

Some Key Terms in eCommerce and S.E.O.

Click-Through Rate - it does no good to rank well if people still choose not to click on you.

Bounce Rate - the proportion of people who arrive at a site or page but immediately leave again.

Conversion Rate - the proportion of site visits which successfully make a sale.

Trust - the mass of information and competing claims on the web make trust a much sought commodity. The more trusted message or messenger will be the one which most guides choices and makes sales.

User / Traffic Tracking - it's possible to monitor web traffic in a great deal of detail, and this can be presented automatically in graphs, diagrams and spreadsheets. Thus one can see how much site traffic comes from any given advert, search engine or third-party weblink, and how users behave when they arrive on the site, what terms they searched for which brought them to the site and much more. Of course one can map trends over time, the effect of site changes and break-down the online R.O.I. For example: which adverts bring best traffic, which website pages appear to best 'close the deal'.

Organic Search Results - the typical 'vanilla' results of a common or garden web search.

Site Ranking - how high does a site appear in relevant search engine results pages (SERPS). Page one is a huge advantage, beyond page three is virtually useless. The ranking is determined by complex calculations carried out by search providers such as Google and Yahoo. On occasion a website which looks great to humans is virtually invisible to search engines, because its creator has not allowed for the particular means by which search engines 'see' and interpret a site.

Search Engine Optimisation (S.E.O.) - work done 'on' and 'off' page (see below) to make sites consistently rank higher in selected web searches. The benefits are far more long-lasting than those of advertising.

Search Engine Marketing (S.E.M.) - a form of advertising whereby search engines are paid to promote websites alongside their 'organic' search results. These listings are less trusted, because users understand that they have been sponsored.

Online Advertising - typically traditional display ads, placed online. They can be animated or interactive, but they function much like print ads. They can provide short-term boosts in web traffic more immediately than S.E.O. but users trust ads less than normal search listings as they know their source is not impartial, and the boost in traffic only lasts as long as the ad is displayed.

Search Spider - when you search Yahoo or Google, the whole web isn't actually searched but rather an index (otherwise searches would take much longer). 'Spiders' are the programs sent out to gather and update search engine indexes. Like computers in general, these 'spiders' can work much faster than humans, but they have very little initiative or common sense. S.E.O. helps them do their work.

On-Page S.E.O. - expert modification of websites (often invisibly) to obtain their highest possible ranking in everyday search results.

Off-Page S.E.O. - increasing the number of links from the wider web into a given site, so as to raise its ranking in everyday search results

White Hat S.E.O. - the good guys in S.E.O. are facilitators in a virtuous circle - helping good sites reach the appropriate users which Google etc. want to deliver to each other. The mellon factory does 'white hat' S.E.O.

Black Hat S.E.O. - the spammers of S.E.O.. They try to make sites appear what they are not, to fool search engines into inflating rankings. Search providers constantly adapt to block these practices: they succeed, but the bad guys always try to outflank them. Occasionally a bit of Black creative thinking can be turned to the good, so the mellon factory keeps an eye on what they are up to.