

Anatomy of a Search Engine Results Page

A Micro-report

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Topic: Anatomy of a Search Engine Results Page (SERP)

Key Point: Understanding how Google and other search engines present your website as a listing on a search engine results page is an important part of your search engine optimization and marketing strategy.

When a bride/groom goes to Google, or any other search engine, to perform a search, they (a) find the search box, (b) type in keywords, or (c) a few keywords, or (d) even a phrase, expecting that Google will bring back results that match their search. One of the reasons Google gained popularity quickly was their ability to return search engines results that accurately met the needs of the searcher, in other words, the most **relevant** results.

Power Tip: Relevancy is the most important factor in getting pages top ranked in organic search engine results. Creating relevancy is the result of appropriately managing many different variables.

The page that is returned and presented to the viewer after entering their query is called a search engine results page (SERP).

Each of the search engines present their search engine results pages differently, but most display three core elements:

- (A) sponsored listings
- (B) local listings or mapped listings
- (C) organic listings

In the following graphic these three elements are shown.

Sponsored Listings (labeled A on graphic)

These results are advertisers who are paying to appear on a search engine results page (SERP). When you see them at Google, they are using a program of Google's called Adwords (<http://adwords.google.com>).

Google Adwords allows an advertiser to buy advertising across Google's network and pay only when someone clicks on their link.

This form of advertising is also commonly referred to as pay-per-click advertising.

Advertisers using pay-per-click advertising select keywords and keyword phrases, as well as other criteria, to target their "advertisements" or "sponsored listings" so that they reach only people searching using specific words and phrases.

Google's Adwords program, similar to Yahoo's pay-per-click program called Yahoo! Search Marketing, is a bidding system where advertisers compete with each other. Those willing to pay a higher price "per click" show up above others who have bid lower – generally speaking.

Sponsored advertising is very competitive and has become extremely sophisticated.

Power Tip: In most cases, it is a good idea to get a PPC expert to help you either set-up or manage your pay-per-click programs. Without this expertise, you can easily spend a lot of money and see little or no results.

When it comes to pay-per-click advertising it is not unlikely that you will have to pay \$2/click, or more, to show up in the first three to five sponsored listing results.

Sponsored links rotate on a SERP. Often two or three show up horizontally across the top of the SERP while others appear in a list down the right side of the page.

Local Listings (labeled B on graphic)

Local listings on a search engine results page, and for the moment I will focus on Google, come from a variety of sources. One of these sources is the Google Local Business Center. You can, and should, submit your listing to "Google Local" through their Local Business Center (<http://www.google.com/local/add>).

I'd highly recommend creating a Google Account before you do this, if you do not have one already (i.e. _____@gmail.com).

For more information about setting up a Google Account visit:

<https://www.google.com/accounts/>

Generally speaking, you must have a published phone number and a business address to appear in the local listing results.

Local listings, part of Google's Universal Search (i.e. organic results, maps, local listings, YouTube listings, real-time search listings), appear randomly, or as the result of a highly kept-secret Google Algorithm.

They do not appear on every presentation of a search engine results page.

At this time (01/10/2010) there does not appear to be any way to "optimize" your listing to show higher than others in the local listings. Local listings are not presented alphabetically.

Organic Listings (labeled C on graphic)

The results on a search engine results page that show after sponsored listings and local listings, or listings presented on a map if they appear, are called the "organic" listings.

Some refer to these the "free listings."

Organic listings have been "pushed down the page" in the recent past as a result of search engines showing sponsored listings and local listings above them.

Accurate or not, these organic listings are web pages that Google, and other search engines like Yahoo! and Bing, think are the most relevant for the search that was entered by the user.

It is not uncommon to see some of the same web sites and pages top ranked organically at Google, Yahoo!, and Bing – again, because of "relevancy."

In most cases, particularly in any competitive keyword/keyword phrase category, these organic listings show up as a result of a process known as search engine optimization (SEO).

Power Tip: Organic listings do not show up by chance and just waiting for your website or web pages to show up in the organic listings on a search engine results page is an ineffective search strategy.

There are more than two dozen different variables that go into an effective search engine optimization strategy, including but not limited to; keywords and keyword phrases on a page, placement of those keywords/phrases on a page, website design, streamlined programming and coding, the ability for search engines to read or “crawl” through a page, and the number of links from outside of your website that point to a specific page at your website.

Power Tip: Google and other search engines have difficulty reading websites and pages designed entirely in Flash. Why? Because there are no words search engines can “see” on a website designed entirely using Flash programming code. As a result, search engines have difficulty determining relevancy.

Summary

Understanding the different components of a search engine results page will help you to more effectively develop a strategy to get your website and its pages listed in each area. All three require a different effort and approach.

A

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www.towerwinespirits.com - (404) 881-0902 - 4 reviews

C **Coco Loco Cuban and Caribbean Restaurant Catering**
www.pigroastatlanta.com - (404) 364-0212 - 38 reviews

D **Holway Catering**
www.holwaycatering.com - (770) 350-2978 - 6 reviews

E **A Legendary Event**
www.legendaryevents.com - (404) 869-8858 - 7 reviews

F **Carlye's Catering**
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