

Kellysearch Webinar Website Health Check: 30 Minutes to Get Your Website in Shape

Q&A Session

June 4, 2008

Q: Where do we start with an update to our website?

A: My suggestion would be to:

1. Look at the content of your site and see if the terms that your customers and prospects are typing into search engines are on your site...if not add them to the relevant pages.
 2. See what opportunities there are to get links on other relevant, quality sites through to your site.
 3. Submit your XML sitemap to get your pages picked up by Google, Yahoo and MSN
 4. Verify your site with [Google Webmaster Tools](#) to gather information on any existing problems Google has crawling your site
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Q: How do you handle a web site that is too large for a standard xml site map?

A: There is a limit to the amount of data that you can provide within each XML sitemap (10mb and up to 50,000 URLs). We have significantly more pages than this on Kellysearch so we split our sitemaps up into 78 separate sitemaps as shown below.

Create an index page which then links on to individual sitemap pages. For more information and help on how to do this, go to this page on [Sitemaps.org](#) and look for the section titled "Using Sitemap index files (to group multiple sitemap files)."

Sitemap included in this Sitemap index

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<u>Filename</u>	<u>Format</u>	<u>Status</u>	
sitemap-kellysearch-com0.xml.gz	--	OK	Details
sitemap-kellysearch-com1.xml.gz	--	OK	Details
sitemap-kellysearch-com10.xml.gz	--	OK	Details
sitemap-kellysearch-com11.xml.gz	--	OK	Details
sitemap-kellysearch-com12.xml.gz	--	OK	Details
sitemap-kellysearch-com13.xml.gz	--	OK	Details
sitemap-kellysearch-com14.xml.gz	--	OK	Details
sitemap-kellysearch-com15.xml.gz	--	OK	Details

Q: What about stuffing your Meta tags?

A: Stuffing Meta Tags is not a good idea. For those that do not know - this involves excessively repeating your most important keywords or phrases over and over in the Meta description. For example:

```
<meta name="Description" content="Garden furniture Pine garden furniture Garden furniture UK Patio furniture Patio garden furniture Garden swings Wooden Deck Furniture UK, Patio furniture UK Sustainable garden furniture Garden hammocks UK Garden rockers UK from Pepe Garden Furniture UK">
```

Because the Meta description is open to such abuse, most search engines pay no real attention to it when indexing for relevance anymore. However, as discussed during the Webinar, the main benefit of the Meta description is that it will often get used in the results snippet by the search engines. Using "Garden furniture" as an example you would get much more benefit and greater click-throughs from having an enticing, benefits led description such as...

Garden Furniture - Teak, Aluminium & Metal Outdoor Furniture

Looking for a great deal on **garden furniture** then check out our superb range of **garden furniture** in teak, synthetic and woven **garden furniture**, ...

...as opposed to a spammy and difficult to read...

{xxx} Garden Furniture UK Patio Furniture UK Swings and Pine Garden ...

Garden furniture Pine garden furniture Garden furniture UK Patio furniture Patio garden furniture Garden swings Wooden Deck Furniture UK, Patio furniture UK ...

Q: You mean <img src=... right? Site specific search usually includes other paid links, though...

A: Yes you're right... it should read <img src=... and not <img scr=...

Well spotted!

Q: I am lost! Unable to grasp the discussion(s). We do not have the ability to optimize our Web Site. Do you have a recommendation for a contact to help us 'redesign' and/or optimize our site?

A: We are lucky enough to have an in-house team that does the technical side of things when it comes to optimizing Kellysearch. There are

hundreds of companies out there who can help you with this and a good place to find one would be Kellysearch (little plug for us there!). Have a look at these companies that offer [Website Optimization Services](#)

There are a lot of companies out there who will promise you top rankings on Google etc (which is something they cannot guarantee) to get your business. What I would however suggest is that before you agree to go with anyone:

a) Contact them and ask them to show you other sites that they have worked on and check out these sites to see how they rank for relevant terms.

b) I would also take the time to call up some of these companies and see what sort of service they got and would they recommend them.

c) Type the Website optimization company's name into Google to see if there is any bad press going round about them.

d) If you know or see any other companies ranking well then ask them who did their website for them. (Often the website company will place their logo at the bottom of the webpage.)

