

Bearish SEO

Optimizing Websites in the Post
Panda World



Agenda

Introduction to How Search Works

How Search is Changing

The Panda Update

Search User Experience

- User Assistance
- User Controls

Search & IA

- Structure: Why taxonomy & Controlled vocabulary are not optimization
- Navigation
 - Navigation blindness
 - Berry Picking
 - Best Bets
- Content Strategy
 - Relational Content Modeling
- Link Strategy

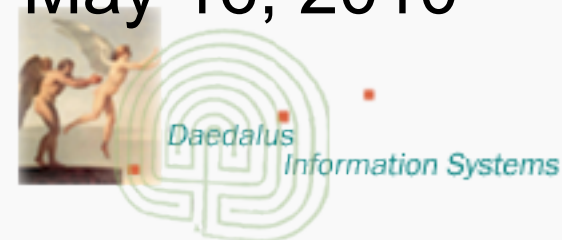
Key Takeaways



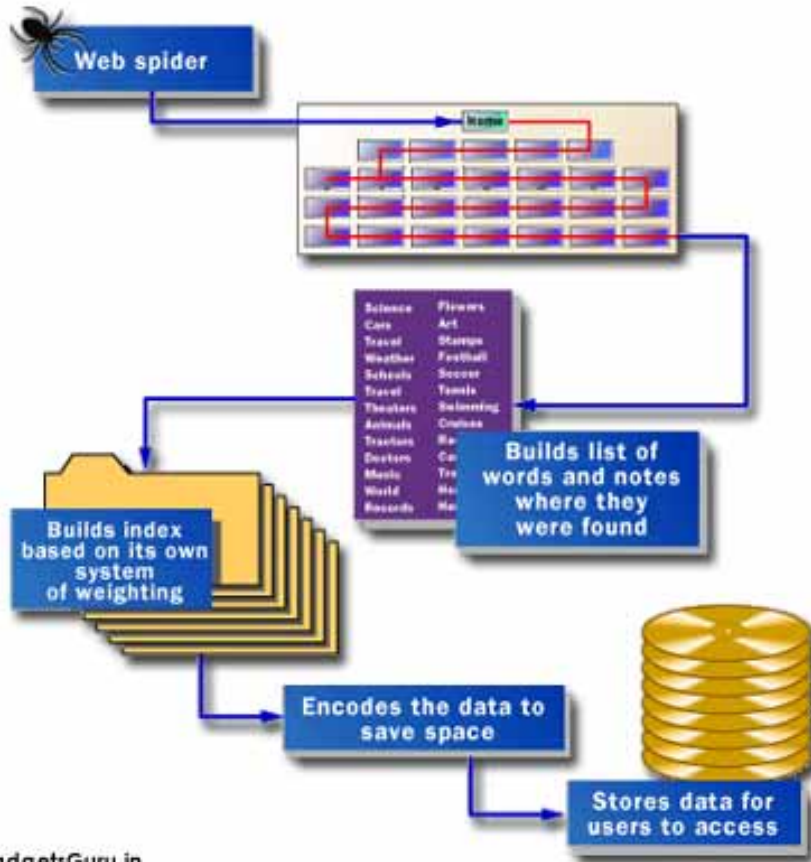
Arcane = Not Long for This World

“Increasingly the online audience for these sites is coming in the side doors via links on blogs and social-networking Websites like Facebook. Probably the most important tool for reaching large audiences is, however, is Google. If you can climb onto the top of the site’s search results, you’re certain to be rewarded with a huge number of clicks. Most publications these days **try to harness the Google algorithm through an arcane process known as search engine optimization**. Some are more skilled at this than others.”

New York Times May 16, 2010



How Search Works



1. Search bot visits site
2. Crawls through all pages unless instructed not to
3. Discards code
4. Breaks down text
5. Sends text back to search engine inverted index
 - i. What words
 - ii. Where are they on the page
6. Sends a copy of page to be stored in index

Retrieval

Human Retrieval

- Contextual
- Free form
- Navigational or informational
- Focused and random
 - Berrypicking
- Constrained
 - By technology
 - By biology

Machine Retrieval

- Literal
- Directed
- Rigid
 - One way
 - Sequential
- Constrained
 - By size of index
 - By nature of instructions



Relevance

Thought-Processing Biped Relevance

- Emotional
- Environmental

Good means pleasing, honest, truthful, operates with integrity

Machine Relevance

- Literal
- Logical

Good means fulfills a programmed criteria based on computational mathematics

"I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it."

