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further reading

www.AffiliateProgramAdvice.com

– affiliate advice from a team headed by Jess Luthi who has been in the affiliate marketing industry since its start in the UK.

blog.affiliatetip.com

– a blog from Shawn Collins, an affiliate since 1997 and founder of Affiliate Summit, the leading industry conference.

5. search engine marketing

What's inside: A look at the industry known as search and the different types of search results: organic results and paid results. We lay the foundation with key terms and concepts before looking at **the importance of search** to a marketer. The three-way **relationship between search engines, users** and **webmasters** follows, and then a look at **how search engines work**. This leads to search engine marketing, made up of SEO and PPC, and **keywords**.

Every day, all around the world, millions of people use search engines to find content on the Internet. Search engines are web-based programmes that index the web and allow people to find what they are looking for. "Search" or "search marketing" is often used to refer to the industry that has built up around search engines.



Google, Yahoo! and Microsoft's Live are all well known international search engines. Google is by far the leading player in the market. A comScore study of worldwide search engine activity, release in October 2007, showed that Google has just over 60% of the global search engine market share. In Europe, almost 80% of searches are on Google.

Search Property	Searches (Billion)	Market Share
Worldwide	61,036	100%
Google Sites	37,094	61%
Yahoo! Sites	8,549	14%
Baidu.com Inc.	3,253	5%
Microsoft Sites	2,166	4%
NHN Corporation	2,044	3%
eBay	1,319	2%
Time Warner Network	1,212	2%
Ask Network	743	1%
Fox Interactive Media	683	1%
Lycos, Inc.	441	1%

Global search market share. Source: comScore 2007.

When we talk "search", we refer to two different kinds of results:

