

The Internet Marketing Chronicles

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January 17th, 2002 - "Increase Your Rankings With Keyword Density"

IMC is published weekly and distributed to over 150,000 Internet marketers and webmasters who have asked to receive it.

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1. [EDITORIAL](#): "Increase Your Rankings With Keyword Density"

Introduction

The "*keyword density*" of your website could make the difference between your site achieving a **top-10 search engine ranking** or staying buried with hundreds of other sites in mediocre positions. A top-10 ranking in a major search engine like AltaVista, Lycos, or Hotbot will often generate more targeted traffic than an expensive banner advertising campaign!

For this reason, it can be to your advantage to develop keyword rich "*information*" pages within your site that are appropriately loaded with the correct mix of carefully selected and intelligently assembled keywords.

In this article, you are going to find out exactly what "*keyword density*" is, how you can measure it, and most importantly, how you can **use this knowledge to make sure your website is among the first** sites that appear when potential buyers input your keywords.

If you have never heard of keyword density or if you have wondered what exactly it is, keyword density is the number of times a keyword appears in relation to the other words on your webpage.

For instance, if your page only had one word of text (i.e. "*cheese*"), the keyword density of the word "*cheese*" would be 100%. On the other hand, if your page utilized the keyword "*cheese*" in an entire sentence (i.e. "*The best selection of fine imported cheese*"), the keyword density of "*cheese*" would be 20% because it represents 1/5th of the entire text.

Keep in mind that **search engines ignore common words** such as "the," "of," "at," etc. when calculating keyword density.

CAUTION! Do not use "stop words" or "*dead weight words*" in titles.

A stop word or dead weight word is a keyword or key phrase that has become so common on the Internet that search engines either ignore it or return hardly relevant results when they are used.

Some examples include... Homepage, web, webpage, sex, etc. Here are some more obvious stop words... the, of, that, is, and, to, etc.

Just be aware that search engines tend to ignore frequent or recurring words that commonly appear on webpages, in order to save storage space or to speed up searches. If your business happens to be in a "stop word" category, it is suggested that you wrap your keywords in quotation marks, or use capitalization and uppercase letters. Applying this strategy can make stop words more "*findable*" through the search engines.

How Can You Measure Your Website's Keyword Density?

Take a look at <http://www.webjectives.com/keyword.htm> to check the keyword density on your site for your most common keywords and phrases. Simply:

a) Type in your URL and the keyword or phrase you would like to check the density for.

b) Click the "*analyze*" button.

A keyword density report is then generated on the fly to give you an accurate profile of your page. You can repeat this process for as many keywords as you want to analyze on your page.

To see an example go to:

<http://www.marketingchallenge.com/kda/kda.html>

Before we explore how you can use keyword density to get your site a top-10 position, let's take a closer look at exactly how search engines determine rankings. **The more you understand how search engines "*think*," the more you can use this information to your advantage.**

What Are Algorithms And How Can Understanding Them Be Used To Your Advantage?

Each search engine uses a unique set of instructions called "algorithms." Various components are measured and then assigned a weighting. Search engine companies keep their algorithms secret and also frequently change them just to ensure that the same sites aren't always at the top.

Since keyword density is important to various degrees in the different search engines, **make sure your site caters to the right density for the search engine that you want to optimize for.** Some search engines may only consider the body text when calculating keyword density. Meanwhile, others also consider the way your site uses all the indexable text keywords and key phrases including the body text and a handful of other tags.

Here are several elements that search engines might factor in when determining how your site will rank...

Keywords in your domain name

Keywords in the title of your website

Keywords in meta tags

Keywords in headings

Keywords in the body text of your website

Keywords in alt tags

Keywords in comment tags

Keywords in form hidden fields

Keyword density

The number and relevancy of the hyperlinks from other sites linking to yours

Design (such as using frames or flash)

The key point to remember is that every search engine has a different algorithm that may or may not include keyword density in elements that span further than the body text. And for that matter, elements that span further than keyword density itself.