Justice Potter Stewart
Miller v California (1973)



How Search is Changing



Machine Refinements

Semantic

- Authority
- Contextual relatedness
- Phrase indexed based on popular searches: Index, categories, keywords, document-specific data
- Similarity estimation: Compares a “sketch” or compact representation for document and uses an established similarity threshold to delete duplicate entries

Prediction

- Orion Algorithm: Search engine algorithm uses vector space analysis that combines vector positioning with previous user action
 - Google 2009
 - Microsoft Powerset Acquisition



User Relevance Inputs

Behavior that influences relevance

- Query
- Click through
- Time on page
- Path

Social Influences

- Likes
- Comments
- Recommendations
- Retweets
- Click-throughs



Search Distraction

Searchers do not know “how to search”

- 56% constructed poor queries
- Proficiency with the machine does not translate into proficiency with the software

Searchers get lost in the data

- 33% had difficulty navigating/orienting search results
- 28% had difficulty maintaining orientation on a website

Loss of capacity for discernment

- 36% did not go beyond the first 3 search results
 - not pages...results on page 1
- 91% did not go beyond the first page of search results
- 55% selected irrelevant results 1 or more times

The screenshot shows a search engine interface with various filters and search results. On the left, there are filters for 'Everything', 'Images', 'Videos', 'News', 'Shopping', 'Books', 'Blogs', and 'More'. Below these are location filters for 'Seattle, WA' and 'Any time' (Latest, Past 24 hours, Past week, Past month, Past 3 months, Past year, Custom range...). There are also 'All results' filters for 'Sites with images', 'Related searches', and 'Timeline'. On the right, the search results are displayed, including 'Starred results for information architecture' with links to 'The Information Architecture Institute | Home' and 'InfoDesign: Understanding by Design - News'. Below that is a Wikipedia entry for 'Information architecture'. Further down, there is a social media snippet from 'The Information Architecture Institute' and a snippet from 'Information Architecture Tutorial | Webmonkey | Wired.com'. At the bottom, there are 'Images for information architecture' and a snippet for 'What is information architecture? » Step Two Designs, Iain Barker'.





2011 GOOGLE PANDA



Panda Chronology

1.0 (February 2011) Farmer Update: Content farms plummet from search results

2.0 (April 2011): English language sites and browser language settings – user data (Chrome blocked sites)

2.1 (May 2011): Site and content quality

2.2 (June 2011): Improved duplicate content detection

2.3 (July 2011): additional user signals to differentiate high/low quality sites

August 2011: Panda goes global



Search & User Experience



User Assistance

Tools

Suggestions as query is entered

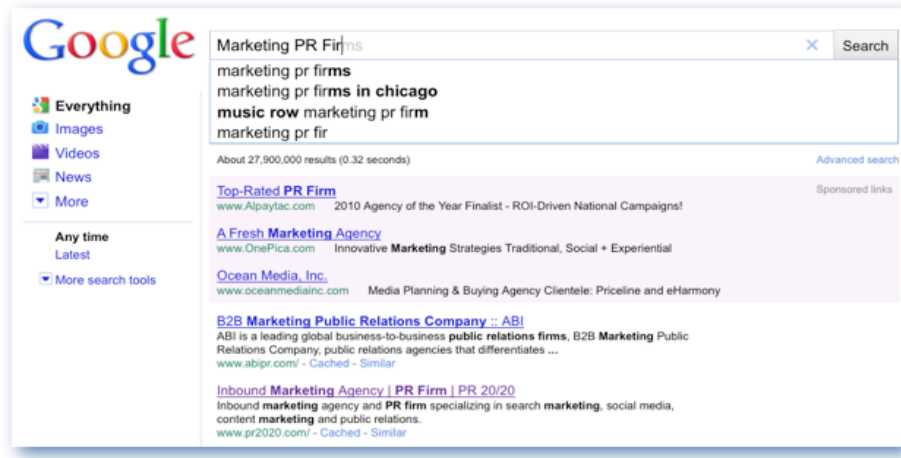
- At page search box
- On search page

Spell check/correction

Best Bets

Augmented Search results

- Awards
- Display PageRank score
- Sharing
- User Ratings



User Controls

Dell Laptops

Refine Your Search

Laptop Screen Size

- 10 inches
- 11 to 14 inches
- 15 to 16 inches
- 17 inches & up

Price


- Under \$500
- \$500 to \$600
- \$600 to \$700
- \$700 to \$800
- \$800 to \$900
- \$900 & up


