Tropical Search Engine Optimization
& The Future of Broadband
by Web Site Optimization, LLC

Prepared by:
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Web Site Optimization, LLC
http://www.WebSiteOptimization.com

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Requisite Pithy and Profound Quotes

"Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted, the trouble is I don't know which half."

– John Wanamaker (attributed)
US department store merchant (1838 - 1922)

"What kills a skunk is the publicity it gives itself."

– Abraham Lincoln, in The Fitzhenry & Whiteside Book of Quotations, 1993

"The right name is an advertisement in itself."

– *Claude C. Hopkins,* quoted in *Randall Rothenberg,*
Where the Suckers Moon: An Advertising Story, 1994

Talk Outline

Andy King Intro
Tropical SEO
>   Introduction to SEO – Glossary / The 3 Keys
>   High Ranking Benefits
>   Compelling Stats / Overview
>   Gender Preferences / Education
>   Click Behavior
>   Best / Worst Practices
>   Keyword Research / Aruba Hotel example
>   Case Studies – Good & Bad SEO

The Future of Broadband
>   What Is Broadband?
>   Broadband Penetration Trends – U.S. / Europe
>   Broadband Penetration vs. Household Income

About Andy King

Andy King is the founder of WebReference.com, JavaScript.com, and more recently WebSiteOptimization.com and OptimizationWeek.com. He holds two degrees from the University of Michigan in Mechanical Engineering and started his career as a structural engineering consultant. Once he saw the Web for the first time in 1993 he was hooked. WebReference was acquired by Mecklermedia (now **Jupitermedia**) in 1997, where he and his staff worked for four years.

He is the President of Web Site Optimization, LLC, a web optimization firm based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA. WSO specializes in raising the ROI of existing web sites through web performance optimization, search engine marketing, persuasive copywriting, and web site redesign. **WebSiteOptimization.com** provides news and information on the web optimization industry, consulting services, along with a companion site for his book, *Speed Up Your Site: Web Site Optimization*.
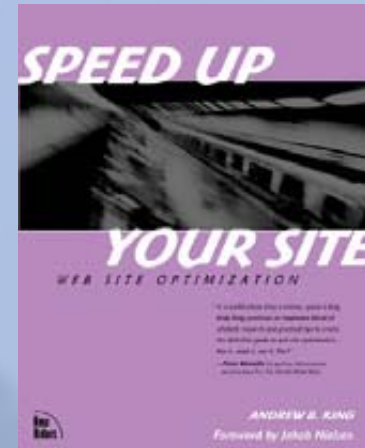
SEO Glossary

- SEO – Search Engine Optimization
- SEM – Search Engine Marketing (SEO + PPC etc.)
- PR – PageRank, a number denoting the importance of a web page at Google
- CPC – Cost Per Click
- PPC – Pay Per Click
- CTR – Click-through Rate
- Landing page – a keyword-focused page (one theme) designed to convert
- Splash page – rich graphical page designed to entice/impress
- "Above the fold" – first screen of page visible (old newspaper term)
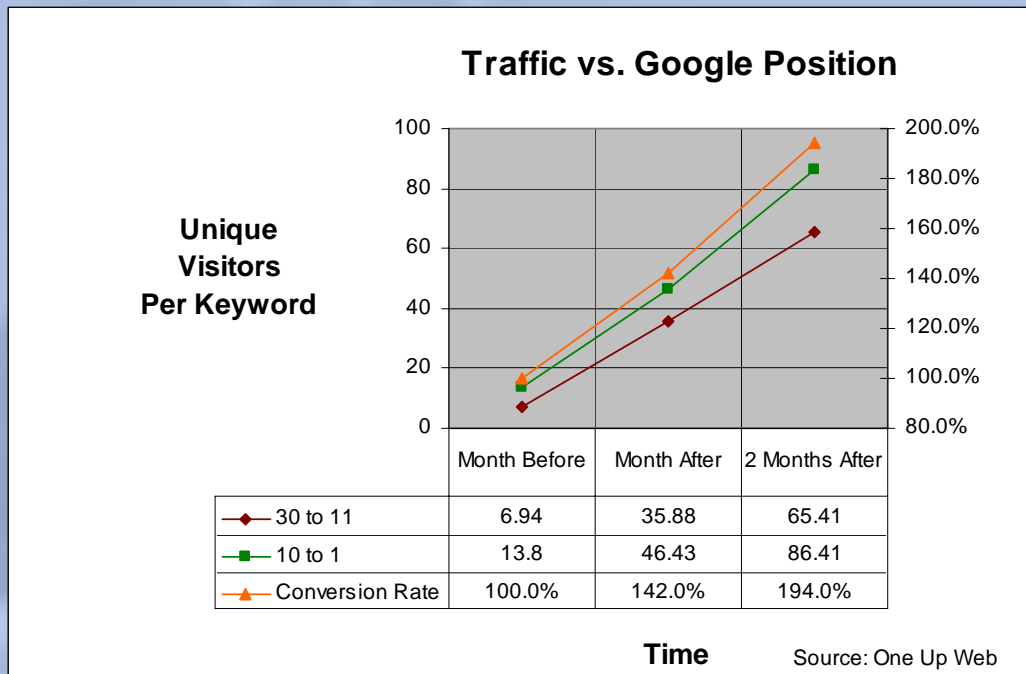- ROI – Return On Investment
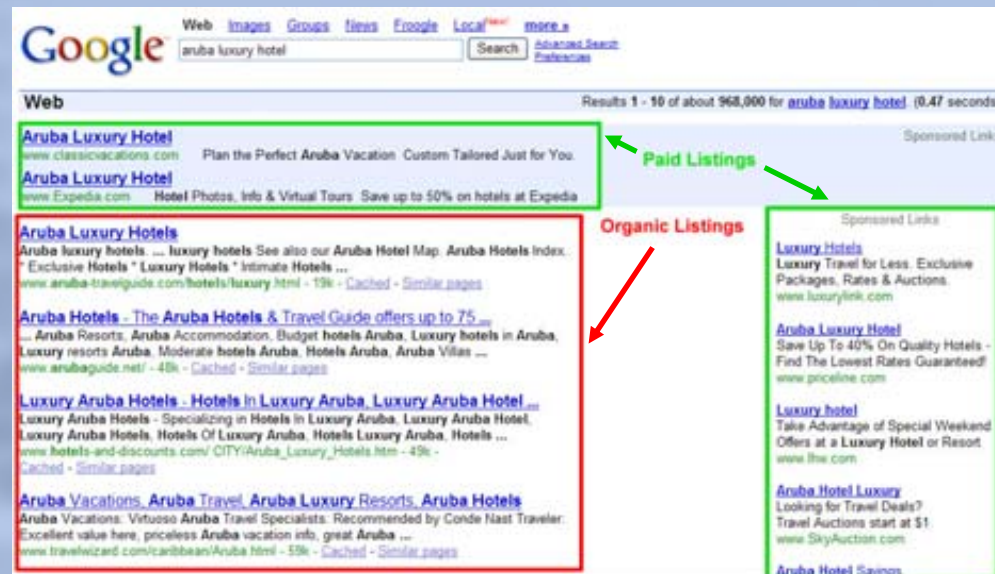
What Is Search Engine Optimization?

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the art and science of raising web site visibility in search engines and directories to increase targeted leads.

- 3 Keys - Creating SEO-friendly sites
  - **Linkworthy**: make it useful and compelling
    - SEO is inextricably intertwined with web site design & content
  - **On-site optimization**
    - Keyphrase / theme optimization – keyword-focused content
    - More content = higher PR
    - Follow best practices avoid worst
  - **Off-site optimization**
    - Maximize high PR inbound links (backlinks)
    - Keyphrase filled anchor text (example: keyphrase.com is ideal)
    - Match theme with your site

High Ranking Benefits

- Appear on 2nd or 3rd page of Google (positions 11-30)
  - One month after - 5.2 times original traffic
  - Two months after – 9.4 times original traffic

- Appear on 1st page of Google (Top 10)
  - One month after 30% more traffic of 2/3 page (3.36 X Original)
  - Two months after 30% more traffic of 2/3 page (6.26 X Original)
  - Conversion rate up 42% after 1st month, up 94% after 2nd month

Traffic vs. Google Position

Unique Visitors Per Keyword

	Month Before	Month After	2 Months After
30 to 11	6.94	35.88	65.41
10 to 1	13.8	46.43	86.41
Conversion Rate	100.0%	142.0%	194.0%

Time

Source: One Up Web

Compelling SEO Stats

- Every day, the search engines and directories average 300-500 MILLION searches (multiple sources)

- In a recent Forrester Research report, 81% of consumers on the Internet find products by using search engines.

