

Future Evolution of Search

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The search engine world never rests. As online marketing professionals discover new ways to obtain top rankings the algorithms evolve right along side. There are two primary reasons behind the updating of ranking algorithms. To increase the quality and relevancy of the results, and to decrease the many pages of online spam.

As the algorithms are updated, new ways to affect the results are discovered, and the algorithm must then be again adjusted. This is a cycle that has been around since the early days of search, and one that won't be going away any time soon. A lot has changed over the years, and the future is sure to also deliver its plethora of surprises, but there are three main factors that will always have some level of impact on your search results.

SEO, Content and Links

Some people say that the world of search engine optimization is over and that the entire basis behind successful rankings lies in the power of incoming links. While incoming links do play a significant role, and in most cases are a necessity, they are far from the only determining factor.

There are many determining factors behind what will affect the ranking of a site. The three largest contributing factors are SEO, links, and site content. To compete in highly competitive industries a site needs numerous on-topic pages of content, relevant incoming links from a variety of sources, and, solid site optimization. While search is always changing, these three factors will remain constant. Each may change in the level of impact they have, but they will always contribute to the top listings.

Site content and SEO go hand in hand. Content is very important, but without the SEO to add focus, it can go unnoticed. Proper keyword densities, link paths and keyword placement will always play a role in having the content discovered and ranked by the search engines. If the fundamental SEO aspects are not in place, there is a strong chance that the content may never see the light of day. Incoming links add focus and relevance for the site overall, but if the content is not relevant to the desired phrases the odds of obtaining a top ranking are very bleak.

Links play, and will continue to play a strong role in the future of search rankings as they add that important vote of confidence. When site A links to site B, that tells the search engines site B is worth considering. Value is passed, based on relevance and the overall authority of site A.

As more and more webmasters develop new linking schemes, the algorithms responsible for displaying top sites have to continually evolve to weed out the ever increasing amounts of SPAM. While Google's current algorithm relies heavily on incoming links, especially for sites in highly



competitive markets, this algorithm will have to change and mutate over time as the internet continues to evolve. If rankings were determined 100% by inbound links where would this leave us? Thousands if not millions of valuable websites would go completely unnoticed. We would also see many sites ranking that are not relevant to the actual search term due to issues related to Google bombing.

Political opinions aside, the single word "failure" does not accurately represent the George Bush bio page; however, it continues to rank #1 in Google. This was made possible by the anchor text used in links posted by thousands of bloggers and webmasters. If links were solely responsible for rankings, we would see a lot more examples of Google Bombing as the actual number of links required to 'bomb' would decline.

Where is Search Going?

For us to know the exact future of search we will have to wait and see what happens but some things are certain to grow in popularity.

The future will undoubtedly see more advances in localized search, serving results relevant to the locality of the searcher. Is this the best way? Only time will tell, but even if this is the future, we will still see SEO, links & content dictating the results. The SEO and content will have to be in part geared towards local information such as zip codes, city names, etc, but they still will be important contributors.

Links will undoubtedly contribute to rankings long into the future, but quite possibly will have a reduced role with more SEO fundamentals making a comeback. One example is to take a look at MSN Live Search. As reported by Ross Dunn in the [SEO BLOG](#) just this past weekend an algorithm update has shown increased value on fundamentals such as title tags and domain names. These two areas were once an incredibly powerful tool in obtaining rankings, and had reduced in value. Now, at least in MSN, they are gaining ground once again.

Still in its infant stages, Mobile Search is growing as more and more people turn to their cell phones and other mobile devices for search. Mobile search will likely have the most benefit for localized type searching. People looking for an address, weather report, local business, entertainment information, etc. As time goes on the number of users using Mobile Search will continue to grow, and optimized sites will be the ones found by these searchers. A whole new level of optimizing mobile websites will likely emerge.

In 10 years time search will certainly look very different. While it has become a staple in the lives of millions, in the big scheme of things the internet is still very young and search even younger.



Why SEO will always be important

SEO will always play an important role in having sites found in the search engines. Regardless of how search algorithms evolve they will always require a level of on site content in order to correctly rank websites. As long as this content is considered, proper keyword placement and frequencies will play a role.

SEO in itself will continue to change. The proper frequencies of keyword placement, linking techniques and URL structure may alter, but will always have an impact.

As we move into the future and as the search engine algorithms continue to evolve SEO will always play an important role in having your websites obtain top rankings. While the small things will always change it is important to have the basic fundamentals in place and doing so will help sustain consistent rankings into the future.

