



amber
green

A Presentation to:

SUPA - Usability: getting it right

What is search and why is it important?

what is search?

Search plays an important part in online information retrieval.

Search is commonly used as the first point of contact between a searcher and a website.

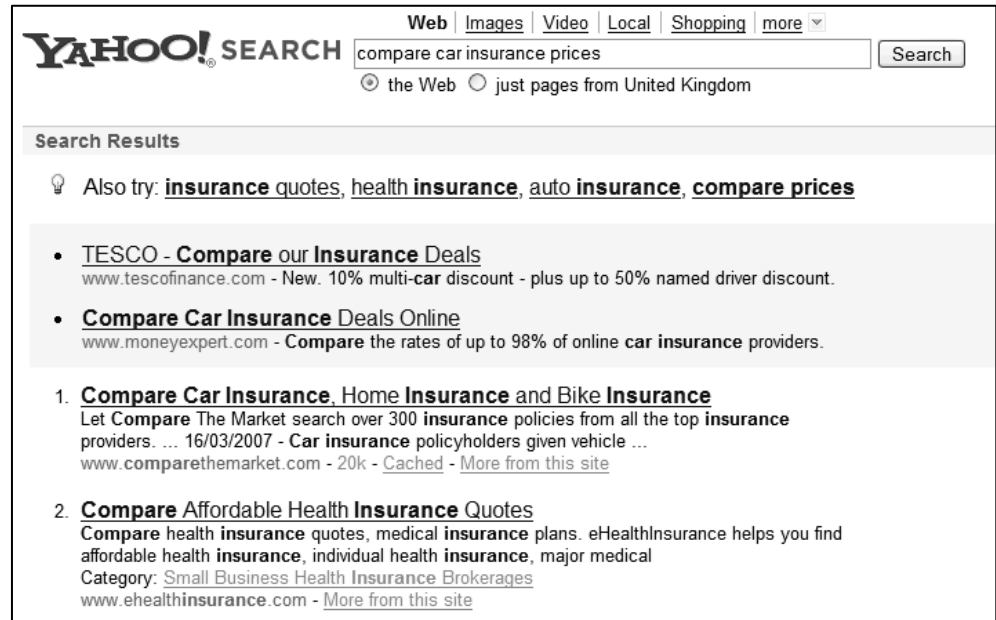
Not being indexed can severely limit your ability to reach or retain customers.



search and customer acquisition

One of the most common uses of a search engine is for product or service research.

Without being listed prominently in the engines for a relevant search query, your competitors will be found instead.



The screenshot shows a Yahoo! search results page. At the top, there is a search bar with the text 'compare car insurance prices' and a 'Search' button. Below the search bar, there are navigation links for 'Web', 'Images', 'Video', 'Local', 'Shopping', and 'more'. There are also radio buttons for 'the Web' (selected) and 'just pages from United Kingdom'. The search results are displayed under the heading 'Search Results'. A lightbulb icon indicates a suggestion: 'Also try: [insurance quotes](#), [health insurance](#), [auto insurance](#), [compare prices](#)'. Below this, there are three search results listed:

- **TESCO - Compare our Insurance Deals**
www.tescofinance.com - New. 10% multi-car discount - plus up to 50% named driver discount.
- **Compare Car Insurance Deals Online**
www.moneyexpert.com - Compare the rates of up to 98% of online car insurance providers.

Below the list, there are two numbered results:

1. **Compare Car Insurance, Home Insurance and Bike Insurance**
Let Compare The Market search over 300 insurance policies from all the top insurance providers. ... 16/03/2007 - Car insurance policyholders given vehicle ...
www.comparethemarket.com - 20k - [Cached](#) - [More from this site](#)
2. **Compare Affordable Health Insurance Quotes**
Compare health insurance quotes, medical insurance plans. eHealthInsurance helps you find affordable health insurance, individual health insurance, major medical
Category: [Small Business Health Insurance Brokerages](#)
www.ehealthinsurance.com - [More from this site](#)

search doesn't work in a vacuum

It takes on average from **3 to 15 searches** to find and comply to a call to action that is measurable toward customer acquisition.

This means your website needs to be found for a number of searches to cover the queries that may occur within a search cluster.