- Unfortunately, only 7% of all web sites are visible by the search engines according to a recent StatMarket.com study. Most web sites are not properly optimized for maximum Search Engine Visibility.

- In fact, only 9% of the Fortune 100 have effective SEO and 44% use no SEO! (Source: One Up Web)
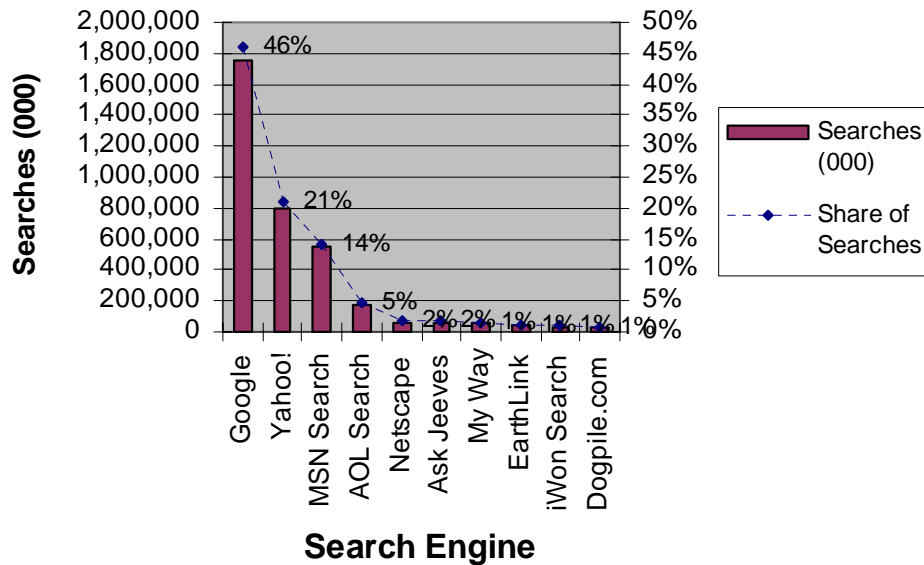
I'll show you how to optimize your site for higher search engine rankings.
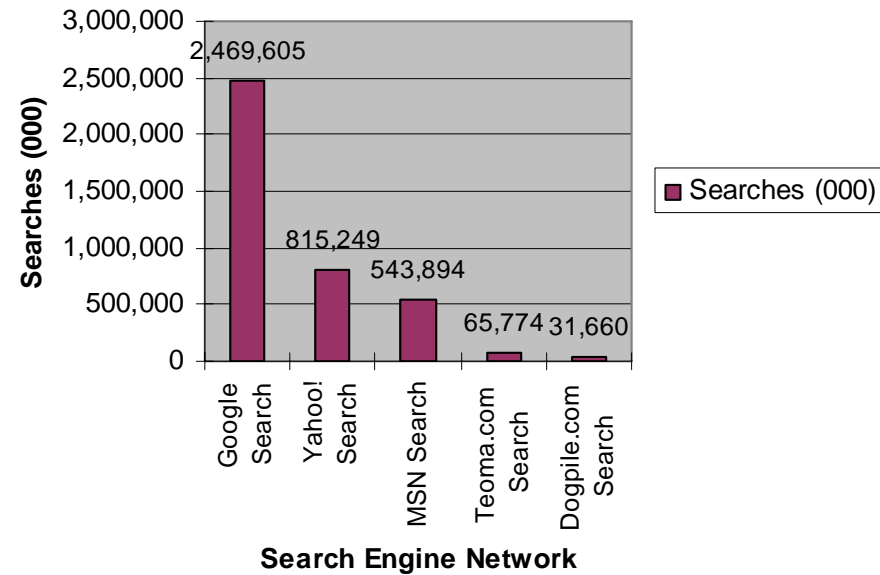*This presentation is geared towards the Aruban travel industry.*

SEO from 100,000 feet

- **Google dominates** the search engine landscape (46% share)
- 82.9% of all business users prefer Google, 86.9% for high income businesses – Marketing Sherpa, 2004.
- Google has over **3 times** the search traffic than Yahoo!
  after adding up all the sites it supplies results to (AOL, Netscape…)

Top Search Engines by Searches

Searches (000) — left axis: 0 to 2,000,000
Share of Searches — right axis: 0% to 50%

- Google: 46%
- Yahoo!: 21%
- MSN Search: 14%
- AOL Search: 5%
- Netscape: 2%
- Ask Jeeves: 2%
- My Way: 1%
- EarthLink: 1%
- iWon Search: 1%
- Dogpile.com: 1%

Legend: Searches (000), Share of Searches

X-axis: Search Engine

Top Search Engine Networks by Searches

Searches (000): 0 to 3,000,000

- Google Search: 2,469,605
- Yahoo! Search: 815,249
- MSN Search: 543,894
- Teoma.com Search: 65,774
- Dogpile.com Search: 31,660
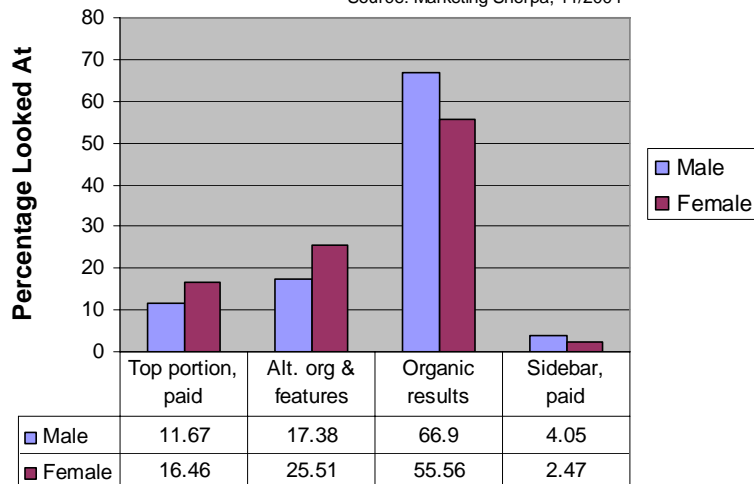
Legend: Searches (000)

X-axis: Search Engine Network

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings – Feb. 2005

Search Engine Preferences by Gender/Education

- Males tend to gravitate towards Google
- Females prefer MSN and Yahoo
- Women click on paid ads more than men
- Males tend to go for the organic results, women spread clicks around
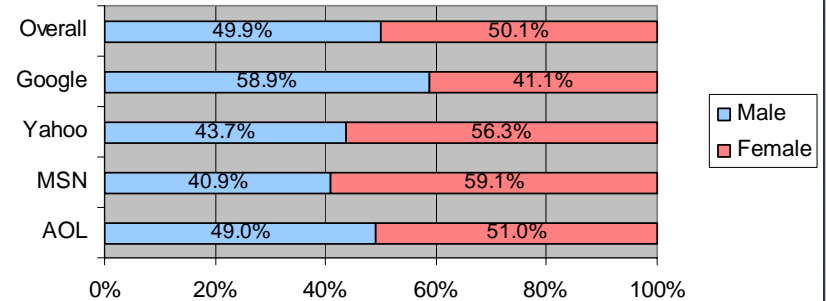- Google users are more likely to have a college degree

Top Search Engine Preferences by Gender (US Only)

Source: iProspect, Search Engine User Attitudes, 05/2004

	Male	Female
Overall	49.9%	50.1%
Google	58.9%	41.1%
Yahoo	43.7%	56.3%
MSN	40.9%	59.1%
AOL	49.0%	51.0%

