

Search Engine Terminology (from Register.com)

What is a search engine?

A search engine is a website that people use to search the Internet for products, services and information. The three primary search engines are Google, Yahoo!, and MSN which account for nearly 90% of all Internet search traffic. Other search engines include Ask.com, Lycos, AOL and AltaVista.

What is search engine optimization?

Search Engine Optimization is the process of analyzing and enhancing your website so that it's easier for potential customers to find your site from a search engine. Use our SEO tools to help improve where your site appears in the results pages when someone conducts a search for your product or service.

Why is SEO critical to my business?

1. You may have a great website, but if nobody sees it, your business is not going to be successful. Employing proper SEO practices on your website can help your site get found by people looking to buy your product or service.
2. SEO can help you tap into the vast market of potential customers who are out there right now searching on Google and other search engines.
3. Proper SEO can help you gain a competitive advantage by helping your site get seen before your competitors'.

What kind of results should I expect from SEO?

SEO is a powerful and effective way to increase your site's traffic - but even the most serious SEO efforts can take several weeks to several months to take effect. If you are committed and willing to manage your website's SEO on an on-going basis, you will likely see your results increase steadily over time. As a general rule, the more dedicated and persistent you are with site optimization, the better your results will be.

What are keywords?

Keywords are terms that people use to search the web. For instance, if someone wanted search on Google for a dentist in the Denver area, they might enter "Denver Dentist" in the search field - these would be the keywords for that particular search.

A critical part of the SEO process is deciding which keywords are the most valuable for your business. Obviously a dentist in Denver would want to optimize her site for "Denver dentist". If the same dentist also specialized in veneers, she would want to optimize her site to perform well for the keywords "veneer specialist", and so on. The keywords you choose and how well your site is optimized for those keywords can make all difference in getting qualified traffic to your site.

What are search engine rankings?

Your site's "ranking" is where your site appears in a list of search results returned by a search engine. For instance, if someone searches for a "dentist in Denver" and your site appears 27th on a list of results, your ranking would be 27 for that keyword. The higher your ranking (with position #1 being the highest ranking) the more visibility you'll get and the more traffic you are likely to bring to your site as a result.

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What are meta-tags?

Meta-tags are part of your website's HTML code that search engines use to help rank your site. The three primary meta-tags are the title tag, header tag and keyword tag. An important part of Search Engine Optimization is to optimize these tags so that search engines can more easily evaluate your site and rank you higher in search results.

While it may sound technical, adjusting your site's meta-tags is a fairly simple process. Our Do-It-Yourself solutions offer tools and guidance to take you through the process. With monthly consulting, your SEO specialist will guide you through it step by step. With Full Service SEO, your account manager will optimize your meta-tags for you.

What are site links and why are they important?

When search engines evaluate your site for rankings, an important factor is how you use links on your site, as well as how many other websites link to your site. Our Advanced, Monthly SEO Consulting and Full Service solutions offer ways to help you evaluate your site links and optimize them to help improve your rankings.

What's a search engine spider?

A spider is an automatic indexing tool - or robot - used by search engines. Spiders continually "crawl" the web evaluating websites for content, html tags and many other factors. With proper Search Engine Optimization in place, your site can be more easily and completely indexed by spiders, which can help improve rankings.

What is a search engine algorithm?

A search engine algorithm is the computer program a search engines uses to evaluate and rank websites. Each search engine uses its own algorithm, which may involve hundreds of factors, including:

- what do your title, keyword and header tags say?
- what keywords are used in the copy of your site and in what frequency (keyword density)?
- what do sites with similar content look like?
- how many websites link to your site?
- what is the content of the sites that link to yours?

What is search engine submission?

Submitting your site to a search engine is a way to help your site get indexed and ranked - so that your listing will appear in that engine's search results. All our SEO solutions provide automatic monthly submission to the major search engines.

What is "Paid Search" or "Search Engine Marketing"?

Paid Search campaigns, (also known as Search Engine Marketing, or SEM) are text ads for your business that appear in the "sponsored links" section of Google and other search engines. (In most cases, this section appears above and next to the search results listings). The cost of these ads will vary depending on your business, the keywords you want to buy and the search engine on which you want them to appear.