporate or information sites. These are sites essentially created for information and not for generating leads or sale. Hence the conversion parameters for these sites have to be defined. Here we consider value of a customer not the money he is going to spend on our product/service.

Let's assume the website had unique 2,500 visitor sessions per month before the search engine optimization campaign was launched, and the website was converting 4% of its users. Before the SEO campaign was launched, the website was converting 100 users per month. After the campaign is launched, the website experienced increased visitor sessions up to 15,000 per month, with conversion rates increasing to 6% as a result of more targeted visitors (a very conservative increase). We can then determine that the search engine optimization campaign is directly responsible for converting an additional 800 users per month.

If we were able to determine a dollar value for each converted user, we could easily determine the campaign ROI. Let's assume that we have determined that each converted user is worth approximately $10. Using this as a base, we see that the website was generating $1,000 per month before optimization, and $9,000 post-optimization launch. The search engine optimization campaign is responsible for generating an additional $8,000 per month through converting website users. If the SEO campaign cost $25,000 for the year, we estimate that a ROI will be seen within 4 months.

There are many tracking tools available to track the performance of the campaign. If a site owner was determined to track all traffic and measure ROI, the solution would be quite costly. First of all, you're looking at a high end web analytics program such as Hitbox Enterprise or Webtrends Live. These typically cost anywhere from a few thousand to several thousand dollars a month.

5.2   *Visitor Traffic Analysis*

Often it is said that objective of SEO campaign is ranking the website in the top ten on the major search engines. But that's just one of the goals of a SEO campaign. The real objective of a SEO campaign is getting qualified traffic to your site and converting as much as possible into leads or sales.

Suppose you are an automobile company and your SEO consultant ranks you top on keywords like Auto Toys, Auto magazines and Buses, then certainly you are not going to get the desired audience or traffic. Also sometimes your site ranks top on the desired keywords but fails to deliver results in terms of sales. There could be many reasons for that.

Traffic Analysis is the evaluation of referrals from search engines based on conversion of traffic for keyword choices. The data is found in the logs using log analysis software or a customized application to cull referrer data for the site. Visitor traffic analysis helps to optimize the campaign in greater details to increase ROI. There are a number of software's available in the market that provides data in respect to the above.
The visitor traffic analysis can be done on the following parameters.

- • Traffic on keywords
- • Keywords and landing page
- • Whether the call to action was followed for conversion
- • Qualified Traffic
- • Converted traffic

Traffic on Keywords:

Knowing the details about which keywords are working well and which are not is important. Keywords can attract targeted as well as untargeted or generic traffic. Targeted traffic means people are interested in your product or the information on your site. They are looking for the information related to your industry. It may be for research or purchase. They generally use

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keywords to find the information related to your site. I.e. if they are interested in photography then they will use keywords such as wildlife photography, photographs etc. And if you are also into the same industry and use these keywords in your website, they will visit your site which is a targeted traffic. But if you are a camera manufacturer, these keywords will certainly get you irrelevant traffic.

Therefore it is necessary to select right keywords for the campaign. Also you must know the performance of every keyword. Which keyword attracted the most traffic and which has failed to attract the traffic should be known to search engine optimization consultant. Only then can we see and optimize the site further. Try to replace the non-performing keywords.

Keywords and Landing Pages:

Which keywords are directing the visitors to which pages? Try to figure out which pages are attracting more traffic and why. Include more content if it's saturated and create different pages for different products and services. This will again attract targeted traffic. Then keyword research should be planned according to pages.

Whether the call to action was followed for conversion:

Marketers expect certain activities to be done by visitors on the web site. These can be downloading stuff, registration, writing views or asking more information about the product. As an SEO consultant we must know whether the visitors are performing that activity or not. If not then try to find out the reasons behind it. There might be wrong selection of keywords or content might be not up to the mark. If we can figure out what makes the consumer leave the site, we can work on that.

Qualified Traffic:

Qualified traffic means targeted traffic. You must know the demographics and psychographics of the traffic you are getting for the client. The conversion rate will be high only if you attract qualified traffic. There are several ways to get qualified traffic such as more precise and targeted keywords, well defined keywords etc.

You must be able to find out which keywords are getting qualified visitors and which are getting general visitors. The more the qualified visitors it is more beneficial for your site.

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Converted traffic:

Conversion in terms of sales is undoubtedly the final aim of a marketer. You must track how many sales you are generating for the client. Even if you are getting huge traffic but no conversions then it's no use to the client. So track the actual sales and find out the way they are making sales.

Calculate the percentage of traffic converting into actual sales. As an SEO consultant our aim must be to increase the conversion rate for our clients and help him hit the optimal ROI mark via his search engine marketing efforts. Create value for the customer in terms of traffic, leads or customers.

5.3   *How to choose an SEO consultant*

Search engine optimization consultants provide search engine optimization services to clients who own websites and would like to achieve a beneficial ranking in search engines. Search engine optimization services include many factors such as on page optimization, off page optimization, PPC campaigns, link building, site restructuring and lots more.

SEO consultants use different approaches and strategies to optimize the site. Different strategies need to be used for different search engines. The ultimate aim of search engine consultants is to achieve higher rankings for the client's web site.

You should know what the job liabilities of an SEO consultant are. An SEO consultant's job starts with website research. They then research keywords and finalize a list of certain keywords of which they think will generate maximum and relevant traffic to the client's site. Content building is another aspect of the search engine optimizer. Clients either provide the content or consultants write it and place keywords in the content. Placement of the right keywords with good density is a very important part of the SEO consultant's job. Making changes in the site's HTML coding is very important as well. These changes are done in Meta tags, anchor tags, Meta keyword and description tags etc. Site submission to directories and search engines are another job of the SEO. The theme specific sites and search engines needs to be researched. Submitting the site to specific as well as popular search engines is very important. Finally tracking the performance of the site is also the responsibility of the SEO consultant.

Choosing the right Search Engine Optimization consultant can decide the success or failure of your online marketing activity. The results of this activity determine who actually finds your site, and in what context.

The ethical SEO consultants are always preferable. Those with proven track records have an added advantage because they have results to show and prove them right. But it is not necessary that if they have succeeded in the past, they will produce same kind of results for your site. The industry is so volatile that no one can guarantee you success. You must weed out the sharks and unethical consultants from the reputable ones. A good idea is to hire a consultant who is "SEO Certified". To search for an "SEO Certified Professional" or SEO Certified Company", visit www.SEOcertification.org

While a lot of companies/individuals offer SEO as a service, very few people understand what's really involved (and the position of the search engine engineer requires no set credentials), so it's very hard to choose the right contractor. There are also many businesses or organizations that cannot afford the professional level of service and guidance they require.

The first thing to consider is the importance of hiring an ethical SEO specialist. SEO ethics is not just about being nice little boy scouts. An ethical SEO specialist will make sure your website is not penalized or even banned from the search engines.

Beware of guarantees promising top rankings. A reputable freelance SEO specialist or SEO firm will not provide a guarantee, because much is out of his control. Nobody knows the search engine algorithms. SEO is simply an educated guess based on what's worked in the past for others. A lawyer cannot guarantee you will win your case. The star witness could die or leave town, the judge might be in a really bad mood, and the other lawyer might be a whiz. Some so-called consultants may get you a top placement in the short term, but ultimately get your site banned forever. Find out exactly what on-page and off-page SEO strategies they use.

Lookout for search engine spam, steer clear of anyone using these tactics. Ask around on popular SEO forums if the person is known. See if they contribute to the community through posts, newsletters, etc. It shouldn't take much time at all to see who's real and who's a scam artist. To make sure you are hiring an ethical SEO specialist, always check that he has a physical address posted on his website. Do ask that instead of paying for a guaranteed ranking, you can pay some up front and the rest when you achieve the rankings. Most reputable SEO specialists will ask for only 1/3 to ½ of the payment up front. Some will bill in arrears. This is a fair strategy. SEO is a risk so it's fair to pay some non-refundable money up-front just for the labor. That is a sign that he is less likely to disappear.

It is important to ask an SEO specialist about his methods before hiring him. Combine quality content and a performance based agreement with a solid, reputable SEO company and you'll probably get the results you're looking for. Using dirty tricks, called "black hat SEO", your website will rank high initially, but after some time it is more likely to be banned by the search engine.

Another scam is to guarantee placement within a short period of time, and to buy pay-per-click ad space. Pay-per-click ads appear as "sponsored" listings in the search engines. While they will attract some targeted traffic, only 40% of Internet searchers click on the sponsored listings. Worse, they are temporary listings that end when the account is depleted.

A similar scam that some SEO specialists get into is to place temporary links on their own sites or buy paid advertising links on other sites. Once the money is paid, they remove the links on their own sites, and once the ads expire on other sites, your site loses those links and rankings also fall.

5.4 Test Questions

Select the right Option:

1) The success of an SEO campaign can be measured in

    a) Rankings
    b) Number of visitors to the site
    c) Actual sales on the site
    d) Number of incoming links
    e) All of the above

2) The visitor traffic analysis is done on the following

    a) Traffic on keywords
    b) Traffic on website
    c) Traffic in the network
    d) Traffic on search engine

3) Qualified traffic means

    a) Educated traffic
    b) Targeted traffic
    c) Permitted traffic
    d) None of the above

4) Conversion equals

    a) Sales
    b) Inquiries
    c) Registrations
    d) All of the above

5) The SEO's who guarantee the number one ranking in search engines are

    a) Unethical
    b) Ethical
    c) Over Confident
    d) Highly trustworthy

6) Before selecting an SEO consultant you must ask for

    a) The structure of payment
    b) Ranking guarantee
    c) The status of current algorithm
    d) Past experience

7) The final aim of any marketer is

    a) Increase brand loyalty
    b) Increase number of clicks on the PPC ads
    c) Sales conversions
    d) Attract traffic to the website

8) Landing page means

    a) Home page
    b) Index page
    c) The linked page where customer arrives after clicking on the ad or listing
    d) None of the above

9) You need to use ……………. to attract qualified traffic

10) Traffic Analysis is the evaluation of referrals from search engines based on traffic for keyword choices.

11) Using dirty tricks, called ……………., your website will rank high initially, but after some time it is more likely banned by the search engine.