There are however a lot of things that you can do yourself with very little technical knowledge and this starts with:

1. Getting a list together of keywords and phrases that your potential customers would be typing into the search engines to find you. Then make sure you include these terms as often as is reasonable in the content of your pages and the Title Tag (Blue Bar at top of each page).
2. Try and get other relevant sites to link to yours - ideally with your important keywords in the link text.... Click here for [Pine Garden Furniture](#) as opposed to [Click here](#) for Pine Garden Furniture.

We produced a [Webinar a couple of months ago](#) which goes into a bit more detail about optimizing your site which may help you.

Q: Don't e-mail address on a site lead to lots of spam?

A: Yes it can and probably will but ways to avoid this are to:

- Display an invalid email address on the webpage (i.e. add a space in the address) but use the correct one in the mailto: address behind the scenes.

Show: matt.lester @reedinfo.co.uk and then use <mailto:matt.lester@reedinfo.co.uk>

Other suggestions include:

- Set up a specific email address and inbox for enquiries from your site and do not use your personal email or inbox.
- Use CAPTCHA - many of you may not know what this means but will have seen it. It is basically when you are asked to type in a random word or selection of letters before you can send an email to confirm that you are a human and not an automated email sending system.
- Use the junk mail rules you can set up within Outlook etc to block emails that contain certain words / are obviously spam - though be careful not to block valid emails.

Q: Our key words place very high with Google but not very high with Yahoo. Any reasons?

A: Don't worry - you're not alone. Check out the online forums and you'll find discussion after discussion that usually starts with someone saying:

"We do well on Google but appear nowhere on Yahoo. I really don't have the faintest idea how Yahoo's algorithm works. It's really frustrating."

Google and Yahoo have completely separate and different algorithms that are continually being tweaked to try and bring back what they see is the best result for their users and minimize spammers manipulating the results.

No-one really knows what makes each tick (though there are hundreds of theories in the forums if you look) but all you can do is focus on the core elements of content, backlinks and site structure. Google has about 70% market share in the US so at least you're doing well on the site that makes the biggest impact.

Q: Explain the benefits of an XML sitemap.

A: It allows you to provide a list of every URL on your site to the search engines so they can add them to their index. It also allows you to add information such as when that page was last updated, the frequency of updates and its importance compared to other pages on your site. You can continually add to or adapt the XML data you provide.

For more information on this go to <http://www.sitemaps.org/>

Google especially uses the sitemap to give loads of feedback via Google Webmaster Tools on any URL problems etc.

Q: Do search engines check the alt name or the name of the image?

A: Both - although I've read a few times that they will probably pay more attention to the file name as it is less open to spamming / keyword stuffing.

Q: We are about to add some video clips to our site for the first time. Are there any formatting or coding issues we should be aware of? Things to avoid when embedding the clips? Is Mpeg 4 a good format?

A: We don't have a lot of experience in this area to be honest. I did find this useful article about [optimizing video clips](#) recently which may give you some help.

Q: Does Google watch web site traffic to your site? Does it help with PR Rank? What is traffic importance in the scope of algorithms?

A: They deny doing it but their privacy policy is a bit loose on it. General consensus here is that they probably don't as it would be a bit of a vicious circle where sites getting lots of clicks would always appear at the top thereby getting all the clicks again and stopping newer, better sites from ever appearing.

Q: What was the redirect tool you mentioned?