Gender Preferences in Paid Search vs. Organic Search

Source: iProspect, 05/2004

	Organic	Paid
Men	65.4%	34.6%
Women	56.9%	43.1%

Area First Looked at & Gender

Source: Marketing Sherpa, 11/2004

Percentage Looked At

	Top portion, paid	Alt. org & features	Organic results	Sidebar, paid
Male	11.67	17.38	66.9	4.05
Female	16.46	25.51	55.56	2.47
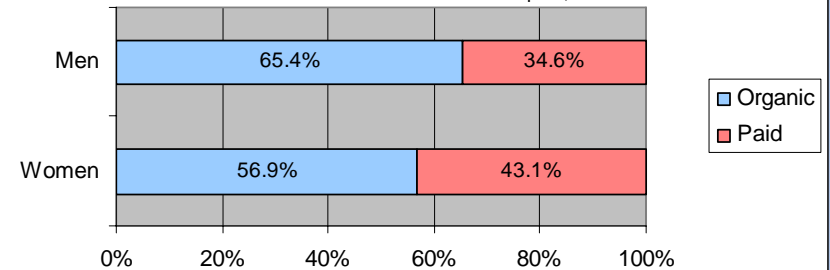
Top Search Engines - Preference by College Degree

Source: iProspect, Search Engine User Attitudes, 05/2004

	No College Degree	College Degree
Overall	44.1%	55.9%
Google	32.6%	67.4%
Yahoo	49.2%	50.8%
MSN	55.8%	44.2%
AOL	51.6%	48.4%
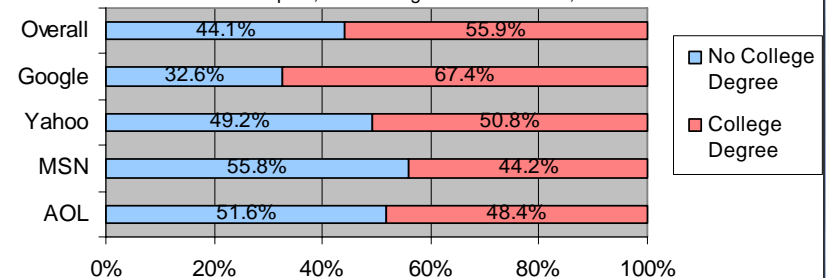
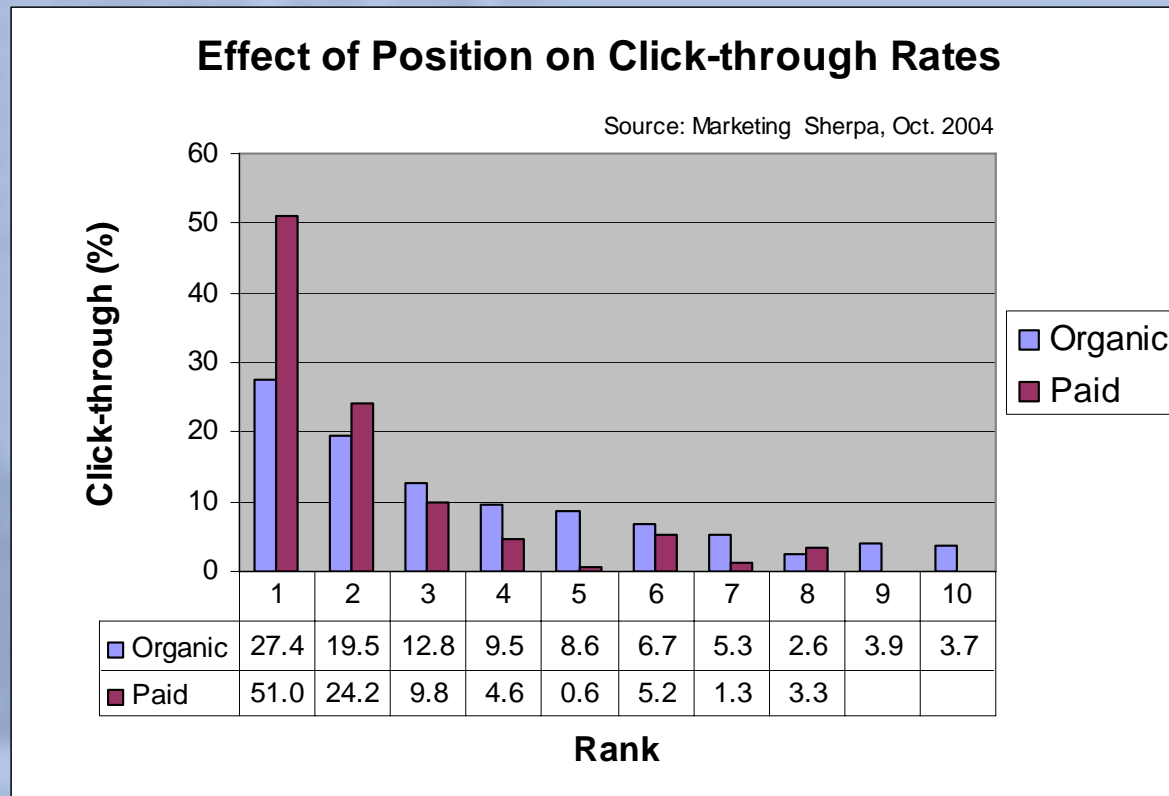# Search Engine Behavior – Where do people click?

1. Overall 60.5% click on natural results, more with higher income
2. Google has highest CTR for natural results (72.3%)
3. MSN reverses this trend, with more PPC ads displayed
4. Search engines vary displaying PPC results (labeling)
5. Conclusion: for maximum coverage, do both natural & PPC SEM
6. **Lopsided ad budgets**: Search marketers spent $3.3 billion on PPC ads in 2004, but only $238.5 million on SEO (Marketing Sherpa, 2004)

Search Engine Behavior Study
(iProspect & 2 survey sampling firms)

Source: ClickZ, "The One-Two Punch: SEO & PPC"

	All engines	Google	Yahoo	AOL	MSN
■ Natural Results	60.5%	72.3%	60.8%	50.0%	28.8%
■ PPC Results	39.5%	27.7%	39.2%	50.0%	71.2%
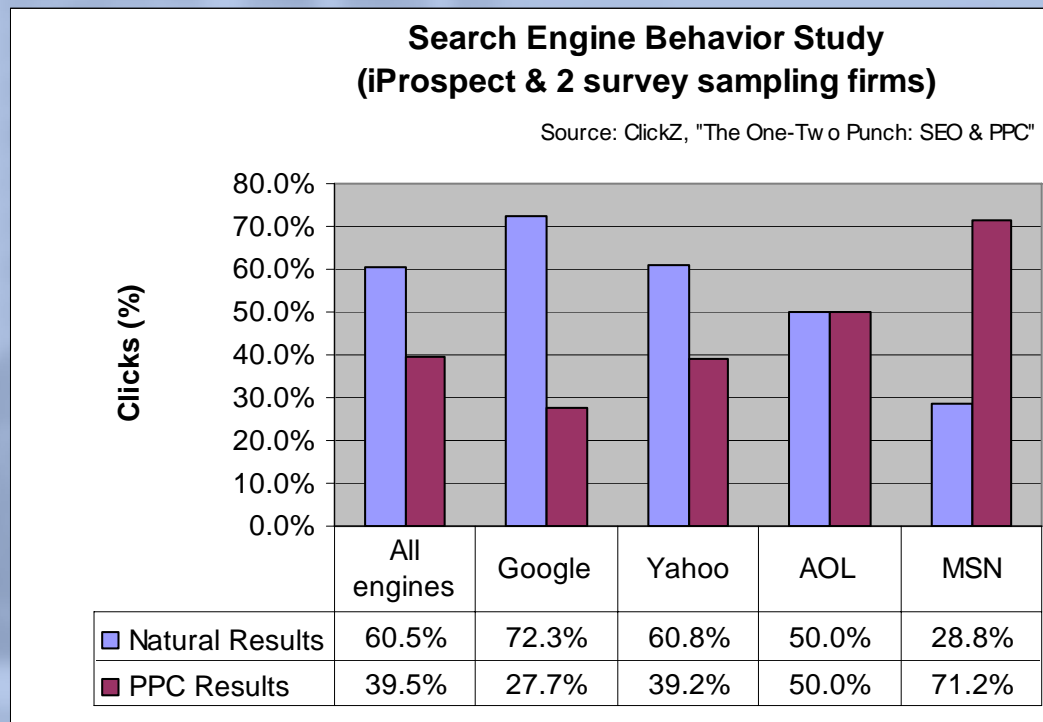
Search Engine Position & Click-through

What effect does position have on click-through rates?

