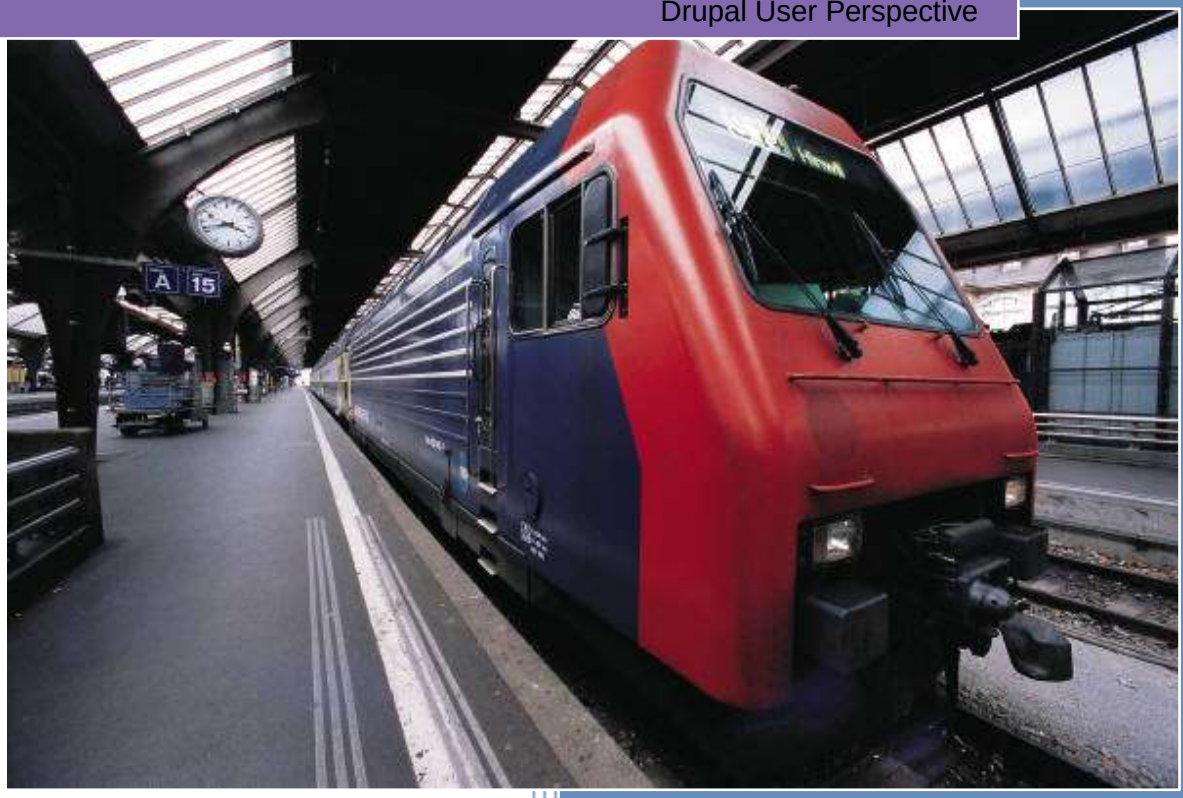
2008

Search Engine Marketing Tips

Drupal User Perspective



Daniel.Zivkovic@gmail.com

www.JasminaHomes.ca

11/13/2008

Search Engine Marketing Tips

Drupal User Perspective

Table of Contents

IT'S ALL ABOUT MARKETING 2
- TRADITIONAL MARKETING METHODS 2
- ONLINE MARKETING METHODS 2
- WHAT IS GOOGLE PAGE RANK & WHY DOES IT MATTER? 2

SEO FOCUS AREAS 2
- ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION 3
- SITE-WIDE OPTIMIZATION 3
- OFF-SITE OPTIMIZATION 3

SUBMIT YOUR XML SITEMAP TO SEARCH ENGINES 4

PROMOTE YOUR RSS FEEDS 5

WHAT IS DMOZ? 5
- WHY IS DMOZ RELEVANT? 6
- OTHER DIRECTORIES 6
- EXAMPLE OF SUBMISSIONS TO DMOZ 6

MAKING DRUPAL SEO FRIENDLY IS EASY 7
- DRUPAL MODULES THAT HELP SEO 7
- NICE VIDEO GUIDES 8
- GOOGLE'S SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION STARTER GUIDE 8

HOW TO DO KEYWORD RESEARCH? 9

ONLINE MARKETING IDEAS TO STAY AHEAD OF COMPETITION 13
- GOOGLE LOCAL BUSINESS CENTRE 13
- CREATE GOOGLE GADGETS TO PROMOTE YOUR SITE 14
- CREATE MOBILE DEVICE FRIENDLY CONTENT 15

MORE MARKETING IDEAS 16
- QUICK TIPS 16
- DON'T MAKE ME THINK! 16
- EVERYBODY IS LISTENING TO WIIFM RADIO 17

APPENDIX 17

It's all about Marketing

Whether you are promoting yourself, social ideas, products or services you want to be found and get established as a trusted advisor. In its broadest sense this is marketing and it has the following goals:

- visibility (business promotion)
- inquiries (leads)
- involvement (sales)
- friendship (repeat business).

In the business world, the advent of Internet has increased the fear of competition, which opened companies to the idea of moving from traditional Marketing techniques to new Online Marketing techniques.

Traditional Marketing methods

- Inside sales
- Telemarketing
- Tradeshows and Seminars
- Print Advertising
- Direct mail and E-mail

Online Marketing methods

- Search engine optimization (SEO)
- Pay per click (PPC) advertising
- Leveraging Blogging & Social Media
- Landing pages targeted for lead conversion
- Google Analytics to track your marketing efforts

I like the terms coined by HubSpot.com: Outbound Marketing for Traditional Marketing, Inbound Marketing for Online Marketing and their video "Dude, Cold Calling Is For Losers".

What is Google Page Rank & Why does it matter?

Google **Page Rank** (a.k.a. PR) is a number from 0 to 10 and it measures Website popularity ("authority on the topic") in its databases. You can see the PR-s of the sites you visit, if you downloaded a Google Toolbar for your browser.

Page Rank is one of the most important factors when Google is calculating **SERP** (Search Engine Result Page) to decide where to position your links among all search results. Search Engines want to place links from the most authoritative source of information first!

