Search Engine Optimization in the current socio-economic challenges

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\textbf{Abstract.} Social media is a constant presence in everyday life and activity, no matter if we are talking about persons or companies. All the companies that survived the economic crisis understand that the on-line presence is vital for publicity, in order to increase sales, in order to gain new clients. The companies struggle to get new visitors on the site and turn them into clients that return to the companies’ products, increasing the online visibility. To increase online visibility the companies enroll in search engines such as Google, Alta Vista, etc, enroll in web directories and use social media instruments such as forums, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, link exchange and other paid methods such as Pay Per Click campaign. The article is an overall perspective regarding all these instruments.

\textbf{Keywords:} SEO, social media, discount sites, Pay Per Click campaign, Google Analytics.

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1. \textbf{Introduction}

A site visited for the first time by a potential customer has only a few seconds to attract and cause him/her to spend extra time in discovering interesting information from his/her point of view. The first impact is fundamental to the future relationship with the client. The opening page must announce from the very beginning which is the main activity of the company with online presence, which are their products, their services, and to whom it is addressed. Usually to elaborate design elements detract from the point of interest, removing the company and the visitor from the original purpose. "Google has been experimenting with ad extensions and product extensions, such as video and product images. So if you show an image for generic keywords especially, put your best foot forward."\textsuperscript{[1]}

The very first visit gaze falls on the "site fire area", i.e. on the top left area, easy swooping down toward the centre. In this area critical information to the customer should be presented, for example a target phrase showing why the client should stay more on the site, or act in a specific mode. Here the advantages of the product/service have to be easily retrieved, its features, but especially which is its impact in the customers’ lives or activity. After discovering these elements it is important to forward the customer to track stimulus: finding out further information by visiting other pages of the site, downloading a demo, comparisons between different offers, buying a product/service, etc. If the client makes a decision for an acquisition, this process must be followed by an easy approach.

The customer may be dispensed with if it is directed to a form with fields to fill out a lot of information, especially if you want the personal information that he/she does not want to reveal them. He/she prefers to reveal the card number in order to make the purchase, the mailing address to receive the product and if

\textsuperscript{1+} \textit{Corresponding author:} Assistant Porf. PhDe Rocsana Bucea-Manea-Tonis, rocsense39@yahoo.com.
necessary the name, an email address or phone number. Most customers are interested in the service and warranty politics that should be very clear. Customers assess the risk as a purchased product-service with a particular defect can be returned. The brand is often associated with quality, safety ….

Design, colours, contrast, font type and size, framing images and text on the page must leave the impression of harmony and relate to the theme of the site. A fancy font is not easy readable and distracts, but for a site with archaic themes you can choose a font that suggest the time period in question, for example.

Menu items must be very eloquent. It is important to group information on different categories, as to have a well organised menu. However a menu with many items confuses at first glance. For ergonomicity the horizontal menu items in the first half of the page have to be repeated in the second half of the page. Thus the customer will not have to return to the top to navigate the site, but will use the secondary menu, from the bottom of the page. Other menu items can be added on the left column, if they are important or right-hand column, if they are less important.

Vital information that needs to be easily found on the website is the address where the company can be found. Just an email address or a phone number does not inspire enough confidence. Visitors want to feel that the products / services are personalized for them, because they are important, and their opinion counts. Hence the importance of an associated forum in order that each client should have their say and provide feedback to the business. It is known that the most effective form of advertising is the direct person-to-person form. Customers will have confidence in the family, friends, professionals and other customers’ recommendations, whose opinion can be found on the forum. A mediator will have to respond personally to each client on the forum, and to each mail. Visitors appreciate an open, honest dialog. Visitors want to get in contact with real people, and not with machinery. Visitors also react very well to the firm success story, if they recognise themselves in it and will find it the appropriate choice.

A well organized site will consist of two to three pages: index, site map and purchase form, for example. The other pages have to be loaded dynamically from an XML file or a database using AJAX technology, for example.

Multimedia content is a great way to increase interest in the website. Videos, pod casts, tutorials and other multimedia options allow presenting the message in an attractive way for visitors.