1. Over 50% click on the first paid ad
2. Nearly 60% click on the first three organic results
3. Even at #9 or #10 organic results still draw nearly 4%

Effect of Position on Click-through Rates

Source: Marketing Sherpa, Oct. 2004

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Organic	27.4	19.5	12.8	9.5	8.6	6.7	5.3	2.6	3.9	3.7
Paid	51.0	24.2	9.8	4.6	0.6	5.2	1.3	3.3		

Eye-tracking Study Reveals Search's "Golden Triangle"

Positioning is important, here's the proof. We click where our eyes dwell.

1. Above the fold F-shaped triangle viewed by 100% tested
2. Drops to 50% to 20% below fold
3. Top paid ads seen by 80-100%
4. Top side paid seen by 50-10%
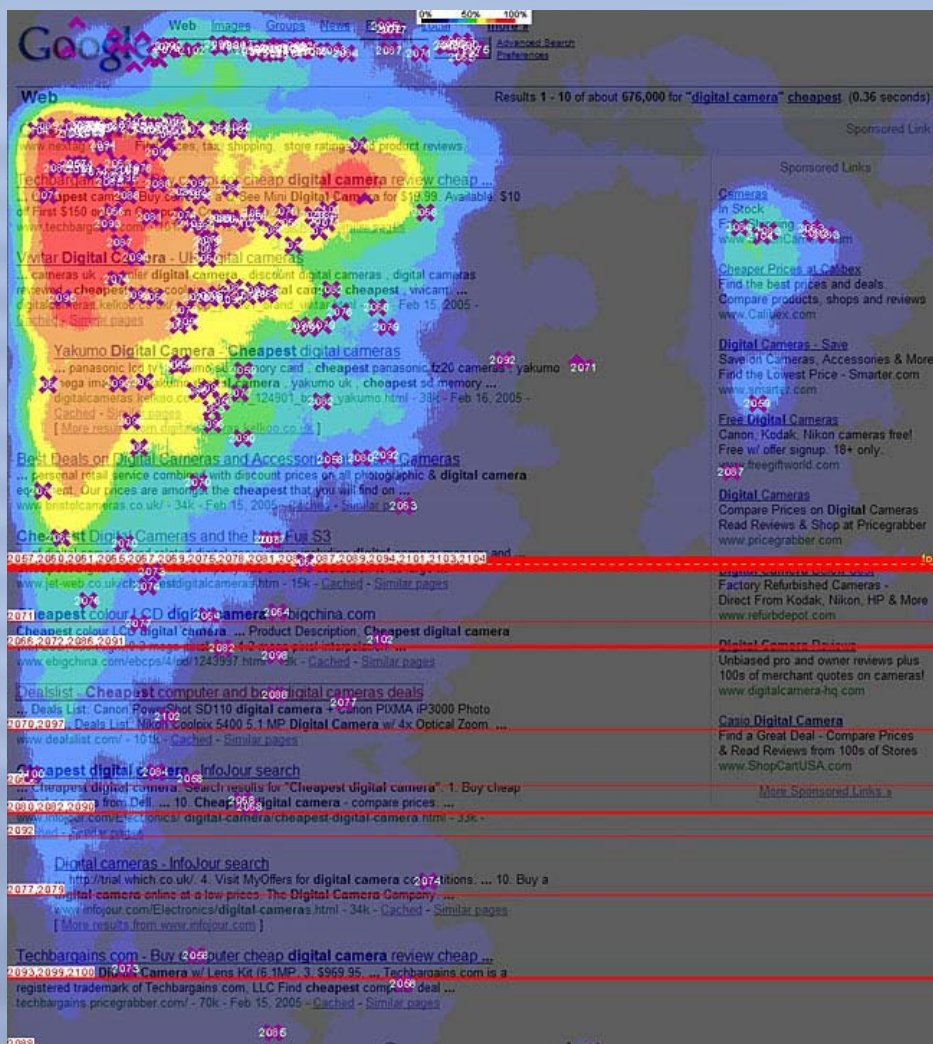
Organic Ranking Visibility
(shown is a percentage of participants looking at a listing in this location)

Side sponsored ad visibility
(shown is percentage of participants looking at an ad in this location)

Organic Ranking	Side sponsored
Rank 1 - 100%	
Rank 2 - 100%	
Rank 3 - 100%	1 – 50%
Rank 4 - 85%	2 – 40%
Rank 5 - 60%	3 – 30%
Rank 6 - 50%	4 – 20%
Rank 7 - 50%	5 – 10%
Rank 8 - 30%	6 – 10%
Rank 9 - 30%	7 – 10%
Rank 10 - 20%	8 – 10%

Source: "Did-it, Enquiro, and Eyetools uncover Search's Golden Triangle," http://www.enquiro.com/eye-tracking-pr.asp 04/2005

Ideal SEO Sequence

- **Keyword research** - narrow topically/geographically - find a niche

- Buy **definitive domain** - include primary keyphrase, no underscores, can use dashes - period (i.e., arubaluxuryhotels.com etc.)

- **Rename your business** as your top keyphrase (Aruba Luxury Hotels, Inc.)

- **Linkworthy site**: Create SEO-friendly site with fresh content, tools, info.

- **Optimize** site for high search engine visibility
  - Integrate top keyphrases into design process up front
  - Create buzz with news/content/tools/software
  - Get indexed
  - Mix last two items well and repeat

- **Get links**, links, and more links (relentless PR)

Usual SEO Sequence

Existing site with average content or news
- Poor content that offers no benefits to target audience
- Unprofessional look and feel
- Weak "call to action"
- Slow

SEO barriers
- Graphic text / Flash – little text to index
- JavaScript menus – use list-based menus instead
- Dynamic content (client-side)
- Splash pages – low text, high bailout rates (30-70%)

Convert barriers into CSS XHTML or redesign site
SEO optimize site & PPC
Monthly follow-up gives optimal results
Buzz (regular content, tools, web-savvy PR firm, RSS)

On-site Optimization

- **Keyword research** - find top keyphrases that people search for you with
- **Site architecture** – use top keywords in:
  - Link text / breadcrumbs
  - URLs
  - Avoid moving pages if you have backlinks
- **Rework content/code**
  - Create keyword-focused pages with single theme per page
  - Strategically sprinkle keyphrases into key areas of pages
    - Title / Headers / Body copy / links / META / ALT / filenames...
  - Maximize usability and accessibility
  - Use Web standards
    - Text-based menus (Google looks for lists)
    - CSS H1, H2, H3 Headers (sIFR) not graphic text
    - Validate code (Google ranks valid pages higher) validator.w3.org

Top 10 On-page Optimization Tips – Best Practices

1. Buy the **definitive domain name** with your top keyphrase
2. Use keyphrase(s) up front in TITLE tag (Aruba Luxury Hotel - …)
3. Use keyphrase in rest of url (filenames/directories) Good: aruba.com/luxury-hotel/ - bad: islands.com/search?165_&^%
4. Use **text-based headers** (h1 - h3) with keywords
5. Use keyphrase in first 25 words (prominence, avoid embedded CSS/JS)
6. Make **keyword-focused pages** (single theme matches queries)
7. Use keywords in links/anchor text Wyndham Luxury Hotel…
8. Use keywords in ALT attributes (<img src="arubahotel.jpg" alt="aruba luxury hotel"…>
9. Use **text-based menus** / lists
10. Write **full sentences** - Google favors sentences over fragments

Bottom 10 On-page Optimization Tips – Worst Practices

1. Use lots of Flash and splash pages
2. Make it all graphics (including the text)
3. Waste your TITLE tag ("Welcome to Company.com," "Home page of," or even worse with no TITLE - http://www.company.com)
4. Make it difficult to navigate (like a game)
5. Use the same META tags on every page
6. Fake XHTML structure (graphic headers etc.)
7. Stuff lots of keywords into your page – "Keyword Stuffing"
8. Make it inaccessible (no ALT attributes) & hard to use
9. Throw everything into one page – a sales letter
10. Make is as slow as possible

Off-site Optimization: Acquiring Links

The Top 4 Strategies for Acquiring Links to Your Web Site:

- **Higher PR** - Get a higher Google PageRank score than your competition by getting more higher PR inbound links. Close Google PageRank gaps.