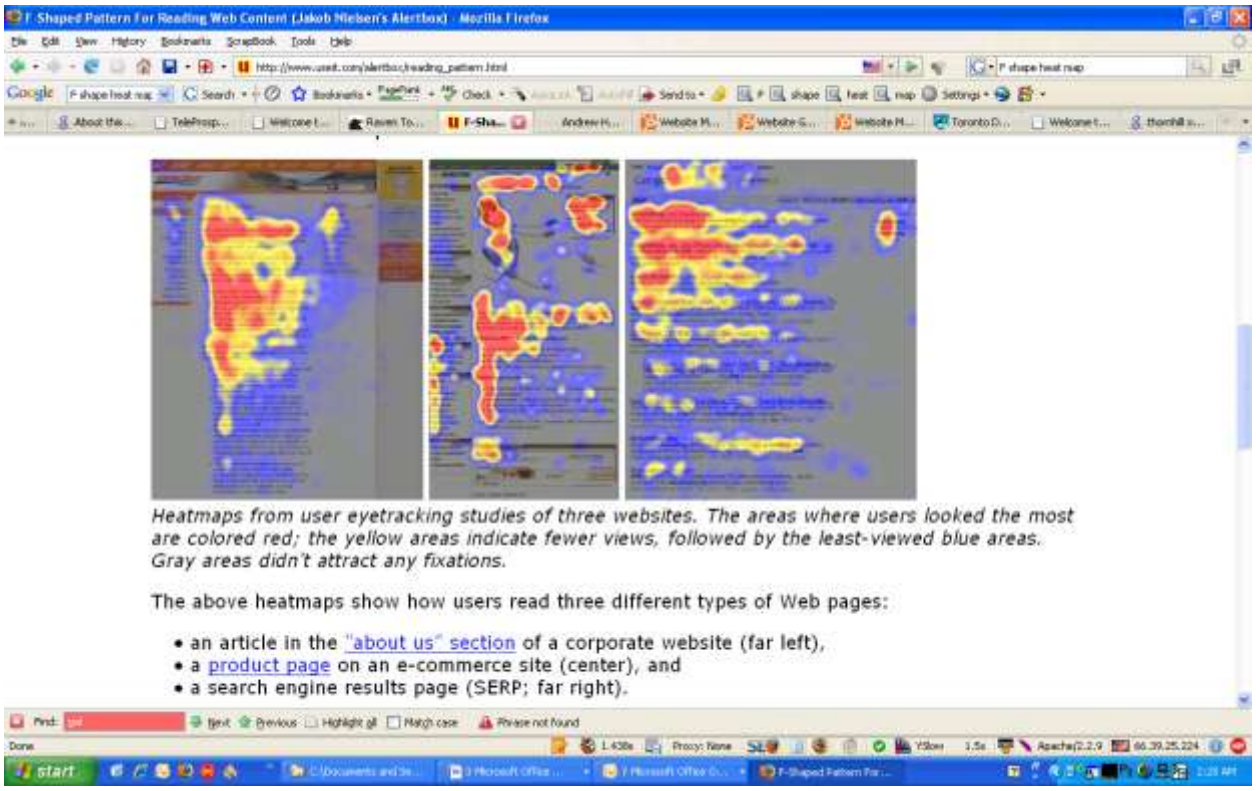
SEO Focus Areas

The goal of all SEO is to achieve Keyword Dominance in the mind of search engines. To do this, we have three areas of concern:

On-page Optimization

Refers to the keyword optimizations you make in your web page code. This has fairly little SEO importance but is easy to control.

Keep in mind that eye-tracking visualization research finds users read Web pages in an F-shaped pattern. Here is a screenshot of Eye-tracking Heat-maps:



- Users first read in a horizontal movement, usually across the upper part of the content area. This initial element forms the F's top bar.
- Next, users move down the page a bit and then read across in a second horizontal movement that typically covers a shorter area than the previous movement. This additional element forms the F's lower bar.
- Finally, users scan the content's left side in a vertical movement. Sometimes this is a fairly slow and systematic scan that appears as a solid stripe on an eye-tracking heat-map.

Site-wide Optimization

The navigation and linking structure you use across your site. This is very important and within your control.

Off-site Optimization

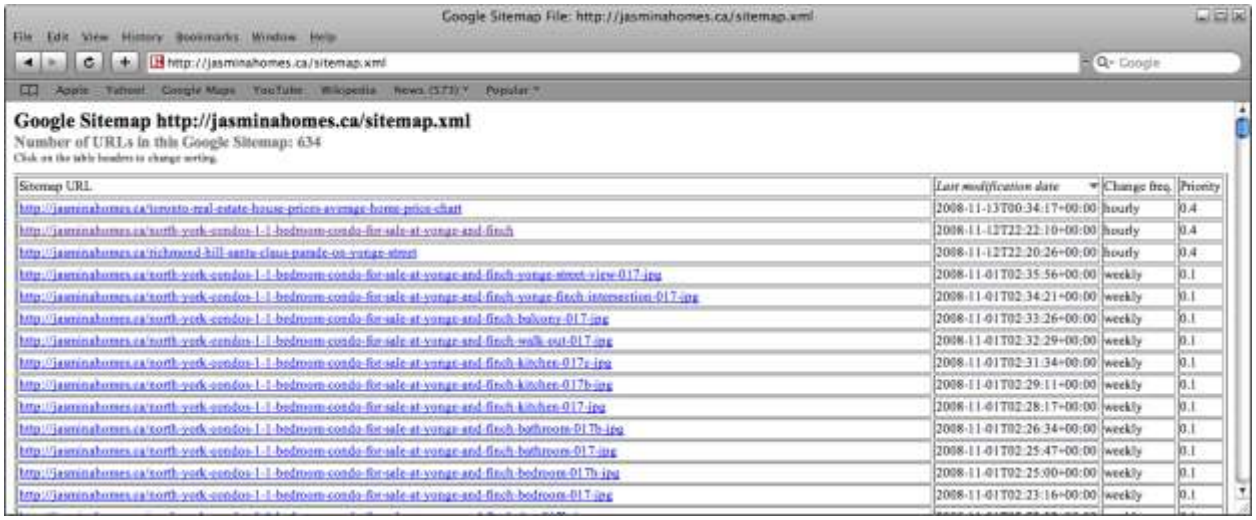
The links coming into your site. This is extremely important but very difficult to control. You'll need to inform the World about your content in order to acquire quality inbound keyword links.

Fortunately, the Social components of modern website like RSS feeds, Blogs, Forums, Comments, Polls, Voting are becoming a commodity as they are built into every modern CMS (e.g. WordPress, Joomla!, Drupal). The question is no longer how to code this functionality, but how to promote it online. The bare minimum to improve website visibility & credibility is to:

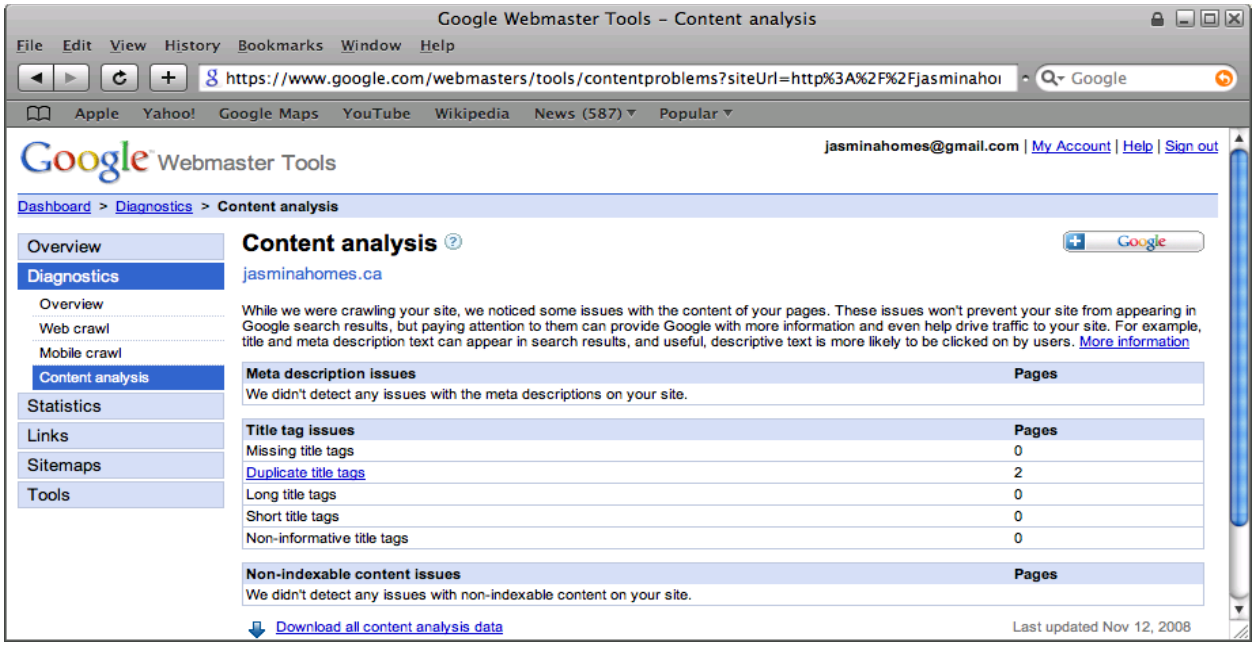
- Create & submit your XML Sitemap to search engines
- Create & promote your RSS Feeds
- Submit your site to DMOZ.org – Open Directory Project.

Submit your XML Sitemap to Search Engines

Here is an example of XML Sitemap telling Search Engines what, when and how to spider:



You'll need to create Google Webmasters Tools account and submit Sitemap from time to time:



Yahoo! & MSN search engines now understand the same XML format and you will need to submit it to them too.

Promote your RSS Feeds

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) changes **push** into **pull** style of interaction with your audience. They can easily “sign-up” to read website updates when they want to, in either online of offline mode.

I suggest partitioning RSS Feeds per author & topic (taxonomy term) to giving readers a choice who and what to follow will give more exposure to your content writers (members) as well.

Let major RSS Online Directories know that you have fresh content. The easiest way to perform bulk updates (with a single “ping”) is to use Pingomatic XML-RPC call (in our case, just a Drupal module), because it will update multiple directories and search engines:

You need to promote your RSS feeds with the RSS syndicators and directories whenever there is a new content and unlike DMOZ (below) this is not just one-time registration.

What is DMOZ?

DMOZ.org – The Open Directory Project, is the Internet’s largest directory system containing over 4 million web sites. It is maintained by human editors.

DMOZ submission works hand in hand with search Engine Optimization (SEO) and leads to:

- more visits to your website
- more links to your website (because other directories will also copy DMOZ content)
- getting established as the leader in a certain category (if you follow the tips below).

Why is DMOZ relevant?

You have to register your main websites to Open Directory, because it is important part of having a web site rank well in Google! Google takes URL-s from DMOZ, matches URL-s with their Page Rank number on Google and copies into Google Directory – sorted by Google Page Ranks. Chose your category wisely! It is **better to be a big fish in a small pond then a small one in a big lake**.

Other Directories

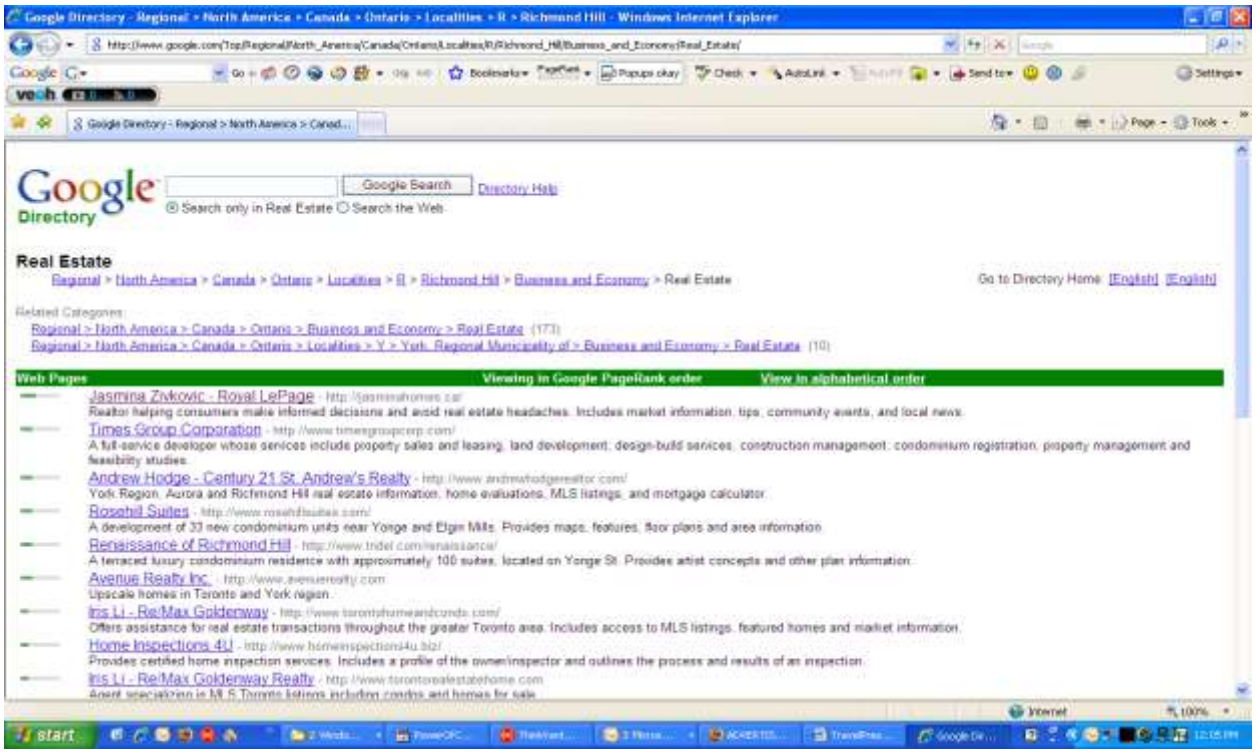
There are other free and for-fee directories to submit your sites to. E.g. Yahoo Directory is very good, but it will cost you a few hundred dollars: http://dir.yahoo.com/. Do not overdo directory submissions:

- Choose only players relevant for your industry.
- Make sure they have a page rank of at least #4.

Every directory has submission guidelines, and your need to read them and obey them to be accepted. This may be time consuming. And last, but not the least: **be patient**, it can take 6+ months to start seeing benefits of DMOZ directory submissions.