Centered design Designing Web Usability Engineering Guidelines
Human-computer Information Architecture Marketing Methods Reviews
Sciences **Software** Usability And Accessibility **Usability**
Consulting Usability Professionals' Association Usability Project **Usability**
Research Usability Resources **Usability testing** Usability,
Information World Usability Day

As search engines improve the process of information retrieval, the easier it is to find places with good information and the less time users will spend visiting any individual website.

As a result of this, your website needs to make the most of visits arriving at your pages.

your website needs a call to action!

where is search going?

Search is beginning to mature as broadband usage grows.

More people are using search engines and the way they are using them has noticeably matured in the past year.

In February 2006 more internet visits were recorded to search engines than adult websites *

Nearly half the searches performed are now one off unique queries, as the user adapts their search to find exactly what they are looking for.

where is search going? cont.

Usability and increased awareness of CRM have worked to keep customers loyal to a brand after their initial recruitment.

The ideal is fewer brand related searches and yet more visitors to your site.

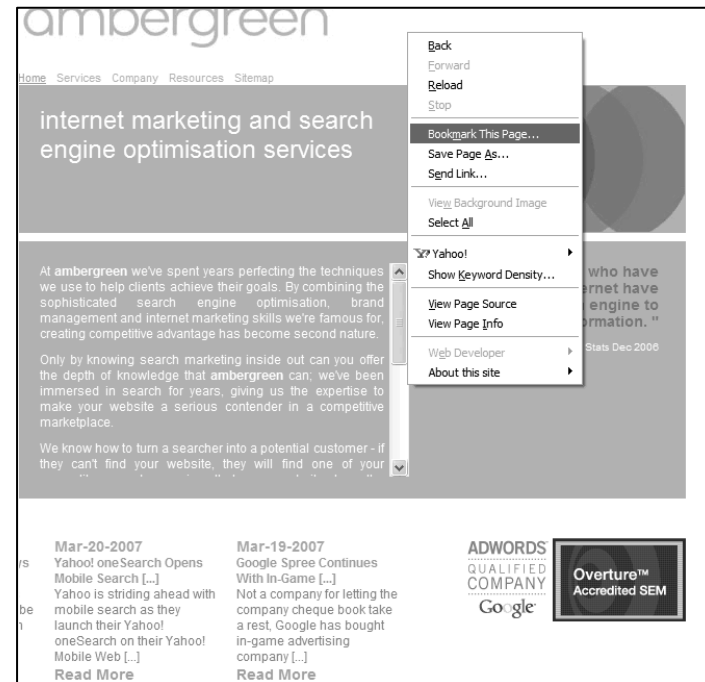
This reflects an increase in domain awareness (through bookmarking and social media optimisation etc) and it should also reflect a wider range of long tail keywords used by searchers currently not loyal to your brand.

where is search going? cont.

These in turn (after becoming customers), should become brand related searches.

This should be followed by a period of familiarisation and CRM activity, where the visitors enter the site using direct type ins and bookmarked referrals.

At this point, search in earnest starts finding visitors that are currently not loyal to your brand.



How usability and search can work towards reaching the common objectives

usability and paid search

Multi Variate and AB testing

Traditional A/B testing on web pages has been proven to increase conversion ratios.

Testing various creatives has proved to deliver more targeted responses.

PPC

Allows you to deliver a mixture of creatives and landing pages; enables you to target the right kind of customer, at the right kind of price.

Feeds

There are only a 5 companies in Europe accredited to run trusted feeds with Yahoo Search Submit Pro, of which **ambergreen** is one.

Benefits include

- 48 hour page refreshes keep Yahoo! content fresh
- placement of deep content in the natural search index
- detailed daily reporting to track and optimise results
- pay for performance pricing on a fixed CPC basis

If you have little Yahoo! visibility this increases natural presence while providing greater average basket value than any other engine.

Emails

These are one of the greatest tools online marketers can employ.

Demographic profiling of email subscribers allows email landing pages to be easily tailored to the audience (adults, teenagers etc)

This makes it more likely that positive ROI will be achieved.

Usability + Natural Search: techniques of avoiding conflicting interests

content and usability

Content

Search engines love content.

