



Blogs ~ Learn How and Why They Fit Into Your Search Engine Marketing & Optimization Campaigns

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This White Paper will examine Blogs and how they can be utilized in Search Engine Marketing and Optimization. It will also cover Blog basics and optimized examples.

Technorati, a Web site that indexes Blogs, released its semiannual "State of the Blogosphere" report in Q3 of 2005. It highlights a steady, and astonishing growth rate. Nearly 80,000 new Blogs are created every day, and there are some 14.2 million already in existence; 55 percent of which remain active. Business publications like the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and Internet Retailer are bringing Blogs to the front lines. Marketers want to know how Blogs can be leveraged for Search Engine Marketing and Optimization.

Blogs defined — An online journal that is regularly updated with content and built on a platform with automated syndication. In simple terms, consider a Blog to be the equivalent of an online diary or bulletin board that is very easy for Web users to access. Blogs can be hosted with Blog Software or can be hosted by a Blog Host Company.

Here are a few examples:

Blog Software:

b2Evolution

Wordpress

.Text

bBlog

Nucleus

Textpattern

Blog Hosts:

blogspot.com

livejournal.com

typepad.com

AOL Journals

blogs.com

MSN Spaces

Blog Search Engines – Blogs provide quality content to the Web at very timely intervals. Specialized Search Engines have emerged to catalog the Blogosphere (defined as the Blogging world). They have new challenges because of the time requirements and search patterns for Blogs. Submissions to these Engines may be automated through the Blog host or completed manually. The quickest way to get a Blog added to the indexes is to sign up and add them to your customized home pages or Blog Reader software.

Examples Include:

www.technorati.com

www.feedster.com

www.blogdigger.com

www.icerocket.com

google.com/blogsearch

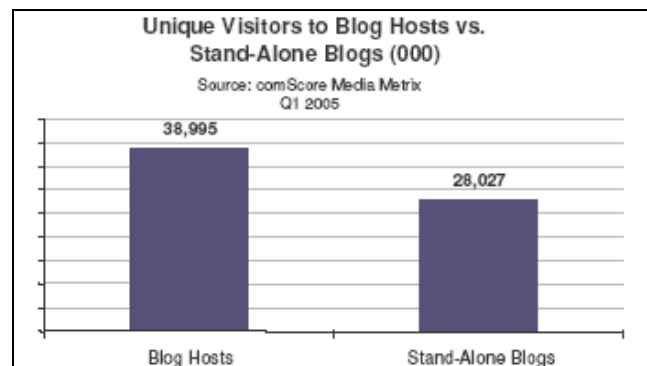
Search Engine Optimization Benefits from Blogs

Optimized Blogs can rank very well in the major Search Engines and the specialized vertical Blog Search Engines. Traffic can come from keyword searches that match any optimized content on the Blog. Link popularity can be Naturally increased through Blogs, they can provide quality links with desired anchor text back to your Web site. Links can point to specific, relevant content deeper within the Web site. These methods address some of the off page optimization calculations of the Search Engine's algorithms. Overall, optimized Blogs should increase the amount and rank of positions within the Search Engine's results.

Techniques for Optimizing Blogs for Search Engines:

Always consider your content for keywords during creation and editorial. It is best to focus on very limited keywords in a Blog update. The main keywords should appear in the title of the Blog entry. Those same keywords should be mentioned 1 to 3 times based on the size of the Blog entry. Using keywords properly in the editorial should enforce the subject matter of the Blog entry.

Decide on using a Blog host or Blog software to manage the Blog. Most Blog hosts include powerful options for syndication. A mark in a checkbox creates an atom.xml file, which is standardized for distribution. Blog hosts also provide a myriad of templates to customize your Blog to your requirements. Blog software may provide more customizable templates and better tracking options. In either case make sure the finalized setup is simple and easy for Search Engines to crawl.



Keyword rich text links, also known as Anchor Text, can be used for off page optimization. These links provide new seed points for Search Engines to follow. When used effectively they can help increase link popularity of your Web site. These links should only be used when the keywords are relevant and the Blog reader's experience may be enhanced by the links content. Links should point to other Web sites that may serve the same purpose.

Many Search Engines have opened backdoors to their databases for Blogs. Add your Blog's atom.xml file to my.yahoo.com and the Yahoo Spider (Slurp) will crawl your site. The same goes for MSN, your content will be spidered by adding it to My MSN. Google has a personalized home page option that can do the same here: www.google.com/ig. Adding the content to your customized pages almost

guarantees that the Search Engines will at least index your Blog. If you were going to add MoreVisibility's Blog to your home page, you would follow the urls to:

Create a Section – Google

Add Content – Yahoo

Add Content – MSN

Add this URL: <http://morevisibility.blogspot.com/atom.xml>

Now you will see the most current topics on MoreVisibility's Blog right on your customized Home pages (ie: my.yahoo.com, my.msn.com, www.google.com/ig).

