SEO (Search Engine Optimization) /cont'd

SEO strategies/techniques

1. Domain name strategies

- domain names are traffic magnets
  > 63 million domain names registered
  > 4.7 million domain names registered 1st quar 2004
- choose a domain name that will increase your search engine ranking. How?
- simple, short, no hyphens, no numbers
- use keywords, common words, advertising terms, product names
- choose a keyword that is important for your business

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

2. Linking strategies

- the more inbound links the higher the SE ranking
- if the site linking to you is already indexed, spiders will also receive your site
- quality of inbound links is critical
- how to increase links: a) good content b) good outbound links c) target a list of sites from which you can request inbound links
- links for the sake of links can damage your search rankings

"Link relevancy is critical in getting your site indexed by search engines"

"A small number of inbound links from high-quality, relevant sites is more valuable than many links from low-traffic, irrelevant sites."

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

3. Keywords

- *important* in optimizing rankings
- keywords are words that appear the most in a page
- the spider chooses the appropriate keywords for each page, then sends them back to its SE
- your web site will then be indexed based on your keywords
- can be key phrases or a single keyword
- do not use common words eg 'the' 'and' 'of': spiders ignore them
- write keyword-rich text
- balance keyword-rich and readability
- always have text in your page: at least 100 words

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

4. Title tags

- *important* in optimizing rankings
- the first thing that a search engine displays on a search return
- must keywords in title to be ranked no. 1
- should have the exact *keyword* you use for the page
- every single web page must have its own title tag
- you can use up to 65 characters eg. Ebay
http://www.ebay.com/ *(title is littered with keywords)*

5. Meta description tags

- the next important
- displayed below the title in search results
- use dynamic, promotional language
- use keywords

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

Meta keywords tags

- no longer carry weight with major SEs
- a myth that meta keywords alone affect rankings

6. Alt tags

- include keywords in your alt tags

7. Submit your website to SEs for indexing

- submit your site to search engine directories, directory sites and portal sites
- indexing takes 1 wk to 3 months

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

Major SEs to submit to:

- **Altavista** ***http://addurl.altavista.com/***
  (Search engines that also use this database - Looksmart)
- **The Open Directory Project (DMOZ)** ***http://dmoz.org/***
  (Search engines that also use this database - Ask Jeeves, Lycos, Netscape)
- **Fast** ***http://www.alltheweb.com/***
  (Search engines that also use this database - Lycos)
- **Google** ***http://www.google.com/***
  (Search engines that also use this database - Yahoo)
- **Inktomi** ***http://submitit.bcentral.com/***
  (Search engines that also use this database - AOL, Excite, MSN, Overture)
- **MSN** ***http://submitit.bcentral.com/***
- **Yahoo** ***http://docs.yahoo.com/***

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

SEO - what is NOT recommended

Flash and shockwave - spiders do not pick up these files

Image only sites - spiders do not pick up images

Image maps - spiders cannot read image maps.
Do not use them on your home page or critical pages.

Frames - only one page can be titled (titling is critical in search rankings)
- If the spider cannot read the complete page (because of the frames), it will not be indexed properly.
- Some spiders may not even read a frames web site

Password protected pages – spiders cannot enter password protected pages

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

PDF files - can be problematic for spiders. Although some search engines can index them, the pages must be interpreted into HTML and can lose much of their content.

- place PDFs lower down in your site

Dynamic pages - spiders cannot index some content on pages using ASP, CGI or other dynamic languages.

- Make sure important pages are HTML, no dynamically generated content.

Drop down menus – spiders cannot read them.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