Chapter 6
Latest Concepts

6.1 Emerging Trends in SEO

Blog Optimization

Blog is a user-generated website with journal style entries that are displayed in reverse chronological order. Generally, blogs offer information about a particular subject and in some cases they are like personal diaries. A blog consists of text, images and links to other web pages, blogs and media related to its topic. Most blogs are textual while some other focus on picture and are part of a wider network of social media. Blog optimization helps in for better search engine results.

Blog optimization can be done in a variety of ways.

Simple content: One of the best ways to optimize a blog is to keep the content simple. You can start by making one good quality content and use variations of the topic to sustain interest in the topic.

Search engine submission: Have as much content on the blog as possible. Search engines always prefer bigger sites over small ones; this will also help with generating more visitors and back links to your content. Like any website, a blog's URL has to be submitted to search engines for indexing.

Keywords: Identify popular keywords and target them as this offers the blog owner an edge over other competitors. A thorough keyword research helps you identify what people are looking for. Some blog software have plug-ins that suggest keywords for you, or use Google Suggest, Digital Point and Google AdWords Keyword tool to help you in this process.

Remember, prudence has to be maintained while deciding the frequency of the keyword usage; all keywords should make sense wherever they are used.

Optimize your Blog template: Check that the post titles appear in the title tag and you append the title tag (hard code) with an important phrase of your blog. The blog post title should be used as a permalink.

Regular Updates: Regular updates help in regular indexing of the website. The blog should be fresh and new information should be added regularly. The quality of the content should be good and maintained consistently. Remember that a creative, well meaning content is always preferred over useless clutter by any web surfer. Offer value to the reader if you want your blog to be taken seriously.

Advantages of Blog Optimization:

- Blog optimization helps to increase rankings of the blog on regular and blog/RSS search engines. This facilitates the SEO optimization process.
- Helps increase traffic to the blog from different sources that include social search (Yahoo, MyWeb, Google, Personalized Search) and social bookmarking sites (del.icio.us, Furl, Digg, Blogmarks). Once the blog is created, submit it to RSS and Blog directories. You can also submit the blog to regular directories that have categories for blogs such as DMOZ, JoeAnt, MSN Business Central, Go Guides etc.

Content Duplication in SEO

With the arrival of the Internet, organizations have a new medium for promoting their business and products. This led to the emergence of search engine optimization which is now leading the internet world. If you have just finished building your website then the next task on hands is its optimization. Search engine optimization is the best way to promote your business worldwide and attract visitors and customers. Unfortunately some people suffer huge losses during this process as they get penalized on various search engines because of content duplication.

Content duplication is something which is very common nowadays and has raised many questions. In general, content duplication is nothing but the presence of the same content on two different websites. These sites are known as mirror websites. In order to curb content duplication various search engines have started penalizing websites for having the same content. This is the reason why many websites and web pages don't show up in search engine results.

With duplicate content there is no guarantee as to which page will show in search results and which won't. Moreover, duplication of content also means that some sites and some pages are not indexed by search engines at all. Websites carrying duplicate content never get indexed and will vanish from the search engines index.

Search Engines checking for Content Duplication

There are various places where search engines see duplicate content. Few of the popular ones are:

1. *Product descriptions and manuals*: The first and foremost place is the product descriptions from various manufacturers, publishers and producers. This usually occurs on large ecommerce sites. When one or more website offers the same products, they tend to use the same descriptions. This is nothing but content duplication.

2. *Alternative print pages*: This is something which is unknown to many website owners. There are various websites offering the same content on different pages that may be formatted for printers.

3. *Pages that use duplicate syndicated RSS feeds*: When RSS feeds from various websites are reproduced on other pages in addition to the original source website. This appears to be duplicate content as the text which is being displayed using server side includes is presented as html on the pages.

4. *Canonicalization reasons*: This is a new term to the world of content duplication. Herein a search engine may locate the same page as different pages with different URLs. This is why it is also known as a "canonical URL".

5. *Article submission or syndication*: For optimizing reasons, many site owners create articles and for popularizing offer them others for linking and attribution to the original source is made. This is at times tagged as content duplication by various search engines.

6. *Mirrored websites*: In content duplication this is the most widely used method. It has been seen that when a website becomes popular and busy people tend to look for an alternative. This is when they create a mirror website and the mirrored website carries the same data or content.

Many popular websites have used mirror sites in the past and for this they often use multiple servers and load balancing techniques. Unfortunately search engines can easily detect duplicated URL structures of mirrored websites.

Ill effects of Duplicity

If you are facing difficulties with the web pages of your site showing up in search engines, if they are shown as *supplemental results* or even if they seem to be *disappearing from the index* of a search engine, then content duplication is the issue that is harming the pages of your website.

CraigsList

Craigslist is a centralized network of urban communities on the internet that features free classified advertisements. These advertisements include housing, jobs, personals, for sale/wanted services, resumes and forums etc. The ads are in a sorted format under various topics.

Craig Newmark founded Craigslist in 1995 for the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1999, Craigslist expanded in nine more cities in 2000. Until November 2006 Craigslist was established in 450 cities all over the world, with a staff of 22 people. Revenue is generated with the help of paid jobs in different cities. Craigslist allows you to search and post advertisements free of charge except job listings in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Unlike ebay or other classified sites that charge fees, advertisers can place free listings that target a specific region or city.

Craigslist Statistics

As per Craigslist facts sheet on craigslist.org, Craigslist serves over 5 billion page views every month. It has roughly around 15 million unique visitors and over 12 million new classified ads each month.

Benefits offered by Craigslist:

- Craigslist is an affordable advertising option for marketers. Most postings on the website are free except when you are posting a job listing in Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York.

- Craigslist allow marketers to reach a wide array of people. As Craigslist is a popular site, by advertising here traffic to a particular website greatly increases thus allowing for large audience reach.
- Advertising on Craigslist is a good option as compared to other traditional advertising sources, as it allows people to look for specific items and services in a specific category.

How to post Your Ad on Craigslist

Posting your ad on Craigslist is very easy but while doing this keep in mind that a simple design is more suitable as it is more in align to the Craigslist community will be most effective. For best results the ads should be posted in the most relevant category. The ad should be concise, accurate, without any grammatical and punctuation errors and legitimate. Studying the terms and conditions of Craigslist immensely contributes in creating good ads. Answering ads seeking the desired products or services increases interactivity and is also a good way to generate business.

It is a convenient place to shop at and has a user friendly interface that offers easy navigation. Local listings help in obtaining information about various products and services available in the area.

Craigslist facts as per Craigslist factsheet on craigslist.org

Q: What is Craigslist?
A: Craigslist is a local community classifieds and forums. A place where you can find jobs, housing, community information, goods & services, social activities, advice, etc. all for free, and in a relatively non-commercial environment.

Q: How was Craigslist started?
A: Craig Newmark started it in San Francisco, California.

Q: How much traffic does Craigslist receive?
A: It receives more than 5 billion page views per month.

Q: How many people are using Craigslist?
A: More than 15 million people are using Craigslist each month.

Q: How many classified ads does Craigslist receive?
A: More than 12 million new classified ads each month.

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Q: How many Craigslist discussion forums are there?
A: There are about 50 million user postings in more than 100 topical forums.

Q: Who is the CEO of Craigslist?
A: Jim Buckmaster has been craigslist's president & CEO since late 2000.

How to do Branding with SEO

Branding is one of the foremost objectives of marketers all over the world. Most of the mega companies spend millions of dollars on branding and advertising campaigns. This huge spending on advertising budgets has changed since the arrival of Internet and its use as an advertising and promotional medium. Since the realization that search engine listings drive large volumes of traffic to various websites, Search Engine Optimization became an integral online marketing strategy.

As compared to advertising that is known to interrupt consumer behavior, search engine users actively seek information and are therefore driven towards its source. The SERP (Search engine results page) listings add function as a text ad and are non-intrusive.

Why branding is important?

Proper branding helps the customer identify a particular business. Good branding helps the brand as the business is able to bring in loyal customers and maintain existing customer relationships. The main aim of search engine optimization is to drive targeted traffic to the marketer's website which results to lead generation as well as online and offline conversions. Branding is also an important function of SEO and should be conveniently utilized for building a brand.

The working mechanism of Search Branding

When you index a website, search engine uses the website's Title and Description to create the text link, which appears in the SERP's. The title and description actually work as an advertisement for your website, when the users view your search engine listing. Every time the user views the listing in the SERPs, it results in branding.

Branding in SEO

Search Engine optimization aims at increasing website traffic by better Search Engine listings. This is done with the help of keywords that are strategically placed in the website content. The selection of the keywords holds the key as most searched keywords or keyword phrases are instrumental in driving traffic to the client website. If keywords are selected that have the brand name, then they can help in the branding process too. Therefore promotion of the brand will depend on the selection of relevant keywords and its proper usage.

Podcasting

If you belong to the techie crowd then you must have heard the latest buzz surrounding podcasting. *Podcasting is an online audio content or file which is easily delivered through a RSS feed. Podcasting is something which is usually used for informational content, promotional clips and interviews of music bands, talk shows for providing investor news, sportscasts, news coverage, commentaries and even story telling for children or the visually-impaired.*

Generally podcasting works on the same ground as a standard RSS feed reader or news aggregator. The only difference is that the feed you subscribe to contains an audio file in instead.

Currently, many people prefer podcasting to radio on demand but podcasting gives far more options in terms of content and programming in comparison to radio. Furthermore, podcasting listeners can decide what programming they want to receive and also when they want to listen to it. In short, listeners can save audio archives to listen to at their leisure.

Recently blogs have now turned many bloggers into journalists and podcasting carries the same potential as it can turn podcasters into radio personalities. According experts, podcasting is nothing but the simple syndication of audio files using RSS. Instead of reading the content you can simplify the contents of your feed using a reader or aggregator that supports podcasting. Nowadays, podcasts are flaunted on websites with simple clickable links to audio files.

Benefits of podcasting to the subscriber:

   • User can easily receive the information they like, and listen to it whenever they want.

- You can download the material which can be listened or even viewed on wireless handhelds, allowing subscribers to utilize time on the road.
- This fresh and new technology has opened various avenues for entrepreneurs as users find more creative audio content for delivery.
- Podcasting is highly beneficial in terms of education as the listener can hear educational tutorials and foreign language instructions during a work commute.

This innovative technology is getting popular among users as finally it's the subscriber that maintains control and determines what podcasts are deemed successful. Moreover, this inherently builds a quality control level which ensures that only the most modern, instructional and interesting podcast feeds will survive.

