

Search Engine Marketing

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In a nutshell...

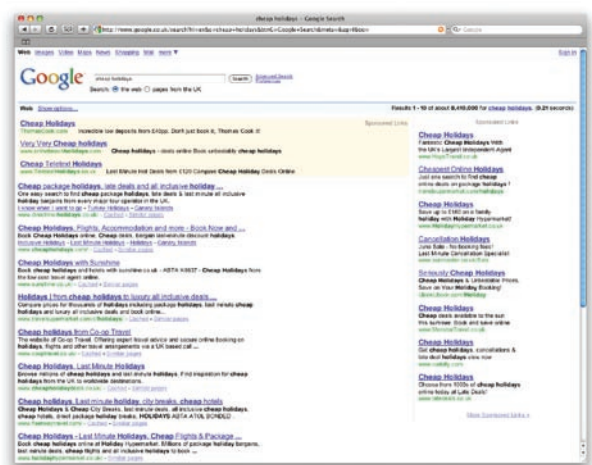
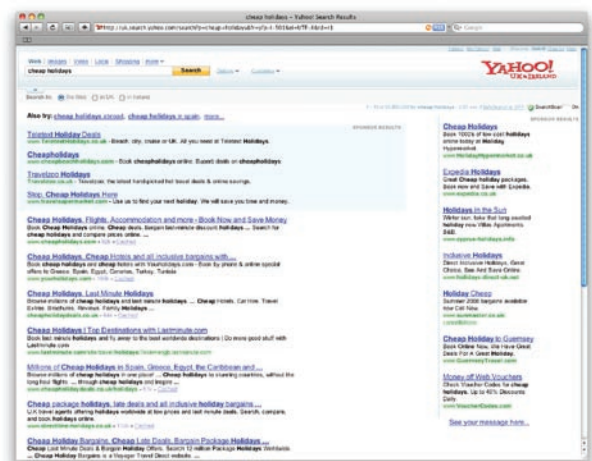
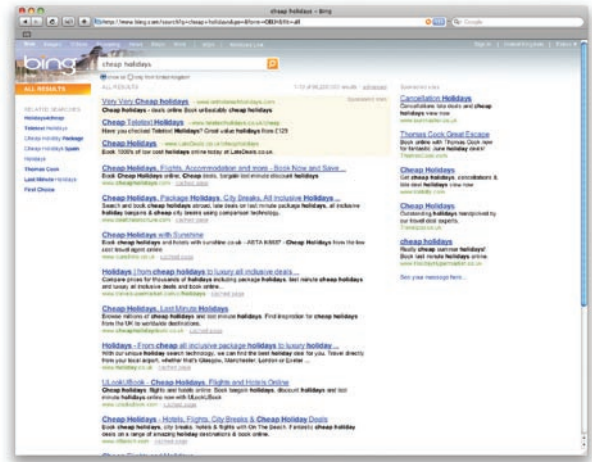
WHAT IS SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING?

Search engine marketing (SEM) is the method of strategically enhancing visibility in major search engines. The two main methods of optimising search engine presence are organic optimisation (widely known as search engine optimisation or SEO), and paid-search marketing (usually referred to as pay per click marketing or PPC).

The concept behind search engine marketing is quite simple. When a consumer or business person searches online they are in active 'hunt' mode. Identifying and capitalising on this mode of behaviour is extremely valuable to businesses; it indicates that the person is actively seeking information, and is most likely researching a product or service to try and satisfy an immediate need. This makes search engine results one of the most valuable sources of targeted traffic on the web.

The importance of search engine prominence must not be underestimated. Approximately 50% of all online traffic is driven by search engines, with Google accounting for nearly 90% of these searches in the UK. A staggering 79% of search engine users claim not to visit the second page of search engine results, with 42% of users claiming to click on the top 'two or three' search results.

The fragmentation of 'conventional' media, combined with its lack of measurability and prohibitive costs have seen the value of the UK search industry soar to a worth in excess of £4-5 billion. The phenomenal growth rate of the search engine market has been matched only by the escalating importance of search engine marketing; an understanding of this relatively new discipline is a pre-requisite for online success in the modern media landscape.



