



SEO in the Web 2.0 Era: The Evolution of Search Engine Optimization

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I. Introduction

To those of us whose passion for the growth of the World Wide Web is exceeded only by the marketing possibilities that emerge from that growth, the Internet has become a playground for the imagination. There is a large number of marketers, however, who are fascinated by the Web but approach its marketing capabilities more out of necessity than lifestyle. The Internet's capacity has advanced in so many areas in the past few years that marketers playing catch-up are at a significant disadvantage. Marketing directors and account managers with traditional media backgrounds need to expand their breadth of knowledge in order to make informed decisions in today's e-commerce. This article provides clarification surrounding the fairly recent buzzword "Web 2.0" and focuses on the evolution and future of the search engine born occupation of Search Engine Optimization (SEO). SEO and its implications are expanding so fast and in so many directions that it has never been more important for C level professionals and traditionally oriented marketers to fully understand the world of Internet search.

II. Search Engines: A Brief History

When the first search engines began cataloging the World Wide Web in the mid-1990s, obtaining a high rank on search engine results pages (SERP) was not particularly difficult or secretive. It was the webmasters who submitted URLs to the engines and communicated a page's relevancy to a keyword search through keyword meta

tags in the HTML code. Early engines, like AltaVista, struggled with providing relevant search results because webmasters, who were paid on a cost-per-impression basis at the time, wrote inaccurate meta tags using high search volume keywords in order to increase visits to their websites.¹ It was Google who finally answered the call for a more complex ranking algorithm that would greatly improve the relevancy of SERPs. Sergey Brin and Larry Page, the founders of Google, invented the concept of PageRank, an algorithm which helps rank web pages based on the probability that a random person surfing the Internet will find a given page.² The PageRank algorithm assigns a numerical value to each web page by analyzing the quantity and quality of the pages that link back to a given page. Known as a backlink, each link represents a vote for the page it links to by the page on which the link appears. The significance of each vote depends on how relevant the page giving the link is to the page receiving the link, as well as the PageRank of the linking page.

Along with the changing search engines continually trying to provide more relevant search results to the user, the entire Web has been evolving to meet the needs of the massive Internet population. In conjunction with the growth of the Internet and the popularity of search, a unique profession known as Search Engine Optimization (SEO) was born. SEO tactics and skills have evolved alongside the changing Internet, but such changes have never been as significant as the most recent. We have entered into a second phase of the Internet, and as a result SEO is taking on a new face. This second generation of the Internet, often referred to as Web

2.0, has moved away from the old model — based on static websites, clicks, and impressions — and burst onto a cyber playing field built around communities, participation and open cooperation towards better products and services.³ An unprecedented level of interaction between consumers, businesses, and interest groups exists in this new Web. Due to the existence of a new social presence, vehicles for driving organic traffic to one's website have expanded far beyond the major search engines. While obtaining high rankings on the major search engines is still an SEO's main objective, the means by which this positioning is achieved requires a much broader capacity for creativity than ever before. Many of these new tactics also provide additional avenues of incoming traffic, which has significantly expanded the big picture view of the SEO professional. In order to grasp the fundamental principles of the creativity and perspective now required of SEO, it is important to get a better understanding of the new Web 2.0 environment.

III. Web 2.0: The New Internet

Defining or labeling the new Internet is often met with a considerable amount of critique due to the expansive reach of such a description. There are so many different things that have changed about the Internet in the past several years; a concise definition is difficult to come by. In addition, the term Web 2.0, while perhaps the most accurate term, is typically scoffed at by the skeptical industry veteran who is wary of a vendor or brass employee attempting to sound Internet savvy. The World Wide Web has existed for almost twenty years.

What is so significant about the changes in the last few years that distinguish the current Web as an upgrade from its previous omnipotent self? The simple answer to this question is *you*. Web 2.0 represents the user's needs, hopes, and desires finally manifesting into a definable force of "voluntary motivation."⁴ The blogosphere, social networks, wikis, and other new forms of expression on the Internet have captured the Web population by harnessing their goals, skills, and interests onto a platform of collaborative creation and production. Websites are reflecting an up-to-the-minute common voice rather than a collection of static informational documents. The Web has never before experienced this level of effective interaction between its users, and that reason alone warrants its 2.0 designation.