Podcasting Software:

There are software to create, edit and publish podcasts to a website. Few of the popular ones are as follows:

- **FeedForAll:** This software easily creates edits, manages and publishes podcasts and RSS feeds. FeedForAll Mac also supports namespace extensions for iTune attuned podcasts.
- **AudioBlogger:** Through AudioBlogger you can easily post any audio to your blog from your phone. All you need to do is just dial a number and speak and your audio will automatically be posted for you.
- **Replay Radio:** Replay Radio helps you record hundreds of radio broadcasts from all over the world. Herein you can listen on your PC, CD Player or MP3 Player, and even skip over the ruffle.
- **MixCraft:** MixCraft allows you to record and mix music for podcasts. In short, you can produce podcasts editing the audio for just a fraction of the cost.
- **TextAloud:** TextAloud is an instant podcast with easy text to speech software. Just type or paste in text, and save as an MP3 for instant podcasting.

Podcasts are gaining momentum and are here to stay for the long run. Owning a podcast keeps you ahead of the competition and by making it as unique as possible you will definitively stand out from the crowd.

RSS Feed Optimization

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a list of a website's with new or updated content. It was developed to allow different news services for syndication of content by displaying links, articles summaries and headlines on other web sites.

Technological Insight of RSS:

Dedicated software called news aggregators is used to create RSS feeds. The simplest way to create an RSS feed is to use a software such as FeedForAll.

RSS is a lightweight XML format designed to share headlines and other web content with other web sites. It was started by UserLand in 1997 and was later used by Netscape to fill channels for Netcenter. RSS feed was evolved to share content between sites that included BBC, CNN, Disney, CNET, Forbes, Motley Fool, Red Herring, Salon, ZDNet and many more. RSS helps solve some of the major problems faced by webmasters today such as increasing traffic, gathering and distributing news.

RSS Syntax:

To create an RSS document, you have to save it in the .xml extension. Once this is done, upload the file to your website. The next step is to register with an RSS aggregator. The function of the aggregator is to search the registered websites for RSS documents. It also verifies the link and displays the information about the RSS feed so that customers are able to link to documents that interests them.
RSS documents use a self-describing and simple syntax. Document example:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="ISO-8859-1" ?>
<rss version="2.0">
<channel>
<title>XYZSchools Home Page</title>
<link>http://www.xyzschools.com</link>
<description>Free web building tutorials</description>
<item>
<title>RSS Tutorial</title>
<link>http://www.xyzschools.com/rss</link>
<description>New RSS tutorial on W3Schools</description>
</item>
<item>
<title>XML Tutorial</title>
```

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```
<link>http://www.xyzschools.com/xml</link>
<description>New XML tutorial on xyzSchools</description>
</item>
</channel>
</rss>
```

The first line is the XML declaration which defines the XML version along with the character encoding used in the document. The next line is the RSS declaration that identifies that this document is an RSS document. The following line contains the <channel> element. This element describes the RSS feed. It has three required child elements:

<title> - It defines the title of the channel.

<link> - It defines the link to the channel.

<description> - It describes the channel.

The <channel> element has one or more <item> elements.

Each <item> element defines a 'story' or an article in the RSS feed.

The <item> element has three required child elements title, link and description.

<title> - It defines the title of the item.

<link> - It defines the link of the item.

<description> - It describes the item.

The last two lines close the <channel> as well as <rss> elements.

Once the RSS text file is created and validated, register the site at various aggregators and your RSS feed is now available. When updating the file, all sites subscribing to your feed will automatically get updated.

Benefits of RSS for your website:

- Helps in improving search engine rank and increasing traffic from search engine
- It is one of the fastest ways to invite spiders to your website
- It is an innovative way to attract customers to your website
- You get fresh, keyword rich content for your website and as a result your website is regularly updated

RSS feeds are read by people who want to keep themselves updated with their favorite websites. The feeds help compare prices and availability of various products. It is also a good way to subscribe to a newsletter without worrying about spamming of their web addresses.

SEO & PPC Tools for Google

Amongst all search engines the most popular and sought after is Google. Hence the present article is written for exploring the subject - SEO and PPC tools for Google. Nowadays SEO and PPC go hand in hand and even complement each other. This is the reason why according to various SEO experts, no SEO campaign is complete without the actual use of PPC campaigns. The best keyword generation tools are:

1. Google Keyword Tool: The first and foremost tool is Google's Keyword Tool. This famous tool is not only free but very popular.

Benefits:
- It shows 12 months of historical search trends.
- It can analyze a page or website and automatically recommend keywords.
- Google's keyword tool has the largest search user base, and thus offers great keyword depth.
- It gives an estimated cost, competition level, and suggests potential negative keywords.
- The biggest benefit is that it is easy to export your list as an XLS spreadsheet.

Negatives:
- Google's keyword tool is well integrated into the AdWords system. Hence your competitors could bid on those same keywords as you do.
- It has been seen that search engines may desire to show you terms which offer the highest prices, instead of the highest search volumes.
- Estimates are exceptionally irregular.

2. Google Suggest: Next to follow is Google Suggest which is also gaining popularity.

Benefits:
- Google Suggest is not free but quick and easy to use.
- Google's huge database of search activity to grab this data from.
- Google's Toolbar generally auto updates and they added Google Suggest as a function directly to the toolbar in Google Toolbar 4 beta. Moreover, they also have created a FireFox Google Suggest extension.

Negatives:
- Google Suggest normally only shows up to 10 terms for any search term and do not give any sort of search volume estimates.

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- It only shows terms that specifically starts with the letter sequence you type, thus it will not help you find related searches that have modifiers before the core term.
- Similar to other Google products it never shows a clear result and how data is organized.

3. Google Keyword Sandbox: Another service offered by Goggle.

Benefits:
- Google Keyword Sandbox is free, quick and easy to use.
- In addition to showing exact search terms, it also presents many related search terms and potential modifiers.
- Google has access to more search data than any other company.

Negatives:
- Since Google is the largest search engine many people may use Google Keyword Sandbox and bid up these terms.
- Google Keyword Sandbox does not share specifics on how it gathers this data or what it means to you.

Whatever one says, Google has a highly useful keyword research tool within their AdWords interface ones you log in. This AdWords interface automates keyword research based on entering a URL or site. Moreover, it allows you to find related keywords based on words you enter or words that are already in your account. By using all of the mentioned tools I believe you can surely boost your business.

SEO & ROI

The Internet has made online commerce more pervasive and this is the reason why it has become the most popular channel for increasing business. Nowadays people focus more on getting better ROI from technology investments. People in the field of search engine marketing are feeling the peer pressure on how to justify their products by claiming they can improve ROI. The bottom-line in any web based business is the ROI and that's the reason many discussions on Internet ROI are only focused around a single sub-topic.

Getting ROI can be the toughest deal to crack and sometimes gives painful lessons to SEO's who are trying to understand the real ROI impact of their decisions. Many SEO's attempt to demystify ROI by presenting a clear framework for decision making.

In SEO calculating the ROI of a move to online selling and promotion requires a lot of analysis and comparison on how your total technology and promotion cost per sale stacks up against customer calculations. For instance the payback period of your technology investment is approximately one year. To make your ROI calculation easier now you can find various tools and ROI calculators to determine the exact return on investment.

For calculating ROI all you need are seven data and core points which are as follows:

- The exact lifetime value of your customer.
- Your actual search engine optimization campaign budget.
- Total length of your SEO campaign.
- Calculating the aggregated monthly estimated including search volume of all your keywords.
- The expected click through rate you expect based on rankings you obtain.
- Conversion rate of visitors that click through to your website.
- The rough percentage of leads that you usually convert to sales.

However, if you are thinking of doing this on your own, there is a very good process which can easily determine your ROI and you can decide whether Search Engine Optimization is going to provide your business with value in return for your efforts.

Firs calculate the sum of all "Searches" to get the Total Monthly numbers for your most "relevant" search terms. Once you have this data simply multiply the Monthly Searches by 2. After the multiplication you get a rough estimate of total Monthly Searches for the terms that represent potential leads for your business. This rough estimate of factoring can be either done outside the Yahoo network on search engines like Google and countless other search engines.

After this multiply the Total Monthly Searches Number by 5%. This will give you the Estimated Number of Clicks/Visitors your search engine listing will receive if your website is in a top ten position. (Always remember that 5% is the standard industry metric for estimating clicks from a top search engine position). Now multiply the Estimated Number of Clicks by Your Visitor to Lead Ratio. That ratio can be 2.5%. And finally you have your estimated Leads. Once knowing you estimated leads multiply them by your current Lead to Sale ratio and you will get Actual Sales.

After knowing your actual sales, multiply that number by the Average Sale Price. If your business model includes repeat buying then the average life of the client is directly into the Average Sale Price equation.

The mathematics formula is:

Monthly Yahoo Searches x (2) = Monthly Searches
x (5% Click Through Rate CTR) = Visitors
x (2.5% Visitor to Sales Ratio) = Contacts / Leads
x (5% Lead to Sale Ratio) = Sales Units
x ($20,000 Average Sale) = $??.?? Monthly Sales
x 3 Years = $ ROI

In other words, it is amazing how many different ways people search for essentially the same thing. However, targeting one or two particular phrases will only let you tap a fraction of the potential audience. Search engine optimization is nothing but all about being listed in the top results when a potential customer is looking for answers. And for that you want to be one of those answers!

SEO - Present and its future

Search Engine Optimization is considered a subset of search engine marketing and is used to improve the number or quality of visitors to a website from "organic" search results. SEO programs are based on certain amounts of market research, consumer profiling and competitive analysis.

Present SEO scenario

In the past Search engine optimization dealt with adjusting meta tags, headers, titles & page text etc. for prominent search engine ranking. In the present scenario they involve SEO techniques that deliver semantically correct as well as logically marketed and well written website content. This type of content is preferred by Search Engine and is readily retrieved by them.

- Every web page is created in HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) as it helps define page structure and contain the essential page elements. We are witnessing a trend where the shift towards the use of XHTML ('X' standing for eXtensible).
- A neatly constructed page utilizes specific tags that have a considerable part in the visibility of the page within the SERPs and express the relevancy to Search Engine algorithms.