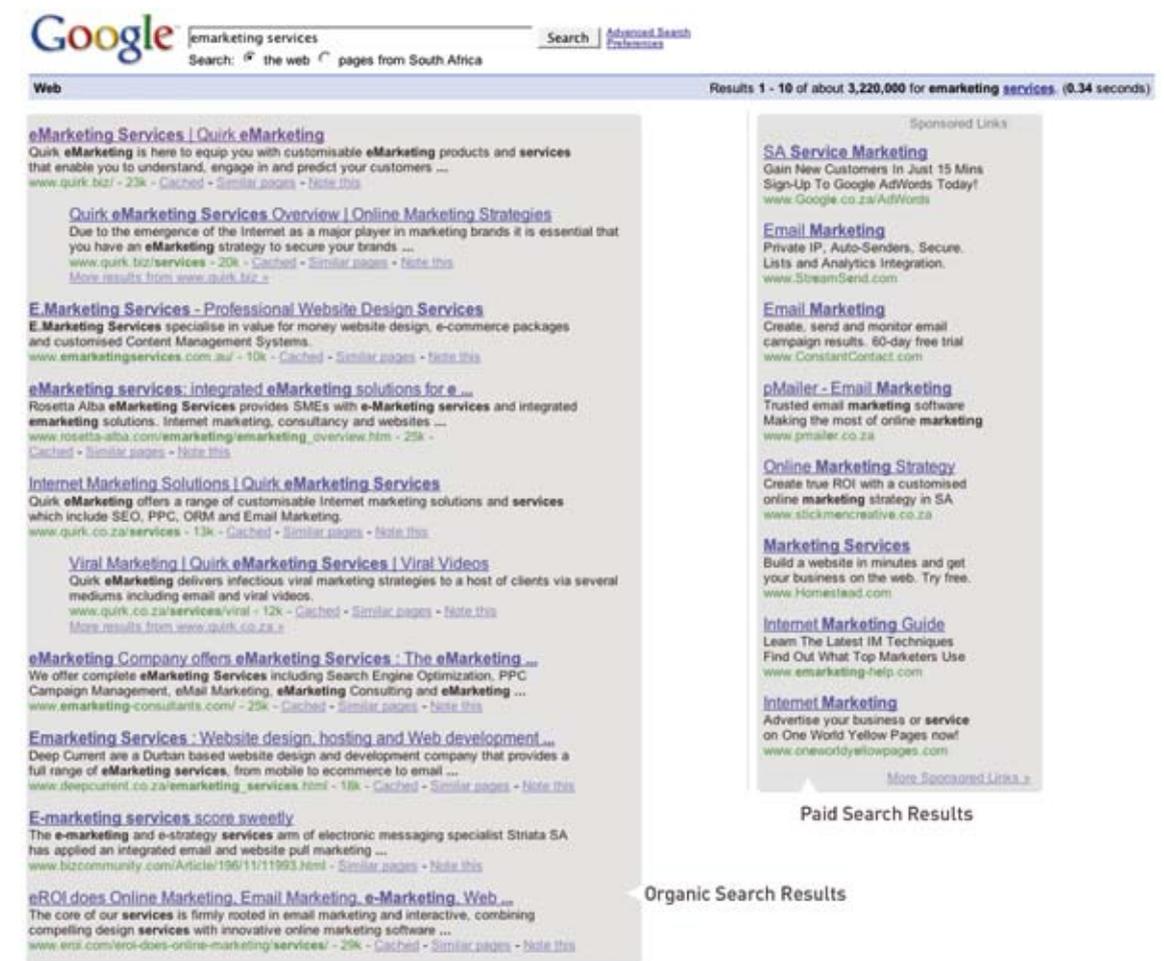
organic search results

Organic search results are the primary product of a search engine. These results are the listings generally found on the left hand side on the search engine results

pages (SERPs). They are not influenced by financial payment and are therefore also called natural search results. Organic search results need to be consistently reliable to attract (and keep) users. Google's growth and success as a search engine can be directly linked to its superior search algorithm which returns highly relevant organic results.

paid search results

Paid search, also known as Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising, involves the displaying of sponsored results alongside the organic results. Advertisers bid for placement, and pay the search engine when their advert is clicked on. Paid search results must be distinguished from organic results since paid placement introduces bias. PPC adverts are usually displayed at the top and on the right side of the SERPs. Search engines attract and keep users through organic search, but they make most of their money from paid search.



Organic Search Results

Paid Search Results

key terms and concepts

Above the fold The content that can be seen on a screen without having to scroll down.

Algorithm When it comes to search, a search engine's algorithm is its set of rules for computing ranking.

Browser An application used to access the Internet. Popular browsers include Firefox, Internet Explorer and Safari.

Index The databases for keywords created by the search engines.

Keyword A word or words used by a searcher on a search engine. In SEO, keywords are the words that a web site is optimised to rank for, and in PPC, keywords are bid on by advertisers.

Keyword phrase More than one keyword can be referred to as a keyword phrase.

Organic search results The listings on a SERP resulting from the search engine's algorithm. These are not paid for.

Paid search results The listings on a SERP that are paid for.

PPC Pay Per Click is advertising on search engines where the advertiser pays only for each click on their advert.

Ranking In search, ranking is used to describe the relative position of a web page in the SERPs.

Search engine A tool for searching the Internet. Users of search engines enter keywords relevant to their search, and the search engine returns results from its databases.

SEM Search Engine Marketing refers to marketing that is related to search.

SEO Search Engine Optimisation is the practice that aims to improve a web site's ranking in the search engines for specific keywords.

SERP Search Engine Results Page - the page that shows the results for a search on a search engine.

Spider An automated program that scans or crawls web pages to gather information for search engines.

Sponsored links The paid search results on a SERP.

URL Universal Resource Locator - the address of a web page on the Internet.

the importance of search to a marketer

As search engines have become essential to a web user's Internet experience so has search become essential to a marketer. Search is important for a number of reasons:

Search is goal oriented: people use search to find the things they want and need.

The Internet is a highly competitive environment, with literally billions of pages in existence. So how does anyone find the page they're after? Web users find what they

need primarily via search. Search drives targeted traffic (and therefore sales) to web sites. A web search is a signal of intent from a web user.

Search engines are the doorway to the Internet.

According to comScore, 95% of the global Internet population visited a search engine in August 2007.

The search industry is BIG.

The daily search volume numbers are in the hundred millions. According to ComScore figures, there were more than 10 billion searches in the US alone during January 2008! That's around 322 million per day.

To be found you must be visible.

If you want your web site to generate a significant amount of traffic, it needs to be listed on the major search engines and listed high up enough to be seen. Statistics show that users are not likely to view listings beyond the first 30 results, with the top 6 (above the fold) listings enjoying the lion's share of clicks (Eyetoools).

Top of search equates to top of mind awareness.