Ease of self-expression, now apparent on the Internet through the popularity of websites like MySpace and YouTube, is generating massive amounts of original content. Critics of this tremendous increase in creativity and public opinion complain about the dilution of reliable quality content on the Internet. Many social networks, however, naturally weed out undesirable content, and promote popular, well referenced content to the top of searches. In Web 2.0, popular content emerges via a user-generated ranking system that determines the positioning of articles by the number of user votes they receive. This model was made most popular by Digg.com, which joins several community-based popularity websites like Slashdot.com and Reddit.com in providing a user-edited resource for finding news stories, blog entries and other websites. In Web 2.0, up-to-date,

reliable content is produced by the editing abilities of the wiki. Wikipedia, the Internet's user-written and -edited encyclopedia, boasts an accuracy level not far from the widely accepted Encyclopedia Britannica. In a study that compared forty-two science entries in both resources, Wikipedia had only four inaccuracies per entry compared to Britannica's three.⁵

Social network websites in the new Internet also have a way of allowing like-minded people to find each other's favorite content through a system called social bookmarking. Del.icio.us.com is the most popular example of a social bookmarking website. This system of classification, known as folksonomy, involves users assigning labels, or tags, in the form of keywords, to content on the web. Through this collaborative form of tagging, web content becomes grouped by recognizable categories. Continuous tagging and creation of categories by users increases the content's ability to be searched by a wider range of people. This social phenomenon happens "because stable patterns emerge in tag proportions [allowing] minority opinions [to] coexist alongside extremely popular ones without disrupting the nearly stable consensus choices made by many users."⁶ Such websites are considered "social" because of the nature in which users' bookmarks are publicly shared for other users to browse and discover what people find interesting.⁷

IV. Web 2.0: The Technical Landscape

Aside from the collaborative aspect of the new Internet, there is another reason the Web has earned its

2.0 upgrade. The user's interaction, not with other users but with the interface of the Net itself, has changed significantly. Technical advancements in web navigation and design, as well as increased penetration of high-speed and broadband connection, make the new Web a foreign landscape compared to its older version. Web applications have continued to improve, providing a profoundly different user experience. The implementation of rich internet applications (RIA) is gaining ground. RIA technologies, such as Flash, Ajax and Java, are leading the Internet in the direction of a Web without web pages. Websites are traditionally made up of networks of static pages linked together by text in the form of the computer language HTML. These pages behave in a synchronous manner. That is, after the user clicks on a link, there is a short period while the server processes the input, in turn triggering the browser to download the requested page. RIAs operate in an asynchronous fashion, allowing response time to be much faster. RIAs' increased responsiveness results from the following five factors:⁸

- Information can be obtained from a server by anticipating certain user input.
- The screen can be refreshed in pieces instead of all at once, eliminating the need for entirely different pages to load when navigating content.
- More than one user's input can be collected and validated before it is sent to the server.

- Some responses to user input can take place without any server communication.
- Certain processing that was once handled on the server end can be stored on the user desktop.

Google Maps is a prime example of the pageless capabilities intrinsic in RIAs, such as Ajax, that are disrupting the crawlability of the Web. Search engines rely on crawling and indexing pages that have unique URL addresses. Websites built using RIAs not only function without the constant reloading of pages, but in most cases do not require unique URLs. Growing implementation of RIA has important implications on search engines and optimizers alike.

V. SEO Linking Strategy in Web 2.0

The Blogosphere & RSS

The common SEO adage continues to be valid in the 2.0 world: content is king. It is the content boundaries and means for dispatching content that have truly taken SEO to another level. Since the inception of the blogosphere — a term that describes all blogs as a social network of public opinion — rumblings of the people's voice via the Internet have quickly risen to a powerful roar. Beginning in the form of an online diary in the mid 90s, the blog has since developed into a simple vehicle of communication for anyone who desires to send content across the Web. The dissemination of information through blogging has become so mainstream that one can find

a blog from an authority source on virtually any topic. The blogosphere, centered on the concept of original content, has provided a link rich venue for the SEO to plan his or her linking strategy surrounding good content.

So what is “good content,” and what does it have to do with good linking strategy in Web 2.0? In this new era of the Internet, good content is viral. Whether this content is a written article, a homemade video or a podcast, if it grabs, provokes or tickles the user, it will travel, and it will travel fast. From the content's eye-view, the Internet has become much easier to navigate following the advent of Really Simple Syndication (RSS). RSS allows for a program called an aggregator (or feed reader) to notify users of new content added to a website, retrieve that new content, and present it to the user in an easy-to-use interface. RSS and blogging go hand-in-hand because of the constantly updating nature of the blog. As a result of RSS, people are discovering new content on the Internet, passing it along, and linking to it at an unprecedented rate.