- Title and description as well as headings are used to summarize the web content and have strategically placed keywords and keyword phrases. While using keywords care should be taken that they are used carefully and overuse is avoided at all cost. Generally 3% to 7% keyword density is the usually followed norm depending on the type of the market.

Limitations of the present system

At times well optimized page content may not be indexed properly, especially dynamic pages. These pages are configured and delivered instantly dependent on the user selection parameters. The pages are programmed with the help of ASP, PHP, Cold Fusion, Perl etc.

Future of SEO

In the near future SEO will witness some important changes and innovative technologies will follow.

- Decrease in the importance of algorithm based search.
- Wikipedia has launched its own search engine 'wikiasari', the people powered search engine. The characteristic feature of this search engine will be that search is based on human editorial judgments. This is a revolutionary development as it will lead to prominence to "white hat" SEO techniques.
- The Search Engine will work on open source software.
- Link Exchange will receive lesser importance.
- Local search will gain more significance.
- Vertical search engines will emerge on the SEO horizon.
  In this type of search the Search Engine will focus entirely on a particular domain.
- The credibility of PPC (Pay per Click) advertisement will decrease.
- LSI will gain importance.

Search engines are trying to optimize themselves for the comfort of the end user and these proposed changes will go a long way in improvements towards SEO tools and Search Engine Optimization results.

Wiki Article Inclusion

Wiki article inclusion has gained a lot of popularity and importance. Nowadays, the majority of SEO's make sure that they incorporate Wiki article inclusion in their SEO campaign. This method is highly responsive and also fetches high search engine ranking.

All you have to do is submit the information you think needs to be propagated. Ones this information is submitted it can be edited updated and even refurnished. The main aim of any change is that search engine crawlers treat any change as refurnish of the page and thus, indexing occurs. In the SEO world continuous indexing means high ranking on search engines. This is the main reason many SEO's make sure they don't miss Wiki article inclusion at any cost.

Benefits of Wiki article Inclusion:

There are various benefits attached with Wiki article inclusion but few prominent ones are as follows:

- You can easily propagate any message or information to people instantly without much hassles and barriers.
- In Wikipedia the name of an article is embedded in the hyperlink which ultimately boosts the ranking of the linked website.
- Wiki article inclusion provides maximum audience exposure and fetches instant audience reaction.
- Any editing and additions are treated as fresh information which attracts search engine crawlers.
- Writing keyword rich content when going for Wiki article inclusion will ultimately help you in getting good search engine ranking.
- Writing in different languages you can target and capture audiences and viewers from different countries.
- If you update the published information regularly it will automatically help your targeted website or targeted business.

Disadvantages of Wiki article Inclusion:

Despite having so many benefits and advantages it also carries a few disadvantages such as:

- This method is highly vulnerable as anyone at any point of time can change or edit the information.
- Any irrelevant information at times can ruin the whole purpose of the exact information. Being easily accessible and highly vulnerable, people at times don't rely on this mode of information and the information provided.
- People play with the information by adding content which does not match with the information provided.

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- Many readers purposely delete the important information so that the targeted message never reaches the audience.

Whatever may be the situation the majority of SEO's will still bank upon Wiki article inclusion and treat it as an important SEO technique.

The New Buzz in Video Optimization - YouTube

The latest addition made in search engine optimization techniques is YouTube optimization. Yes, you read right; YouTube optimization has emerged as one of the latest SEO techniques which has taken the SEO world with a stride. But instead of YouTube optimization it is known *video search optimization*. Earlier this technique was discarded by many SEO's as they thought it wasn't too effective and not catchy with the audience. However, they are now proved wrong as the majority of SEO's use YouTube optimization techniques for getting top ranking.

Just a few years go, optimizing any website wasn't a tough task and with little yet precise Meta information anyone was capable enough to get top ranking. But now this scenario has changed and if you are going for optimizing your videos, you ought to have a concrete strategy to have an advantage over your competition.

Everyone knows that video is the best and coolest medium. It scores well over any other medium whether it is print, audio or at times web. However, you need to be smart and intelligent enough when going video optimizing as only then it will put you at a significant advantage over those that aren't. It takes some time if you are going to do video or YouTube optimization and prior to that you need to have a plan to solve your purpose. For that you need to know the answer to the following questions:

1. What kind of video you want to make?
2. What will be the purpose of that video?
3. Where will you submit that video?
4. What exact information do you need and want to convey?

If you are able to answer these questions then your success is guaranteed and you can save time and money. Ones you get the answers to these questions the next task is to create an accurate *Meta toolkit*. A Meta toolkit is very important in video optimization and it this gives you a picture stating out on how big your video will be by identifying the exact keywords and

also the format used. All these points play an important role in video search engine optimization. Video Meta information carries targeted keywords and phrases. Makes sure the keywords you choose will be eloquent of the content in the video.

Apart from that, the drafted Meta information should also be included during the video encoding. Moreover, don't forget to incorporate the video's genre, copyright information, description, keywords and title in the Meta information. Ones the video is shot, your next task in hands is deciding what price tag to attach with the video and how publishers should charge? There are various websites offering video submission but some of the more popular ones are:

Singing Fish: First in the list is Singing Fish which allows publishers to submit their site URL and video directly. They also provide you the option of keeping all site media elements in a single directory of your website.

Google Video: Next to lead is Google Video. Google video has gained popularity in a very short time. Herein users can easily upload their videos via website submission form or through a downloadable desktop tool. Ones this is done the publisher can add or update Meta and content information for each video. For your convenience there is a Google dashboard which includes a tab for reporting what people are interested in and what video they're not watching.

YouTube: Last but not the least is YouTube. YouTube is one of the most popular websites offering video submissions. YouTube generally converts video to a set format which is why it's advisable to shoot videos at good quality. Apart from that, it allows users to include a series of basic Meta information like title, description, tags, language and video category.

With the increased popularity of video many websites are popping up to offer video submission and this directly boosting the video optimization technique. Hence this is the time to jump into this fledgling market and stay ahead of your competitors.

Digg.com

Digg is a community based and user driven social content website launched in November 2004. Initially, Digg was started as an experiment but soon became a rage among people as they got a new way to promote their website. *Digg is a completely user driven website wherein users have full right to approve or reject the content right away*.

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User popularly uses the term digg and bury while browsing the content. Digg means the content is very good and is appreciated by the user. However, if the content isn't good then it will be tagged with the term bury. Which means it isn't compelling and should be removed. Moreover, you can even Digg and bury comments you like or dislike. Digg also allows you to track your friends' or colleagues' activity throughout the website and herein you can even share a video or news story with a friend or user.

If your story or content rocks or is appreciated it is bound to receive many Diggs. More diggs means you will be promoted to the front page for the millions of visitors to see. Digg.com primarily lays more emphasis on technology and science articles and it also combines democratic editorial control, and syndication with a form of non-hierarchical, social bookmarking and blogging.

Advantages of Digg.com:

Digg.com provides various benefits to a website and few of the important ones are as followed:

- All the articles, news stories and write ups carry the links to websites. This means more diggs will give you good and quality back links. And these back links will finally boost your search engine ranking.
- Comments given by users help you in understanding the needs and requirements of users and you can adjust your future content and articles according to that.
- Anyone appreciating your article, news story or write up is bound to visit your website and if you are providing what that user is looking for then it will automatically increase your website's popularity.
- The biggest advantage attached with Digg is that all the content posted on the website is free to access. But you are ought to get yourself registered to the website for certain elements, such as promoting or "digging" stories, submitting stories and commenting on stories.

Disadvantages of Digg.com

Lately Digg was under criticism in the media and in the blogosphere, for various valid reasons. Few of those reasons are as follow:

- Many complaints were filed which usually centered on the website's form of user-moderation.

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- Many users felt that few users have too much control over content and this allows sensationalism and misinformation to thrive.
- Former and current users expressed their indignation that the website's operators exercise too much control over which articles appear on the front page.
- According to experts, Digg often uses to incite many Internet users into vigilantism. This vigilantism has resulted in action both online and offline. Recently many members have apparently in acts of vigilante justice and flooded Internet websites and businesses with DDoS attacks in response to stories posted by single users.

Categories available in Digg.com

Prior to submitting any content to Digg.com make sure it's original and complies with the set rules and regulations. Herein author can submit original articles, news stories in sixteen different categories such as:

Deals, Gaming, Links, Mods, Music, Robots, Security, Technology, Apple, Design,

Hardware, Linux/Unix, Movies, Programming, Science, Software.

Being a user driven and user friendly website, Digg.com also allows users to remove posts which are duplicates in nature, spam, wrong topic, inaccurate and even offensive story submissions. Recently, on June 26, 2006 Digg.com released Digg 3.0 in which categories were divided into 6 containers such as Technology, Science, World & Business, Video, Entertainment, Gaming, with many sub-categories.

Despite being under the criticism, Digg is still one of the favorites for reading and browsing articles and news stories.

Web analytics

Web Analytics is a process that involves the measurement of visitor behavior to a particular website. It entails measuring the aspects of the website that involves working towards specific business objectives.

Market Potential of Web Analytics

As per the Aberdeen Group the current market size is of $425 million and shows a growth rate of 200%. The Web Analytics market has witnessed two stages in growth and is currently in the third. The first stage till 2000 showed rapid market growth while from 2001 to 2003 it witnessed a period of market consolidation as well as product standardization. Since 2004 the Web Analytics market has become part of the process ecosystem. According to webanalyticsassociation.org, UK shares roughly about 18.44% of the total Web Analytics market.

Importance of Web Analytics

- Web Analytics helps in the decision making process. It helps to find the ideal STP or Segmenting, Targeting or Positioning of the company.
- Predictive modeling, forecasting as well as optimization helps to identify the best target customers, price structure and also to optimize inventory.
- More and more businesses now are demanding expert insight in customer behavior along with revenue paths and click throughs and page views.

A thorough analysis along with the maturing of the market and price competition increases the possibility of business consolidation. It is therefore a means to establish a business in the market and consolidate one's position in its domain.

Objectives of Web Analytics

The main objectives of Web Analytics are to provide the right solution to specific business challenges and problems. They include examining your site's audience as well as traffic. It helps the customer to reach target traffic, customize search, benchmark the site and optimize online advertising strategy.

What are the Data Collection methods used for Web Analytics?

The data collection methods include different sources.

