Western Technical College

Effective solutions for small business

Keeping your Site on Top of Search Engines

Agenda

- Introductions
- Search Basics
- What you have to give up forever
- Animal sacrifice
  - Which animals and how
- Eye-teeth: do you need them?
- Getting alone without your first-born

Agenda

- Introductions
- Types of search
- How search engines work
- Basic Approach and Techniques
  - Tools included
- Paid search
  - An overview
- What not to do, what to always do
  - A review

Introduction

Who is this guy?

Experience

- 12+ years of experience
- Full range of development
  - Project Management
  - Environmental Metrics and SEO
  - Graphic and User-Interface design
  - Coding
  - Content Writing
  - Database design/management
  - Server Development

Experience

- 3 years - Mercy Hospital - Webmaster
- 6 years – Iowa Public Television – Webmaster
- 3 years – Ovation Marketing – Web Manager
- Southeast Technical College
  - Webmaster/Developer
- Teaching @ Western Technical College
  - Dreamweaver I, II, III
  - E-Commerce
- Freelance projects for small businesses

Clients

Big Guys

Little Guys

Who are you?
What are you looking to get out of the class?

Types of search
and search engines

Types of search

- Organic Search
  - Search indexed for free
  - Our main focus
- Media Search
  - Maps, Images, Video, etc.
- Social Search
  - Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Paid Search
  - Will discuss briefly

Types of search engines

Google: the "only one that matters"?

- Maybe...
- Leading Search Engine
- 63% of market share
- Translatable practices
- Free tools
- Cutting-edge

How Search Engines Work

To the best of our knowledge

What happens when we search

- Enter **search term**
- Site searches its **indexes**
  - Does not search pages for results
- Results returned by **relevance**

Important notes

- Search engines **index** page content
  - Think *page* not *site*
  - Spiders, Gophers, and roBots to the work
    - Jump, burrow, plod from link to link to find pages
- **Terms** are the key
  - Term: word, or set of words, used to find content
  - "puppies" does not equal "puppies for adoption"
  - Term must be **relevant** to content
    - More relevant = Higher score = Closer to top

How is relevance scored?

- No one knows *exactly*
- Important factors
  - Title of page
  - Headings
  - Number of time the term appears
  - Links to page from other sites
    - Should be *good* links

Basic Approach

The meat of the story

Basic Approach

1. Evaluate your site
2. Choose your playing fields
3. Pick your search terms
4. Pick page(s) for each term(s)
5. Optimize your pages
   1. Optimize Content
   2. Optimize Code
6. Get linked
7. Keep track of results

1. Evaluate your site

- Examine how the site is doing now
  - Terms used
  - Placement on terms
  - Page Errors
- **Tool:** Google Webmaster Tools
  - **www.google.com/webmasters/tools**

2. Choose your playing fields

- Who is your user?
- Where will people search for you?
- What will they want?
  - Online products? Images? Contact information?
- Keep this in mind when optimizing
- **Tool:** Google Analytics
  - www.google.com/analytics

2. Choose your playing fields

Knowing your user is the most important aspect to success on the Internet. The value of this knowledge cannot be overstated.

3. Pick your search terms

- Choose terms people use
- Keep it simple!
- Don't be too general
  - Specificity generates good traffic!
- Don't make it a guessing game
  - Use keyword tools
- **Tool:** Google AdWords
  - https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal

4. Pick pages for your terms

- Which pages will use which terms
  - One term per page (maybe two)
- Make sure the term is <u>relevant</u> to the content
- "About Us" page is critical
- Home page is less important

5. Optimize your pages

- Two steps to optimization
a) Optimize your content
b) Optimize your code

5a. Optimize your pages

- Term(s) should appear…
  - In the page title
    - <title></title> tag
    - With site name
    - Should be descriptive
    - e.g. "MySite.com – Web Development in Mauston"
  - Several times in content
    - 4 – 6 times is optimal

5a. Optimize your pages

- At least one heading per page
  - <h1>Web Development in Mauston </h1>
  - Stick to 1 <h1> per page
- More headings help
  - <h2>,<h3>,… <h6>
- Keep heading text relevant

5b. Optimize your code

- HTML changes
  - "Easy" HTML code
  - Content Management Systems (CMS) help
- Three things to consider
  - Meta tags in pages
    - Description, Keywords
  - "Alt" attributes for images
  - Sitemap for spiders and bots

5b. Optimize your code

- Meta tags <meta>
  - Information about the page
- Two common types of meta tags
  - Description
  - Keywords

5b. Optimize your code

- Description meta tags
  - Describe content
  - Used to some extent by search engines
  - Should be descriptive
  - Must be brief
- Example:
  - `<meta name="Description" content="Author: A.N. Author, Illustrator: P. Picture, Category: Books, Price: $17.99, Length: 784 pages" />`

5b. Optimize your code

- Keyword meta tags
  - Summarily ignored by most search engines
  - Too prone to abuse
  - Irrelevant to content
  - Can be a reminder to you, however
- Example:
  - `<meta name="Keywords" content="Web Development, Mauston, Wisconsin, Graphic Design, Web Hosting" />`

5b. Optimize your code

- "Alt" attributes
- Image descriptions
- Great for image searches
- Great for text searches too!
- Example:
  - `<img src="images/puppies.jpg" alt="Puppies adopted in Mauston" />`

5b. Optimize your code

- Sitemaps
- XML documents
- List pages and links
- Help search engines find content
- By hand?
  - I don't think so!
- **Tool**: XML Sitemaps
  - www.xml-sitemaps.com

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<urlset
    xmlns="http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9"
    xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance"
    xsi:schemaLocation="http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9
       http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9/sitemap.xsd">
<!-- created with Free Online Sitemap Generator www.xml-
    sitemaps.com -->