Enter the skilled SEO, who sees potential for organic traffic and quality backlinks. By creating or at least harnessing the creativity necessary to produce content that people find useful, funny or interesting, the optimizers can watch as their creative efforts pay off in dividends. In Web 2.0, a fully comprehensive linking strategy must spend more time producing quality, viral content and less time submitting to directories, buying links, and reciprocal linking. While these later tasks are low-cost, they are time consuming, and efforts can often be wasteful or present the risk of a decrease in search engine

rankings if responsible linking tactics are not observed.

Baiting the Link

The SEO practice of producing content in hopes that people will link to it from their own website is known as “link baiting.” Good link bait has the same qualities as good content. From a well written controversial article to a video clip of a bulldog on a skateboard, website owners will link to any and all content as long as it is interesting and catches people’s attention. There are no boundaries surrounding the types of content one can use to bait a link. In fact, the very name of a new kind of link baiting suggests an indefinable quality. This new link baiting tactic is called “widget baiting.” Nick Wilson, CEO and senior strategist of the social media market agency Clickinfluence, declared that “the holy grail of linkbaiting in 2007 will be the widget.”⁹

In reference to computers, a widget is an element of user interface that displays information or provides a specific way for a user to interact with an application. A widget could be a calendar, a stock ticker, a quote of the day, or an icon that collects the most popular YouTube videos. To get an idea of the limitless widget possibilities, check out Yahoo! Widgets (<http://widgets.yahoo.com/>). In its most basic form, a widget is a downloadable interactive virtual tool made up of simple bits of code that can easily be added to a webpage. When a widget is added to a webpage, if coded correctly, it will act as a crawlable link pointing back to its page of origin. These links can help to boost a site in the search

engine rankings, but they also represent great potential for organic traffic.

Creating a popular widget could, in some cases, outweigh traffic from the major search engines. One example of traffic generated by a widget is a blog editor Firefox extension created by the professional blogging company, Performancing, that received close to half a million downloads when it was first released.¹⁰ The brand awareness that widgets can promote has also made advertisers extremely enthusiastic. One would be hard pressed to find a better method of exposure than a logo attached to a button that sits in front of a user’s eyes daily. Widgets can be downloaded to the desktop, so the user does not even have to have an internet browser open to be exposed to the advertising. While all interactive marketers will recognize the widget as an effective marketing tactic, in most cases, due to the linking and organic traffic potential, it will be the SEO who is best suited to orchestrate the creation and implementation of the widget. In Web 2.0, effective linking strategy must include widget baiting.

VI. Social Media Optimization: A Piece of the SEO Puzzle

In this new age of the Internet, people have been quick to deviate from the title Search Engine Optimization when describing the organic promotion of a website. In August 2006, Rohit Bhargava, VP of Interactive Marketing for Ogilvy Public Relations, coined the phrase Social Media Optimization (SMO) and defined it as the following:

[The act of implementing] changes to optimize a site so that it is more easily linked to, more

highly visible in social media searches on custom search engines (such as Technorati), and more frequently included in relevant posts on blogs, podcasts and vlogs.¹¹

On one hand, Bhargava's point is well taken. If the tasks one is performing to drive traffic to a website are not intended to do so by improving search engine rankings, but rather by building a presence in social networks, than perhaps SEO is not the appropriate definition of their occupation. There is no doubt that SEO has undergone, and will continue to undergo, a certain level of compartmentalization. As different areas of SEO continue to experience the growth of specialized services, such as blogging, widget baiting and social networking, the future SEO will spend a large part of his or her time moderating and collaborating with more outsourcing opportunities that are not, by themselves, SEO related. In the end, however, SEO is a sum of its parts, and from the perspective of a company looking to pay for SEO services, all methods of driving organic traffic will reside under the umbrella of Search Engine Optimization.

Notwithstanding the new coinage, SMO is an important component of SEO in Web 2.0. An SEO's intention in a social network is to create the illusion of natural links that occur during the interaction that takes place on networks such as Kaboodle.com, MyBlogLogs.com and Flickr.com. It is these links that search engines value the most because they happen as a result of real interests, not paid or reciprocal contracts. These links often lead to spikes in traffic, which have been criticized for only providing unqualified visitors and using up bandwidth. While these spikes continue to be a topic of debate on SEO forums,

traffic after the spike does typically return to a level higher than it was before. The more authentic the illusion of natural interaction created by the SEO, the better the results. SEO in Web 2.0 introduces a new skill set of creativity that was previously not present. The space for this creativity, which ties in with the above link baiting topic of quality content, is especially exciting for the SEO of the future. The possibilities for attracting genuine links and organic traffic are limited only by the SEO's imagination.