- The Browser data is collected with the help of IP address, cookies, Page tagging. The latter two are more reliable as they are more accurate.
- The Server data is done with the help of Log file analysis.

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- The Network data collection offers access to technical data that is used to determine server response times to requests. It also provides network related issues that may be responsible for interfering user experience.

Web Analytics software

While selecting the software consider the price, ease of usage, features, functionality, vendor viability and training available for web staff.

The Web Analytics software includes the following software:

For server side data tracking:
- Log file analysis: Analog, One stat, Metasun, Webalizer, Clicktrack etc.

For Browser side data tracking:
- New version of WebTrends® 7, (estimates first party cookies info)

Software to track cookies:
- Escalation Tracking Software (Arclabs)

Software to track page tagging:
- Live-Stats from DeepMetrix

For both browser and sever side data:
- Data Sherpa solo online data tracking

6.2 *Affiliate Marketing*

Affiliate marketing is a method of promoting web businesses in which an affiliate is rewarded for every visitor, subscriber, customer, and/or sale provided through his/her efforts.

Affiliate marketing is the best and trusted way to promote any business. In this innovative and modern variation every visitor or subscriber or even the customer is rewarded for its efforts. Affiliate marketing is also known as pay for performance model as the merchant doesn't incur any marketing expense unless the results are finally realized. Herein the compensation is usually based on the following values:

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• Pay-per-impression or Cost-per-thousand (CPM): The first and foremost one is pay per impression or cost per thousand. In this the publisher of the advertisement gets the fixed amount for every 1000 impressions of the ad. In this the carried advertisement can be banner image or rich media.

• Pay-per-click (PPC) / Cost-per-click (CPC): Next to follow is pay per click. This is the most popular and widely used method. In this the advertiser has to pay a certain amount of money every time a potential customer clicks on the advertiser's Ad. However, few treat it as irrelevant as people generally generate commission by fraud clicks.

• Pay-per-lead (PPL) or Cost-per-lead CPL: Another famous mode is pay per lead. Herein the advertiser has to pay commission to the publisher for every visitor that was referred. If that referred visitor performs the desired action then the publisher is paid a commission. The desired action can be creating a new account, subscribing for the newsletter or even filling an online form. This type of model is very popular amongst online service providers such as internet service providers, cell phone providers, banks offering loans and mortgages, credit card companies and subscription services.

• Pay-per-sale (PPS) or Cost-per-sale (CPS): Pay per sale is another popular term in affiliate marketing. In this model a publisher refers any visitor to the advertiser and that visitor generates a sale or buys something. A percentage of that order amount is given to the publisher. This model is popular amongst online retailers and is also known as revenue sharing.

• Pay-per-call: Last but not least is pay per call. This recently developed compensation model in which an advertiser pays a fixed commission to the publisher for the phone calls received from the specific published Ad. This new pay per call model generally acts as a bridge between online and offline advertising.

It has been proven that revenue generated via affiliate marketing is faster. There are various types of affiliate management solutions such as standalone software, hosted services, shopping carts with affiliate features, and third party affiliate networks. Affiliate marketing acts as a benefit for the small sized and upcoming businesses as growth rates are higher in this type of marketing.

Benefits of Affiliate marketing:

Affiliate marketing is highly beneficial for merchants because of reasons like:

- Affiliate marketing gives a broader market to merchants and can easily generate more sales.
- Having a successful affiliate marketing campaign requires some healthy research to ensure that there's a good fit for that particular website.
- Via affiliate marketing merchants get easy access to the market and customers who are willing to drive and enhance sales.
- Affiliate marketing brings consumers and visitors of different genres to the website giving a fair picture of the consumer trends, needs and requirements.
- It also generates easy and fast sales as repeated customers and recommendations generally work in the merchants favor.

Software for Affiliate marketing:

In making affiliate marketing a success there are various software available on the market, and the most popular one is *Affiliate Wiz.* Affiliate Wiz (ASP.NET) tracking and marketing software is used for managing an affiliate marketing program. This affiliate software displays your link on their site and you just have to sit back and watch visitors coming to your website.

Affiliate Wiz - Technology

Via Affiliate Wiz, an affiliate is used to fill in the sign-up page in order to become the affiliate. In order to link to your website you need to obtain the code for banners, text links, product images, etc. however these links identify the affiliate site with an Affiliate ID. The software places a cookie on a visitor's computer and tracks them as they browse your website. After a sale is made the administrator is notified by email, accept the sale and the affiliate is automatically notified of their sale.

6.3   *Google Dance and its Impact on Rankings*

Google is a widely used all over the world by web surfers but over the years it has been noted that once a month, without any prior notice it makes major shifts in rankings. This is the time when Google "tweaks" its algorithm and the Page Rank and Back links of the sites are updated.

Generally there is a minor change in rankings known as 'Everflux'. The Google dance happens once every month, which lasts about 3-5 days. During this period Google Results

show large amounts of variation. The Google spider "Googlebot" visits most of the sites during this 'Google dance' period.

How does Googlebot work?

When Googlebot finds your site for the first time it visits your site for every few days to look whether the site content has changed or not. When it returns to find that the site content has not changed, your site will be put on the monthly dance schedule. The problem we all face is that Google does not announce its dancing days and you have to look out for these days yourself. The Google dance tool helps you find when this phenomenon is occurring. Once the dance is over each website is adjusted as per PageRank and Back Links.

What is Deepbot?

Once the Google dance is over, roughly after 5 to 10 days another set of spiders are sent by Google that are known as 'Deepbot' with an IP address starting with 216. The link structure and PageRank are used by Google to determine how many of your website pages will be recorded or how deep your site will be indexed.

Impact of Google Dance on rankings

Google uses a large number of patented algorithms to determine the ranking an indexed website. To index webpages thousands of different hosts as well as data centers are being used. Updating every site at the same time is an enormous task which leads to skewed data during this updating process.

When Google dance is being performed server all over the world located in various data centers are updating and upgrading themselves. This is the reason why some sites show false results while other are benefited from this unique dance. There is nothing you can do about this phenomenon so just relax and wait until the "music" is over.

6.4   Test Questions

Select the right Option:

1) What are Blogs?

    a) A blog is a regularly updated website
    b) A blog is a static website
    c) A blog is a website which cannot be edited
    d) A blog doesn't facilitate interactivity

2) What is content duplication?

    a) When a website contains no content
    b) When website contains huge content
    c) The presence of same content on two websites
    d) When website contains unique content

3) What are mirrored websites?

    a) Websites carrying different content
    b) Websites carrying the same content
    c) Supplement website
    d) Related website

4) What is URL Canonicalization?

    a) The process where search engines select the best URL
    b) The process where search engines select the worst URL
    c) The process where search engines delete the URL
    d) The process where search engines add the URL

5) What is branding in SEO?

    a) Decreasing the traffic to a website
    b) Increasing the traffic to a website
    c) No Effect on traffic to a website

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d) It is not related to traffic

6) What is Podcasting?

a) Audio or video content delivered via e-mail
b) A computer program
c) Audio or video content delivered via RSS
d) Best way to cast pods

7) What does RSS mean?

a) Really Simple Syndication
b) Really Slow Syndication
c) Really Sloppy Syndication
d) Really Smart Syndication

8) What is Digg.com?

a) Website teaching best ways to spam
b) Owner driven website
c) User driven website
d) Best tool to find keywords

9) Benefit of Google keyword tool?

a) Decrease traffic
b) Offers great keyword depth
c) Offers unused keywords
d) Offers poor keyword depth

Chapter 7
Marketing Strategies

7.1 *Local Search Marketing*

The use of search engines to search for local resources has been increasing over the years. As per a study conducted by Webvisible and Nielson on 2000 adults in the U.S in October, 2007, around 74% mentioned that they used search engines as the primary source for obtaining local information.

Local search marketing refers to search marketing in a limited geographical area. Let us take the example of a restaurant situated in Buffalo, New York and understand how Local search Marketing would differ from regular Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

Keyword research: As the focus is local, so also would be the keywords. This implies that local qualifiers such as zip codes, city names, county names, state names, and streets need to be included with the regular keywords. In the example cited above, one of our keywords could be Restaurant Buffalo NY.

In addition, research can also be done on local terms that are more popularly used for a particular keyword. For instance, a restaurant could also be known as a bistro elsewhere.

On Page Optimization factors

It is advisable to have the local phone number and the physical address across all the pages. Include a toll free number but give prominence to the local number as it helps search engines identify the area of the business establishment.

Use Geographical qualifiers such as city names, county names, state names, and streets in the title tag, the h1 and h2 tags as well as the body. This gives your location more prominence in the search engines.

It is also recommended to have a location/directions page, with a map embedded from Yahoo or Google maps, with the directions explicitly written out.

Offsite optimization factors: It is advisable to have the anchor text for incoming links to hold local qualifiers.

Submission in major search engines: All the major search engines namely Google, Yahoo, Ask and MSN have a local business center where the local business should be submitted. Enter your business information details such as County, Street address, zip code, phone number, and business hours along with a brief description of your business; also select the category and sub category that most aptly describes your business. The category in the example we have cited above would be restaurants and the sub category would be the cuisine the restaurant is serving.

Once you're done, your business listing shows up in the local section of the search engine. The local section of most search engines is integrated with maps, and hence the listing will appear on the map.

A search with the selected keywords on Google Maps will list the text results on the left panel of the page and a map display on the right.

With the search engines integrating results across all categories, the prominence of local results has increased manifold. The local search results box is the first to be displayed in the search engine result pages. If you happen to search for 'Restaurant Buffalo NY' the first result you get on Google is a set of 10 local results.

What is interesting, however, is that the listing of results differs from that on local.google.com. It is understood that Google uses different algorithms to rank the results in both the sections.

For search marketers, the listings on the Universal search window become more important as it is the primary source of traffic from a search engine.
There are certain studies that see a correlation between the ratings, the number of reviews and the rankings of a local search result. It is, therefore, advisable to promote and gain good reviews for your product.

Other search engines, yellow pages and directories: There are other specific local search engines which are capable of diverting huge amounts of traffic to your site or establishment. There are directories which are also used as information sources by major search engines. Some of these are listed as follows:

- Yelp.com
- Local.com
- Infousa.com
- yellowpages.com
- superpages.com
- Citysearch.com

As a company looking to harness the potential of Local SEO, it is imperative that all the above provided details are studied and analyzed to maximize traffic and visibility.