Social media allows communication from the business perspective and allow communication between clients. It is recommended inclusion of links to blogs, Facebook, Twitter and other social media accounts. It is preferable for the firm to be identifiable to anyone on the websites of social media, even if it involves filling the web form’s company website. The web form is a way to capture and lead customers to a specific site if it includes a special offer, advice, interesting free information, etc. „For web design, online marketing, user experience design and content writing, social awareness streams offer the opportunity to discover trending topics, opinions, and new resources. Your target market is talking to you and all you have to do is tap into their discussion streams.”[2]

The latest trend is that the offers of discount sites or sites that compare different products such as: http://www.cautareduceri.ro/, http://www.adulmec.ro/oferte/bucuresti, Groupon www.groupon.ro, Newpon www.newpon.ro, www.goldendeals.ro, www.fundeal_ro. On these sites offers are valid for very short periods (e.g. 24 hours), and discounts are up to 70%. (Fig.1. and Fig.2.)
To check the consistency of communication approach with visitors can always ask a person who sees the site for the very the first time.

2. Search Engine Optimization

The term SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is well known to websites developers, but not all of them know that it has two approaches: on-page SEO and off-page SEO.
2.1. **On-page SEO**

On-page SEO refers to a better site optimization for search engines and to the techniques used for this purpose. This approach is often known by web developers and can be improved without a big effort, if it meets certain strict rules by which search engines work. On-page SEO can gain about 25% of the score of 100 points. To optimize the web pages can take into account several factors such as:

- **URL structure** - it is preferable that the site should be well thought from the very beginning, containing easy to remember keywords, company name or brand name; otherwise it can be improved by 301 redirect; also it must be taken into account that Google makes the difference between icourses.com and www.icourses.com; different words can be separated with a hyphen in order to be retrieved by the search engine; one of the important rules is that the URL should be static, remaining unchanged for one web site page;

- **Information about the longevity of the online presence** - search engines quotes better the older sites avoiding spam. (By the way the word spam was taken from a British comedy troupe, who in a trip only received canned meat Spam mark, no matter what they ordered; they have built a gag in which the work spam took the connotation of unrequired messages or information);

- **Page title** - must contain legible key words, the brand or the company name and should not be longer than 70 characters; it is recommended that each page have a different title, with the opportunity to use as many keywords that are placed between <title> tags;

- **Metadata description** - refer to the description of the site that appears in Google search, description that may be relevant to the customer. This description does not appear on the company website, but you should include keywords and up to 150 characters, that are placed between <metadescription> tags;

- **Headings** - search engines read text in the <h1>, <h2>, <h3> tags, where one can place different relevant keywords for the site;

- **Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)** - CSS page templates may diminish the relevance of HTML templates;

- **Images** - should not be very large because they require a long time to load and may be accompanied by keywords between the <alt> tags, or in their name with a hyphen between them.

2.2. **Off-page SEO**

Off-page SEO refers to a picture on the web site, which is determined by the "opinion of other sites" and can be done through links between sites, called inbound. The more high traffic sites send links to the site in question, the more it is appreciated and gets a higher score in the SEO analysis. The best way to create such links is to create interesting content that can be shared in social media to be easily found on the Web. This approach involves a lot of time for improvement. It can gain about 75% of the score of 100 points.

- **First step in getting visibility online** is enrolment in search engines like Google, Yahoo, AOL, Alta Vista, etc. Registration may be made by any person approved in this area, or by specialized companies in enrolment on search engines, such as: All The Web, Excite, InfoSpace, Lycos, Kappa, etc.; it is the most important stage of this approach. Lately Google has developed Caffeine, which increased a lot the ability of the engine in searching and indexing new sites in real time „Caffeine lets us index web pages on an enormous scale. In fact, every second Caffeine processes hundreds of thousands of pages in parallel... Caffeine takes up nearly 100 million gigabytes of storage in one database and adds new information at a rate of hundreds of thousands of gigabytes per day.\[3\].