VII. Usability vs. Searchability: The RIA Search Challenge

To the skilled web designer, Web 2.0 invokes a technical definition referring to fairly new applications that are being implemented on the Internet to improve the usability and/or aesthetics of web sites. These applications, known as RIAs, present an interesting dilemma to anyone involved in creating as well as finding these sites. Search engines that find and index web pages by crawling HTML code are presented with the challenge of expanding their crawling capabilities. Clients want to give their customers the best user experience to increase loyalty, but do not want to sacrifice the organic traffic and brand awareness received from the major search engines natural listings. The SEO is caught somewhere in the middle, scrambling to find a solution for the client and cursing the search engines for their limited indexing abilities. As a result of this RIA conundrum, SEOs will be forced to become increasingly tech savvy in order to work closely with RIA architects and web designers while

building the web sites. By fully understanding search engine algorithms and RIA technology, it is possible to embrace the RIA applications of Web 2.0 while increasing, or at least maintaining, SEO results.¹²

Currently, in addition to PageRank and similar link-based algorithms, search engine spiders rely on metadata within the HTML code to determine the contents of a webpage. The most common definition of metadata is “data about data.” An example of metadata in the HTML code as it refers to a webpage is as follows:

```
<META NAME="Description"
CONTENT="BKV is a full service direct
marketing agency specializing in direct mail,
broadcast media production and planning,
interactive media and search engine
marketing.">
```

Above is the “meta description” of the BKV homepage. The text is a type of data that is in reference to the data, or content, that fills the webpage. This description (meta description) is crawled by the search engine spiders in order for them to index the contents of the website. Because spiders crawl from page to page, internal linking between pages of a web site is important. Increased interconnectivity improves the likelihood that the spiders will crawl and index the entire site. For this reason, the inclusion of a sitemap is a common SEO tactic because it provides a concise hierarchy of the pages and links that make up the website.

With the use of RIA, all of the above crawlability disappears. Pages are written in JavaScript instead of HTML, and the applications no longer require the refreshing of entire pages. For this reason, RIA-based web sites are not

made up of pages with unique URLs, and as a result they lose the benefit of the interconnected pages. Until search engines implement a new way of indexing the Web, where does this leave those who want the usability of RIA but do not want to sacrifice their high search rankings?

According to Matt Cutts, senior engineer at Google, “The vast majority of sites are still built as static Web pages, so we don’t foresee a problem at this time.”¹³ This answer does not indicate any alarm on the part of the leading search engine. Companies that want to have the usability of RIA while maintaining search engine accessibility will have to consider building two separate websites with unique URLs. Designing separate sites is not to be confused with the black hat SEO tactic known as “cloaking,” which means serving different versions of a webpage based on whether the search agent is a user or search engine spider. While the need for talented RIA web designers will no doubt drive up web design costs, if companies want to keep their presence on search engines they will be forced to spend more money on SEO and traditional web design. Building and maintaining entirely search engine oriented websites will become a common practice for companies that demand the usability of RIA. Despite the aforementioned, the professional SEO must also be the one to forewarn the clients about the overuse of RIA. An entire site should not be made in RIA just because it can be. It will be the SEO’s job to team up with the web designers and determine which parts of a site can remain static in order to salvage indexability from a search engine’s stand-point. The SEO of Web 2.0 will

have enhanced technical skills in order to deal with this RIA search challenge.

VIII. Google's Personalized Search: The End of Traditional SEO?

From the Web 2.0 era has emerged one overriding feature: personalization. These days, those browsing the Net are clicking with far more conviction, as increased exposure to the Web has sharpened their ability to find what they are looking for. Instead of lackadaisically surfing from site to site, many users now enter the Web through a personalized homepage containing RSS feeds that do the searching for them. Search engines that specialize locally, topically, and vertically have increased significantly in recent years, signifying the demand for a more precise search experience. In order to combat the competition of increasingly specialized search engines, Google has wisely focused its efforts on improving the relevancy of SERPs through personalization. The beginning of Google's quest for more personalized [and therefore, in theory more relevant] search results can be marked by their 2004 beta launch of Google Personalized Web Search. Users of the service were required to set up profile pages where they indicated personal interests by checking off various categories. The SERPs would refine themselves based on the user's interests and desired level of personalization; the later depending on how the user manipulated a designated "slider" bar that appeared above the search results.¹⁴ In April 2005 Google introduced My Search History, which, when users are signed into their Google account, keeps track of every