<url>
 <loc>http://www.montet.org/</loc>
</url>
<url>
 <loc>http://www.montet.org/default.aspx</loc>
</url>
<url>
 <loc>http://www.montet.org/Portfolio/default.aspx</loc>
</url>
<url>
 <loc>http://www.montet.org/WTC/index.aspx</loc>
</url>
<url>
 <loc>http://www.montet.org/pdf/SEO_TipSheet.pdf</loc>
</url>
<url>

    <loc>http://www.montet.org/pdf/Lecture_UserFriendlyWebDesig
    n_3per.pdf</loc>
</url>
</urlset>
```

6. Get linked

- Add links whenever possible
- Consider
  - Email signature
  - Blog comment posts
  - Vendors and clients
- Use good text
  - Text helps search indexes
  - Avoid URL links and "Click Here"
    - They are of no help

7. Keep track of results

- Check your statics monthly
- Adjust page content first!
  - Adjust page code second
- Update sitemaps quarterly
- Keep track of competition
- Don't overreact

Paid search

How do you get to the top? Money.

Paid Search

- Results show up as "Sponsored Links" or "Sponsored Results"
- Google leads industry
  - AdWords
  - AdSense
- Yahoo! and Bing too

Paid Search – how to play

- Bid on keywords
- Pay per click
- You set spending limit
  - Per term/per month
- Highest bids appear higher
- Can be tuned for location
  - BIG advantage for small business
- Tool: Google AdWords
  - http://adwords.google.com

Google
AdWords

Paid Search – how everyone plays

- Google AdSense
- Shows paid ads on Web sites
- Site owners get paid per click
- No money down!
- Cyber-squatters love this stuff
  - Example: www.doge.com

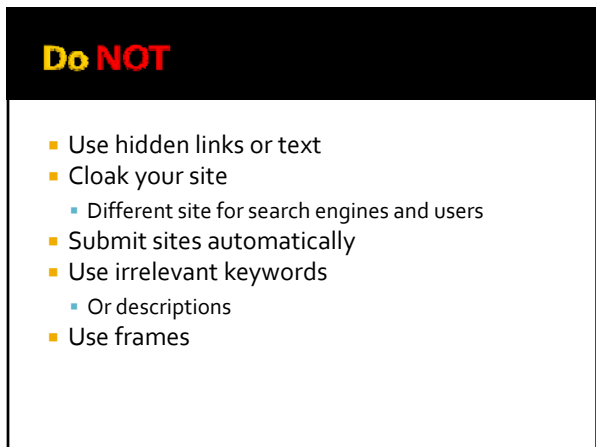A recap
Don'ts and Dos

What you should *never* do
The things that will get you blackballed

Do NOT

- Use hidden links or text
- Cloak your site
  - Different site for search engines and users
- Submit sites automatically
- Use irrelevant keywords
  - Or descriptions
- Use frames

More things not to do

- Create duplicate content
  - Even across different sites
- Use "doorway" pages just for search engines
  - Including affiliate programs without adding content
- Trust SEO experts with "guarantees"*
  - Especially hosting companies
- Trade links – I mean it!
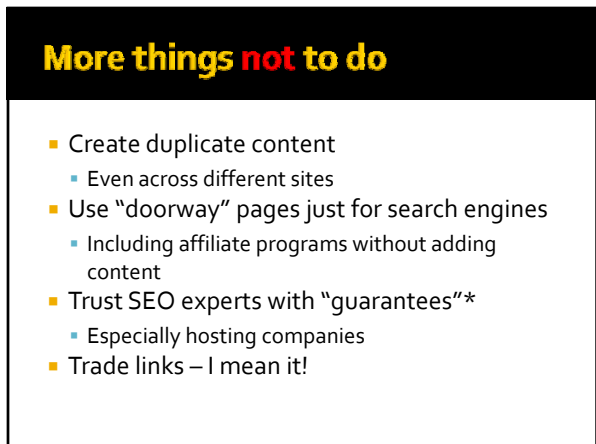
If you get blackballed…

- NONE of you pages will EVER show up
- You need to…
  - Fix the issue(s)
    - May need a full redesign
  - Rename and rebuild pages
  - Submit your site for reconsideration
    - Humans make the decision
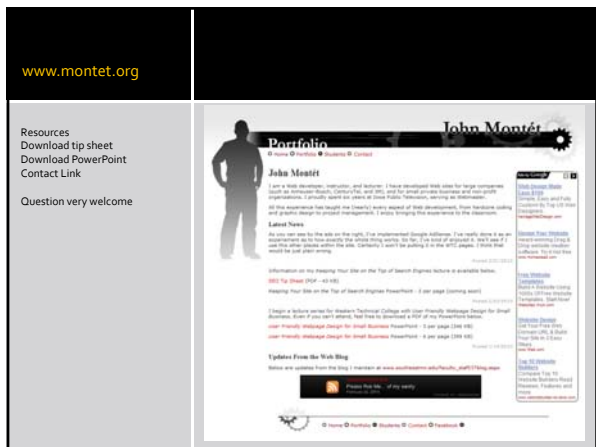
What you should always do
Best Practices

You should always…

- Fill your site with good content
- Write content for your user, not search
  - Good for one = good for the other
- Use good static text links - everywhere
- Use "alt" attribute for all images
- Use good titles
  - *Site Name – Page Name*

You should always…

- Use a heading on each page
- Use good page titles
- Include good description meta tags
- Add good "alt" attributes to images
- Use a site map
- Be *very* careful with Flash
  - e.g. www.smartwool.com

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www.montet.org

Resources
Download tip sheet
Download PowerPoint
Contact Link

Question very welcome

Thank you!

Any questions?