  View PageRank with Google Toolbar or prsearch.net

- **Relevancy** - Get more relevant links than your competition

- **Diversify** - Get more links on more varied sites than your competition

- **Keyword Links** – get top keywords in anchor text of in-bound links

Advanced Linking Strategies

- **Use keywords in the anchor text of your in-bound links.**

  "Anchor text" is the **visible text** within a hyperlink. **Text links** and **anchor text** are the two **most important criteria** for how Google and other top search engines rank web sites. Here are some examples of links containing anchor text…

  Merchant Accounts by Charge.com
  Charge.com provides online business owners with merchant accounts to accept credit cards.

- **Banners with Text Links:**

FREE Setup
FREE Application
FREE Technical Support
FREE Shopping Cart
FREE Internet Check Software

Charge.Com
CARDSERVICE
Best Service. Best Prices. Guaranteed

Merchant Accounts
By Charge.com

Off-site Optimization: PageRank

Google's all-important PageRank algorithm doesn't determine your overall ranking, but is an important factor.

"We assume page A has pages T1...Tn which point to it (i.e., are citations). The parameter d is a damping factor which can be set between 0 and 1. We usually set d to 0.85. C(A) is defined as the number of links going out of page A. The PageRank of a page A is given as follows:"

$$PR(A) = (1-d) + d (PR(T1)/C(T1) + ... + PR(Tn)/C(Tn))$$

To improve your PageRank (and ranking on other search engines)
- Get more links from high PageRanked sites
- For higher PageRank fewer links in referring page the better
- Create a hierarchical linking/structure to your site, not a mesh
- Create more pages = higher site PageRank
- Promote and optimize new pages to maximize total PageRank
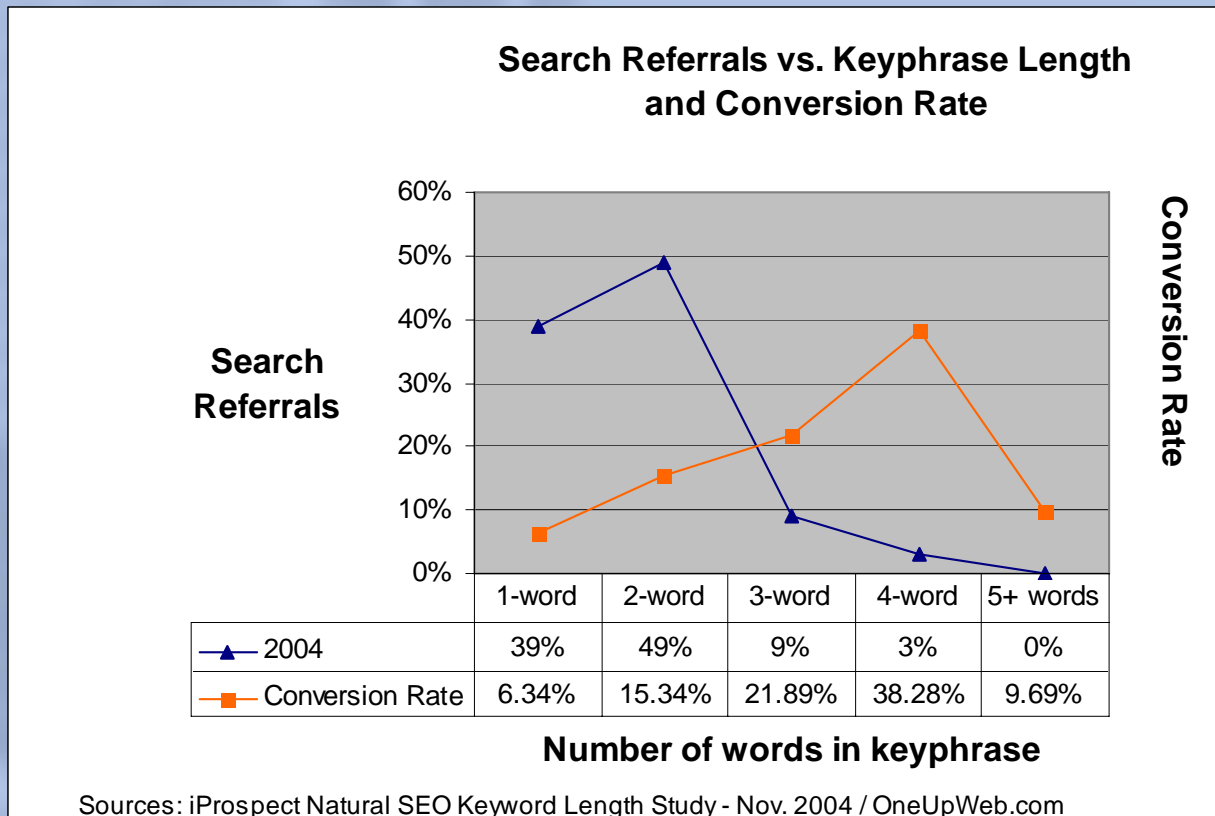- Use keyphrases in inbound/outbound links in the theme of external/internal pages

Keyword Research Steps

- Choose keyphrases that are narrow enough to rank well, and broad enough to garner adequate traffic

- Use Tools – Overture keyword selector tool, Wordtracker

- Use Log file analysis

- Go to school on your competitors

- Brainstorm and expand (colleagues, thesaurus.com)

- Winnow overly broad & irrelevant terms & sort by popularity

- Narrow topically and geographically for better results

- Ideally integrate keyphrases into site design/architecture

- Don't forget misspellings/alternates, singulars/plurals

- Best to target 3 or 2-word phrases - UNLESS you identify unique acronyms (like darpa, javascript, or wyndham)

SEO Best Practices – Optimum Keyphrase Length

- Keywords – Target 2-4 word keyphrases (iProspect, OneUpWeb)
- Conversion rate peaks at 4-word keyphrases (OneUpWeb – chart)
- Optimum is between 2 and 3-word keyphrases (~2.75)
  - One exception: unique corporate names = higher conversion rates
- One and two-word keyphrases account for 88% of search traffic

Search Referrals vs. Keyphrase Length and Conversion Rate

Search Referrals

Conversion Rate

	1-word	2-word	3-word	4-word	5+ words
2004	39%	49%	9%	3%	0%
Conversion Rate	6.34%	15.34%	21.89%	38.28%	9.69%

Number of words in keyphrase

Sources: iProspect Natural SEO Keyword Length Study - Nov. 2004 / OneUpWeb.com

Keyword Research Example: Aruba -> Aruba Hotel

Keyword Research for "Aruba Hotel"

Step 1

Keyword Selector Tool

Not sure what search terms to bid on?
Enter a term related to your site and we will show you:
- Related searches that include your term
- How many times that term was searched on last month

Get suggestions for: (may take up to 30 seconds)

Note: All suggested search terms are subject to our standard editorial review process.

Step 2

Keyword Selector Tool

Not sure what search terms to bid on?
Enter a term related to your site and we will show you:
- Related searches that include your term
- How many times that term was searched on last month

Get suggestions for: (may take up to 30 seconds)

`aruba`

Note: All suggested search terms are subject to our standard editorial review process.

Searches done in January 2005

Count	Search Term
163894	aruba
19903	aruba hotel
10232	aruba vacation
6440	aruba weather
6237	aruba map
6200	aruba all inclusive
5206	aruba resort
4941	marriott aruba
3405	aruba fishing
3253	divi aruba

Step 3

Keyword Selector Tool

Not sure what search terms to bid on?
Enter a term related to your site and we will show you:
- Related searches that include your term
- How many times that term was searched on last month

Get suggestions for: (may take up to 30 seconds)

`aruba hotel`

Note: All suggested search terms are subject to our standard editorial review process.

Searches done in January 2005

Count	Search Term
19903	aruba hotel
887	aruba all inclusive hotel
634	renaissance hotel aruba
465	marriott hotel aruba
434	wyndham hotel aruba
394	aruba hotel map
393	radisson hotel aruba
367	aruba grand hotel
259	cheap aruba hotel
244	aruba hotel review
243	hyatt hotel aruba

Keyword Selector Tool

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393	radisson hotel aruba
367	aruba grand hotel
259	cheap aruba hotel
244	aruba hotel review
243	hyatt hotel aruba
212	all inclusive hotel in aruba
203	aruba hotel las vegas
197	marriott hotel in aruba
189	aruba luxury hotel
187	allegro hotel aruba

Metrics: Clicktracks

- Visual interface
- Each link shows % of visitors who clicked
- Compare visitor groups
- ID visitors by specific criteria
- Only 28.7% of online marketers analyze their stats
- Marketers who do check their stats get 25% better conversion rates

Bad SEO Techniques

When choosing an SEO firm, avoid these unethical practices that don't work in the long term. Look for and avoid the following questionable techniques.