Example of submissions to DMOZ

Alphabetical submission to DMOZ was really a submission to Google Directory (http://www.google.ca/dirhp). Please note the order – per website PR quality:



Making Drupal SEO friendly is easy

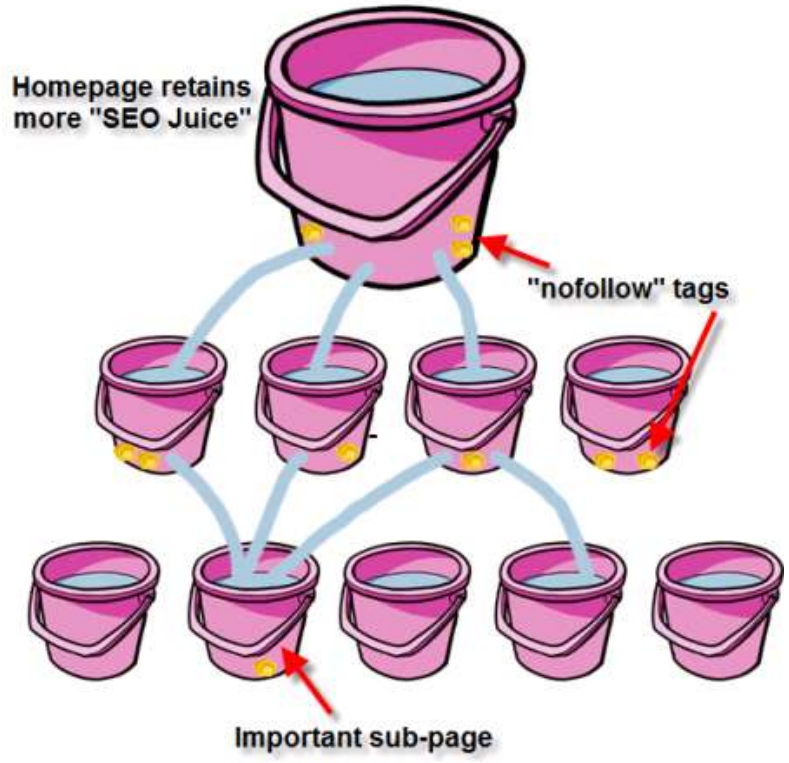
The best place, where I once found guidance and have following almost literally, was:

- Drupal SEO Search Engine Optimization Tutorial Tips and Help

Unfortunately author has gone WordPress.

In a nutshell you'll need to:

- Enable clean URLs.
- Make permanent (301) redirect to the www version of the site.
- Fix robots.txt to avoid duplicate content penalty.
- Do not leak page rank to outside sites and less important internal pages:



Drupal Modules that help SEO

- XML Sitemap: http://drupal.org/project/xmlsitemap
- Google Analytics: http://drupal.org/project/google_analytics
- Pathauto: http://drupal.org/project/pathauto
- Related links: http://drupal.org/project/relatedlinks
- Service links: http://drupal.org/project/service_links
- Meta tags: http://drupal.org/project/nodewords
- Path Redirect: http://drupal.org/project/path_redirect
- Site map: http://drupal.org/project/site_map
- Ping (core) or Multiping: http://drupal.org/project/multiping
- Search 404: http://drupal.org/project/search404 (more for human visitors then SEO)

SEO modules I will soon incorporate:

- Global Redirect: http://drupal.org/project/globalredirect
- Page title: http://drupal.org/project/page_title
- Taxonomy Breadcrumb: http://drupal.org/project/taxonomy_breadcrumb
- RobotsTxt: http://drupal.org/project/robotstxt
- Nofollow: http://drupal.org/project/nofollow
- Google Proxy Hacking Protector: http://drupal.org/project/antiproxyhack

[What else do you use?]

Nice Video Guides

Instead of me going through the details of Drupal module configuration for SEO, just watch easy to follow video course segments at http://www.masteringdrupal.com/screencast/seo-course:

- Part 1 covers the most important Drupal settings and modules that help in SEO.
- Part 2 covers Path Redirect, Global Redirect, Page title and Related links module.
- Part 3 covers the Pathauto module.
- Part 4 covers Meta tags (a.k.a. node words) module.
- Part 5 covers XML Sitemap module and will introduce Google Webmaster Tools to you.
- Part 6 covers modules for Social Bookmarking.

[I was asked to remove the links to the individual video tutorials, so you will need to register to receive these links via email. Don't worry, you will not be spammed.]

Google's Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide

While preparing this presentation, I saw that just yesterday Google published 22 pages long list of best practices **used inside Google** that will help you improve site crawlability and indexing. Finally, there is an official document that contains many specific On-page & Site-wide Optimization tips for beginners to use!

How to do Keyword research?

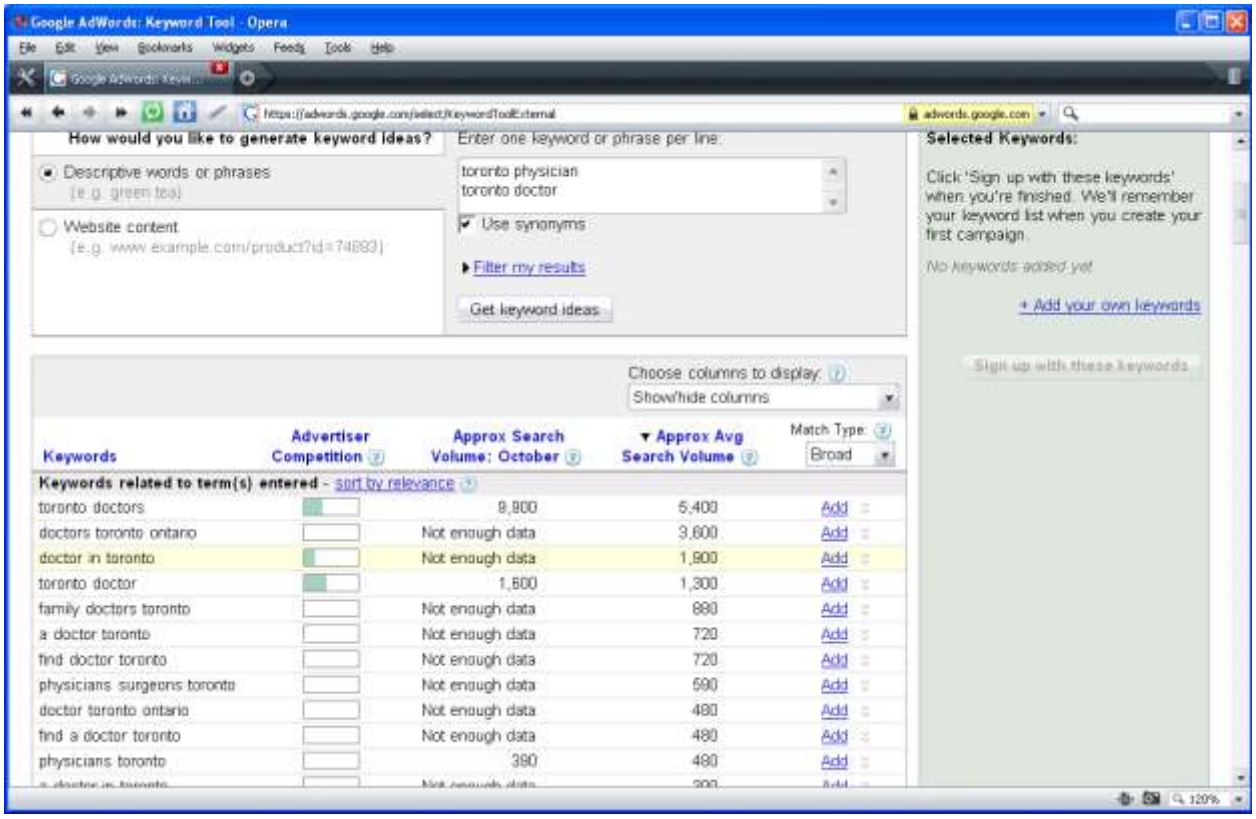
Don't be too broad – you cannot be everything to all people:

- Start from the small vertical market
- Find what people are actually searching for.
- Find low competition & high search volume phrases

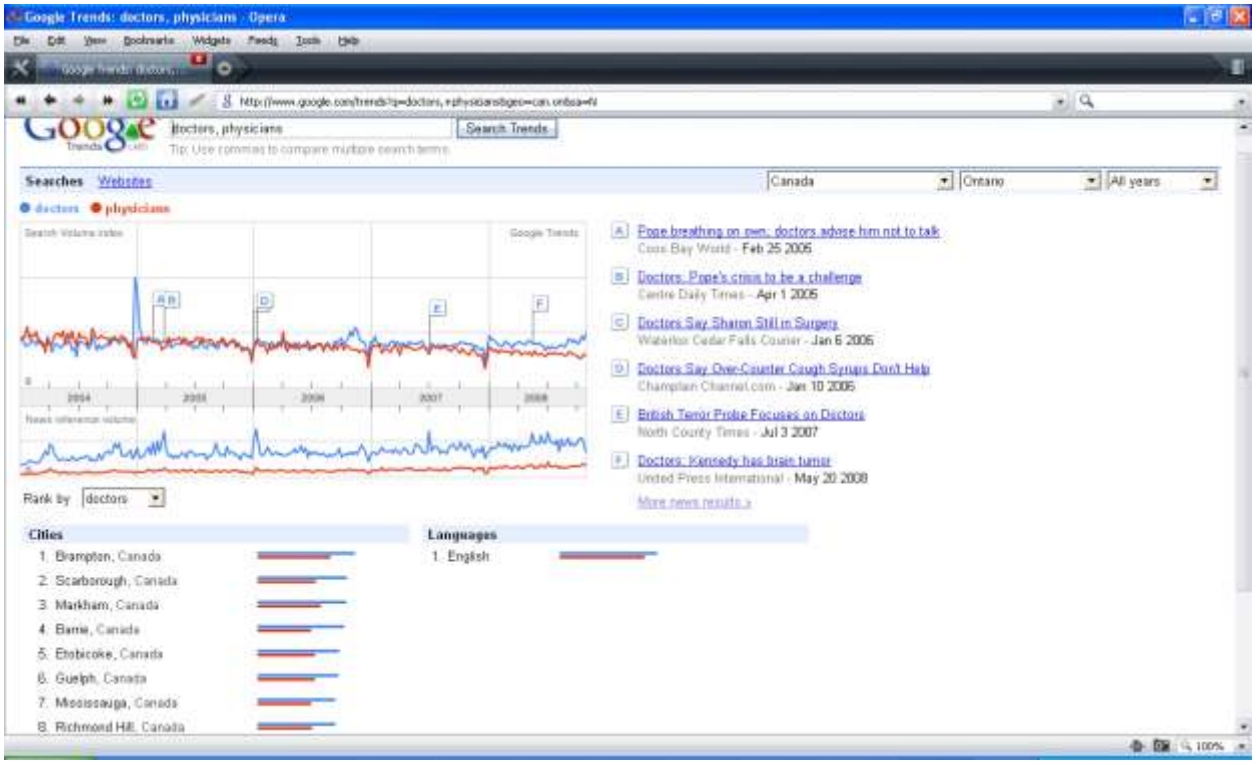
Most basic are Search Suggest on Yahoo:

and Google suggests:

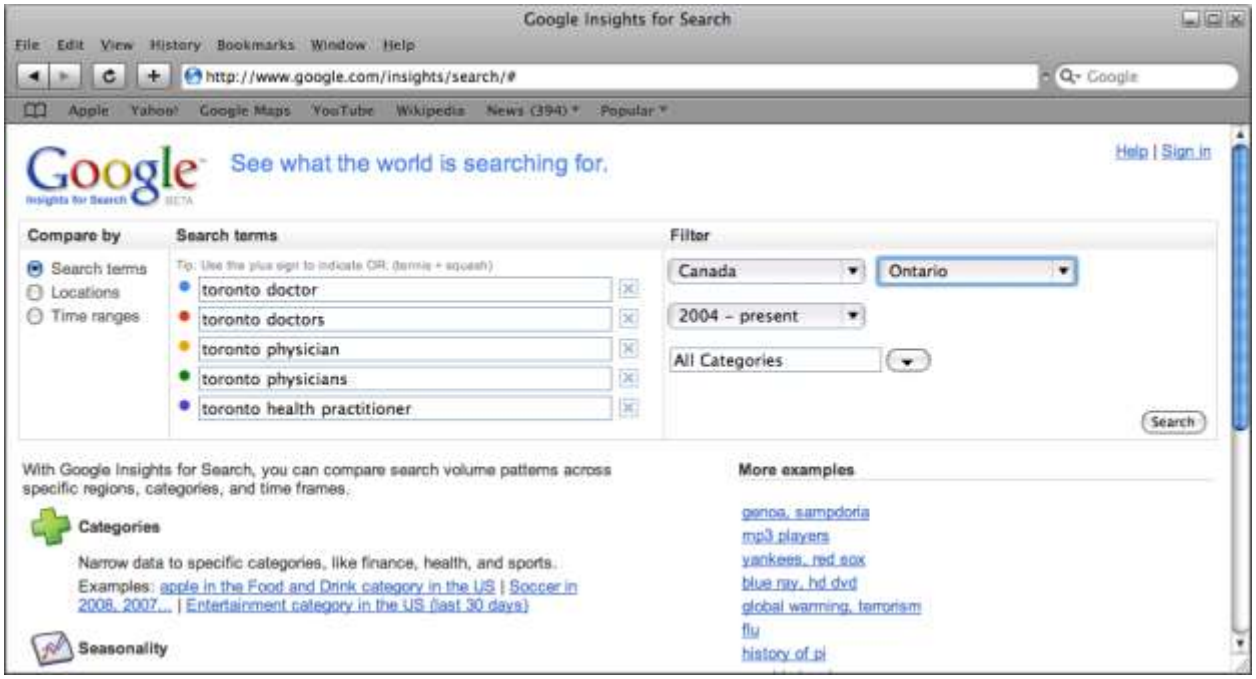
The best is to get ideas using Google AdWords Keyword Suggestion Tool:

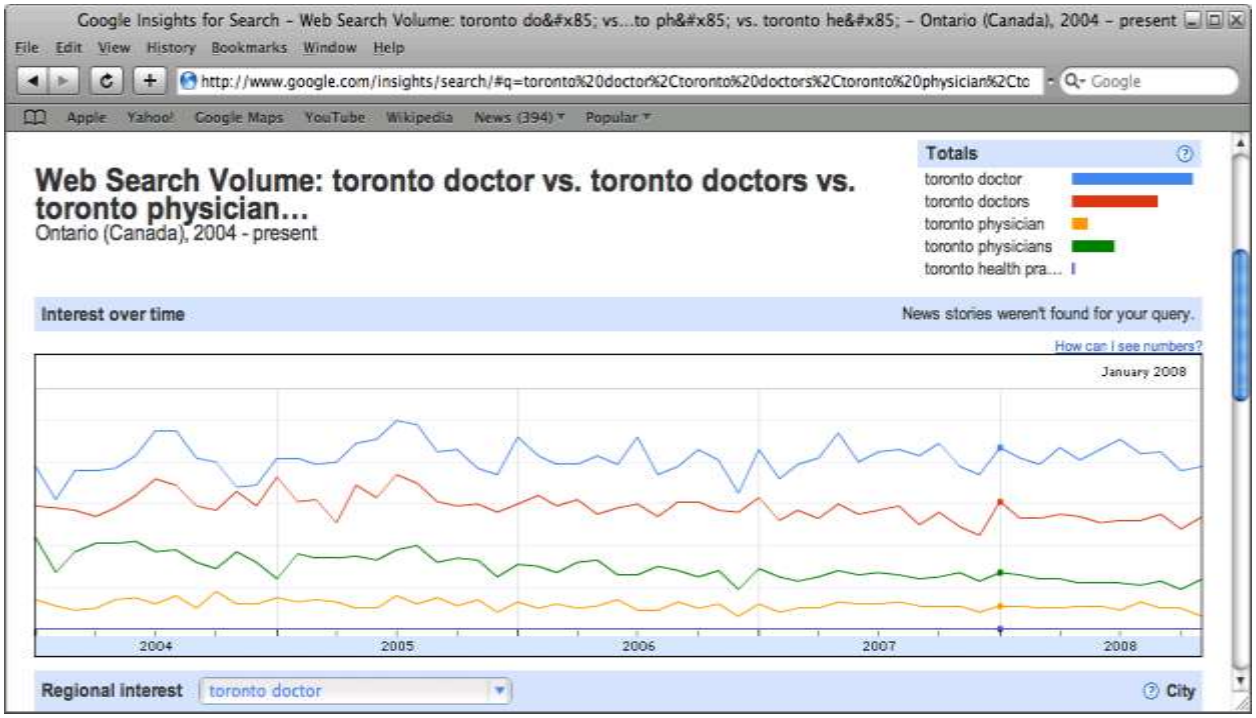


Compare regional volumes using Google trends:

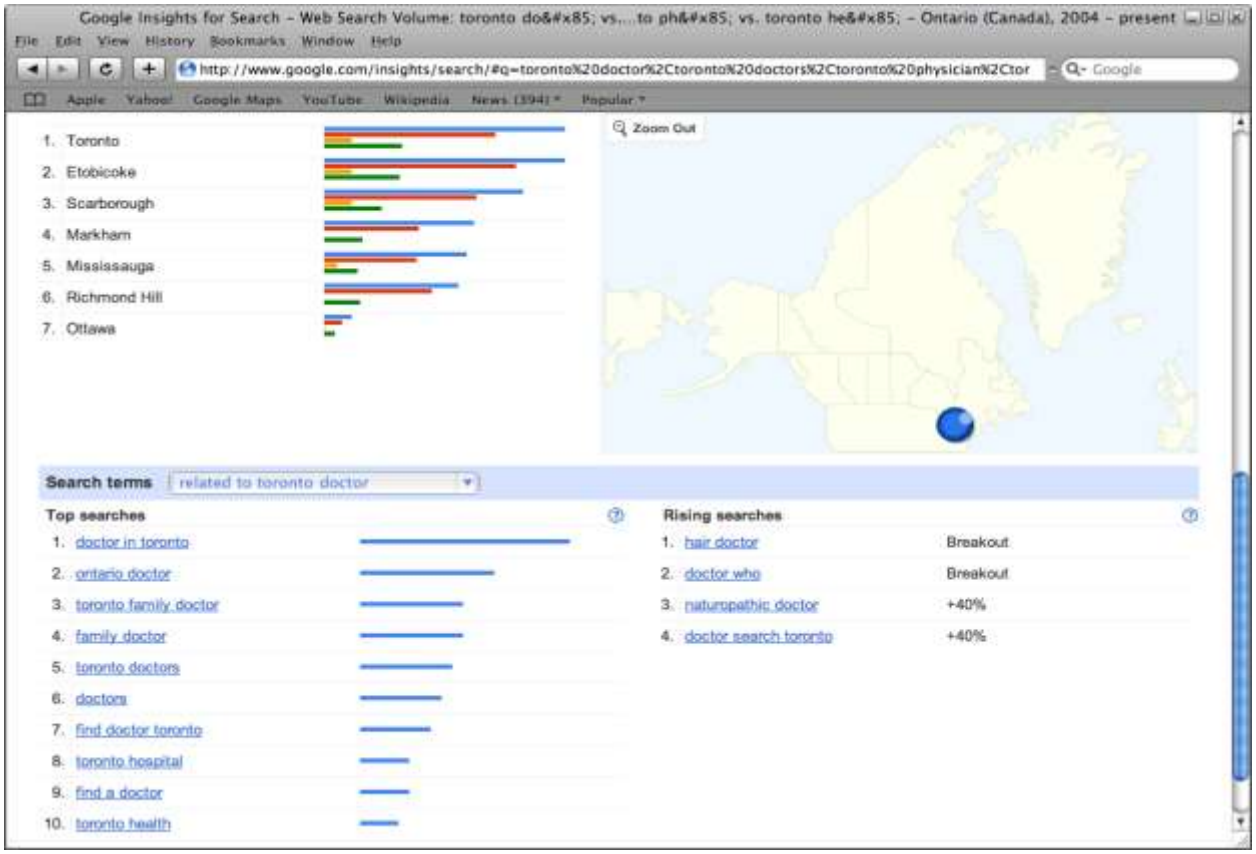


Drill down using **amazing** Google Insights for Search:

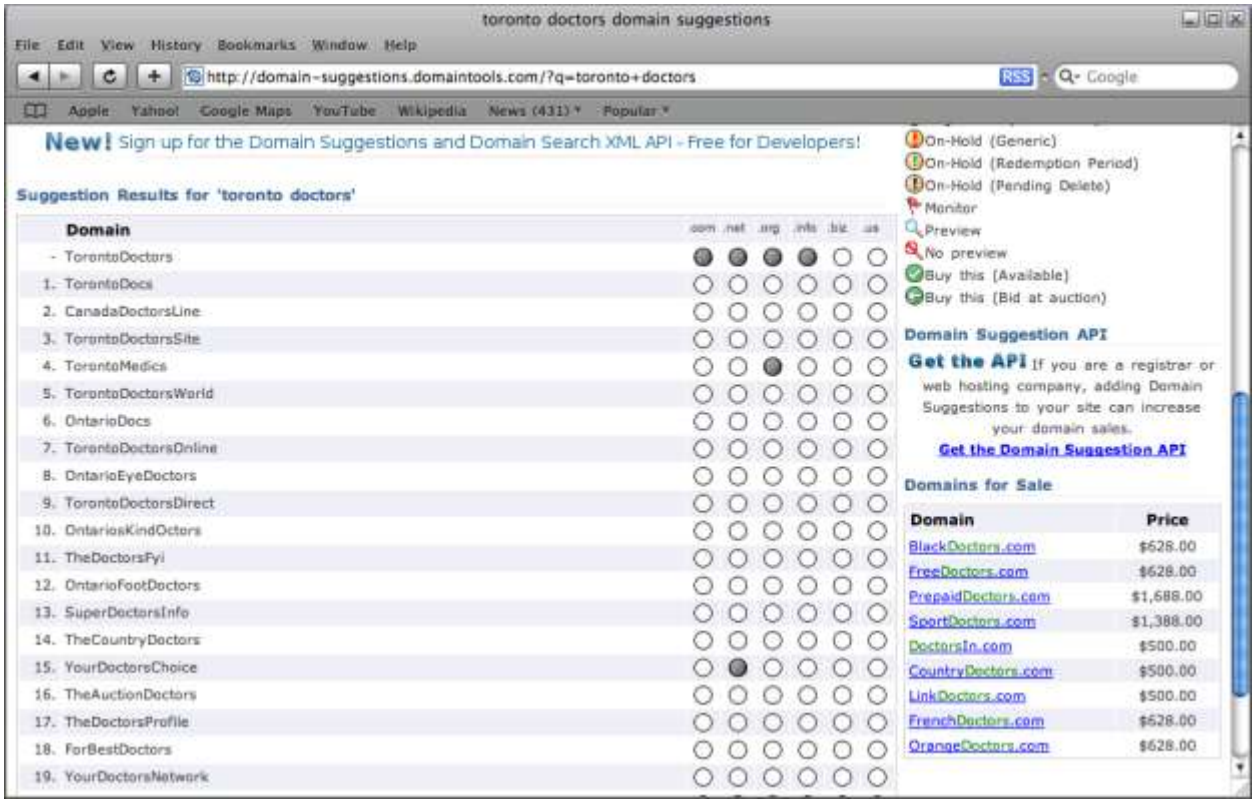




It will give you more keyword ideas you can use to create artice titles or get new domain names:



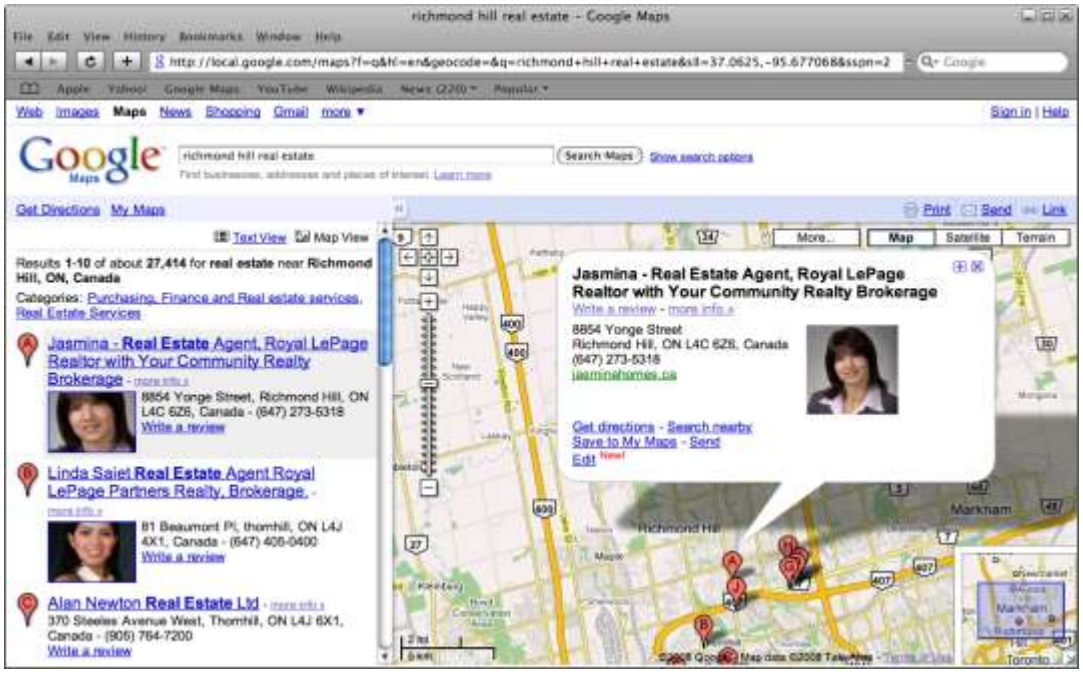
You will also benefit from the domain name suggestions tools like this one:



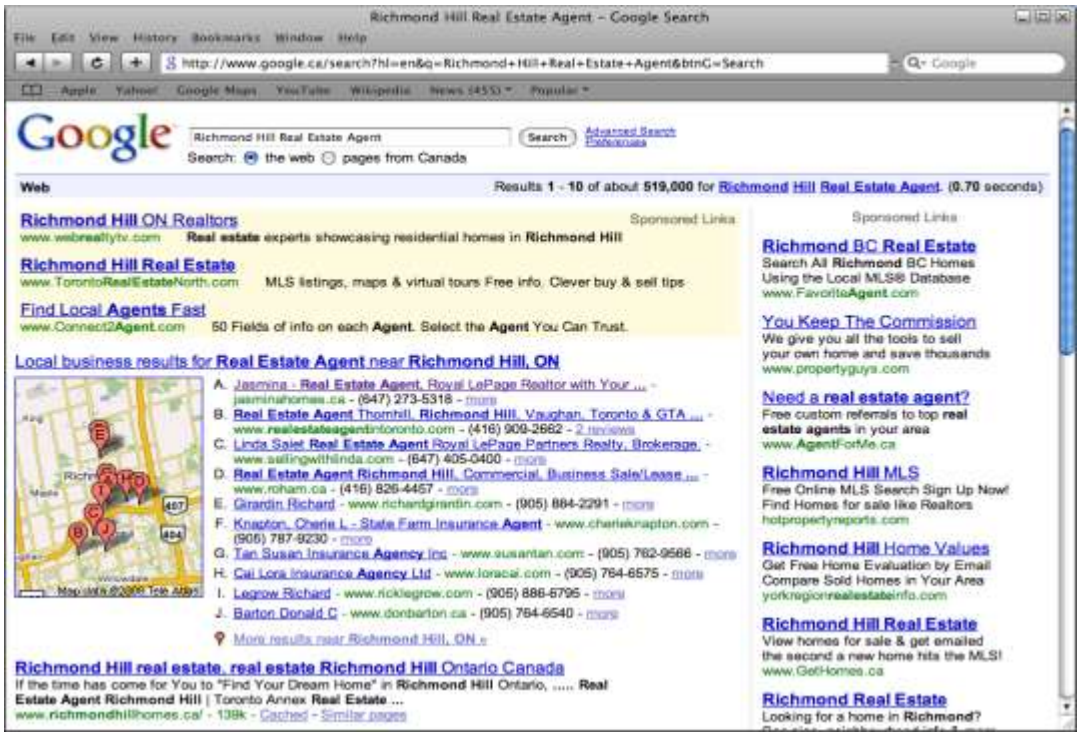
Online marketing ideas to stay ahead of competition

