

It's Time to Re-visit your **SEO Practices** with **Google** Being More Stringent on **Ranking Webpages**

The focus of Google search has shifted to articles with unique content — whether it's text, an image or a video. Aggressive pushing of content alone may not help getting them ranked higher

— Mastufa Ahmed

The world of 'Search' has evolved with many shattering changes from search giants like Google. The Panda and Penguin update have penalized several websites having poor content or those search engine optimizers who tried hard to beef up rankings in Google by building low quality links. Many small business owners were affected with the Penguin update who digged hard to entice search engines with repeated phrases and keyword stuffing, and not visitors.

The algorithm by Google was meant to do away with the black-hat SEO techniques cited above. Before Penguin, there was Google Panda which aimed at downranking websites that provided poor user experience.

The focus of Google search has shifted to articles with unique content, whether it's text, image or video. So, if you're aggressively pushing your content for search engines to rank them high, you may not get the desired results until you put in genuine contents for readers. As we move along the year, Google will be more stringent on all this --one pointer to this is that Google has been in transition to semantic search for a year now. And the best way to get featured on semantic search results is adding quality content to your site. The old rule of stuffing keywords into your content alone may not work.

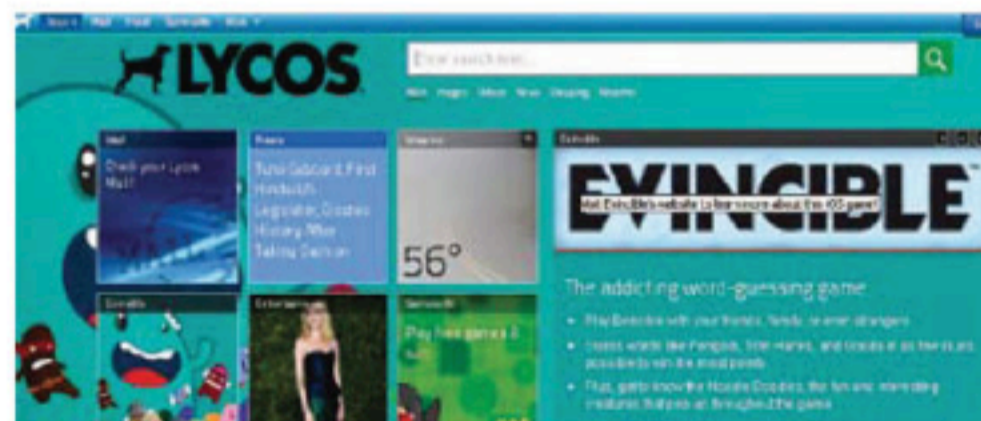
Lycos planning a comeback in 2013

According to a report by The Next Web, the search giant of 1990 that existed alongside Yahoo! Netscape, and Alta Vista, is planning a comeback. The search product will offer content on the page itself without having to click off to pages in individual search results, said CEO Rob Balazy, according to the report.

"In the coming year you will see us introduce a new proprietary search product... it's still in the planning stage but we have a vision to merge the notion of a

SEARCH 2013: PCQ PREDICTIONS

- Shared content will move up the search results
- Google will force content producers to use Google+
- Personalized search results will feature alongside organic results
- Google will focus on authors' credibility to prioritize content
- SEO will evolve to Web Presence Optimization



search-type activity with a curated content experience," says Balazy.

How 'Search' will change in 2013

'Search' got a major refresh ever since Google overhauled its algorithm and shifted to semantic web by rolling out Knowledge Graph in the mid of 2011. The keyword based web content faced a major setback from this given the fact semantic web works on the basis of the meaning of words. Google will for sure cash in on the new mantra moving forward.

Year 2013 is set to see many more changes. It's time SMEs revisit their online content marketing/optimization strategies in the wake of all these changes to stay ahead of the curve.



Navneet Kaushal
CEO of Page Traffic

What can we expect from Google in 2013?

2013 will see a major shift in terms of how Google assigns rank and authority. Google's rising emphasis on social, Authorship, their ongoing efforts to measure site trust, and their progressive devaluation of raw links as a ranking factor. Google understands that people come online to find trusted businesses or read content written by credible and knowledgeable people. So, we will see the trend towards making social verification and content a major part of their search algorithm.

Google is set to rely heavily on shared content to rank webpages!

Social networks have become a critical element in SEO. Shares, likes, follows, and Google Plus all now positively impacts overall rankings for a website. Reviews on sites like Yelp and Places are great for ranking your site locally. Google also combines authority in social networks as a whole in combination with other factors to decide which sites are most important to rank in any particular locale.

Google applies a three-dimensional measurement system for both Twitter and Facebook. The number of followers/mentions or shares/likes your business account, the authority index of individuals who follow/mention or share/like and the pace at which these accelerate or decelerate.

Google will add new signals, as it works to continually improve the SERPs specially with Google+ integration.

How should SMEs prepare to get more visibility to their businesses online?

In 2013, we optimize everything - slides, photos, videos, infographics, career pages, blogs, webinars and all every other web element possible. We will also need to master technical SEO. This will include digging into data that you never thought was important, such as URL parameters and backlinks. The new SEO strategy will include brand building, citations and trust, growing importance of social and personalised search, knowledge graphs, structured data and authorship. This will make us do less of SEO and more of Web Presence Optimization.

What can we expect from other search players like Bing and Yahoo!?

In the last year alone Bing has launched its Social Bar, Qwiki (similar to knowledgebase). With Yahoo! Search now being powered by Bing, we expect Bing to continue launching similar features.

We at PCQuest come up with the following trends that are likely to rule the search world in 2013.

Content shared on social media will feature more on search results

Search engine especially Google will rely more on social media to rank content. Google+, for instance, has aggressively been pushed by Google recently through which readers say whether a page is helpful. Posts with more social sharing points will get ranked up. The mantra behind this is that pages that are recommended/shared or retweeted seem to have more values than the rest. The question is what do SMEs have to do with it? Much! Really. SMEs have to have measures to be all over Google+ moving forward.

Google to leverage 'Author Rank' to crawl high quality content

Google plans to prioritize content generated by verified writers. This is why the new tool that connects authors with their contents. 'Author Rank' is a new ranking system Google is expected to use in 2013. Google Authorship tool allows authors to anchor their articles/online content to their Google+ profile, which enables Google to credit the

authors with their content. So, your credibility as a content generator will decide your page rank in search result pages. With this measure, Google intends to outsmart SEO spammers while forcing content producers to use Google+.

The tool will be a boon for journos and online writers who contribute genuine articles to authority websites and make all the noise for readers. And obviously, low grade/anonymous content generators will move down the result pages. It's time SMEs get their content generators recognized by Google to stay up the search results.

Personalized search results will show up more on search results

Personalized search results is nothing new, where Google takes into account user's history including sites visited earlier, etc and not only based on the relevancy of web page to the search term, to provide a more personalized experience. Moving forward, Google will ramp this up to be able to provide location and search based activities by prioritizing pages. Let's wait and watch how things unfold.

How are you planning to do your web page optimization to remain on top of search results in the wake of all this changes? Let us know by writing to pcquest@cybermedia.co.in □