A: A "301 redirect" - this allows you to tell crawlers and web browsers that the page they have just come to has PERMANENTLY moved to a new URL address and immediately sends them there to find the page at its new location. The benefits of using a 301 redirect are:

1. Visitors and search engines can still find your webpage even if they use your old URL (Direct, via a link from another site, via a Favorites / Bookmark etc)
2. You do not lose the SEO / Backlinking benefit that old page addresses may have built up over time
3. Crawlers will remember this page has moved and go direct to the new address in future to check for updates

The other option is a "302 redirect" which means that the page has TEMPORARILY moved to this new address and that crawlers should come back and check for it again at the old address.

Search engines often misunderstand 302's so don't use them for pages that have moved for good

Q: Please explain why we should avoid Flash.

A: Mainly because search engines crawlers have trouble reading any content that you place within images and Flash files.

By all means include Flash animation on your pages but make it complement the real content on your page - not dominate it. On-page HTML textual content is always going to be your best bet. If your website opens with a flash animation this is the first thing a crawler will see (i.e. if it follows a link from another site to your homepage) and it may just give up waiting for the page to load or see no way to access the content hidden behind.

Flash Splash Pages are annoying for a visitor too - especially if they have a slow browser and have to wait for it to load.

Q: What about animations instead of flash?

A: As mentioned before in the previous Flash question - just be careful to what extent you use them and do not place any of your main textual content within them - keep it on the page as HTML.

Q: Are multiple urls, pointing to the same website, advantageous?

A: This will cause duplicate content that search engines should quickly pick up on and could get one or all URLs excluded from their index.

Q: Isn't the main purpose of an image "alt" tag intended to aid the visually impaired, and despite the fact that SE robots can read them, the intention for "alt" tags should be to ensure that a visually impaired user can get the best experience at your site?

A: Yes, that is correct and I believe you need to have these in place to gain your www.w3c.org certification. Technology allows the visually impaired to install software that reads the page out to them - including alt tags - or even prints the page out in Braille for them to read. I suppose a Search Engine Crawler could be seen as a visually impaired visitor to your site.

Q: What was the SEO tools page?

A: www.seobook.com This site offers lots of great tips and tools for online marketing. The particular tool we mentioned in the Webinar was the keyword suggestion tool.

Q: What is the url for the webmaster tools?

A: www.google.com/webmasters

Q: Are you hurting your SEO capabilities by having PDF pages on your web versus html, etc?

A: NO - you can and should optimize your PDFs for Search Engines and you'll often see PDF documents coming up in the top of results. For information on how to ensure your PDFs are as optimized as they can be have a look at this great [PDF Optimization article on Search Engine Land](#).

Q: Are cloaking pages like doorway pages?

A: For full definitions look at:
<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=66355>

"Doorway pages are typically large sets of poor-quality pages where each page is optimized for a specific keyword or phrase. In many cases, doorway pages are written to rank for a particular phrase and then funnel users to a single destination."

"Cloaking refers to the practice of presenting different content or URLs to users and search engines. Serving up different results based on user agent may cause your site to be perceived as deceptive and removed from the Google index."

They are similar in what they are trying to achieve but they are not exactly the same - however they are both bad.

Q: My rankings on Yahoo web dropped dramatically in May. I ran them again in Yahoo Directory and they were good. What's with Yahoo?

A: Yahoo did introduce an [update to its algorithm in late May](#) which may have impacted your site. Kellysearch.com saw its rankings take a positive jump as a result but I suppose for everyone who goes up someone else has to come down.

Yahoo Web Search bases its results on its organic algorithm whereas the Yahoo Directory focuses on what information you gave when you submitted your site to it... As such, what appears in each will usually be different.

Q: Do search engines check the alt name or the name of the image and what is importance of site map?

A: They check both but most sources agree that the search engines pay more attention to the file name as it is open to less abuse.

The importance of XML sitemaps has been discussed in an earlier question. However - the static sitemap page on your website is an easy way to help search engines find all the pages of your site. Display your site structure in a clearly hierarchical way and include keyword rich text in the anchor text of the links going off to each page.

Q: Can you refer a company that constructs creative websites for search firms?

A: Unfortunately not, but if you use Kellysearch you should be able to find suppliers that meet your specific needs.