Search Engine Optimisation

SEO Overview

- Behind the scenes, search engines like Google crawl the Internet to associate keywords with pages

- The search results are sorted by how well these pages match the **criteria** of the search engine's algorithm

- Most of the criteria relate to:

    a. how relevant the page is to the keywords searched

how 'trustworthy' it is (to stop the spammers)

What are the Criteria

- On Site Criteria

    - What is on YOUR website that makes your pages relevant to the keywords

- Off Site Criteria

    - What is on OTHER websites that make your website more *relevant* and *trustworthy*

On Site Criteria Check List

1. Meta Data

    - Title tag – Home page should contain most competitive keyword

    - Description – Should contain most competitive keyword

    - Keywords – Not so important, but you should fill out and restrict to about 20 words max

2. Keyword Presence and Density

- Try to include best performer in a <h1> tag on home page

- Create a page / article for each one of your high performing keywords – 'content is king'

- Link to these pages from your home page with the keyword in the link

- Add more content relating to the keywords

- Don't put your keywords so many times that it looks unnatural (penalty)

3. Good Navigation

- Your navigation being intuitive and logical assists the spiders / crawlers to traverse your site

- Your most keyword powerful pages should be as close to the top of the source as possible

- Don't use images!

- Use text!

- Use unordered lists (
)

4. Hosting Location

- Is your website hosted in the same country as your primary market

- Google.com.au will favour Australian hosted sites

- Google.co.uk favours UK hosted sites

- Unsure? Get your website's IP address and put it into MaxMind's GeoIP tool

5. Update Frequently

- No one likes visiting a site last updated in 1998. Nor does Google.

- **Keep writing content**

- Post news and events

- Start a blog

They are the main ones. Google also values:

- Domain age (how old it is)

- How long the domain is registered for (always renew for more than a year at a time)

- Your contact details – sites aren't 'trustworthy' if you can't contact the owner

- RSS Feeds

- Site Map

- Keywords in image filenames, embedded in flash

- (List goes on and on)

Off-site criteria

- Off site criteria are the features of other websites that link to yours.

- Off site criteria generally determine just how 'trustworthy' your site is

- PageRank (PR) is a rank given from 1-10 as to how many websites link to your website

- Based on a 'random surfer' model as to the probability of a random link clicker surfing the net would end up on your site.

- PageRank numbers are **exponential**

    - Eg. PR5 page has double the link value of a PR 4 page, PR4 has double the link value of a PR 3 page etc.

- PageRank was one of Google's original sort algorithms, but was spoofed easily

- Can be measured by installing Google Toolbar or other SEO toolbar

- Google published PR data is around 6 months old

- Don't pay a great deal of attention to it

- **PageRank is pretty much dead**
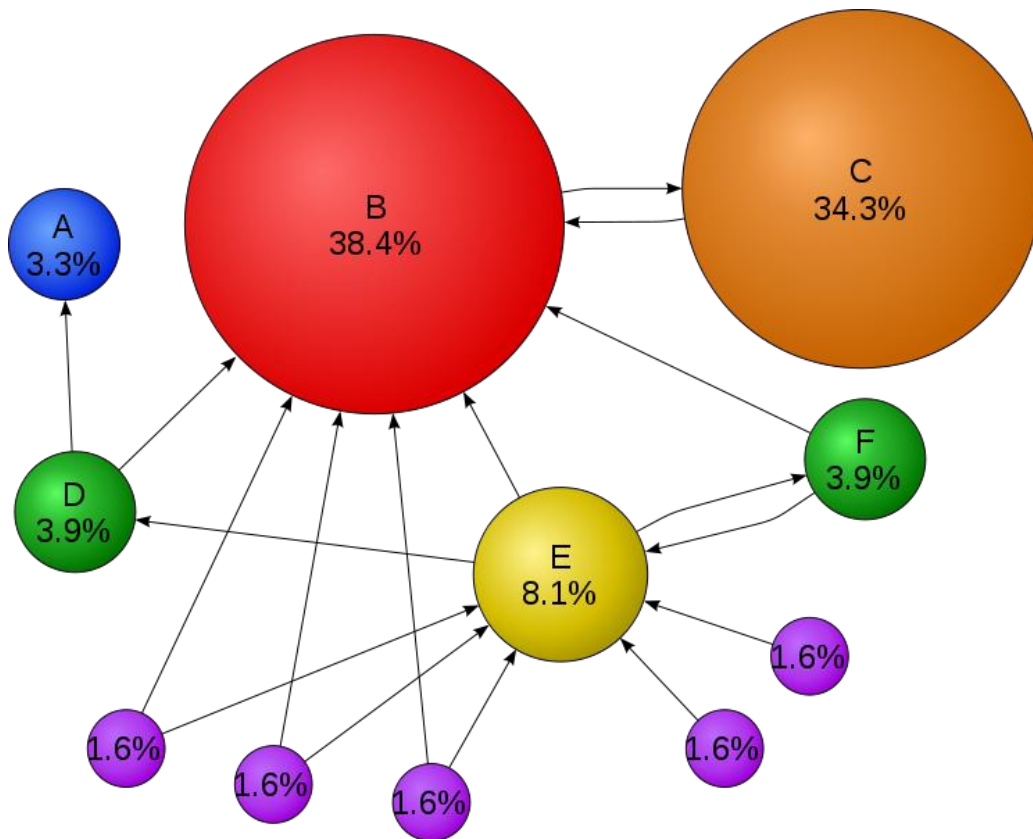
Note: Page C has a higher PageRank than Page E, even though it has fewer links to it

Off Site Criteria – Hill Top Algorithm

- Also known as Trust Rank / Authority Rank

- Similar to PageRank, only instead known trusted sites start with a high weighting

- Trusted sites are defined and seeded by Google – eg: BBC, WhiteHouse, WikiPedia, etc.

- Trust trickles down to your site from the seeded sites

- In my opinion, when the onsite criteria are fulfilled, TrustRank via the hilltop algorithm is the definitive sort criteria

- The chain of trust from the seeded sites….

Black Hat SEO – Buying Links

- Google does not approve

- Google may penalise you *(if you get caught)*

- However, you can receive excellent results if done safely

- Buy fewer, better quality links

- Don't buy millions of crap links

- Unnatural spikes in link growth is detectable!

- Not for everyone

Buying Links – What to Look For

- Check PageRank

- Check Alexa Rank

- Use Yahoo Site Explorer to examine back links

- Does the site you are purchasing from seem 'Trustworthy'

- Make sure they aren't rel="nofollow"

- Make sure they aren't loaded in with client script or iframed

Where to Buy Links

Interaktiv is an authorised text-link advertising agent. We have had a lot of success and pick the cream of the crop of text link advertising.

List of Essential Tools

- Google Analytics

- Google AdWords

- Google Webmaster Tools

- Yahoo Site Explorer

- SEO Quake Firefox Toolbar

- Many tools available to track your position for keywords over time