PROGRESSIVE SEO

New strategies to enhance organic search results

Written by Craig Smith | CEO, Trinity Insight

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Progressive SEO - Executive Summary

The more things change, the more things stay the same. This widely embraced saying rings never more true than in the SEO marketplace, where technical standards, algorithmic changes, and consumer patterns all impact and disrupt the search optimization landscape.

These changes leave marketers inundated with options to focus their SEO attention and resources. With so many aspects to optimize and improve, which ones should forward thinking SEO managers embrace to get ahead of the competition?

That's what this brief is all about. Providing you with details into the SEO components that you must improve if you want to stay ahead of the pack.

Within this brief we outline **2 new but fundamental SEO tactics, micro-formatting and social seeding,** that can help improve your primary and "tail" terms within search engine results pages and help provide the competitive advantage of being an authority within your market in search results.

SEO Focus area #1 - Micro-formatting and Schema.org

When thinking about search engine optimization and maximizing your results, the number one question in your mind should be "how can I make my site more relevant".

Search engines want nothing more than to provide quality results to their visitors. In doing so, they know that they will provide a positive experience and users will back to leverage the engine again (and click on ads!).

Because relevance is the most vital directive at search engines, it is paramount that your website embrace all technologies that assist your website in providing the cues and details to help your web pages rank more appropriately.

In the past, it was a fairly level playing field as keyword density and metadata optimization allowed businesses to target varied phrases within their content. Businesses that embraced these practices were rewarded with higher ranking pages and increased levels of non-branded traffic.

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The advent of micro-formatting

Now however, a new technology has emerged that is changing the way you need to conduct SEO. The technology is called *micro-formatting* and it allows you as a business to add context to your search engine results, while providing further cues to search engines into the context of your pages.

Take for example you are a bookseller. Within your website code, in a programatic fashion, your webpage will render micro-formats that say the following:

Name = Mastering SEO
Author = Craig Smith
BookFormat = Hardcover
NumPages = 129
PublishDate = 2011
Image = http://www.trinityinsight/com/images/mastering-seo

Now search engines will have this additional context that allows them to serve more effective search listings to users. Check out this search listing of a URL/webpage that has been improved through micro-formatting.

HP Officejet 6000 Wireless Printer | HP Official Store
www.shopping.hp.com/product/printer/inkjet/1/storefronts/C9295A%2523B1H - Cached
★★★☆☆ 60 reviews - $79.99 - In stock

This standard search listing adds review data, stock data, and pricing details to non-shopping listings. Clearly making it stand out on the page and providing additional context to Google that helps users.

Make it a priority to introduce the concept of **rich snippets** and **micro-formatting** to your technology team and see your website will reap the benefits of increased click through rates and page relevancy.

Learn more at the consortium and micro-formatting standards at the group page that has been embraced by Google, Bing, and Yahoo at www.Schema.org

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Focus area #2 - Social "signals" in search algorithms

Recently, major developments have taken place within search algorithms to weigh **social media actions** as ranking factors.

Social signals present additional cues which can be leveraged by search engines, and these elements have been incorporated as secondary variables to be utilized when engines decide which pages to rank at the top of the results.

Likes, tweets, re-tweets, and brand mentions that take place within the "social web" have been been recently proven to drive SEO performance in recent industry research.

As spammers and the secondary link buying markets exploded over the last 3 years, search engines realized that the most major threat to their existence is the quality and continuous improvement of their search listings and link manipulation was a threat.

"Seed" content to drive interactions, branding, and links

Having algorithms being primarily based on links and on-page factors led to search results being too easily "gamed".

All too often, top ranking sites for competitive searches
are "thin" sites that are obviously engineered for nothing but affiliate revenue. The Panda update helped filter much of this practice, but it still exists.

Google and other search engines have realized that leveraging data from Twitter and Facebook provides details into human connected content sharing - which helps their algorithms weed through webpages looking for quality signals.

It's widely known that Google and Bing actually pay Twitter for this data. The real time nature of Twitter provides the ability for a search engine to become even more effective as a source of real time news and information - instead of just a gateway to that information.

The advent and launch of Google + just reinforces Google's focus on social as a long term strategy. With Gmail, Google +, and the history of Google search results - Mountainview has a complete history of your interests, likes, and personal happenings. What happens to that data and how it is used is, of course, a giant mystery.

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How to leverage social signals within your SEO efforts

So what are you to do as a marketer? The first plan of attack should be to isolate the influencers that exist within the social web for your marketplace. Document the publishers, the URLs, and the specific Facebook pages or groups that have high levels of interactivity.

Next it's time to look at your content. What content do you have on your domain that is of high value? What content do you have that will help answer questions or comments within prospects' minds in your market? Document these pieces of content as these are the two types that you will be seeding in Facebook, Twitter, and other social destinations.

If you don't have content that is of high value, then you need to create it. Your SEO success will not proceed without your site being a leader in targeted copy that is geared for your prospects.

At this stage, when you have identified the top content that you have in your arsenal, its now time to interact in the communities and platforms that you initially identified. Present your content not as a sales pitch, but rather as additional information to solve a question, or provide a prospective solution to a problem.

Earn trust by engaging in the conversation. Add value through experiences and knowledge. Do not try to optimize the anchor text of the links that you "seed". All of these aspects are crucial to driving social sharing of the content and the benefits for which it can bring to your website and business.

Time to get started!

Focusing on these two aspects of SEO will help drive momentum for your organic search results. By embracing micro-formatting and the social signals that impact algorithms, your website will undoubtedly experience enhanced exposure, click-through rates, enhanced branding, and new customers.

To speak to Trinity Insight about your SEO opportunity, please call us at 888.535.8807 or schedule an initial site consultation by emailing us at info@trinityinsight.com.

Written by: Craig Smith, Founder
Trinity Insight LLC

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