Google search query and SERP listing they click. This service was originally marketed to the public as a useful resource to remember past search interests. The following quotation, announcing My Search History, is from Google's official blog:

How many times have you used Google to find an obscure funny website or fun facts about "The Wizard of Oz," but then got distracted by other web pages and tasks? I know — me too. Wouldn't it be great to find them again, and for that matter review all your Google searches over time? Which is exactly why we built My Search History.¹⁵

The true purpose of My Search History, however, became clear in June 2005 with the introduction of Google Personalized Search. This service alters search results based on search queries, the sites one selects, and the number of times sites are visited, as well as any activity taking place on the user's Google Personalized Homepage (created with every Google account,) such as bookmarks, RSS feeds, or widgets. The ability to take into account a user's unique search behavior when forming search results means that Google search results for a given keyword will no longer be the same across the Web. Currently, SEOs typically optimize websites with the Google algorithm in mind. This practice is reasonable because Google receives the most searches in the U.S. (63.9% as of February 2007¹⁶). The fear is that without the Google standard, measuring the effects of SEO efforts by improvement in ranking will become impossible because the results will vary by individual.

If personalization has been infiltrating search results since 2004,

why is the SEO world only now expressing its concern? On February 2, 2007, Sep Kamvar, Google's Engineering Lead for Personalization, announced on Google's official blog that anyone who signs up for a Google Account, whether it be Gmail, Adwords, Adsense, or Google Analytics, will, by default, be enrolled in Google Personalized Search. While there exists a way to opt out of the personalized search results, there will be plenty of users who will either breeze through the sign up process without noticing the option, see the service as an improvement or simply not care one way or another. Responses to this rather large step towards personalizing the search experience have been mixed. Some say that Google Personalized Search will not have any sort of notable impact on SEO because most people will not be logged in to their Gmail accounts when searching the Internet. Others note the relatively small market share held by Gmail users. As of May 2006, Gmail users were a distant fourth in market share behind Yahoo! Mail, MSN Hotmail, and MySpace Mail users.¹⁷ The immediate impact of Google Personalized Search on SEO efforts is unknown; however, there is no doubt that the leader in online search continues to move in the direction of improved search relevancy for the user. This movement towards personalization will alter SEO best practices to revolve increasingly around Google. Tactics such as prompting visitors to add websites to their Google Bookmarks, as well as add RSS feeds to their Google Personalized Homepage are ways to drive traffic, as well as influence a user's SERP who is signed in to Personalized Search. Using the Google Gadget API

to create widgets, referred to above as widget baiting, will be another necessary SEO tactic.

The question remains, does Google Personalized Search represent the end of traditional SEO? Without a common SERP for each keyword query, what will be the point of optimizing for specific keywords? Personalized Search rightfully sends a shiver down any SEO's spine; however, the truth is there is no immediate danger that websites will not require optimization in order to obtain search engine visibility. The frequent use of Content Management Systems (CMS) that are not search engine friendly will require traditional "on-page" optimization for many years to come. In order to achieve initial rankings on the search engines, a website must be indexed, which requires optimization of HTML, creation and submission of sitemaps, internal anchor linking, and all sorts of other little things that increase a website's chances of being crawled. Google Personalized Search will further the importance of quality content; however traditional SEO will remain necessary until search engines change the way they index websites. Personalized Search does represent a step in the development of a search algorithm that can effectively take into account click through rate [CTR] when determining rankings. Logically, listings that are clicked on more are more relevant to the keyword search query. Search engines typically use a webpage's meta title and description to display the page's ranking. When this CTR development is realized, the traditional SEO tasks of writing good webpage titles, descriptions, and URL directory structures will become even more important for the purpose of

communicating the contents of a webpage. Receiving a click will not only mean more traffic, but also a higher CTR, which will increase a site's ranking.

IX. Search Behavior R&D: Customized Engines and Long Tail Keywords

With the new age of the internet comes an improved ability to track user behavior. Better tracking means increased accountability for all internet marketers, SEO included. Obtaining a better understanding of search behavior will prove to be imperative as competition for high rankings increases. In order to meet the higher standard for performance, research and development will receive more attention.

Advancements will take place in this arena by SEOs utilizing customized search engines and long tail keywords.

