

RezNEWS Feature Article: Search Engine Marketing 101

This month, **RezNEWS** would like to familiarize you with the basic terms of search engine marketing. Although at first glance this information looks more like a glossary than an article, the specialists at RezStream cannot emphasize enough the importance of knowing the fundamentals of this valuable type of marketing. Each one of these terms is something that the marketing team at RezStream takes into consideration or implements during each marketing strategy.

Getting familiar with these terms will help you understand the many facets of search engine marketing. If you are using RezStream as part of your marketing strategies, this article will help you sort through the key concepts of Search Engine Marketing 101.

Algorithm: A set of rules that a search engine uses to rank the listings contained within its index, in response to a particular search. No search engine reveals exactly how its own algorithm works to protect itself from competitors and those who wish to spam the search engine.

Backlinks: All the links pointing at a particular web page. Also called inbound links.

Banned: When web pages are removed from a search engine's index specifically because the search engine has deemed the pages are violating certain guidelines. Oftentimes, the website cannot recover and a new domain is needed.

Clickthrough rate (CTR): The percentage of those clicking on a link divided by the total number who sees the link. For example, let's say 100 people do a web search. These 100 will see links to a variety of web pages. If thirty of the 100 people all choose one particular link, that link actualizes a 30 percent clickthrough rate.

Conversion rate: The relationship between visitors to a website and what actions those visitors take on that website, such as a completing a sale or information request. Usually, conversion rates are expressed as a percentage. If a website has 50 visitors and 10 of them convert to whatever function, the site is known to have a 20 percent conversion rate.

Cost per click (CPC): System where an advertiser pays an agreed amount for each click someone makes on a link leading to their website.

Crawler: Component of the search engine that gather listings by automatically "crawling" the web. A search engine's crawler (also called a spider or robot) follows links to web pages. The crawler then makes copies of the web pages found and stores these copies in the search engine's index.

Directories: A type of search engine where listings are gathered through human efforts, rather than by the automated crawling of the web. In directories, websites are often reviewed, summarized in about 25 words, and placed in a particular category.

Index: The collection of information a search engine contains that searchers can query against. With crawler-based search engines, the index is typically copies of all the web pages they have found from crawling the web. With human-powered directories, the index contains the summaries of all websites that have been categorized.

Landing page: The specific web page that a visitor ultimately reaches after clicking a search engine listing. Marketers attempt to improve conversion rates by testing various landing page

techniques, which encompass the entire user experience including navigation, layout, and copy.

Link popularity: A raw count of how "popular" a web page is based on the number of backlinks it has. This does not factor in link context or link quality, both of which are important elements in how search engines make use of links to impact rankings.

Link text: The text that is contained within a link. For example, [search engine](#) is a link that contains the link text "search engine."

Meta tags: Information placed in a web page not intended for general users to see, but instead, meta tags trigger which information passes to search engine crawlers, browser software, and some other applications.

Meta description tag: Allows page authors to say how they would like their pages described when listed by search engines. Not all search engines use the tag.

Meta keywords tag: Allows page authors to add text to a page to help with the search engine ranking process. Not all search engines use the tag.

Organic listings: Listings that search engines do not sell (unlike paid listings). Instead, sites appear solely because a search engine has deemed it editorially important for them to be included, regardless of payment. Paid inclusion content can also be considered "organic" (even though it is paid for) as that content appears intermixed with unpaid organic results.

Outbound links: Links on a particular web page leading to other web pages, whether they are within the same website or other websites.

PPC: Stands for pay per click and means the same as cost per click. Refer back to cost per click in this glossary.

Pay per click (PPC): The act of paying for a particular listing at a search engine. This involves paying a certain cost per click based on a variety of factors. Google Adwords and Yahoo Search Marketing are examples of pay per click.

Rank: How well a particular web page or website is listed in search engine results. For example, a web page about Florida hotels may be listed in response to a query for "Florida Hotels." However, "rank" indicates exactly where it was listed -- be it on the first page of results, the second page, or perhaps the 200th page. Alternatively, it might also be ranked first among all results, or 12th, or 111th. Overall, saying a page is "listed" only means that it can be found within a search engine in response to a query, not that it necessarily ranks well for that query. Also called **position**.

Reciprocal link: A link exchange between two websites. This concept was popular in the past, but is currently losing its power.

ROI: Stands for "return on investment" and refers to the percentage of profit or revenue generated from a specific activity. For example, one might measure the ROI of a paid listing campaign by adding up the total amount spent on the campaign (say \$2000) versus the revenue amount generated by the campaign (say \$10,000). This ROI would be calculated at 500 percent.

Search engine marketing (SEM): The act of marketing a website via search engines, whether this involves improving its rank in organic listings, purchasing paid listings, or a combination of these and other search engine-related activities.

Search engine optimization (SEO): The act of altering a website so that it does well in the organic, crawler-based listings of search engines. In the past, SEO has also been used as a term for any type of search engine marketing activity, though now, the term “search engine marketing” has become more commonly used.

Search terms: The words (or word) a searcher enters into a search engine's search box. Also used to refer to the terms a search engine marketer hopes a particular page will be found for. Also called **keywords, query terms, or query**.

SEM: Acronym for search engine marketing and may also be used to refer to a person or company that does search engine marketing.

SEO: Acronym for search engine optimization and often used to refer to a person or company that does search engine optimization.

Spam: Any search engine marketing method that a search engine deems to be detrimental to its efforts to deliver relevant, quality search results. Some search engines have written guidelines about what is considered to be spam, but ultimately, any activity a particular search engine deems harmful may be considered spam, whether or not there are published guidelines against it. Examples of spam include the creation of doorway pages designed to please search engine algorithms rather than human visitors or extreme repetition of search terms on a page. Determining what is spam is complicated by the fact that different search engines have different standards. A particular search engine may even have different standards of what is allowed, dependant on whether content is gathered through organic methods versus paid inclusion. Also referred to as **spamdexing**. ([Source: Webmaster World Forums](#))

About the author

Dennis Miller is the Internet promotion manager for RezStream. Dennis has over four years Internet marketing experience in the hospitality industry. He is a leading expert in search engine optimization, pay per click services, and using the Internet to increase revenue for hospitality clients.