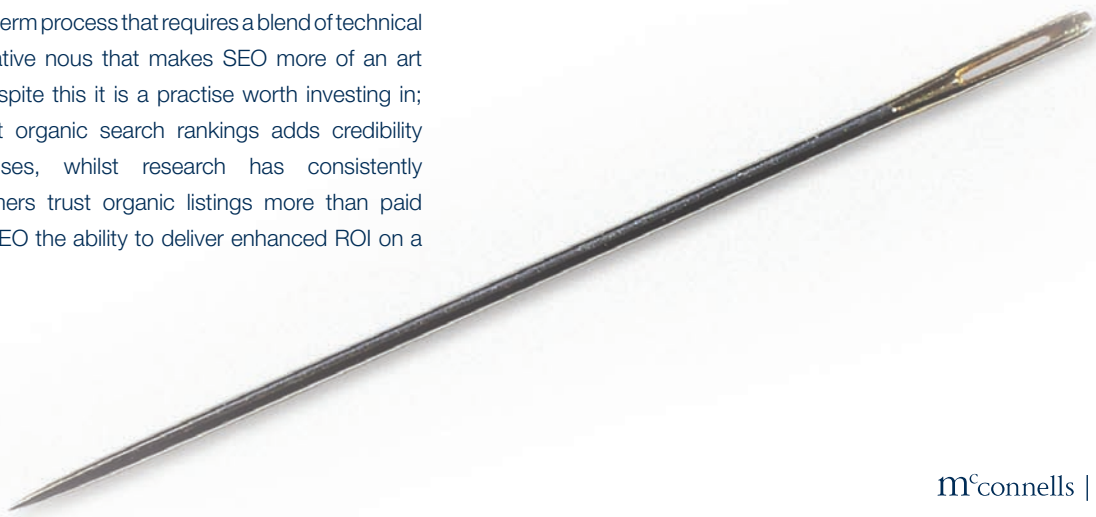
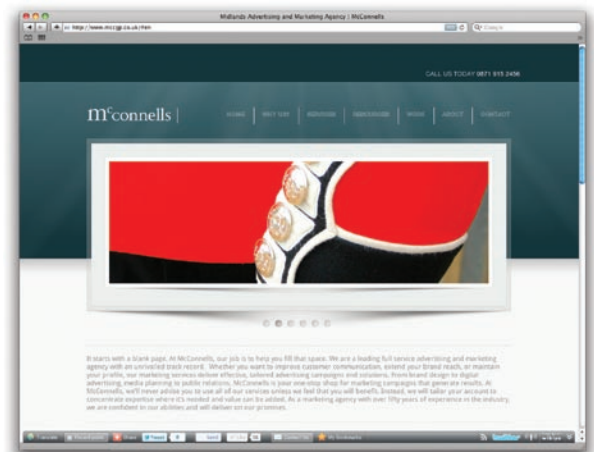
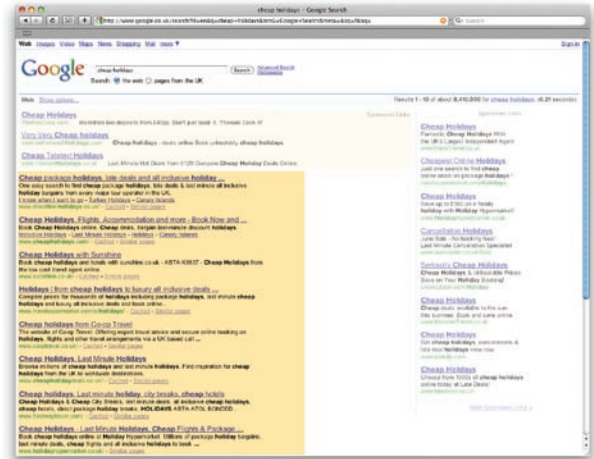
WHAT IS SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION?

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the online marketing discipline that combines best practices in technology, usability, copywriting and link-building to achieve prominent organic rankings on major search engines. Unlike paid search marketing, organic search engine optimisation does not involve paying for traffic, and is instead reliant on a carefully designed website that is perceived by search engines as being important for particular subjects or specific search phrases.

Search engines base their relevancy algorithms on a combination of the content they see on a web page, combined with external elements such as link reputation and user behaviour. Successful search engine optimisation is therefore reliant on a number of considerations that include link popularity, title tags, URL naming, alt tags, link structure, and website content and architecture. Once a site is properly optimised, the ultimate objective is to encourage search engines to add every page to their indices, ideally ranking these pages highly for relevant searches or keywords.