Google Local Business Centre

If a profile is created, your business will show on Google Maps:



You will sometimes be able to **sneak lower ranking link** into the main result page:



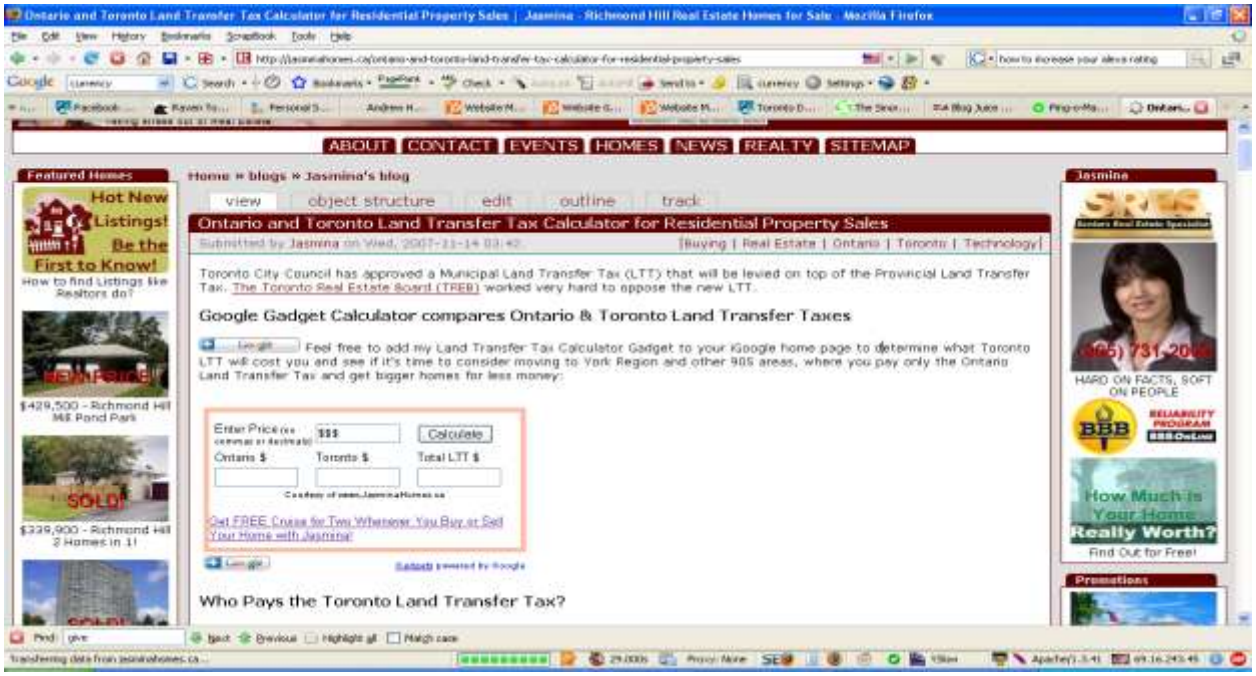
This tip has nothing to do with Drupal, but is the easiest SEO success you can make. Just go to Google Local Business Center and claim your space on Google Maps.

Create Google Gadgets to promote your site

Give away free web tools or scripts that perform some service (e.g. events calendar, rates converter). These scripts should contain links back into your Website. Here are 3 gadgets I created and donated to public:

LTT Calculator can live in anyone's iGoogle Home Page:

and is included into SEO friendly post on my website:



These giveaway scripts proved to be the most popular for visitors to link to and increase Page Rank and SERP (Search Engines Results Page).

Create Mobile Device friendly content

1. The easiest is just to ensure feeds are readable on mobile phones. Bloglines.com offers mobile RSS Reading service and here is an example on how to use iGoogle as mobile RSS reader:

2. Create Mobile theme for devices with limited screen size.

3. Create web pages highly optimized for mobile devices like iPhone (or Google phone). I am not sure about iPhone website adoption rates, but this will definitely be **great PR** and will generate the buzz throughout your Industry when your mobile site becomes ready.
4. Avoid creating standalone mobile applications, which need to be downloaded and installed into the phone. I have seen only failures with this approach in the past.

More Marketing Ideas

Quick Tips

- Register domain for more than a year to get Search Engine ranking quicker
- no dashes in domain name, they look spammy to Google
- Register with Google local business center
- Register with DMOZ – find related category
- Register your business with BBB
- Use reliable & faster hoster
- Register misspelled versions of your domain, maybe your "hate site" equivalents
- Avoid shared hosting as your emails will be often marked as spam. (I am thinking of using iContact.com or ConstantContact.com for email marketing.)
- Since everybody is listening to WIIFM Radio, you'll need to "bribe" site visitors with gifts, raffles…
- Shorter URLs have higher Click-through rate than very long URLs.
- Content is The King - offer quality content and services.

Don't Make me Think!

Here are some Marketing mistakes I made & things I learned:

- Try to use .com rather then and other extensions – e.g. use .info only if you own .com or you risk sending visitors intended for you to competitors.
- Www is better than no-www for offline marketing of your website.
- Use plural words before singular to get more visitors interested in buying, rather than just researching.
- Most people are too lazy to type into a search box, so chose a shorter variant (if spelling is not pure substring) – e.g. Jasmina reached more prospects after I replaced just one word in her listing description (when 'condominiums' became 'condos').
- Avoid too many clicks in lead generation:
    - Have clear problem statement, benefit explanation and call for action.
    - Preferably all on the same page without too much visual destruction - Disable sidebars blocks on forms
- For offline marketing, experiment with Domains like www.CallForActionText.com with 301 redirects to your landing pages with Google Analytics campaign tracking codes.
- Simple website navigation, segmented & categorized content.

Everybody is listening to WIIFM Radio

WIIFM stands “What’s In It For Me?” because Website visitors, your clients care only about benefits to them, not about the effort you put into building & presenting your products & services.

To succeed one has to shift focus from me, to their clients, and start thinking not in terms of features but benefits to people he/she/it is serving. Jay Abraham teaches that we need to define why anyone would do business with us instead all of other options, including not doing anything at all. And Anthony Robbins says that one’s wealth is proportional to the number of people he has helped.

Appendix

Some Drupal SEO & SEM Sites to visit:

http://www.mattcutts.com/blog/

http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/

http://groups.drupal.org/search-engine-optimization

http://tips.webdesign10.com/

http://www.masteringdrupal.com/

http://blog.hubspot.com/

http://roirevolution.com/blog/

http://www.searchenginejournal.com/

There is so much more to Online Marketing and Search Engine Optimization than I have time to document and present at November 2008 DUG-TO Meetup event. I am available for short terms contracts to conduct SEO Website Audits and help you define Online Marketing Strategy & Campaigns to increase your website traffic & visitor-to-lead conversion rates.