A customized search engine refers to a user-modified search engine that produces web results based on a set of predefined parameters. These parameters include: designating a list of URLs for the spiders to crawl, refining a search by topical category such as health care or sports, only searching a website's "neighborhood" (the site's inbound and outbound links), and narrowing results to include only certain languages, regions, file formats or RSS feeds. Each of the three big search engines has its own version of a customized search engine. Google has Google Co-op Customized Search Engine, launched on May 10, 2006. Yahoo has Rollyo, released in September 2005, and MSN has the Advanced Live Search Box, a feature of Windows Live Search introduced to the public on March 8, 2006. Each of these

engines provides the code in order for the owner of the customized search engine to place the search box on their website and tailor it to the look of the site. Not only can customized search engines improve a user's experience when visiting a website, but by experimenting with different parameters and results, SEOs will gain a better understanding of their customer's search behavior. According to a report by the Aberdeen Group released in February 2007, within the next 24 months, 96% of all ecommerce web sites will contain search tools.¹⁸ Among companies that track how many visitors convert to sales, 60% found that search tools convert customers at a rate of 5% or higher.¹⁹ It will be this conversion rate that will lead to the use of more customized search engines; however, the SEO must take this opportunity to expand his or her knowledge of search behavior. One way to do this is use the customized search engine to expand on the understanding of what keywords customers are using to search for different products and services. The search engine box can be programmed to record the search terms used, and functionality can be added that allows users to click on the most recent search keywords in order to perform that search.

As methods for discovering more qualified search terms improves, keyword research will once again have its day in the sun. SEOs will start dedicating the necessary time towards optimizing for "long tail" keywords. Long tail keywords are the thousands of multi word search queries that lead customers to find a website, but are rarely optimized for because they generate such a small number of monthly searches. The buzz regarding

long tail keywords has been around since 2005, but they still receive little attention due to the conventional 80-20 rule that has been so thoroughly ingrained in the traditional marketer's mind. This rule refers to the idea that the group of high-volume keywords in a category make up 80% of a website's traffic and converting sales. Typically, people focus on the top ten or twenty keywords that are bringing in thousands of visitors, because clients are happy to see the broad keywords bring in traffic and ranking high. The truth is, however, that not only does the sum of the low-volume keywords bring in more visitors than the high volume ones, but they typically convert better as well. Use of long tail keywords represent a searcher that is further along in the buying process than someone who types in only one or two broad keywords. As measurability increases on the Internet, the SEO will be forced to develop extensive long tail keyword strategies that lead to more conversions in order to report a better return on investment (ROI).

X. Conclusion

Search Engine Optimization is, by all accounts, a multifaceted occupation. It has evolved most significantly as a result of the Web 2.0 phase of the Internet. The social presence on the Net will continue to play a large role in determining how SEOs attract traffic to their web sites. An up-and-coming technology that SEOs should keep an eye on is the advanced social networking software that creates 3-D virtual worlds, such as Second Life. Second Life hosts the social and business oriented interaction of over five

million users. As Second Life and three dimensional worlds like it grow in popularity, the opportunity to further understand customer behavior will present itself. SEOs will need to use this platform to continue to develop new ways to drive organic traffic.

The fundamental nature of search will continue to evolve as well. Search algorithms that currently rely on the crawling of HTML text will eventually be forced to adapt to applications that promote usability, such as Ajax. Indexing abilities will expand for other reasons as well. The significant influx of video and image content to the Internet in the past few years has made it apparent that the search engines' current text-based methods of indexing content is far from sufficient. Several companies have already developed the software to search for videos and images by speech and pattern recognition technology. It could be several years before such technology fully infiltrates mainstream search, but it will be the SEO who will ensure that websites are optimized in order to be found by such indexing technology.

The skill set of the future SEO includes elements of both art and science. The SEO's level of understanding of both human and computer behavior will distinguish how effective they are at achieving high rankings and driving organic traffic to websites. The best SEOs will drive qualified traffic that yields a higher conversion rate of sales.

About BKV

Headquartered in Atlanta and founded in 1981, BKV is focused on direct marketing strategy and implementation. The largest full-service direct response agency in the Southeast, BKV employs a staff of 100+ experts in creative, account service, direct response television, media, interactive, search engine marketing, search engine optimization, production, and database management.

The company employs proven techniques for driving response while inventing bold new strategies that deliver record-breaking results. Currently BKV boasts such SEO clients as Equifax, Harrah's Entertainment, Rooms To Go, and AfterHours Formalwear. For more information please call Jamie Turner at 404.233.0332 or visit www.bkv.com.

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