In summary…

Critical elements

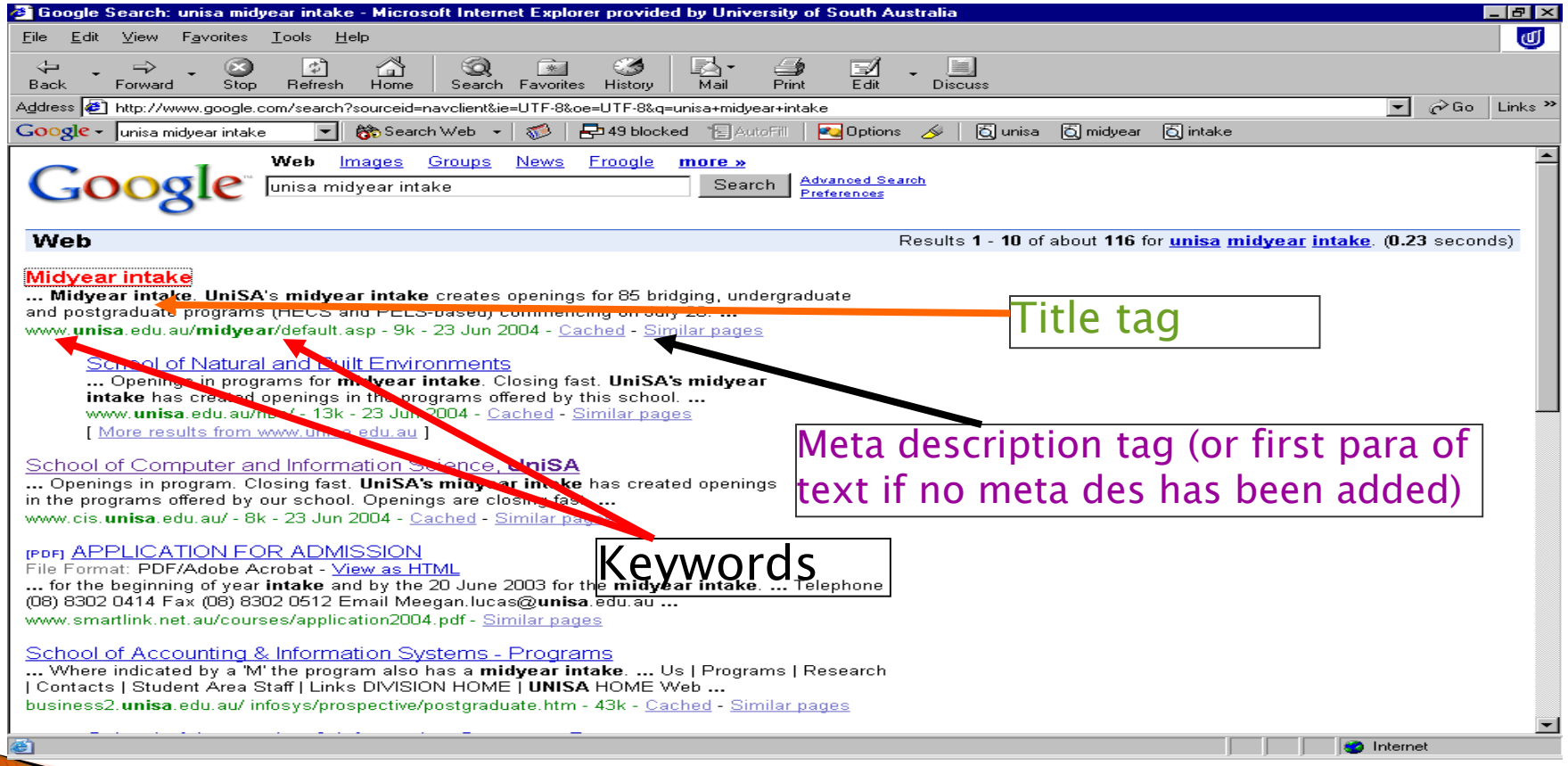
- domain name, links, keywords, title, meta description, alt tags, submitting your website to SEs
- keywords galore: include in page copy, title, description, domain name, alt tags

No-nos

- flash, image-only sites, image maps, frames, password protected pages, PDFS, dynamic pages, drop-down menus

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

How SEO elements affect organic listings



SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

What is search engine marketing (SEM)?

SEM is the act of marketing a website via search engines by purchasing paid listings

What are paid listings?

These are listings that search engines sell to advertisers, usually through *paid placement* or *paid inclusion* programs. In contrast, organic listings are not sold.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

Paid listings:

1. Paid inclusions

- Advertising programs where pages are guaranteed to be included in a search engine's index in exchange for payment
- no guaranteed ranking
- payment made on a *Cost Per Click* (CPC) basis
- eg Looksmart: a directory that lists pages and sites, not based on position but based on relevance. Advertisers pay to be included in the directory on a CPC basis or per-url fee basis with no guarantee of specific placement

