About Search Engine Optimization

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One quarter of the outside traffic to the UIS website comes from search engines, primarily Google, but also Yahoo and Bing. Traffic is also coming more and more from Social Media Sites like Facebook, Twitter, etc.

General Search Assumptions:

- Search Engines assume that if a lot of other pages link to your site, then your site must be important. They will rank your site higher than sites that do not have a lot of other sites linking to them.
- Search Engines will notice links, and keywords within your content to determine if your page matches a search.

Keyword strategy:

- Put all of your important keywords and phrases in a Word document. Print it and have it nearby whenever you work on your website.
- Use narrow, targeted words and phrases for your keywords.
- Search engines ignore common words such as: “a,” “the,” “as,” “and,” etc., so don’t use them in your keywords and phrases.

Establish a Keyword or phrase for each page of your site:

- Use that word or phrase in the Page Title, and in the content on the page.
- Put the word or phrase near the top of your content in the body text.
- Put the word or phrase in a bulleted list of items.

Ways to tell search engines that text is important:

- Make it Bold.
- Make it Italic.
- Use it in your Headings.
- Put it in bulleted lists.
- Make it link to another page.

Links are important:

- Put links within the body text of the page, even if they are already in the menu.
- DON’T say: “Click here to view the requirements.”
- DO say: Please view the application requirements for the program.
- Ask other related websites to link to your site. Give them a phrase or sentence that includes your keywords and ask them to make that a link on their site.
- Ask employees, associations, friends, family and others to link to your site.
- Send press releases and use your keywords and website URL in the content.
• Add comments to others people’s blogs and mention your own site.
• Use Social Media like Twitter and Facebook and link to your own site.

Images and animations:
• Use pure text as much as possible. Don’t put important text in an image. Search engines can’t read text within an image.
• Always include Alt Text for each image. Make it meaningful and use your keywords.
• Use a department Flickr account to post photos about your events and students.

Fresh content is very important:
• If there is nothing new on your page, search engines will eventually ignore it.
• A picture is worth a thousand words.
• Prospective students want to know what our current students are doing.
• Using embedded Social Media and RSS technology is an easy way to update your content. And other people can pick up your RSS feed (without you even knowing).

Get help from the UIS Office of Web Services:

• Request for help form: http://go.uis.edu/webhelp
• URL: www.uis.edu/webservices/