- **Another method to develop this approach** is to include the site in many web directories. A list of free web Romanian directories can be found at [http://www.dirpedia.ro/directoare-generale.html](http://www.dirpedia.ro/directoare-generale.html). Other web
directory can be chosen from the list http://freewebsubmission.com/. Many of these directories offer three possibilities:

- Free enrolment with mutual backlink – the site to be optimized will post a link of the web directory by including a HTML sniped code in the main page, preferably; in this case the promotion is better and the visibility is greater, especially if the directory has a high PageRank.
- Free enrolment without mutual backlink - in this case the promotion is not very good and it will get less visibility; the method is not very efficient.
- Enrolment with payment of an amount that varies from directory to directory, on whose behalf the company receives various more complex services. It is noted that Google penalizes sites that fit in a single day in more than 100 web directories with backlinks to each other.

Other methods used in obtaining free dofollow links, which increase the site visibility, require a more complex and lengthy task. However they are important and therefore we mention a few of them:

- Satellite blogs on WordPress, NABBA, Blogger, etc. - creating a blog on a free platform that can provide information about services, products and the advantages of visiting the promoted site (by anchors). It is a more difficult to implement because it implies active and continues participation in promoting the blog and increase its PageRank.
- Guest posts - writing specialized articles with new useful information, arousing the interest and posting it on blogs niche with loyal readers, or posting it on sites with greater authority and high PageRank. These articles will contain a reference to the promoted site. The difficulty lies in writing the article in a common language and in discovering niche sites, blogs and getting the administrator’s permission to publish it.
- Comments on blog dofollow – the inclusion and active participation in discussions on various niche blogs offering solutions for discussion partners; needs less time than guest posts, the result being translated in backlinks on unique domains.
- RSS submission - on the net there are very few sites that retrieve RSS automatically once discovering the blog. After the inclusion the site is getting constantly backlinks from sites with acceptable authority, if new contents added with great frequency.
- Press releases may be free or paid - brings media exposure, traffic and backlinks from sites with good authority
- Link exchange 2way, 3way, 4way on niche sites:
  - 2way – mutually link exchange between sites
  - 3way – can be done if a person has two sites and include a link in his/her first site to another person site and receives in return a link to his/her second site.
  - 4way - exchange that involves two people each one having two sites and exchanging links between their different sites, e.g. site1 to site 3 and site 2 to site 4
- Profile on high authority sites - creating an account and entering the promoted website link on profile page or Channel, or Youtube. This results in backlinks from sites with PageRank of 8 or 9 on the home page.
- Free Ads backlinks - the ability to put HTML code in the ad appeared on sites ads. The quality of the backlinks is not very good.

Payment methods to develop this approach are:

- PPC- Pay Per Click - paying a small amount bid for each visitor click
✓ Cost per Thousand viewers (CPM) - paying a certain amount for each one thousand people who see the banner
✓ Cost per click-through (CPC) - paying a certain amount for each click on the banner
✓ Cost per Acquisition (CPA) - paying a small amount bid for each online purchase of a customer.

Making Pay Per Click campaign has become a routine activity for specialists, but there are some important details to take into account:[4]:

✓ Currency and payment method: Google AdWords needs a credit card, which credit limit exceeds anticipated budget for PPC, otherwise the campaign will be disconnected automatically. The payment currency is also important. Once chosen payment currency (U.S. dollar, Canadian dollar, Euro, etc.) it cannot be changed, and may involve an extra effort to cover currency conversion monthly bills.

✓ Time zone of rating agency of the customer or of the initiator of the campaign: we normally tend to choose local time zone, but advertisers can choose the customer's time zone, which influences the statistics of the campaign, especially in high traffic PPC campaigns.