Relevant keywords are needed to attract qualified visitors to web pages, but be careful – balance is key.

Keyword stuffing is rarely a good thing – go over the top and you will drive visitors away and reduce positions.

The reputation of page content is related to the relevancy of the content and the anchor text used to link to it.

content and usability

Content

Google.co.uk - It hardly has any content, and still gets found on page 1 for “search engine” on Yahoo!, MSN and Google UK

It doesn't have the word “search engine” in the body

The page title is <title>Google</title>

It doesn't even use a description tag

But millions of authority sites link to it, using link text variations

The site description is written by the Open Directory Project *

The home page is functionally perfect

Session times show how usable the search pages are

A classic example of how usability has worked with SMO and linking to gain positions as opposed to using on page content

As users have matured, so searches have become more complex and more specific.

**82% of users relaunch an unsuccessful query
on the same engine, but using more keywords ***

* iProspect Search Engine User Behaviour Study April 2006

Link Bait drives visitors to a website and increases referrals through third party links by providing a service, tool, article or viral to a community that benefits from it.

navigation and usability

Navigation

Standardising the navigation across each page makes it less confusing.

Give users short-cuts to places where they are likely to want to go.

A good navigation system must be usable by all your visitors.

If your site has a large number of pages, a site search engine will improve your site's usability.

A site map gives users an alternative access route around your site.

style sheets and usability

CSS

Search engines accept the responsible use of CSS.

H1 and bold tags can be given the typeface and size of your choice, but don't go crazy with them; while they help users and spiders identify important points, it can be detrimental to relevancy.

Code your page for search engines and use CSS to make it user friendly.

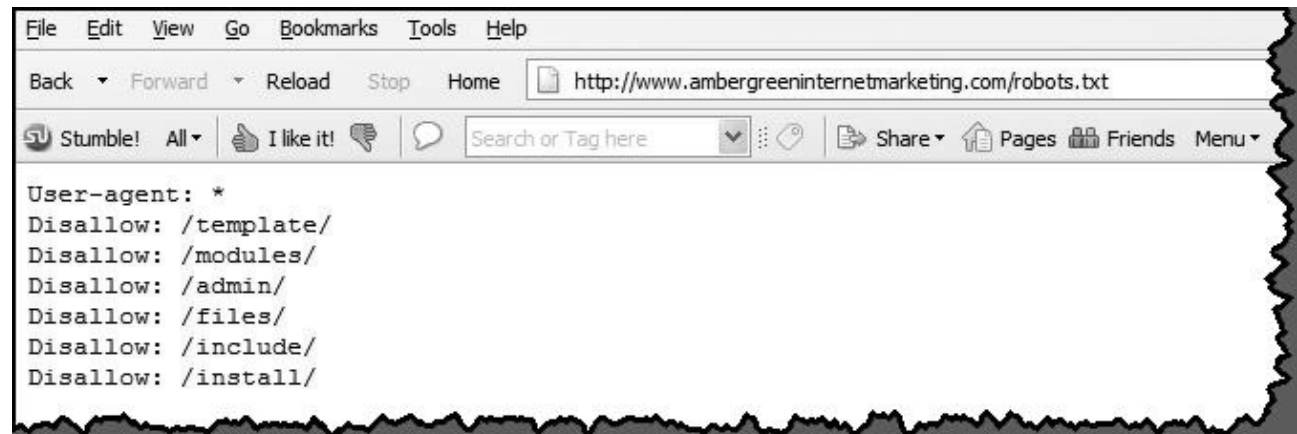
Place search unfriendly forms in CSS and position cleverly to address usability needs.

duplicate content and personalisation

Personalisation

Personalising pages can increase conversion ratios.

Use a robots.txt file to avoid duplicate indexing.

A screenshot of a web browser window displaying a robots.txt file. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'http://www.ambergreeninternetmarketing.com/robots.txt'. The browser's interface includes a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Go, Bookmarks, Tools, Help), navigation buttons (Back, Forward, Reload, Stop, Home), and a search bar. The main content area shows the text of the robots.txt file.

```
User-agent: *
Disallow: /template/
Disallow: /modules/
Disallow: /admin/
Disallow: /files/
Disallow: /include/
Disallow: /install/
```