Processor


- Intel Core i3
- Intel Core i5
- Intel Core i7


Memory

- 1 GB
- 2 GB
- 3 GB
- 4 GB
- 6 GB

 Signature Event - High-performance deals not to be missed! Ends April 7. [Shop Today's Deals >](#)

 Great system financing starting at \$699

 \$9 flat rate shipping on all computers

 Live expert advice 24/7

[Experience the Dell Difference >](#)

Everything you need

Save up to 25% on select best-selling laptop bundles and get it shipped for just \$9.

[Shop Now >](#)

Offers end 4/14 at 6am CT.



Save over 25% & free shipping

[New 2nd Gen Intel Core](#)
Stunning visuals and performance

[Shop our best-selling laptops](#)
Save up to 25%

[Save 35% & free shipping](#)
On a new Inspiron 15R

[All-New Inspiron R Laptops](#)

[View Laptop Deals](#)

Check out why students love our laptops and desktops
[Find Out More >](#)



 Introducing the faster, smarter Intel Core processor family
[Help Me Choose >](#)

Dell recommends
Internet Explorer 9
[Learn more >](#)

Explore Dell Laptops and Netbooks

View by [Usage](#) [Screen Size](#) [Brand](#)

Everyday Computing

Laptops for everyday work and play

Performance

A premium blend of power and design

Multimedia

Laptops for music, movies and more

Ultra Mobility

Lightweight laptops and tablets for life on the go

Gaming

Powerful rigs for hardcore gamers

Tools

Facets

Filters

More Like This...



Search & IA



Structure

Distance reflects relevance

- URL Depth: the further from the homepage, the less important it must be
- Click Distance: the further from an authority page, the less important it must be

Page Structure Now a Factor

- Google Page Segmentation Patent: Determining Semantically Distinct Regions of a Document
- Based on eye-tracking studies and user behavior
- Similar Yahoo patent

URLs

- Keywords found in URLs are weighted for relevance
- Hyphens as separators is best

Tools

Flat structure within CMS

Analytics

Cross linking



Navigation

Users lose orientation on the site

- Help them to stay grounded without using Back Button
- Try not to be too clever with labeling – clear, common sense labels for sections
- Entice them to explore

Users suffer “navigational blindness”

- Page paradigm
- Transitional Volatility

Tools

Google Insights for Search

Breadcrumbs

HTML site map



Content Strategy

Intersection of what you have/do with how customers look for what you have/do

Use online tools to mine customer search behavior

Check to see if you have relevant content and fill gaps

Tools

Core Metadata

Google Insights for Search

Site analytics

Content audit



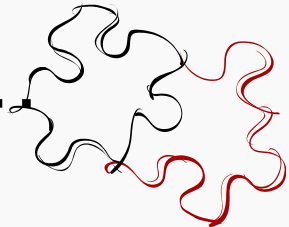
Relational Content Modeling

People who bought
this also bought...



Most
Popular

Goes with...



Tools

- Guided Tours
- Produced Views
- Task List Drop Downs
- Related Links
- Best Bets



Social Media

Customer Engagement media activities

- Search for brand online = 67.2%

Social Media Activities

- Read Blogs: 26.90%
- Play Company Online Games: 25.30%
- Post reviews: 35.20%

Tools

Google Blog Search

FB access - Like

Linked-in Profile

Social Sharing sites



Linking Strategy

Links are human-mediated relationships

Source and destination must share contextual relationship

Create link-based relationship model of relevance

- Create or find Authority resources
- Hook up to HUBs

Think beyond the site

Tools

Wikipedia

Open Directory (dmoz.org)

Certain paid directories

Educational site

Social media



Key Takeaways

Search engines are not smart

Search engine companies have an agenda

IA is an early influencer of relevance

User Experience is a recent influencer of relevance

Search is a user experience



When you wish upon a star, makes no difference who you are.
Anything your heart desires will come to you.
If your heart is in your dreams, no request is too extreme.
When you wish upon a star as dreamers do.
Sir Jiminy Cricket, Pinocchio



Daedalus
Information Systems

Thank You

Marianne Sweeny
Principal
Daedalus Information Systems

E msweeny@speakeasy.net
T @msweeny