What Is The "Best" Keyword Density?

Now that we know each search engine will judge keyword density differently according to their specific algorithm, how do we figure out what keyword density to aim for in each search engine? Although not 100% accurate, we've found a couple of free online tools that, when used along with a bit of reverse engineering, will help you to make a very close "guesstimate."

First, **you'll need to figure out who your competition is.** For this, we would like to introduce Ixquick.com. Ixquick is a metasearch engine that searches 12 main search

engines simultaneously. The returned results are sorted by the number of top-10 placements each website has in various other major search engines.

Each site is given a star for every single top-10 listing the site has in a different search engine. The more stars a website has, the higher up they will be in Ixquick's results.

Ixquick's tool is good for gauging how "in tune" a website is with the search engines. It works on the principle that if several different search engines all rate a site highly, chances are, that site may be doing something right with their keyword density, and it may be worth your while to model your site accordingly.

STEP 1: Go to <http://www.ixquick.com> and then enter your main keyword or keyword phrase and click on the "search" button. Once you have received the results for your search, jot down the top 2-3 domains listed.

STEP 2: Once you've noted a couple of competing websites, use this tool (<http://www.keywordcount.com>), and compare all of the domains that you've jotted down to your own website.

Simply type in the URL of your webpage and the URL of your competitor's webpage. When you're ready, click on the "Analyze" button. You should now see a side-by-side comparison of your webpage and your competitor's webpage.

STEP 3: **Emulate the same conditions in your webpage** as they appear on the top ranking competitor pages.

To see an example go to:

<http://www.marketingchallenge.com/kda/kdacompare.html>

I know this procedure may seem a little tedious, but the fact is, the search engines are the only ones who know for sure what the preferred keyword densities are for websites in their index. The only way you can find out on your own is to test by comparison.

If you don't mind paying a small fee, **there is an easier way to stay on top of search engine algorithm changes**. For a modest price of \$97, you can make sure your website is among the first sites that appear when potential buyers perform a search for your keywords.

Planet Ocean Communications, a leader in search engine research and technologies, is offering all of our Chronicles subscribers a full six month subscription to their Search Engine News (a monthly newsletter that reports the various changes in search

engine algorithms) and their award winning eBook, "*The Unfair Advantage Book on Winning The Search Engine Wars*" (an easy to follow, "how to" strategy book for increasing your rankings in the search engines) for only \$97.

This is a **limited-time offer**, so I encourage you to take advantage of the savings right now, before it's too late. To secure your copy at a special price, go to:

<http://www.MarketinChallenge.com/senews/>

How Important is Keyword Density Anyway?

As mentioned at the beginning of this editorial, keyword density can be a major factor in regards to how well your pages score in the search engines. However, having said that, focusing your efforts on **keyword density alone isn't necessarily enough to get you to the top of the search engines.**

Did you know that **there are over 60 other elements about your webpage that you must check** before submitting to the search engines? And as if that isn't enough, like keyword density, each of these elements can change at anytime.

So how important is keyword density? If done correctly in conjunction with other search engine optimizing techniques, it will definitely give your webpage a good boost. Keyword density on its own, however, probably won't get you the results you really desire.

I know what you're thinking... Keyword density seems labor- intensive enough. Where am I going to find time to check the other various elements for each individual search engine?

Well, I was searching the Internet when I came across an interesting program called SE-Optimizer. After you see what it offers, you'll understand why it caught my attention. **Here are some of the key features** that SE-Optimizer boasts...

Checks for search engine compliance issues, 62 of them to be exact.

Factors in algorithms for 10 major search engines and 2 major pay-per-click engines (AltaVista, AOL, Direct Hit, Google, HotBot, Inktomi/HotBot, Lycos/FAST, MSN, Overture - formerly GoTo.com, and FindWhat).

Update feature available. This feature enables the software to automatically receive the latest search engine algorithm changes.

Easy 2-step process to run software.