1. Link farms – dilute referred PR, not under your control
2. Hidden text (white on white, etc.)
3. Small text
4. Keyword stuffing
5. Duplicate title tags
6. Doorway pages
7. Cloaking / questionable redirects
8. Commented keywords
9. Mirror pages & sites
10. Convoluted, invalid code – template based, cookie cutter

Good SEO Techniques

Ask for references and example sites from your potential SEO firm. Look for the following best-practices on their site and their clients' sites.

1. High rankings
2. Keyword focused pages – theme-based relevancy
3. Plenty of text (not overly graphical)
4. Clean, fast, standards-based pages (CSS lists, headers)
5. Offers metrics to validate and track conversions / ROI
6. SEO changes and optimization are documented
7. Extensive PR campaigns – RSS, newsletters, releases
8. Linking campaigns – check for backlinks (prsearch.net)
9. Filled with compelling, useful content, updated regularly
10. Realistic guarantee of tasks or results

sIFR: An SEO-friendly Alternative to Graphic Headlines

- sIFR = Scalable Inman Flash Replacement (first by Shaun Inman)
- Standards-compliant way to deliver any font to user
- Uses Flash, JavaScript, and any headline
- Embeds font in Flash SWF (Flash 6 or higher)
- Replaces headline text with Flash text automatically
- Latest version can dynamically replace any XHTML element
  (Mike Davidson & Mark Wubben)

Case Study: EBEL.com

- Ebel.com – Handmade Swiss watches, pure Flash site

- Sets wonderful mood, fun

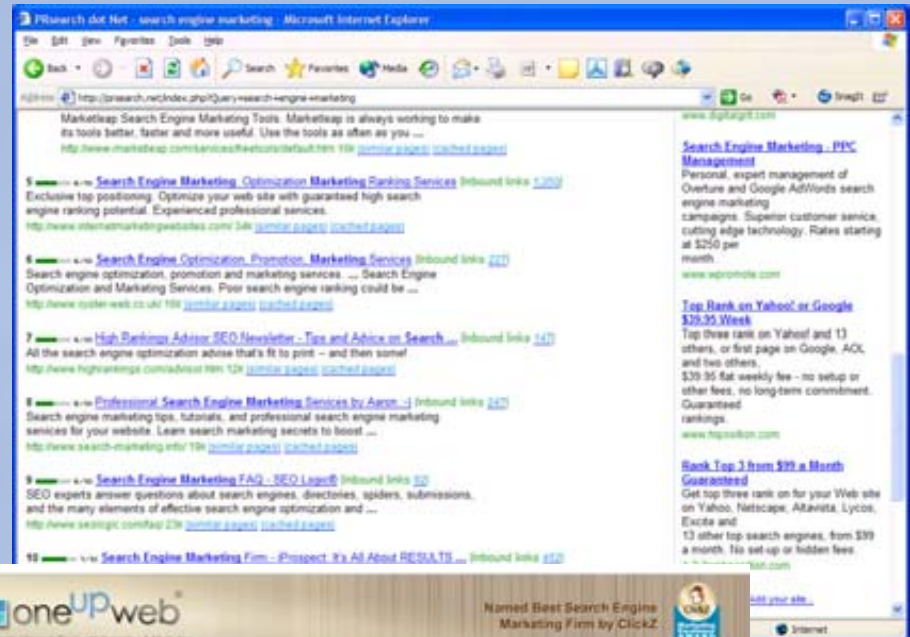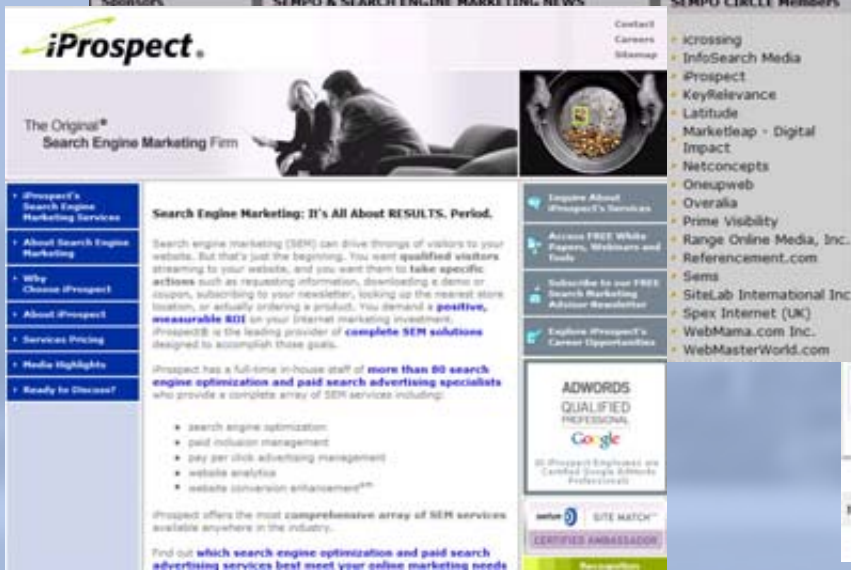- Awful for SEO, need keys to kingdom to navigate
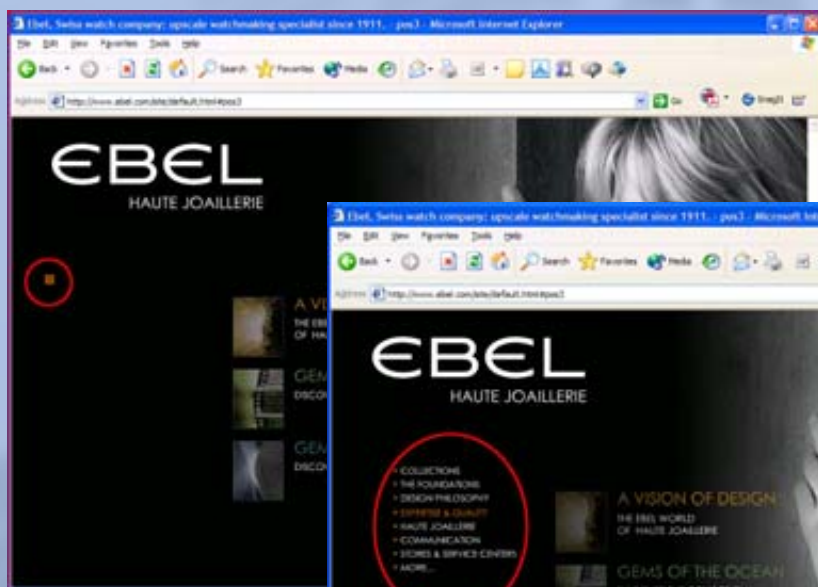
Case Study: OneUpWeb.com/iProspect.com

- Professional SEO sites
- Credibility: impressive sites & clients
- Good SEO as you'd expect
- One Up uses Flash menus however
- Lots of great content/white papers

