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SEO For Yahoo!

By Dave Davies

This article is part two of a four part series on optimizing your website for the the three major search engines. Part one, titled "SEO For MSN" (

<http://www.beanstalk-inc.com/articles/search-engine-positioning/seo-for-msn.htm>

) covered optimizing

your website to rank highly on MSN. In this article we will cover optimizing your website for Yahoo!

Yahoo! is the second biggest of the three major engines and includes an enormous network of websites. The algorithm is based on that of Inktomi which Yahoo! purchased back in 2002 as part of their plan to stop serving Google results to search queries. The algorithm itself can pose a problem for some SEO's as we optimize client websites to rank highly on multiple search engines due to the way that it deffers from Google and MSN. That said, any issue can be addressed provided that the right attention is given to the right details.

The Factors

To optimize and rank highly on Yahoo!, as with any of the major engines, specific areas need to be addressed. On Yahoo! the major areas are as follows:

Keyword density

Site structure

Backlinks

Aging

Keyword Density

As noted in the article on MSN, it would be unwise for me to specify a keyword density for you to target on your website. There are two reasons for this. First, if there is a delay between the writing of this

article and when you read it specific numbers could well send you off in the wrong direction. Second, you will need to analyze your specific competitors to determine what the best density is in your area and for your type of website. Optimal keyword densities are no longer a one-size-fits-all calculation. Your industry and site-type will affect the optimal densities and thus, a complete analysis using a tool such as Total Optimizer Pro (

<http://www.totaloptimizer.com/>

) will be necessary.

Additionally, optimal keyword densities change on a regular basis and so you will need to periodically reanalyze your densities and compare them with others in the top 10 to insure that your densities remain within the optimal levels. When using Total Optimizer Pro for the onsite analysis we generally aim our densities for the upper end of the top 10 results but not aiming to be the top. Generally you will see a range that appears much like a bell curve with a couple sites in the very low range (0.5 to 1.0%) and a couple site in the very high range (5.0 to 8.0%). The rest will generally fall in the middle. Ignore those in the very low and very high range and target towards the upper end though not the highest of the remaining sites and you will be on target.

Site Structure

On no other engine is site structure more important than on Yahoo! While having a good site structure

is important for a variety of reasons, it was on Yahoo! that Beanstalk noted the most significant gains when we brought our homepage and key internals into compliance with W3C standards (the rest of the site will be brought into compliance as part of our complete redesign scheduled for launch on April 24th). While slight gains were noticeable on both Google and MSN they were so minor that they may well have just been part of the ebb-and-flow of the results. On Yahoo! however we noted a three page jump the day the changes were picked up. No other changes to the site were performed during this time.

The site structure is important for two key reasons. First, the site structure determines the order in which your page content gets seen by the search engines and thus, which content will be given the highest priority. Content that occurs higher up in the code of your page (not necessarily in your browser) is given a higher weight than content lower down in the code. Second, a properly structured site will be lower in code through the use of CSS, reduced or eliminated table use, etc. The reduction in code will push the content higher up the page as far as a search engine is concerned and thus, it will be given more weight.

Backlinks

Like the other two major engines, having a solid backlink count from relevant sites using good anchor text practices is a major factor on Yahoo! for any reasonably competitive phrase. When it comes to calculating backlinks Yahoo! is far more similar to Google than MSN. Aspects of backlink counts that

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must be taken into consideration when optimizing your website for Yahoo!:

Quality of site – like Google has attempted to do in the past with PageRank and is learning to do with TrustRank, sheer numbers aren't what will get you high rankings on Yahoo!, the quality of those links is more important. We must remember that PageRank is a Google calculation, not Yahoo! and so it alone cannot determine the value of a link when we are optimizing for this engine. It can be used as a quasi-benchmark however when determining if a link is a quality link on Yahoo! we are better off to consider whether it is from a site that is ranking well on Yahoo! for the same or related phrases, does it come from a site that is related to ours, does the site link to a site that is ranking well on Yahoo! and does the link come from a trusted domain. For these purposes a trusted domain can be considered any domain that is over 3 years old, has a solid number of backlinks coming from a wide variety of sites and which at least a solid number of are non-reciprocal links.

