

Learn To Love Your Bot

Much is written about how to get people to see your lovingly crafted website, and much of this is designed to get you to spend your hard earned cash to employ Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) experts. Unless you have an internet based business that relies on reasonable amounts of traffic being directed to your site then this is entirely unnecessary.



First of all you need to look at how the internet searches work. Looking at things simply, bots (from Google, Bing etc.) wander around the internet taking a look at our websites. We don't want to do anything to deter them so make it easy for them (plenty written on this subject). The search engines then operate on this mountain of data. We supply keywords or phrases and the search engines do the rest.

We of course want our sites to appear near the top of the results and with smartphones and tablets this is even more important. If you are out of the top 5 results then you will not be seen at all.

You can still pay to get your site seen but the best way is to focus on what is on your site, the content. Forget having a certain number of H2 tags or whatever. It is the content and a few other things that really matter.

There is a well-known search engine that used to be associated with page ranking. This has gone and is replaced with page quality which goes from a rating of Lowest, Low through to High and Highest. Highest is good but some other ratings are not so bad. Your website will need to have a rating of High or above if there is a need for it to be trustworthy and/or have expertise. This could be the case for health or financial advice, shopping sites etc. To demonstrate this you might need to show qualifications of advisers or senior staff or provide links to independent testimonials.

Your page (and site) should be well designed and easy to use with a significant amount of good content with supplementary content to back it up, and have contact details for admin/support/customer services. If your site has a good reputation then this will help too. This can be achieved by a certain amount of link building but beware who you link to!

So if you have a high quality page or pages will you be found at the top of the search results? Well, not necessarily. Your website will still have to meet the needs of the user carrying out the search. The more you appear to meet the needs, the higher your site will rank with the search engines.

Imagine I make high quality handmade chocolates and I emphasise the word chocolate but nothing else. Clearly that will not meet the needs of a user who is searching for a local supplier of handmade chocolates. So in my content I need to emphasise chocolate, quality of ingredients, handmade, qualifications and that word 'local'. Many people who wish to purchase are looking for 2 things. First they want a website to look at and secondly they want navigational information to your premises (unless they buy online). So make it easy and supply all of this information then if a lazy person conducts a search for handmade chocolates they find your website and directions to your shop. These sorts of sites meet the users' needs and get to the top of the results.

If you use Google a lot then you will be familiar with the SCRBs (special content results blocks) that often come up at the top of search. These often have a website (the url is better than a link using the word website), phone number, address and directions. These are the best if you can get there!

Don't forget that the search engine companies are continuously tweaking their algorithms so keep your eyes open. You can't go far wrong with a good trustworthy site, with good content that meets users' needs.

In summary:

- Avoid poor page design
- Ensure your site is well maintained
- Create plenty of useful, relevant content
- Display contact details
- Demonstrate trustworthiness

- Ensure your site meets the needs of users who might be searching for your products or services