Prior to implementing any form of search engine optimisation, a thorough and exhaustive research and analysis process must be undertaken. This should include a full website audit and appraisal, as well as a detailed competitor benchmarking study that is designed to assess any threats or opportunities within the search environment. This methodology is crucial in determining the most appropriate SEO strategy; whether this might involve focusing on a micro-niche in highly competitive search markets, or looking to dominate search results in the absence of serious competition.

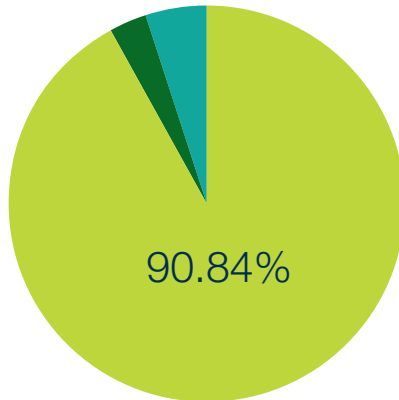
Optimising a website to enhance organic search engine visibility is a complex and long-term process that requires a blend of technical know-how and creative nous that makes SEO more of an art than a science. Despite this it is a practise worth investing in; achieving prominent organic search rankings adds credibility to online businesses, whilst research has consistently shown that consumers trust organic listings more than paid advertising, giving SEO the ability to deliver enhanced ROI on a long-term basis.



THE GROWTH OF SEARCH

The UK search engine market is dominated by Google, which accounts for nearly 90% of all search engine traffic. There are over 4.1bn searches every month through UK search engines, with the average online consumer viewing 93 search result pages per month. Such is the popularity of search within the online environment, achieving prominent rankings in relevant results pages is a necessity.

The UK search market has an estimated worth in excess of £2bn. In response to the growing prevalence of search marketing in the modern environment, more than half of UK companies (55%) intend to increase natural search budgets over the next twelve months, with just under half (45%) planning a greater paid search investment for the same period. It is widely predicted that as the recession continues to take hold, more and more businesses will turn to search marketing in their quest for measurable ROI and accountable marketing.



Rank Website

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2. Facebook
3. Google.com
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5. BBC Online
6. Yahoo!
7. eBay UK
8. Wikipedia
9. Windows Live
10. Amazon UK
11. Twitter
12. LinkedIn
13. Blogger
14. PayPal
15. Daily Mail
16. t.co
17. The Guardian
18. MSN
19. Apple
20. Wordpress
21. Amazon.com
22. IMDB
23. The Telegraph
24. Flickr
25. HSBC



BENEFITS OF SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

Search engine results pages are one of the most valuable sources of targeted traffic on the web; as such there are a number of distinct benefits associated with effective SEM.



- **It** is a non-intrusive method of Internet marketing, enriching as opposed to interrupting user experience.
- **It** is unique in targeting users at the exact moment they are seeking knowledge or a solution, making SEM a 'just in time' solution.
- **It** has strong synergy with mobile marketing, and is set to become increasingly significant as mobile internet becomes more accessible.
- **It** offers complete measurability and accountability – a precious attribute in the fragmented modern media landscape.
- **It** gives access to an engaged audience actively hunting for information, products, or services to satisfy an immediate and specific need.
- **It** is extremely cost-effective when compared with more conventional forms of marketing.
- **It** can be used as a brand recognition and brand alignment tool, providing brands with a trusted platform and targeted audience.
- **It** has excellent synergy with offline media, and can add greater depth to campaigns when combined with less interactive marketing tactics.
- **It** embraces an evolving medium, and can give valuable insight into the receptiveness of online audiences as we move towards a more intuitive 'semantic' web.
- **PPC** gives almost immediate results and offers a great degree of control. Strategies can be flexible to complement budget and objectives.
- **SEO** gives trusted organic search rankings and adds credibility to a business. It offers long term value and excellent ROI.

SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING : MAKING IT WORK

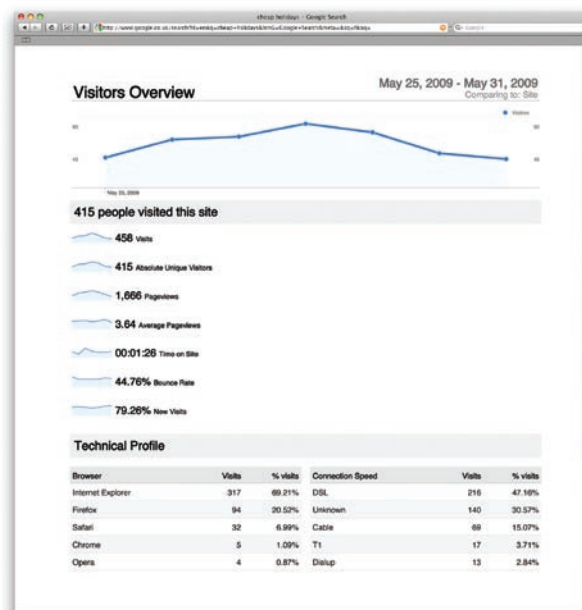
Whilst technological advances and new search engine offerings will always propel developments in SEM, it is essential that the application of search strategies be driven by creative nous and marketing know-how rather than by an over-reliance on the technology itself. The keys to success in search engine marketing involve a deep understanding of the medium and the appropriate strategies concerned, a thorough analysis of the competitive search arena, and a categorical understanding of your business, its key USP's, and core target markets.

Prior to implementing any form of online marketing activity, the installation of Analytics tracking software should be an absolute priority. There are a number of free Analytics packages that yield accurate and valuable information regarding site traffic, visitor demographics, and on-site user behaviour. This tends to be precious information when looking to continually refine online presence.

The art of successful search engine marketing lies in the optimisation of websites and paid search campaigns to maximise appeal both to search engines, and to key target audiences. Too many businesses operating in the search landscape become fixated with achieving top rankings, ultimately neglecting the equally important matter of website conversion. McConnells has rich experience of helping companies to deliver successful search strategies whilst simultaneously implementing conversion enhancement programs as part of a rounded online marketing strategy.

Integration of search marketing strategies is often the most effective method of maximising search exposure and ROI. However, the combination of paid and organic search should be carefully coordinated to achieve a symbiosis whereby cannibalisation of SEM results is avoided. As is the case with any form of modern marketing, careful research and analysis is a fundamental stage in ensuring online budgets are allocated in the most efficient ways possible.

The ongoing evolution of the internet towards a more personalised and intuitive 'semantic web' places yet greater emphasis on businesses 'testing the water' to not only test the receptiveness of key target audiences, but also to assemble data and intelligence that will help to refine website design and content. The recent introduction of Google's Search Wiki serves as the first notable progression towards a more personalised user experience, where a lack of synergy between click and website can lead to users deleting irrelevant listings from personal search engine results on a permanent basis.



SIX STEPS : SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

Our search engine marketing service encompasses everything from full website audits and benchmarking reports through to carefully devised and fully managed paid and organic search campaigns. Follow these six steps to success with search engine marketing.

success, n. 1 degree or measure of succeeding; **2** favorable or desired outcome ;
also : the attainment of

- (1) Get in touch with McConnells to discuss your needs and for a full website audit and comprehensive benchmarking analysis.
- (2) Install Analytics tracking software in your current website to give valuable insight into user behaviour, visitor demographics, and key traffic sources.
- (3) Meet to discuss objectives and suitable search marketing tactics and sub-strategies that can enhance visibility and impact ROI.
- (4) Allow McConnells to plan and implement an appropriate search marketing solution for your business, whether this is on a local, national, or international scale.
- (5) Watch your search engine rankings soar. Although paid search marketing can be an immediate solution, organic rankings may take several months to noticeably improve.
- (6) Monitor every element of the campaign; from traffic sources and click-through rates to conversion rates and return on investment.

CONTACT DETAILS

At McConnells we pride ourselves on our approachability and creativity. Our client retention rate is testament to the superiority of service that we offer. Ask us about our tailored and managed search engine marketing campaigns for a 100% professionally administered solution.

Thank you for downloading this ebook.

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So there you have it. As this introduction will hopefully have shown, there's so much more we can achieve by working together. To discuss your needs over the phone, or a coffee, please contact Chris today.

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