Okay, enough with the teasing. Does this program deliver? Yes, does it ever! After

purchasing the program online, I was instantly given access to the download area. In a matter of minutes, SE-Optimizer was downloaded, installed on my hard drive, and ready to go.

Just a couple of clicks later, my webpage was analyzed and a report was created to show me exactly what was right and what was wrong with my page for each specific search engine.

Wow! What a nice program. I was really blown away by how easy it was to use and how accurate the reporting feature is. **The program even warns you if the keyword density of your body text on your webpage is too high or too low** and offers suggestions for the optimal keyword density.

I was so impressed with SE-Optimizer that I contacted 2 of the original program designers, Terry Plank and Robin Nobles, to compliment them on what a great product their company had produced. It turns out that their company, "*The Academy of Web Specialists*," has been teaching search engine marketing for the past four years. No wonder their software program is so slick.

So if you want to **save yourself a lot of time and increase your presence in the search engines** with ease, I highly recommend that you pick up SE-Optimizer now. There really is no other program that comes close for ease of use and accuracy.

But hold on... it only gets better. When I was on the phone with Terry, he offered to extend their special offer to all of our Chronicles subscribers. If you purchase SE-Optimizer now, you'll receive the full version of the software and a bonus 1 year of free updates for only \$149. The bonus alone is worth \$99!

So if you're serious about increasing your traffic with higher rankings in the search engines, take it from me, you need to pick up SE-Optimizer now.

Don't forget, this is a limited-time offer, so hurry and order your copy of SE-Optimizer by visiting <http://www.MarketinChallenge.com/seo/>. Get your copy at an exceptional price and the bonus 1 year of free updates now before it's too late.

For detailed screen shots and more information on SE- Optimizer, go to: <http://www.MarketinChallenge.com/seo/>

Conclusion

As the search engine world gets more sophisticated, your site will be judged more and more by topical focus and relevancy to users' search requests. That's why the number-one factor in driving traffic to your website will be how well it serves the needs of your target community and its content richness.

Of course, working towards better link popularity, keyword relevancy, and quality content should still ultimately be your primary goal. But in the meantime, **there are**

still many optimization strategies that work to help give your site an extra boost.

Applied properly and responsibly, techniques such as accurate keyword density can **complement your ongoing search engine strategy**. And in situations where everything else is done right, it's those extra little things you do that will give you the advantage, and move your site from a top-30 listing to a top-10 listing.

To quote Stephen Mahaney...

"... there is no such thing as a magic silver bullet that will vault you to the top of the search engines... if there were, everyone would know it, they would do it, and it would cease to work due to saturation. Instead, success in the search engines, as well as on the Internet, comes from doing many tiny little things exactly right."

Well, I think that's my queue, until next time...

Get the skills without the spills!

Boris Chow

Internet Marketing Challenge

About the Editor

Boris Chow is a seasoned Internet marketer and member of the IMC Think Tank, the team of Internet marketing professionals who gather in the IMC Private Site to spill the beans about Web marketing breakthroughs -- as they happen!

To learn their profitable secrets (and avoid the costly mistakes) so you'll have more time to grow your business, visit <http://www.MarketingChallenge.com> for instant access.

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2. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter from **Robert Hantson @ Cybercast Media** to **Boris Chow**:

Hey There Marketing Challenge!

I am an avid reader, and apply a lot of what I have learned from IMC to my own daily routines when marketing the many web sites under my control. I have always found the Chronicles to be an important part of my weekly reading, and even keep a binder filled with past issues... I have a lot of respect for your publication, and feel a little slighted by Mr. Chow in the Jan 3rd edition of the Chronicles...

I really could not believe that Mr. Chow rated ODP at Number 6, and gave it such a low priority for submitting a site. I also cannot even begin to believe he feels that ODP editors use Yahoo! as a model for including a web site in the directory.

I have been an ODP editor for over two years now, and handle over 150 regional categories within the ODP directory. Never have I looked to Yahoo! for advice on what to enter into the directory. In fact, Yahoo! is actually considered by most editors one of the worst models of a search engine on the Internet today.