7.2 <u>*Link Baiting*</u>

Link baiting is the process in which you use a bait or a hook to attract back links. It refers to something unique or interesting on your website that would want others to link to it. A hook or bait generally refers to link worthy content written for websites, blog posts and online articles and then submitted on popular sites. It could also refer to tools, widgets and other useful online applications. When content is written it is also important to ensure that the title also serves as attractive bait to the audience. The bait or the hook could take one of the following forms:

• **Resource Hook:** These are hooks that generally provide useful resources to the audience. A useful tool such as a stock exchange ticker or a compilation of resources useful to a particular niche or domain is a good example of the same. People are always on the lookout for resources that would be meaningful and useful to them. As such, a resource hook acts as a strong bait to gain incoming links.
Example: Must read search marketing blogs

• **News Hook:** This hook banks on providing the latest news first. It could also be a compilation of stories following a particular news item. This type of hook works best over a period of time. One needs to regularly post interesting news articles which slowly establish credibility as an expert.
Example: Jakob Nielsen Not Optimistic about Personalized Search

• **Contrary Hook:** A contrary hook looks at views contrary to an established or perceived school of thought. It usually takes up a contradictory or controversial view of what someone has said or written.
Example: 10 reasons why SEO is of no use to marketers.

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• **Attack Hook:** This is quite similar to the contrary hook but seeks to be more provocative, direct and upfront in nature. The advantage of an attack hook is that the hook could attract the most number of links if your content is perceived to be credible and authentic.
Example: Aaron Wall gets sued for blogging

For both the contrary hook and the attack hook it is advised to make sure that the facts are properly checked and corroborated before the post/article is published. A seemingly non credible post can get a lot of negative reviews which could affect all future posts as well.

• **Humor Hook:** This type of hook seeks to bring in some aspect of humor into the daily mundane lives of people. As a hook it can turn out to be very effective as people like to see something bizarre or funny in the midst of their daily routines. The humor hook stands out and is thus able to gain quite a few links.
Example: Top 21 signs you need a break from SEO

7.3   *Google Webmaster Central*

Google being the most widely used search engine in the world offers many services that help webmasters and Online Marketing professionals promote their website better. Among other services Google provides tools to:

- Diagnose, analyze and solve crawling, and indexing issues so as to enable Google to easily crawl and index your site.

- Get help for potential issues in crawling and indexing through the Google Help center or the discussion group.

- Submit content to various Google services such as the Google search Index, Google Book search, Google Video and Google Base.

- Enhance site functionality through the use of Google Gadgets, Google Developer Tools and Google site search.

- Analyze traffic to the site through Google Analytics and understand where your visitors are coming from.

Google provides a single window to access these services. This central repository is known as Google Webmaster Central.

Google Webmaster Tools

Form the central and the most important component of Webmaster Central. Google provides a plethora of tools that permits a webmaster to make the site more Google friendly. The dashboard gives you a view of the sites you have added on Webmaster Central. Before your site can be added and tracked it is important to have the site verified. This is done by adding a Google specified Meta tag or uploading a Google specified html file on your site.

On selecting your site from the dashboard, an overview of the indexing and crawling is provided which includes the number of pages in Google's Index, the last time the Google bot successfully crawled your site and crawling errors experienced during the BOT's visit.

The diagnostics tab of Google Webmaster Tools gives you a view of the web crawl errors, the mobile crawl errors and content analysis of your site which also includes meta tag information.

The statistics tab of Google Webmaster tools provides you with the top search queries to your site, the external links on your site, the crawl stats which provide you with the distribution of Page Rank across the site, the index stats which provide you with simple commands that can be used to understand how your site has been indexed and subscriber stats which provide you with stats on users subscribed to RSS feeds on your site

The Links tab of Google Webmaster tools provides you with detailed information on internal and external links to your website. This includes the list of pages with external links, pages with internal links and the pages on your site which have been identified to show up in Google search results

The sitemaps tab allows you to add a web, mobile, video or a code search sitemap. A code search sitemap is for accessibility to publicly available source code.

The tools section holds many useful tools that allow you to define how your website should be crawled, indexed and shown in the Google Search Engine Result Pages. These tools allow you to:

- Analyze your robots.txt file
- Set a geographic target for your website
- Enable enhanced Image search
- Remove a URL from Google's index
- Set the preferred Domain: whether you would like the www version or the non www version of your site to be shown up in search results.
- Set the crawl rate
- Re-verify your site with Google webmaster central

Google Webmaster Central also provides access to avenues to increase business opportunities for your site.
These include promoting your website through Adwords, Earning money through Adsense and optimizing content on your website using Google Web Optimizer.

Google Webmaster Central gives you a one stop health check of your website and allows you to constantly monitor the growth of your website and traffic.

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7.4   *Test Questions*

Select the right Option:

1) Local search marketing refers to search marketing for

    a) People of different ethnicities in different parts of the world
    b) A limited Geographical area
    c) All of the above
    d) None of the above

2) Keyword research for Local search involves

    a) Adding geographical qualifiers
    b) Adding local language qualifiers
    c) Adding the business name
    d) Both a) and b)

3) Which of the following is a web 2.0 local search engine?

    a) Superpages.com
    b) Yellow.com
    c) Yelp.com
    d) Infousa.com

4) Which of these is not a hook used in Link Baiting?

    a) Resource Hook
    b) Humor Hook
    c) Friendly Hook
    d) Attack Hook

5) Link Baiting is the same as Link buying?

    a) True
    b) False

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6) Good link bait helps you in gaining

    a) Thematic reciprocal links
    b) Thematic natural one way links
    c) Three way links
    d) All of the above

7) You can enhance your site's functionality using

    a) Google Analytics
    b) Google Gadgets
    c) Google custom search (or site search)
    d) Both b) and c)

8) Adsense allows you to

    a) Post your site's ads on other websites
    b) Monetize your site through Google published ads on your site
    c) Link with other websites on the Google network
    d) None of the above

9) The crawling rate of your website can be checked using

    a) Diagnostics → Web Crawl
    b) Tools → Set Crawl Rate
    c) Statistics → Crawl Stats
    d) None of the above

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Chapter 8
Advanced SEO Techniques

8.1   *Top pointers for High Rankings on Local Search Engines*

With globalization, businesses want to reach every corner of the world. However, there is a contrasting situation as well. While for some products, customers may love to know about the international companies catering in that field, in majority of the cases, they prefer to give business to local merchants. Hence, it becomes imperative to give equal importance to localized searches. If you neglect the efforts needed to obtain high rankings on local search engines, you might lose some of your potential customers who are just round the corner. This is because if they can't find your client's website on the local listings that they use, they might never come to them for business. The result: lost business opportunity.

While devising strategies for SEO Local, you should consider the following points:

1. Include your clients' websites to local search engines: It is very important that your site is included in relevant local search engines. Some directories that you should always consider while aiming at high rankings on local search engines are the following:

- **Google Local Business Center:** You can use the Google Local Business Center to create a free listing for your client. Such a free listing will allow the potential customers to find your client's business and other related information: address, hours of operation, pictures of the storefront or even products, whenever they will search Google Maps for local information.

- **Yahoo! Local Merchant:** This site allows three types of listing: *Basic Listing*, which includes displaying your client's address, website, phone number, store hours, and information about products and services; *Advanced Listing*, which includes basic listing plus company logo and tagline, up to 10 photos, and detailed business description; and *Featured Listing*, which includes advanced listing in addition to premium placement, guaranteed placement, and more exposure.

- **Ask Business Search:** It is a part of the website city.ask.com which allows the potential customers to view the map of the local area and find about the local businesses.

2. Submit your client's website listings to popular directories and Internet Yellow Pages:
There are many top directories that offer detailed information about the local businesses dealing in different products and services. The few directories which you can always consider are yelp.com, citysquares.com, mojopages.com, and insiderpages.com. You can also increase the visibility of your client's websites by submitting them to Internet Yellow Pages, such as SuperPages.com, Switchboard.com, and yellowbook.com. For that matter, you can also get your client's website listed in CitySearch, which is a major provider of local information for sites, including MSN, Ask.com, Expedia.com, Ticketmaster.com, and many others.

3. Set your geographic location in Google's Webmaster Tools: To help your clients' websites rank higher on local search engines, it is important to find detailed reports about your pages' visibility on Google. For this, you can use Google Webmaster Tools which can tell you how your clients' sites are performing in their search results, devise strategies for removing potential problems, and build Google friendly sites. You can submit your client's sitemap to Google and its Webmaster Tools will help you see the site the way Google sees it. See how Google crawls and indexes your client's site. This will help you know about the specific problems Google faces in accessing it. Google's new link reporting tools will also allow you to get comprehensive data on internal and external links to your client's site. You can also get a clearer picture on the Google search queries that drive traffic to your client's site. Once you submit your sitemap to Google, you can also share information regarding the pages that are most important to you and how often they change.

4. Add Contact information to your site: Adding a physical address and phone number within an Address Tag on the homepage or some other contact page will help in increasing the credibility of your site in the eyes of local search engines. They, in turn, will assign a higher rank to your client's site. It is advisable to include the address on all pages of the site for the best results.

Apart from the above points, you can also make use of free press releases and Yahoo 360 social networks with local listings to get your clients' business noticed in the local areas.

8.2   *Use of Lens and Hub pages to promote sites*

Every SEO specialist needs to master the strategies required in using the Squidoo lens and hub pages to promote the sites of their clients. The concept of using lens and hub pages for online marketing and improving the search rankings of different websites is quite new.

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An Internet community, HubPages.com, came into existence in January 2006. It was established with the aim to allow users to publish content and gain information about a specific topic or both. It is a site that allows users to submit content via one-page websites referred to as hubs. Another such content sharing site is Squidoo.com where you can submit articles known as "lenses".

Of late, these hubs and lenses have been largely used to promote businesses, websites or links to other content sites. Being SEO specialists, you can use hub pages and Squidoo lenses to bring traffic to your clients' websites. These sites are fast gaining popularity as a resource for information and as a source of backlinks for webmasters. To use Squidoo or hub pages, you simply need to sign up for a free account.

A Squidoo lens or a hub page can increase traffic in two ways. First, the lens or a hub page will allow you to give a backlink to your website. Every new backlink will help your website gain high search rankings. Second, you can attract readers to your lens or hub by constantly updating them.