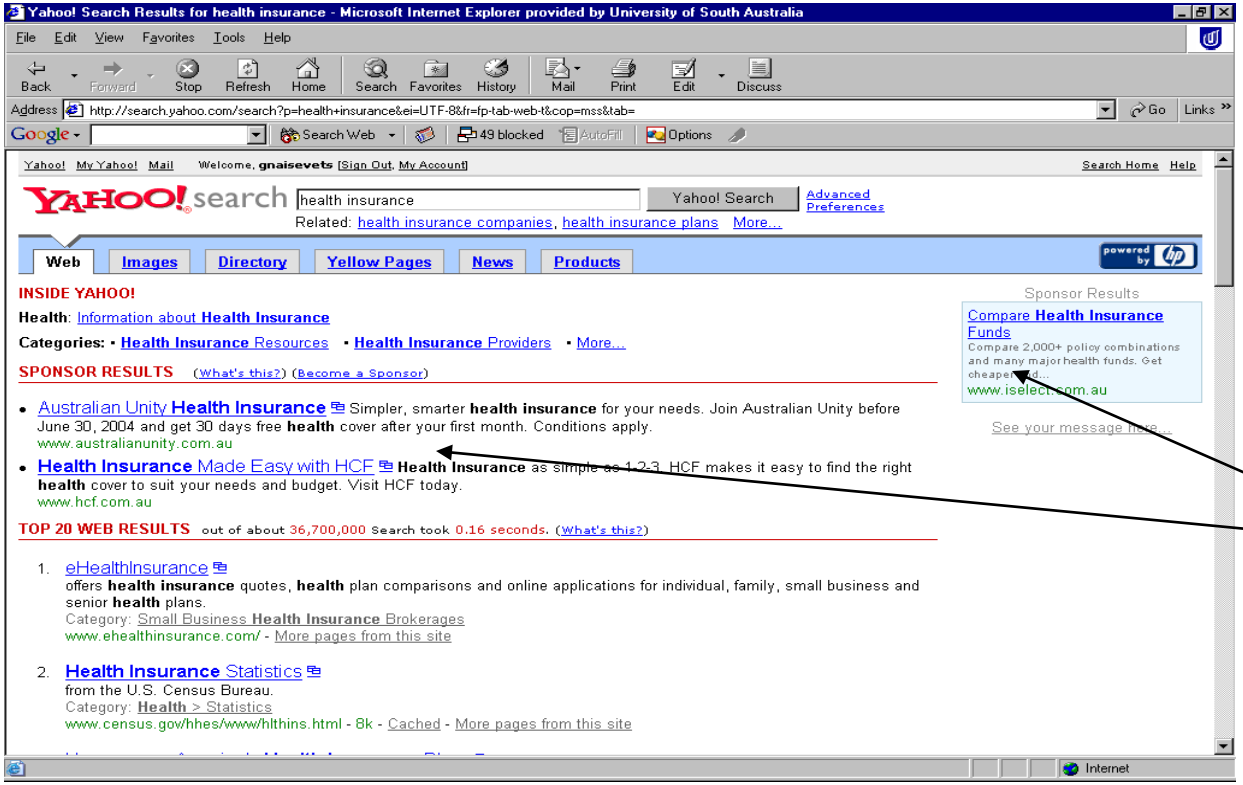
SEO (Search Engine Optimization) /cont'd

2. Paid placements

- Advertising programs where listings are guaranteed to appear in organic listings
- the higher the fee, the higher the ranking
- eg sponsored links and Google's Adwords
- can be purchased from a portal or a search network
- search networks are often set up in an auction environment where keywords and phrases are associated with a cost-per-click (CPC) fee.
- Overture and Google are the largest networks

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)



Other internet marketing strategies

- Usability driven information architecture
- Effective copywriting (presented previously)
- Affiliate programs
- Email marketing and online newsletters
- Interactive customer relationships
- Web traffic analysis and web analytics
- Yahoo answer

Web site uses splash page

We recommend against the use of splash page - A site needs to be content rich with carefully placed keyword phrases, especially the main page.

Since splash pages and Flash intros may have very little (or no) HTML text, they are not helpful for search engines and could potentially inhibit indexing. If your main page has little or no text, there's very little content that the crawler will index... which means your site won't rank high when people do searches.

There are also search engines that only index your main page, so if it happens to be a splash page with very little text, your site has little-to-no chance of popping up in any search results. META tags can help for search engines that recognize them, but without rich content, your odds of getting listed at all, much less achieving top rankings, are tremendously reduced.

Other Recommendations:

- Any folder should not have more than 30 files in it
- All images should be in a folder called images
- Page should be named after the top keyword, which is being targeted for that page.
- Targeted keyword should occur 3-4 times in the body, in alt, one image to be renamed after that keyword, with same keyword in alt tag
- Keeping the header clean so that keywords can be found as early as possible in the body

- Use of unique title tag (8-10 words), Meta description (less than 200 characters), Meta keywords (make sure you do include spaces between each keyword) for each page.
- The only META tags that you MUST have are the "description" and "keyword" tags.
- Use of sitemap is important, and should be linked from each page of the site.
- Use of robots.txt file.

Remember that each search engine has a different ranking algorithm. This means that one may consider a particular factor to be important whereas another search engine may consider the same factor of no importance of whatsoever. Thereby we have

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

listed more general analysis and recommendations above, that work on wide variety of search engines. We cannot provide search engine specific information for your site at the proposal state. Though as a sample we provide you one Google search engine specific factor for your site:

Website homepage Page Rank – $$/10

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.

Conclusion

- If budget allows, undertake both SEO and SEM as SEM enables ROI tracking (leads and conversions)
- SEM works for short time and SEO works till long time and SEO is cheaper than SEM.

A last word

This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Search marketing is at its infancy and is advancing by leaps and bounds.

So stay tuned… and stay ahead of your competitor.

Thank You!

www.codipixel.com