Reference Quote:

"ODP is a directory of volunteer editors. Over the years we've learned that it's easier to get into ODP after you've been accepted to Yahoo. The logic is sound when you think about it. After all, if Yahoo liked your site, why wouldn't the editors at ODP like it?"

Granted, Yahoo! is one of the most popular, and it seems recently, since they have started using Google for their web page searches (who, by the way, uses ODP data for their spiders), that Yahoo! has been getting their act together. They are still full of dead links, and sites that have nothing to do with some, the search terms that come up, but they are getting better.

I'll even agree that a Paid Listing in Yahoo! Business Directory should be one of the important items on the list of any Internet marketer. But to say that ODP editors will consider a site on Yahoo! faster is total misinformation. In fact, we are urged by senior editors NOT to rely on Yahoo! as a guideline to approve sites.

Placing ODP so far down in importance is utterly nuts. You are asking yourself for headaches... Personally, if you really want to see where you need work in your Freebie Submissions... Go to ODP first, and get your site listed with them.

If you are in the ODP, you are in AOL, HotBot, Yahoo, Google, (heck, I haven't found many you are not in) and hundreds of other smaller search engines and directories.

And once you are in the ODP, stay away from submitting to AOL, and many of the other sites. You cannot improve your listings on those search engines by resubmitting. All you will do is annoy an ODP editor, and maybe get removed altogether. To be in Google, you need to get into the ODP. The same goes for AOL.

I cannot understand how so many Internet marketers can put the ODP so far down on

the list...

Hi Robert,

Thanks for taking the time to read the Chronicles and send in your comments. It's not often that we receive a letter from an active ODP editor. My compliments to you and the rest of the ODP volunteers that are putting in the time to ensure that your directory provides nothing but quality sites to its users and the search engines that you supply results for.

In response to your comment about the information on my last article regarding submitting to Yahoo! before ODP, I stand by my opinion and experience.

To read last week's article, please visit <http://www.marketingchallenge.com/backissues/>, and click on issue #279).

I just want to make it clear that in my article, I listed the 8 major search engines in order of "importance" and to me "importance" is gauged by the amount of approximate traffic each receives monthly.

Although I place the quality of ODP's directory as exceptional, when it comes down to the numbers, ODP is not as strong as the other engines.

As for ODP being listed 5th in the "order of submissions" list (separate from the "list of importance"), what it's trying to show our readers is that there is a logical order in which to submit. I believe, as do many other search engine professionals, that this order is accurate.

The reason for placing Yahoo! before ODP is that in my past experience none of the sites that I've submitted to Yahoo! have ever been rejected by ODP. Not to say that ODP follows Yahoo! guidelines, but the point being that Yahoo! is extremely strict with their quality control. Basically your website must be mint to get into Yahoo! and the same expectations appear to be carried over to ODP's quality control. You'll notice that's why Yahoo! and ODP are side by side for submission order.

As for AOL, HotBot, Google, and Yahoo! receiving results from ODP, only portions of their results are from ODP.

- 1) In AOL, the main results are being pulled from the Inktomi Database.
- 2) In Hotbot, the main results are being pulled from Inktomi and Direct Hit Databases.

- 3) In Google, the main results are being pulled from their own proprietary index.
- 4) In Yahoo, the main results are being pulled from their own proprietary index and their alternate searches are provided by Google and Inktomi.

Don't get me wrong, ODP does provide results to many of the 8 major search engines I've listed -- 5 of them to be exact. However, most of the search engines that receive results from ODP already receive their main results from Inktomi and Direct Hit.

One thing I must point out, is that my list for the search engine submission order includes paid submissions. On the other hand, my sources tell me that for free submits, the list would be different and indeed ODP becomes higher in priority, due to the fact that Inktomi non paid listings receive a penalty.