✓ Geographical Distribution Zone: AdWords set by default the 'All Countries and Territories' option, which implies a waste of money if the company distributes products only on a continent or some countries. Even if the campaign is global several campaigns are recommended on small areas according to different criteria such as search and purchase customers behaviour (clients from different areas use different words to search), language (some words from a language could have negative or unpleasant connotations in another language, so the campaign is missed).“Google AdWords Quality Score data from PPC landing pages can also be brought into play when trying to improve the performance of a page optimized for similar keywords. Landing pages with a high Quality Score are likely to better models for an organic search target page than those with a lower score, as Quality Score takes into landing page quality into consideration. Information from the AdWords keyword diagnosis report can also be helpful in building better organic search target pages”. [5]

✓ Language of the campaign: the default setting for any campaign is 'All Languages'. Google, Yahoo, Bing, Opera, etc. have search engines in several languages, not only in the customer language. If the customer is located in Romania and use search words in English may receive advertisements in English and Romanian. It is a great effort and needlessly adding keywords in all languages, especially if those who use them are not part of the target group. Thus the choice of language is important because the campaign ads in Romanian can reach customers who have chosen German, French, Albanian, etc as the default language. They certainly will not understand the message and the campaign fails. It is recommended to create different campaigns for each language, with different message and keywords.

✓ Campaign daily budget: AdWords and adCenter allows setting a daily budget. This budget can be established based on cost per click. If the cost is 0.5 Euro, one can consider 20 clicks per day, so 10 Euro per day. This can determine whether the campaign has the desired effect. If limiting to 5 clicks, for example, the cost is 2.5 Euro per day, but the extent to which the campaign was effective cannot be appreciated.

✓ Distribution of advertising: It can be chosen that the ad to appear
  ▪ only in the chosen search engine
in the chosen search engine and partners engine
in the chosen search engine, partner engines and sites such as network news, blogs. AdCenter is and AdWords have the default settings the second option, so ads will appear on all partner search engines with chosen one. One can also choose that the ads appear on desktop computers, laptop, iPhone, phones with Android operating systems and other machines that support a browser. It is recommended a different campaign for each kind of machine, especially the site has not a version for mobile machines, as iPhone.

✓ Ads rotation: Google will automatically show ads with the best click-through rate more often than other ads. Often ads with more clicks are not the most appreciated and can not test their impact. The situation will be different if rotating the ads. The ads rotation can be made from advanced settings, option "Ad delivery: Ad rotation, frequency capping".

✓ Creativity in advertising - “When writing ads, stress the product's or service's benefit to the customer, rather than just listing its features. One creative approach is to write an ad that puts the readers in the scene of the problem they're trying to solves” [6]

To test the site optimization degree the site can be analyzed by entering it into Google Analytics, StartCounter, etc. Google Analytics is undoubtedly the preferred choice of professionals, because it counts the number of views (page views) for each site page in the Top Content report, from Content menu. Google Analytics also reports the number of unique visitors, details of the day, time when visited the site, time spent on a page, etc. Google Analytics offers features such as integration with Google AdWords, Google AdSense, e-commerce sites, the ability to define goals and track conversion rates, creating custom reports, define custom variables to analyze behaviour of certain types of site visitors (everyday visitors, subscribe visitors via email, customers, etc.), creating and analyzing events, etc.

3. Conclusions

The paper covers various methods to obtain online visibility, with specification for all of them. But most important is the creativity in combing and using them. One may use all of them and not get a high score in Google, and not get a high visibility. The consequences are very few customers, a small selling rate. But the ability to communicate technical knowledge on social media could bring more backlinks then any on-page SEO. That can be translated in high PageRank, high visibility and online sale. Also frequently checking the site optimization degree, with tools as Google Analytics, StartCounter, is vital for the next step of the SEO strategy, influencing the goals definition, creating and analyzing events

4. References

[3] Audette A.. 5 New Tactics For SEO Post-Panda, Search Engine Land, Apr 25, 2011, http://searchengineland.com/5-new-tactics-for-seo-post-panda-73982. Recommends: (1) send strong signals for canonical URLs, (2) make sure most valuable URLs are well indexed and optimized, (3) remove any extraneous duplicate, low value, unnecessary URLs from the index, (4) build internal links to canonical, high-value URLs
from authority pages, and (5) build high-quality external links via social media efforts.