Once you create an account with Squidoo, you can submit as many lenses as you want on any topic. Each lens is made of different modules, wherein the main modules serve as the main textual content, rich in relevant keywords. The text modules allow you to create a big chunk of text on a webpage without having to know anything about HTML. However, there are other modules as well such as:

- Link List: Here you put some key links to outside sites. This helps in getting backlinks to your clients' websites.
- Polls: You can use polls to interact with your readers and attract people who want to express their opinions.
- RSS: Here you can create your own RSS feed.
- Amazon: It allows you to post books and other resources on Amazon.com.
- YouTube: Here you can share audiovisual information with your readers by uploading YouTube videos.

As a usual practice, hubs are essentially broken down into smaller sections known as capsules. You can submit articles, other forms of text, photos, links, or RSS feeds into these capsules. Anyone can create a hub at HubPages.com. Like any other content sharing site or social networking site, here too, you will find some recognizable members who have popular hubs with high scores. In this context, let us talk about the rewarding system or scoring pattern followed at HubPages.com. At the publication of each new hub, a score of 50 is given. From there, it can fluctuate up or down. Then, hub scores and total number of hubs created are

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collectively taken into account to give each hubber a ranking. On the basis of the scores given, hubbers can be assigned the following ranks:

- Average: In this case, the hubbers have a few hubs with average scores.

- Prodigy: It is a hubber with only a few hubs, but each having high scores.

- Stop: A hubber is assigned a stop status, if he has very low scores on a large amount of hubs.

The status of a hubber can change any time. It is always advisable to stay active, add new hubs, update hubs, etc. Visitors are attracted to the high scoring hubs.

8.3 _Auto-pinging a Blog and its RSS_

If you are an SEO specialist, you are well aware of the fact that your site can gain higher rankings in the search engines if Google comes to your site more often. However, it is also a known fact that Google comes back to your site only when it wants to. If this be the case, how can you compel Google to come back to your site more frequently? The answer is pinging.

Pinging is basically a mechanism in blogging by which you tell Google that you have made some changes to your site or pages, and that it should come back to your site to have a look. So, by pinging Google, you may induce its Spiderbot to come back to your site and see the changes that you have made.

In more technical terms, ping is an XML-RPC based push mechanism by which a weblog notifies a server that its content has been updated. This signal is usually sent to one or more "ping servers" who then generate a list of blogs that have some new or updated material. VeriSign's Weblogs.com is an open ping server that let other web services subscribe to a list of blogs that have recently pinged them. Blog search engines can provide fresh results quickly by polling only the newly updated blogs.

Major Blog search engines operate proprietary ping servers that gather information only for their own applications and do not share their received ping data directly with other servers. As a result, a blogger needs to ping many individual servers to get the desired publicity. The best services that you can avail of in such a scenario are those provided by Ping-o-matic, which pings multiple proprietary ping servers. But, there is an issue. While pinging at

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Ping-o-matic can help broadcast your blogs; it would require you to ping manually your blogs every time. Does this sound great? Of course not. Another fact worth mentioning is that although Ping-o-matic offers XML-RPC interface, it is more useful to "ping-friendly" software like Wordpress or Movable Types, as they have a built-in XML-RPC support. So, can we have some automated system for pinging?

Autopinging is the answer to the question. Autopinger is a free and convenient service for all bloggers and podcasters. It is a tool that has been designed for your convenience. Now, you can concentrate more on developing your favorite blogs and podcasts without being worried about whether your updated content has been relayed to the world.

Autopinging is a mechanism wherein you can take advantage of the XML-RPC platform and consolidate all the ping jobs into one common location that is totally disconnected from your blogs. You can then use RSS feeds that include full or summarized text, plus metadata, such as publishing dates and authorship. The RSS feeds will allow the publishers to syndicate the content automatically. Through RSS feeds, they can crawl and check to see if you have updated your content and relay your updates to the world. Also known as Web Feeds, they will benefit the readers who want to subscribe to timely updates from favored websites or to aggregate feeds from many sites into one place. Thus, the autopinger automatically pings one or more servers each time the blogger creates a new post or updates an old one.

With autopinging, not only is your basic purpose of pinging served, but also the dependency of blogging softwares to provide the ping mechanism is done away with. Now, you can continue to use your favorite blogging software and have an autopinger to ping for you. There are many online software companies that offer free autopinging tools.

8.4 *Test Questions*

Select the right Option:

1) You should make a Hub to

    a) Improve your search engine rankings
    b) Get more traffic to another website or blog
    c) Increase its Page Rank which will make your linked websites rise in rankings as well
    d) Promote specific affiliate links, if you choose
    e) All of the above

2) Squidoo lens is

    a) Each article that you submit in Squidoo.com
    b) Is a website that allows you to post articles only on limited topics
    c) A keyword or key-phrase that helps in directing traffic to your website

3) Textual content serves as the only module in a Squidoo lens

    a) True
    b) False

4) State "True" or "False"

    a) AutoPinger is a free and convenient service for all bloggers and podcasters
    b) With autopinger, you manually need to ping one or more servers each time you post a new blog or update an old blog
    c) Ping-o-matic does not offer XML-RPC interface
    d) Blog search engines can provide fresh results quickly by polling only the newly updated blogs

5) The two types of ping server are

    a) Closed ping server and Proprietary ping server
    b) Open ping server and Proprietary ping server
    c) Free ping server and Closed ping server

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Chapter 9
Latest SEO Tactics & Strategies

9.1 *The need for Sitelinks in your Website*

Sitelinks are a new addition to Google Search. What exactly are these Sitelinks? When you want to navigate a certain site, you use Sitelinks. When you have Sitelinks in your website, people can use them to navigate through the website without wasting much time. You can use single line Sitelinks as well as double column Sitelinks. Example of this:

Apple
Apple designs and creates iPod and iTunes, Mac laptop and desktop computers, the OS X operating system, and the revolutionary iPhone and iPad.
⊞ Show stock quote for AAPL
www.apple.com/ - United States - Cached - Similar

Store	iPad
Downloads	iPhone
iTunes	MacBook Pro
Support	Mac

More results from apple.com »

The two column Sitelinks appear when a result for a certain query is the most authoritative, however, single line Sitelinks appear when a result is more relevant than authoritative for a certain query.

What should you do to get better Sitelinks? One of the first things is to create a website that is easy to navigate. Your page titles should make sense, you should use relevant and interesting anchor text for the whole site. Don't repeat points in your text, make use of headers and any other content that will improve your pages. Basically make sure your titles, anchor text and navigation tools are consistent if you want to get better Sitelinks.

Turning Off Sitelinks

When you want to turn off Sitelinks, you can use Google's Webmaster tools to block them. The Webmaster tools normally work for 90 days. You will not have Sitelinks on your website if you unblock less than three of them.

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Breadcrumbs

Breadcrumbs are used in websites and they are related to Sitelinks. These breadcrumbs are site hierarchies which can be used in the place of URLs to show where in the site a particular result fits best. There are different levels in the breadcrumb hierarchy which can be accessed through a simple mouse click. If you want your breadcrumbs to show, they must be linked and visible.

Ad Sitelinks

Ad Sitelinks are normally used to attract more traffic to a website, thus enabling more people to find your website. Ad Sitelinks have additional links for the content that is found deeper in your website and these Sitelinks are used to help users navigate through your site with ease.

When choosing Ad Sitelinks, you should consider user segmentation. You should make use of those ad Sitelinks that will segment your user even before they have had the chance of going to your website. Your Ad Sitelinks should help you to highlight and segment your brand and choose those Ad Links which will enable you to direct as much traffic as possible to a specific page you want to target. All text should have a clear and concise call to action and be brief - to the point.

In Google, Ad Sitelinks are normally managed at a campaign level rather than a group level setting. The search engine does not have a mechanism through which you can see your Sitelink performance. This means that most website owners do not know how often their Sitelinks actually get triggered. Google also assigns Click costs to keywords, which can generate misleading results but by implementing and using an "adcopyid", to gather performance metrics the information is linked back to the group of origin. Statistics collected for different groups between the first and last Sitelink can then be interpreted correctly.

Most results analyses show that clicks made on Sitelinks do not represent the number of people who visit a website. This means than an increase in CTR does not necessarily mean that Sitelinks increase traffic. It is more likely that the increase in CTR is due to the general visibility of the Ad. Sitelinks do affect the overall behavior of online shoppers and a website with Sitelinks will definitely generate more traffic and sales than one without Sitelinks.

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9.2   Website Speed Optimization

Google is about to inject a new ranking factor into the algorithm – site speed and we can anticipate all other search engines will follow. Basically what this means is that Google will be pushing faster sites higher in the search results, whereas slower sites will find it harder to rank. This is huge news for anyone with a website so let's take a closer look.

The internet has become a jack of all trades and today almost everyone opts to go online for all their needs. As a result, the internet has become jammed from so many people using it and there is nothing as annoying as a page taking for ever to load. The need for speed has therefore become an issue that's being tackled today and Google together with its allies have sort to resolve this problem.

Hurry, or Loose Your Rank

Obviously, website speed can't be treated as an absolute metric. The average site load time will largely depend on the niche. For example photo stocks and video sites will generally take more time to load then, say, news blogs and text-oriented websites. Therefore site speed is a relative metric that can only be applied to competing sites in one niche. You shouldn't really bother to become the fastest site on the planet. What you really should care about is whether your site's loading speed catches up with the competition.

It is without a doubt that a faster website is indeed beneficial to both the customer who will get information more quickly and the website owners who will generate more traffic. It has been found that a faster website will generate high conversions and volume per average conversion. This was achieved after comparing an optimized and the original version site. For instance, AdWords advertisers should consider site speed a crucial part of optimization.

Available Webmaster Tools

Using the [Firebug plug-in](#) is a sure way to check a website and facilitate this generated metrics to speed up your website. You should also consider installing Google's Page Speed and check the Webmaster tools for a performance evaluation.

What can be done to Improve Loading Speed?

With Google moving forward and including speed as a ranking factor, it is really important for websites to look at the following issues:

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- **Script Language** – websites running Flash are an obvious cause for concern because those aesthetic graphics and visuals, which take time to load and run, may need to be scaled back or sacrificed to maintain commercial viability.