Here is the order of submission suggested by Planet Ocean Communications, for the free listings:

- 1) Google
- 2) Yahoo (non-commercial if you can get away with it)
- 3) ODP
- 4) Fast
- 5) HotBot (free to Inktomi but won't likely stick until the url has other links going to it from say ODP)
- 6) AltaVista
- 7) Ask Jeeves
- 8) Inktomi (ideally one of the other directories will have listed the url before you submit to Inktomi so it will "stick" better, that's why it's on the bottom)

I hope that this helps to clear things up for all of our readers. Thanks for your input Robert :)

Finest Regards,

Boris Chow
Internet Marketing Challenge

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3. **TOOL OF THE WEEK: CoffeeCup Button Factory** **v6.1**

This week's Challenge Tool was submitted by IMC.

"CoffeeCup Button Factory is a unique program that allows you to make buttons for your Web site with both Java Applets or Flash. Use your own GIF or JPEG images to create custom buttons for your site.

Use the drag and drop WYSIWYG interface to add Java-based rollovers and interactive elements with just one click, or make awesome Flash-based audio/visual effects. CoffeeCup Button Factory also comes with a large collection of button images and sounds for you to use in your applets or Flash files."

To get more information on this tool, visit: <http://www.coffeecup.com>

Have a Challenge Tool that worked for you? Want to share it? Send us the URL and a brief review of the resource (up to 7 lines) to:
Tool@MarketingChallenge.com

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4. **SEARCH ENGINE BYTES: Q & A Sessions -- With** **Stephen Mahaney**

TOPIC: Do directories like Yahoo! check the whois registry database to detect duplicate company listings?

QUESTION: When submitting to Yahoo, LookSmart or to ODP (such as for an AOL listing), I want to create the look of another company so they don't think "oh it's that same company again let's not list them".

Has anyone noticed if the site reviewers check the whois database registry listing on the domain ownership? Does having a different name on the ownership matter?

ANSWER: Yes, you can assume they will check the whois records. For best results we suggest that every URL you submit to the directories -- Yahoo, LookSmart, and ODP -- be registered under a company named exactly as you want your directory listing title to appear.

For instance, if you are submitting the domain www.cell-phone-supplies.com, then the URL should be registered to a company named Cell Phone Supplies. This is to insure the directory does NOT change the title of your listing to whatever company name you have listed in the whois database registry.

For instance, if the above-mentioned domain name were registered to a company named Diversified Industries, Inc., the directory reviewer would likely change the title of your listing to something like Diversified Industries -- making it unlikely that anyone looking for cell phone supplies would find you.

Consequently, you'd have wasted your \$299 submission fee - bummer!

To insure this doesn't happen, be careful not to leave any clues that could lead to a keyword-irrelevant "company name" being used as a title for your directory listing.

The whois database registry is a perfect example of where a directory reviewer might find the necessary "clue" to change your perfect keyword title into something entirely useless in respects to a customer finding your listing in a relevant keyword search.

About This Contributor

Stephen Mahaney is one of the Industry's leading experts on top search engine placement. Stephen is the President of Planet Ocean Communications Inc. (Publisher of best selling ebook, "The UnFair Advantage Book on Winning the Search Engine Wars"), and Senior Editor for Search Engine News (a monthly look at the latest search engine changes and strategies). To maximize your search engine placements, pick up "*The Unfair Advantage Book*" today at:

<http://www.MarketingChallenge.com/senews/>

Are you curious, confused, or completely frustrated about search engines? Send your search engine question to:

<mailto:sebytes@MarketingChallenge.com> and include your name and website URL. If selected, your question will appear in a future installment of the Chronicles.

5. **CONTACT THE CHRONICLES: Got questions? Get Answers!**

Do you have Internet marketing questions? Do you want to share your thoughts? If so, send your lemons or your laurels at: Share@MarketingChallenge.com

Are you a successful cybermarketer? Do you want to contribute an article in exchange for some free exposure? If so, send your contribution, with your brief, promotional byline, to: Article@MarketingChallenge.com

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