Position of link – like all the major engines, the position of your link on the page is important. A link at or near the bottom of the page is less valuable than a link nearer to the top. Also, if your link is on a page with other links, the effect that link will have on your rankings decreases relative to the number of links on the linking page.

Anchor text – the text used to link to your site will help reinforce that the keywords in that anchor text are associated with your site/page. Also, if that anchor text is in the midst of the content it will hold greater weight than if that anchor text is in a directory-style format above a description (i.e. link a standard links page)

Non-reciprocal links – reciprocal links are certainly still valuable on Yahoo! however it is important to supplement these links with non-reciprocal links in the form of directory listings and other one-way links.

Aging

The bane of new websites is the aging delay. Many focus on Google's "sandbox" when they think of aging delays however Yahoo! employs one as well, though it is lighter and lasts a shorter duration of

time. New sites and links are not given the same weight as sites and links that have been around for a while. The aging delay on sites has been extended over the past couple years however it isn't as severe as that imposed by Google. New sites can expect to find it extremely difficult to rank for competitive phrases inside of 6 months even if everything else is in place. To add to the difficulty is a delay on the value of links. When a new site launches it obviously has no links. These links are subject to a delay that appears to be somewhere between 3 to 4 months before they hold their full weight.

The combination of these delays can make it very difficult for new sites to rank for competitive phrases inside of 8 to 12 months however because the restrictions are lighter than those imposed by Google one can expect to see rankings for secondary, tertiary and completely unexpected phrases far faster on Yahoo!

Conclusion

It is important to note that a very important area that needs to be considered is coming in part four of this series. Simply optimizing your website for Yahoo! will likely not get you the traffic you're hoping for.

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Part three will cover optimizing your website for Google and part four will be titled "SEO For The Big Three: Tying It Together" and will outline how to tie all the optimization tactics together into a concise strategy that will result in top rankings on all three major engines.

Resources

Total Optimizer Pro (

<http://www.totaloptimizer.com/>

) – A keyword density and backlink analysis tool.

This tool breaks down a variety of onsite and offsite factors giving you a full snapshot of how the top 10 got their positions.

Yahoo! Press Room (

<http://yhoo.client.shareholder.com/press/releases.cfm>

) – Read the latest press

releases from Yahoo!. This may not give you the algorithm but it will tell you the direction they're going. Understand this and you'll be better equipped to deal with changes down the road.

DigitalPoint's Yahoo Forums (

<http://forums.digitalpoint.com/forumdisplay.php?f=6>

) – Read the latest

news, feedback and discussions on the DigitalPoint forums. A great way to keep updated but beware, not everyone in there is a qualified opinion.

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<http://www.beanstalk-inc.com/>

).

Beanstalk provides guaranteed SEO services for it's clients, as well as SEO consulting (

<http://www.beanstalk-inc.com/services/consulting.htm>

) for those with a strong knowledge of site design

and structure or an inhouse IT staff. Dave is happy to answer your questions and can be contacted at

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SEO – Search Engine Optimization You Can Do

By J. Ratliff

SEO – Search Engine Optimization You Can Do by J. Ratliff

We all know what SEO is, and it seems like it has kind of an "executive" sound to it doesn't it? The truth is, thousands of webmasters spend millions of dollars every year on SEO services. Now, I am not discounting the importance of these services.

Indeed, SEO is very important not only to the big website portals, but to your website as well.

However, I do believe that a lot of the people who spend thousands annually, do so without needing to. I have done SEO work on a dozen websites for businesses, and about 20 of my own. My secret? It's all in the software.

If you have not checked out this software, I highly recommend it.

Internet Business Promoter

(IBP) for

short. I use it everyday, not only for my websites, but also for any SEO work I do.

It does cost around \$200, but it is worth every penny plus some.

Save money and do your own SEO work.

J. Ratliff is a webmaster, part time SEO guru, and affiliate guru. He has achieved certified SEO status from ExpertExam.



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