- **Hosting Server Speed** – many websites find that their hosting service is creating bottlenecks, especially on shared hosting platforms or in the allocation of bandwidth to a virtual server environment. Revise your hosting provider's SLA's to determine the speed and bandwidth allocation.

- **Coding Quality** – Google has a neat set of resources which can take your Java website script and pare it down to the minimum required. This speeds up website loading and operation as well as providing you with a test bed to measure how well your site is performing. For more information: http://code.google.com/speed/page-speed.

- **Picture Resolution** – high resolution pictures and graphics are not always required for a website and many images can be rendered without the user noticing a difference at lower resolution. Higher resolution means a larger download time which means a slower loading speed.

- **Bulky Applications** – Adobe applications are notorious for slowing loading speeds down, and these seem to be the subject of concern amongst SEO practitioners but it is likely that slow-loading applications are going to create some problems and this will need to be addressed.

9.3   Increasing traffic by using Social Bookmarking

One effective way of increasing traffic to your site is by utilizing social bookmarking. High traffic to your site will usually translate into more sales and hence higher revenue. In that regard, many online businesses prefer social bookmarking since it has fast ROI. Among the most popular social bookmarking sites is Twitter and StumbleUpon.

Business owners are able to bookmark some of their favorite sites on these social sites thereby sharing these links with others and in turn the use of back links increases page ranking of websites with popular search engines like Google and Yahoo.

At this point online users get to vote on the links they like thus becoming more popular and increasing your changes of appearing on other websites. This is a fantastic marketing and promotional tool. It's also important to note that keywords are of great significance here since everyone uses keywords to get the information they're looking for. By putting the most relevant keywords in the title, body and additionally description tag you will quickly reap the intended benefits.

There has been a significant impact by social media on internet promotion and growth, and by the way things look, it will not slow down any time soon. It is very easy to find a site on the internet with people that share the same interests and debate on numerous topics and the interaction by guests usually takes place in various forms like sharing, commentating, messaging and tagging.

Despite the fact that social media is still a relatively new concept many more sites are still being placed under this category. In that regard more online markets are utilizing social sites to target their niche and redirect traffic back to their intended sites.

Utilizing social bookmarking you get to add additional traffic, site ranking, brand development and awareness and the benefit of additional indexing from all major search engines. But remember in order for this to work you need to apply the right content in bookmarking. Content should be of high quality, unique and accurate. It's important to use content that is interesting, so people are attracted to it and are willing to spread it around.

Twitter Social Media Monitoring & Analytics tools:

TweetStats – It's designed to graph your Twitter stats including Tweets per hour, per month and Tweet timeline. It's not the most beautiful of sites but the functionality is great.

TwitterGrader – This is a well put together tool which looks at your profile and gives it a ranking; it also has an API which could be useful for developers.

Twitterholic – This tool looks at all of the local twitter users in your area and gives you a ranking.

Other Social Media Monitoring & Analytics tools:

Radian6 (Social Media Monitoring Tool) – Ridian6 is a popular tool that helps you track quite a lot of signals and get insights into your brands performance on various social media channels. They cover almost all the social media channels like blogs, twitter and facebook.

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Alterian Social Media Monitoring – Used for advanced user behavior statistics, measures and daily volume, demographics, location, positive or negative content tone, themes, and trending topics for your brand/product.

ScoutLabs Web based Social Media Monitoring Tool – Web based, with an interface like Google Analytics it tracks almost all the online social media channels. It measures all the negative/positive signals and gives you reports based on the overall performances.

9.4   *Facebook Ad Tactics*

One of the best things about Facebook advertising is the ability select who sees your ad using a number of variables, including keywords. You can target by geography, age, gender, education, relationship status, workplace and keywords.

Your campaigns should target specific audiences if you want it to be effective and your ads have to be changed on a regular basis because they can lose interest quiet fast. Focusing on your target and changing your ads around is the best way to take advantage of the enormous opportunity provided by Facebook.

To start your campaign you must determine a bid per click and daily budget. You can set both of these numbers very low, but don't expect much. Initially you are just testing so you will want to set your click bid somewhere around the Facebook suggested amount and a daily budget you can live with, something like $50 or more to start. You can always adjust these later. Read more about the Facebook Ads Manager here.

Since you don't get much space in these ads, use it wisely. Your headline (25 characters) should grab attention immediately. You will get another 135 characters for a description in the body of the ad. You also have the option to upload an image.

Using an image may be the most important aspect of your ad so choose it wisely. Facebook users are very image driven and the visual graphic you choose can make or break an ad.

It is always difficult at the beginning but if you focus on your target, you can't go wrong. Targeting allows you to make use of the well known CTRs.

Ensuring your Ads are Approved:

1. Follow all ad guidelines provided on www.facebook.com/ad_guidelines.php. Your ad should be approved if you follow these guidelines. Call a Facebook representative if it does not work.

2. The approval team is located in the (PST) time zone and this is requests are processed between the hours of 8am - 8pm. This process can take anywhere from 1-6 hours.

3. Ads that promote international products and services cannot get approved if traffic is going to be redirected to a different campaign. Avoid using affiliate links and link them directly to the offer that you are marketing.

Impressions/Clicks/CTR/CPC:

1. The initial hours of a new campaign are very critical when it comes to determining how effective your ad will be. It's recommended to use the best suitable time when the majority of your target audience is online.

2. CTR is essential to determine the CPC that Facebook will set for you. In most cases, the CPC is directly proportional to the CTR. Facebook pays more attention to the Title that you use but the image is just as important.

3. Your target is also crucial. According to Facebook, the smaller your target audience, the more CPC you are required to pay. This means that if you are targeting a lower volume, you will have to pay more because smaller audiences normally increase the CTR.

4. The way you structure your ad group is also important because it helps you determine who is interested on these ads and who exactly is converting. A most effective way of doing this is by dividing the ads into various groups and determining each group by a target audience. This smaller audience will increase your targeting ability.

5. When you get more than two ads that are effective, you need to push impressions until you notice a decrease in CTR before changing to a new ad. You can do this several times to ensure CTR is steady.

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Quick Points to Remember:

- Carefully select your target audience.

- Keep testing your market and improve ads.

- Use Facebook reports.

- Use your creativity with both text and images.

Answer Key

Chapter 1
Search Engines and Search Engine Basics

1. State True or False

    a) False
    b) False
    c) False
    d) True
    e) False
    f) True
    g) False
    h) False

2. a) Crawler, Index, Search Engine Software

3. a) On page Factor
    b) Off page Factor
    c) On page Factor
    d) Off page Factor
    e) Off page Factor
    f) On page Factor

4. a) All of the above
5. a) Open Directory Project
6. Google
7. Crawler and Directory
8. rankings …well ……Keywords
9. False
10. a) On-page and Off-page optimization

Chapter 2
Search Engine Optimization

Select the right Option:

1. c) There is no defined optimal keyword density
2. a) All of the above
3. a) Keyword Research
4. c) Grammar / spelling
5. b) Text in the Title tag
6. c) All of the above
7. c) Can't say
8. a) Submit to search engines
9. d) All of the above
10. a) CSS

Fill in the blanks:

1. Suggestion
2. Importance
3. The Meta Description Tag
4. Meta Robot Tag
5. Alternative text, Pictures
6. Visible hyperlinked text
7. Heading Tags, Special Text, Anchor text, Keyword Density

State the following statements are True or False:

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. True
6. True

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Select from the options bellow:

1. b) E-mail link request to like minded sites
2. c) Incoming Links
3. a) Getting 10 sites that are related to your site to link to you.
4. c) Content Writing
5. a) The number of links pointing to your site
6. a) One way linking
7. a) Link Swaps
8. a) Relevant themes and good page rank
9. a) Reciprocal into one way
10. c) Get link to the site

Fill in the blanks:

1. Sandbox
2. Link Popularity
3. PageRank
4. Relevance or importance
5. Larry Page and Sergey Brin
6. WebRank.
7. Purchase
8. External Links
9. Automated link building program
10. Bad back links.

Chapter 3
Site Readiness

Select the right option:

1. c)
2. a)
3. b)
4. a)
5. c)
6. c)
7. a)
8. b)
9. a)
10. a)

Fill in the blank:

1. Windows or subwindows.
2. NOFRAMES
3. Visitor's computer.
4. Session Ids
5. Cookies, URLs and hidden fields of web pages.
6. Change
7. Cascading Style Sheet
8. Minimum and Maximum
9. True
10. True

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Chapter 4
Pay per Click

Select the right option:

1. c) Number of times visitor clicks the ad
2. a) Google AdWords and Yahoo PPC program
3. d) All the above
4. c) Bidding
5. a) Relevancy of the ad copy
6. a) Atlas One Point
7. d) You can get extra exposure for your site
8. d) All the above
9. a) I can invest any amount
10. d) $100

Fill in the Blanks:

1. 0.10 cents
2. Click through-s/impressions
3. Automatically
4. 40 and 190
5. pay-per-click search engine management
6. PPC tracking and reporting
7. True
8. True
9. True
10. True

Chapter 5
SEO Monitoring

Select the right Option:

1. e) All of the above
2. a) Traffic on keywords
3. b) Targeted traffic
4. d) All of the above
5. a) Unethical
6. b) Ranking guarantee
7. d) Attract traffic to the website
8. c) The linked page where customer arrives after clicking on the ad or listing
9. Qualifier
10. Conversion
11. "Black hat SEO"

Chapter 6
Latest Concepts

Select the right Option:

1. a) A blog is a regularly updated website
2. c) The presence of same content on two websites
3. b) Websites carrying the same content
4. a) The process where search engines select the best URL
5. b) Increasing the traffic to a website
6. c) Audio or video content delivered via RSS
7. a) Really Simple Syndication
8. c) User driven website
9. b) Offers great keyword depth

Chapter 7
Marketing Strategies

Select the right Option:

1. b) A limited Geographical area
2. d) Both a) and b)
3. c) Yelp.com
4. c) Friendly Hook
5. b) False
6. b) Thematic natural one way links
7. d) Both b) and c)
8. b) Monetize your site through Google published ads on your site
9. b) Tools → Set Crawl Rate

Chapter 8
Advanced SEO Techniques & Strategies

Select the right Option:

1. e) All of the above
2. a) Each article that you submit in Squidoo.com
3. b) False
4. a) True
   b) False
   c) False
   d) True
5. b) Open ping server and Proprietary ping server