After the submission process is complete the Search Engine Optimization continues. Yahoo offers a ping service that will allow you to notify them as soon as your Blog is updated. Other Search Engines are already offering the same type of services. Your Blog need to be fresh and unique to keep the Search Engine's attention. Each new topic should follow the recommendations mentioned above.

Below is an overview of the many ways that Commercial Blogs are being employed:

News – Since Blogs can be syndicated, content additions are easily dispersed throughout the Web. Company news can make great content. Internet Retailer's Article: "Retailers hope shoppers buy blogs as the place to go" on 8/24/05 wrote about <http://flypaper.bluefly.com>. This is a Blog which is meant to appeal to the style conscious Web user. For the first discernable keyword phrase ([a cowl-neck evening dress](#)), they ranked in Google under positions 4 and 5. The link did not directly lead to the position, but SEO was likely considered when making that the anchor text.

Education — Google created an Adwords Blog, <http://adwords.blogspot.com>. They use it to further educate Adwords Advertisers on the latest innovations and uses for their product. The Inside Adwords Blog was customized to fit within the look and feel of Google's Adwords system, even though it is hosted with Blogspot. It is updated weekly with very useful content for its readers. It is even optimized for keywords, while truly educating on new techniques.

Commentary — Insightful analysis of Industry specific news and events is welcomed Blog content. <http://blogs.msdn.com/xmlteam/archive/2005/09/10/463549.aspx> is a Blog post from Microsoft Developers. This article is keyword rich commentary on XML standards. A search for "Standardizing on XML" on Google ranks this Blog post number one. It was only posted 10 days before this White Paper was published. The MSDN Blog follows the SEO standards mentioned above.

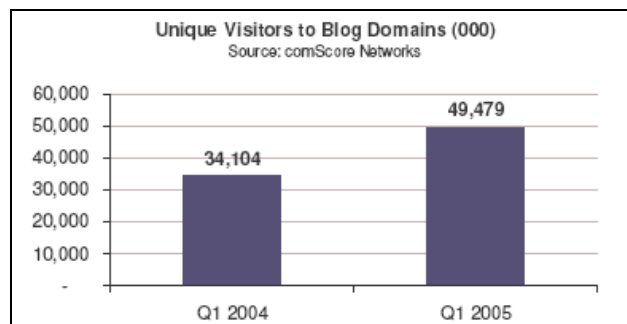
Promotion — Blogs can be a great channel to promote new products or services. This promotion can be achieved through a combination of news, education, and commentary. The Internet Retailer article mentioned previously also covers Ehobbies.com’s Blog, <http://ehobbies.blogs.com/rc/>. It is a very marketing savvy Blog, with the main goal of promoting and drawing attention to new products and special promotions. Reviewing posts from May 2005, Keyword optimization occurred through usage in titles, alt tags, and the text. A quick search on “Nomadio Sensor” showed that Ehobbies ranked in the Top 10 on both Yahoo and MSN.

Spam — Unfortunately any online marketing technique can be abused or exploited. Some Blogs are developed to falsely create link popularity. These Blogs are only built for Search Engines and typically do not contain valuable content. MoreVisibility does not recommend this approach.

A Few Blog rules:

1. *Keep it simple* — Blogs should be quick reads. Keep the interface and layouts clean. Blogs should not be graphic intensive, marketing driven Web sites. Navigation should be simple, employing lots of plain HTML text and links. Use pictures for commentary, but keep them to a minimum.

2. *Keep it fresh* — Blogs should be updated frequently. Good content should be added a minimum of once a week. A Blogging culture is quickly developing online. Comscore’s Behaviors of the Blogosphere report in August of 2005, found “the average Blog visitor viewed nearly 16,000



pages over the course of Q1 2005 – 77 percent more than the 9,000 pages viewed by the average Web user.” Blogs are creating loyal readers. The more frequently the content is updated, the more popular your Blog will become.

3. *Keep it useful* — Unique and valuable content that is useful for others is a must for a successful Blog. Some of the most visited Blogs today according to Comscore are freerepublic.com, drudgereport.com, fark.com, Slashdot.org, and gawker.com. These Blogs combine social commentary and other hot topics to draw their crowds. MoreVisibility’s Blog is full of useful information. It comprises daily entries from the different departments that comprise our Search Engine Marketing Team. Tech

updates, client findings, PPC developments, and promotional information are all available at <http://morevisibility.blogspot.com>.

4. Stay Committed — Blogs are the buzz today and they have the potential to add a new layer of socialization to the Internet. Commit to blogging and the benefits should grow over time. Blogger.com was launched in 1999. Currently owned by Google, you can find Blogs that date back to the onset. Creative uses of Blogs are driving their expansion. As part of an Online Marketing mix, Blogs open new channels to your consumers.

Blogs and Search Engine Marketing marry well. Search Engines have historically looked for content rich Web sites that were updated frequently — Blogs are a match. Search Engines like keyword links — Blogs are a match. Search Engines like unique and popular content — Blogs are a match. Active Blogs can rank well in Search Engines, provide quality links back to your main domain, and expand your traffic and presence on the World Wide Web.