Beyond traffic, a high ranking web site is valuable for brand perception. Web users often perceive search engine results as an indication of authority. Search visibility promotes brand recognition and research has shown that search engine listings can stimulate brand recall by 220% (Enquiro, 2007).

People trust organic search.

Research has shown the people find organic results more relevant and more trusted than paid search results (Enquiro, 2004)

Catch potential customers at every phase of the buying cycle.

Most purchases are subject to a buying cycle. At different points in that cycle, prospects are searching with different key phrases. Give them what they want at each phase, and they will keep coming back till they're ready to buy. In addition, they'll be ready to buy more quickly because information is the best way to shorten the buying cycle.

Many people have a search engine as their browser home page.

Often, the home page of a browser is set to a search engine. Many users enter URLs into the search engine instead of the address bar of the browser - meaning that even if they know the URL of a web site, they are finding it through search.

a three-way relationship

- search engines, webmasters and users

Search engines, Internet users and web site owners are involved in a symbiotic three-way relationship. Each party depends on the other two to get what they need.

Users want to find what they are looking for on the Internet.

They use search engines to lead them to web sites, and they favour search engines that deliver the most relevant and useful results.

Search engines want to make money from selling advertising.

The more users they have, the more advertising search engines can sell. Therefore, search engines must list their results according to relevance and importance in order to attract and keep users. In turn, search engines favour sites that are relevant and useful to users.

Web site owners, webmasters and online marketers want search engines to send traffic to their site.

Therefore, they need to make sure that their sites are relevant and important in both the eyes of the search engines and the users.

Page and Brin sum it up in their pre-Google paper *The Anatomy of a Large-Scale Hypertextual Web Search Engine*:

“The most important measure of a search engine is the quality of its search results.”

what does a search engine do?

Search engines have four main functions:

- They crawl the Web (via spiders).
- They index the Web documents and pages they find.
- Search engines process user queries.
- Finally, they return ranked results from the index.

A search engine is made up of a number of parts all working together:

- A crawling **spider**, also known as a web crawler, **robot** or bot, is an automated indexing program. It goes from page to page, following links and indexing or recording what it finds.
- The **index** is what the spider creates. It is a “library” of pages on the Internet and it consists of tens of billions of pages! The search engine creates databases for keywords, so it knows where to go to when a user enters a query.
- The **engine** is the part that does the actual searching. Users input a search query by typing a keyword or phrase into the search bar. The engine then checks its index to find relevant pages and delivers them ordered from most relevant and important to least relevant and unimportant.
- The **SERP** (search engine results page) is the ordered listing of results for the user’s query. A SERP contains a description and link to the result.

search engine marketing

Search engine marketing (SEM) has two arms: search engine optimisation (SEO) and pay per click (PPC) advertising. These correspond to the two types of search results.

SEO + PPC = SEM

SEM search engine marketing	
SEO search engine optimisation	PPC pay per click
PROS	PROS
- long term ROI	- quick low cost setup
- high volume	- highly measurable and trackable
- more exposure, branding and awareness	- minimal development time required, if at all
CONS	CONS
- tough to quantify	- can be more expensive
- lots of ongoing work	- CPC is climbing
- results can take a while to be seen	- constant monitoring required

SEO aims at improving a web site’s ranking in the natural search results. PPC advertising involves bidding for placement in the paid search results section of the SERP.

Both SEO and PPC advertising are based around the same fundamental concept: **keywords**.

keywords – making sense of it all

Keywords, or key phrases, are what a user enters into a search engine query to find web sites. Both SEO and PPC advertising involve selecting the keywords that are relevant to a company’s web site and are used by potential customers. SEO aims to have a web site rank in the natural results for its target keywords. In PPC advertising, the advertiser bids on desired keywords to achieve rankings in the paid results.

The following two chapters deal with the two arms of search engine marketing: search engine optimisation and pay per click advertising.

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6. search engine optimisation

What's inside: An **introduction** to SEO, and a brief **history** followed by the **key terms and concepts** you need. In **how it works**, we look at the five main areas of SEO, namely **web site structure**, **key phrase research**, **writing content**, **all important links** and **usage data**. When it comes to SEO, you also need to know **what not to do**. Following all this we have the **tools of the trade**, the **pros and cons** of SEO, and a look at **the bigger picture**.