#2

#10

The Future of Broadband

Technically broadband is a transmission facility with multiple channels to carry voice, data, video channels simultaneously with each channel modulated to a different frequency, or a wide band of electromagnetic frequencies.
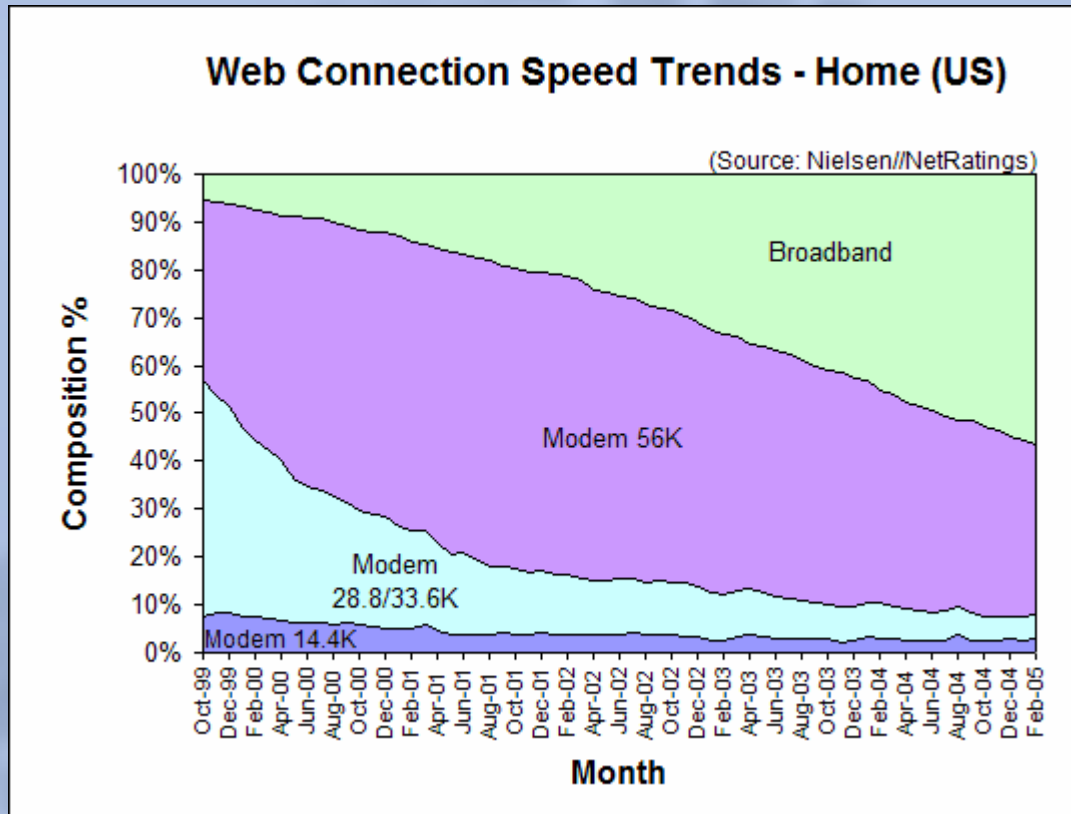
In the real world broadband is a big fat pipe for data. It can range from 128Kbps to 2-3Mbps at the low-end and higher.

Broadband improves the user experience, but does not solve the problem of slow web sites. Just like your hard drive seems to fill up as capacity increases, broadband tends to fill up with higher bandwidth applications.

If the past is any indicator of the future, the effective speed for the average web surfer will go down as web site size grows faster than bandwidth. (King 2003)

Connection Speed Trends in the U.S.

In February 2005, 56.3% of active Internet users in the U.S. connect from home with broadband connections. Broadband is growing at a rate of about 1% a month. 81.6% have broadband at work. – The Bandwidth Report, 02/2005

Web Connection Speed Trends - Home (US)

(Source: Nielsen//NetRatings)

Broadband

Modem 56K

Modem 28.8/33.6K

Modem 14.4K

Composition %

Month

The **overall** broadband penetration rate in the U.S. is now 30% of all households and 47% of online households - Leichtman Research Group, April 1, 2005

U.S. Broadband Penetration Trends & Predictions

Broadband penetration in the U.S. should break 70% by December 2005 for active Internet users.

Online households lag online users by just under a year

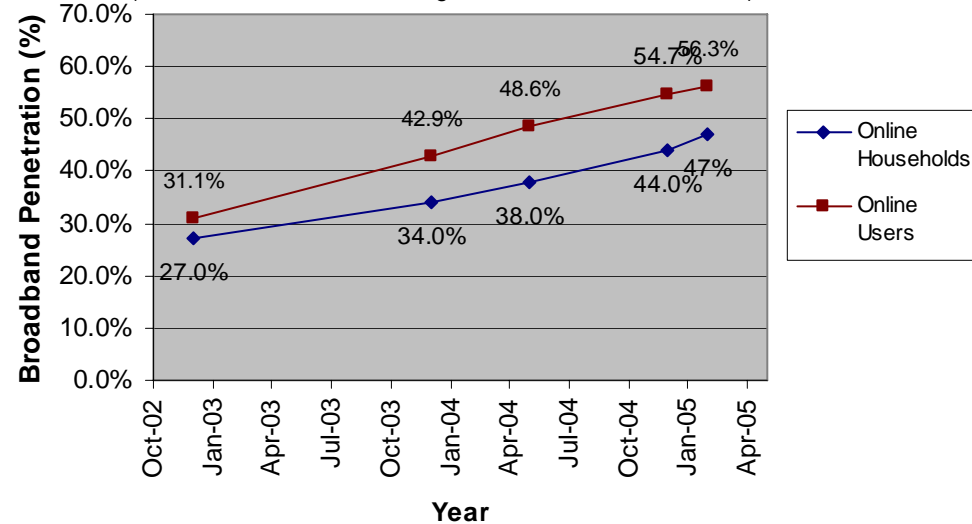For all households, broadband penetration should break 50% by late 2007

Broadband Growth Trend - US Home Users

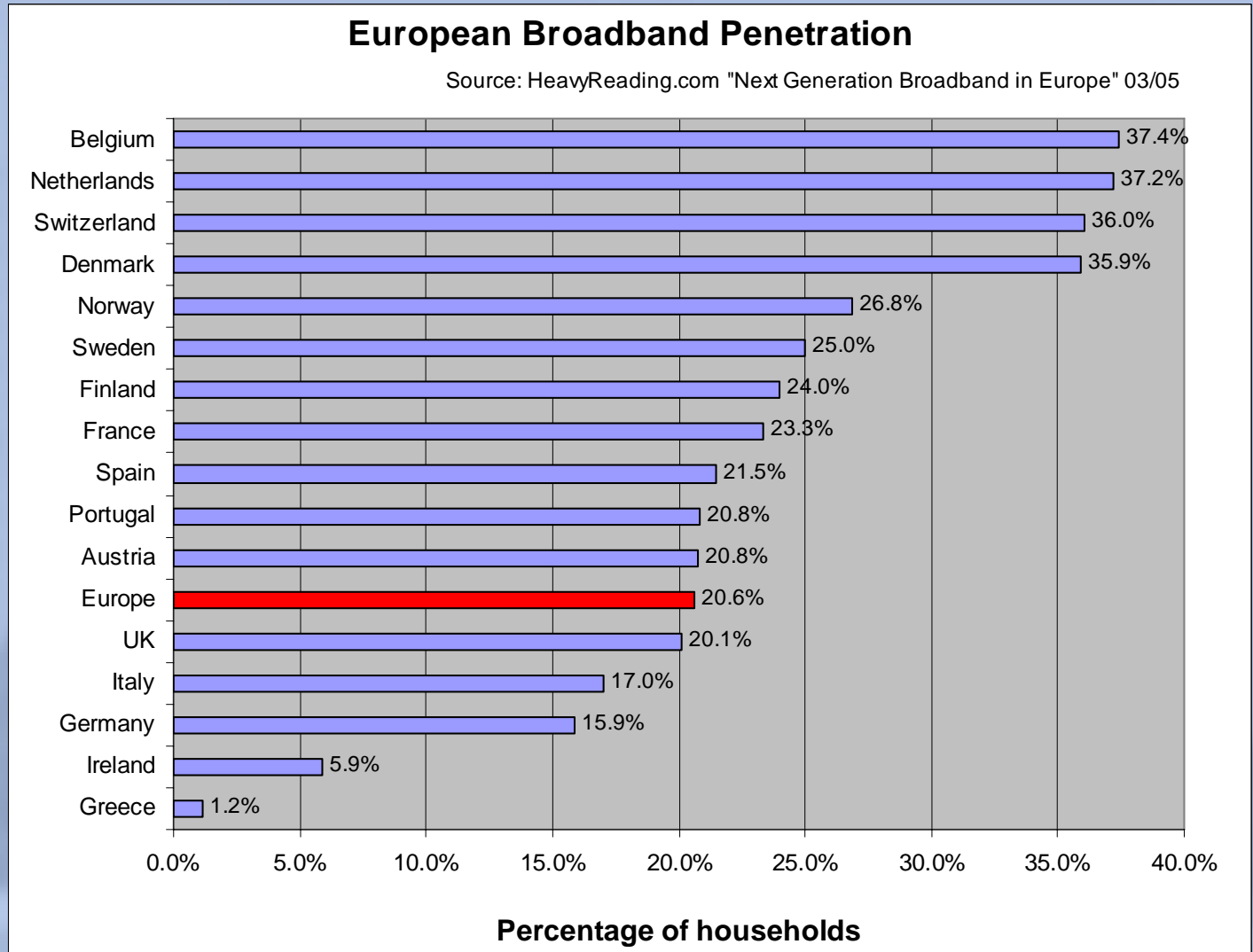(Extrapolated by Web Site Optimization, LLC from Nielsen//NetRatings data)
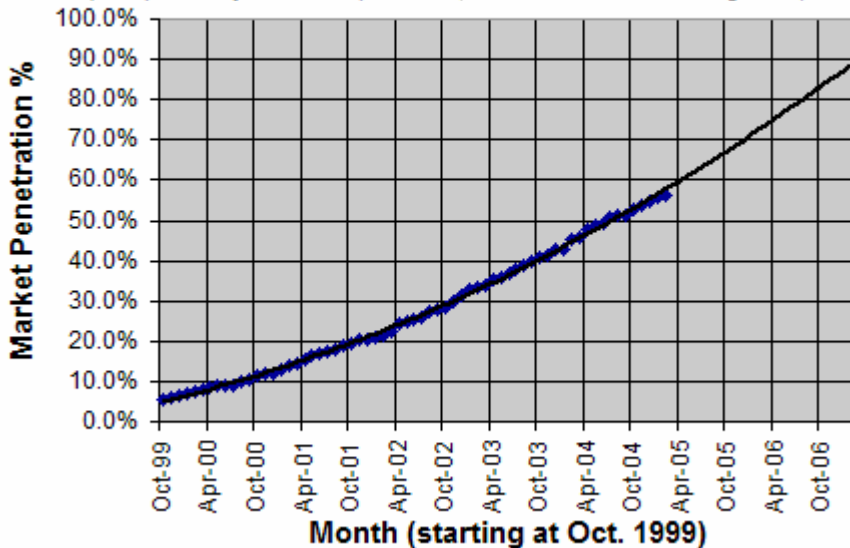
Broadband Penetration: Online Households vs. Online Users US

