# Introduction To Search Engines and Search Engine Optimization

_Google Basics_

_Google best practice guidelines_

_Keyword primer For Beginners_

## What Are Search Engines?

A web search engine is a tool that allows people to find information on the world wide web. If Megan wants to find information on Pest Control Services she will probably search in Google by typing in

**Pest Control Services**

As you know, the world wide web is so huge that it is absolutely impossible to find all web pages that reference pest control services. In any case, Megan is not interested in web pages that just mention pest control. Without a search engine it would have been impossible for Megan to find what she wanted.

But we are able to find what we want within seconds using Google!

## How Do Search Engines Work?

Assume you are reading a book and want to find references to a specific word in the book. What do you do?

You turn the pages to the end and look in the index! You will then locate the word in the index, find the page numbers mentioned there and flip to the corresponding pages.

Search Engines also work in a similar way.

Search engines are constantly building and updating their index to the world wide web. They do this by using "spiders" that "crawl" the web and fetch web pages. Then the words used in these web pages are added to the index along with where the words came from.

When someone searches for "pest control services" the search engine already has a list of web pages that refer to "pest control services". The only thing left to do is to sort the web pages in order of relevance. This is done based on a number of key factors.

## Search Engine Optimization

From the above discussion it is clear that there are two things involved in getting a web page into search engine results.

1. Getting into the search engine index

2. Getting the web page to the top of the final sorted results before display.

Accomplishing step-1 is relatively easy. You just need to let the search engine spider know that the new web page exists. You can do this by pointing to the new page from an existing web page that is already indexed. Some search engines also provide an option to suggest a new URL for inclusion into their index.

Step-2 is the tough part. Most of Search Engine Optimization tasks revolve around this. Search engines spend a lot of time and effort on making their algorithms find the best way to rank sites. According to Google, there are over 200 factors that determine the rank of a web page in the results.

Search Engine Optimization is the process of trying to get your web pages rank at the top of the search engine results for keywords that are important to you.

## Organic and Sponsored Results

Almost all search engine results consist of two types, organic and sponsored. The organic or natural results are those the search engines display on their own. The sponsored results are paid for by an advertiser. The sponsored results typically appear at the top and side of the organic results.

Search Engine Optimization directly affects only the organic results.   However it does have an indirect effect on paid search results. We will discuss this later.

## What Do the Search Engines Want?

Before we get into the specifics of search engine optimization, let us first consider what the search engines want.

Search Engines want to be able to satisfy their users by providing them with relevant information.

Google, for instance makes most of it's money from selling advertisements (Adwords) that are displayed along with the regular search results. They are able to do this successfully because theirs is the most popular search engine on the planet.

People use Google because it produces relevant results. If Google were to show irrelevant or bad results they will lose their prominent status and hence their ability to make money using Adwords.

## Search Engines Don't Like getting Gamed

Google and other search engines do not want their algorithms to be gamed. If the results are manipulated, people will start using some other search engine and they obviously don't want that.

The best case scenario for search engines will be people creating websites for their users and forgetting everything about search engines. That way there is no question of their algorithms getting manipulated.

For obvious reasons the algorithms used to determine the search engine ranks are proprietary and known only to Google. Google is not going to open up their source code and tell us the exact way their algorithms work.

This has lead to SEO related information becoming more and more confusing and contradictory!

## SEO Contradictions and Confusions

How do we know what are the best SEO practices?

SEO specialists try and piece together this information from…

1. What the search engines tell us to do through their "best practice guidelines"

2. Clues based on the patents filed by search companies.

3. What we learn by analyzing the search engine result pages (SERP).

4. What common sense says Google and other search engines will want to do.

5. Ideas and insights from people who are good at figuring things out.

6. Opinions from people based on what they want to believe, based on random observations or based on some "school of thought" they belong to.

**7.** Misinformation from people who have a vested interest.

## Search Engines Have Their Own Agenda

There is a tendency amongst some "experts" to consider whatever the search engines publish as a guiding principles for everything about website development.

Search Engines are run by large companies that are publicly traded and have to look after the interests of their share holders. So it is very important to remember that almost everything they do will be governed by their own requirements.

## The Basics of Search Engine Optimization

This document was never intended to be about the actual steps involved in optimizing your web pages. This document is more about an introduction to SEO and what it is all about.

The rank of a web page in the search engine result pages is broadly based on three factors.

**1.** The actual contents of the web page

**2.** Relationship with other pages on the web

**3.** Reputation of the domain the web page is from

These and other information will be discussed in other Primers.

## Your Feed Back

Your feedback is **always welcome** and we are anxious to hear your ideas and opinions. Please do contact us at

http://www.softnik.com/icenter/contact.php

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