(Sources: Nielsen//NetRatings and Leichtman Research)

European Broadband Penetration

Belgium, the Netherlands, & Switzerland lead European countries in broadband penetration.

European Broadband Penetration

Source: HeavyReading.com "Next Generation Broadband in Europe" 03/05

Country	Percentage
Belgium	37.4%
Netherlands	37.2%
Switzerland	36.0%
Denmark	35.9%
Norway	26.8%
Sweden	25.0%
Finland	24.0%
France	23.3%
Spain	21.5%
Portugal	20.8%
Austria	20.8%
Europe	20.6%
UK	20.1%
Italy	17.0%
Germany	15.9%
Ireland	5.9%
Greece	1.2%

Percentage of households

Broadband Penetration tracks Household Income

Most people that visit Aruba are well-off, averaging $75K-100K in annual income. Most U.S. visitors have broadband at home and work.

U.S. Broadband Penetration by Income Level among active Internet users

Source: Nielsen//NetRatings
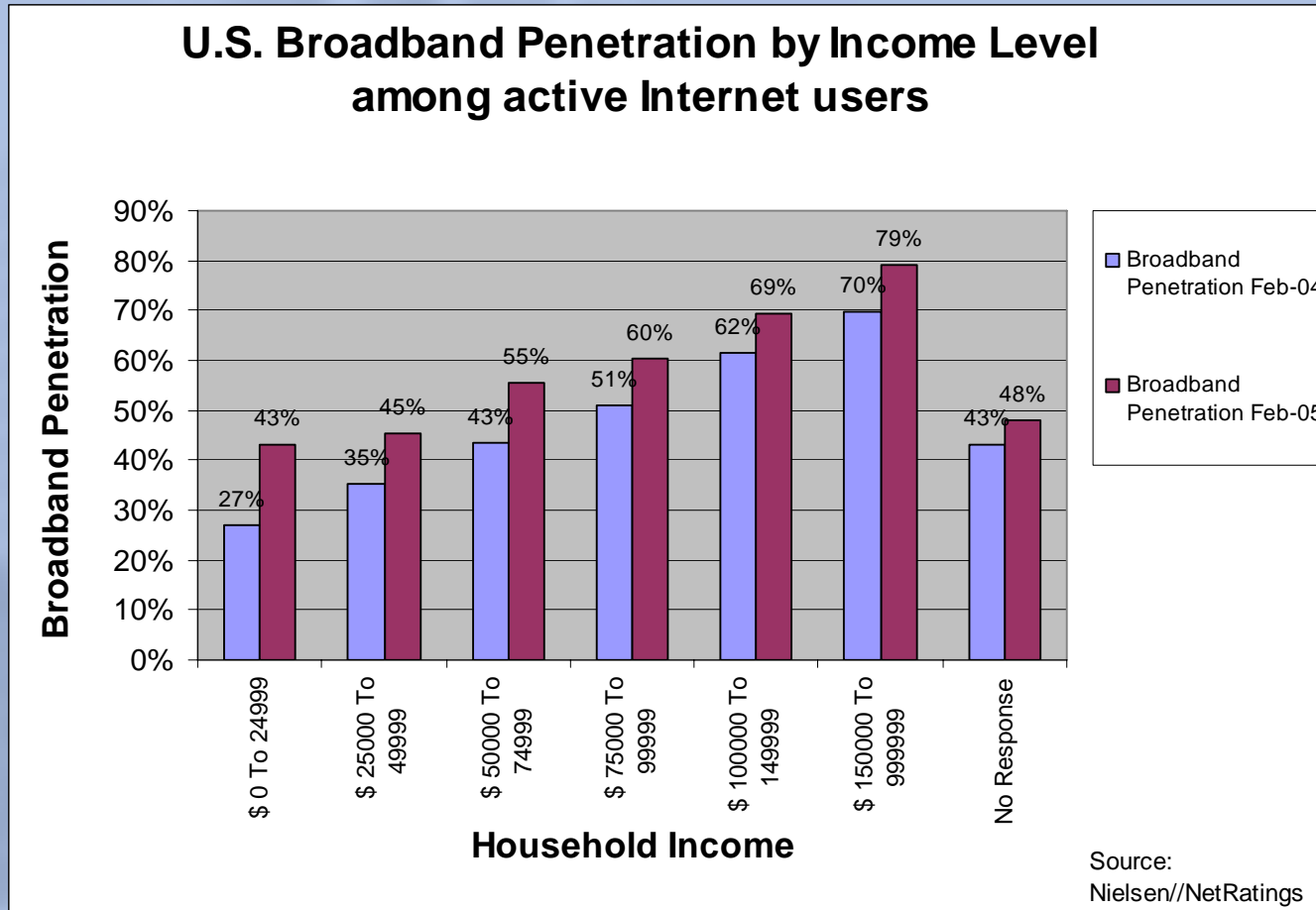
SEO Resources

- *Search Engine Optimization for Dummies*
  - Peter Kent, 2004 Wiley, most recent SEO book
- *Building Your Business with Google for Dummies*
  - Brad Hill, 2004 Wiley, SEO, AdWords, AdSense
- *Speed Up Your Site: Web Site Optimization*,
  - Andrew King, 2003 New Riders, 2 chapters on SEO
- *Search Engine Visibility*
  - Shari Thurow, 2002 New Riders, good intro to SEO
- *Search Engine Positioning*
  - Fredrick Marckini, 2001 Wordware (out of print)
- *Call to Action*
  - Bryan & Jeffrey Eisenberg 2005 (May), Conversion Rate Optimization

- http://SearchEngineWatch.com – Danny Sullivan's definitive search engine site
- http://HighRankinsAdvisor.com – Jill Whalen's High Ranking Advisor newsletter
- http://MarketingSherpa.com – Search Marketing Metrics Guide
- http://Wordtracker.com – most popular keyword analysis service
- http://Clicktracks.com – visual traffic analysis software/service

On a Final Note

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Andy King

Special thanks to: http://www.aruba.com

For more information about my book and my company, see WebSiteOptimization.com.