

Google Searches

How to make your site
easier to find

Overview

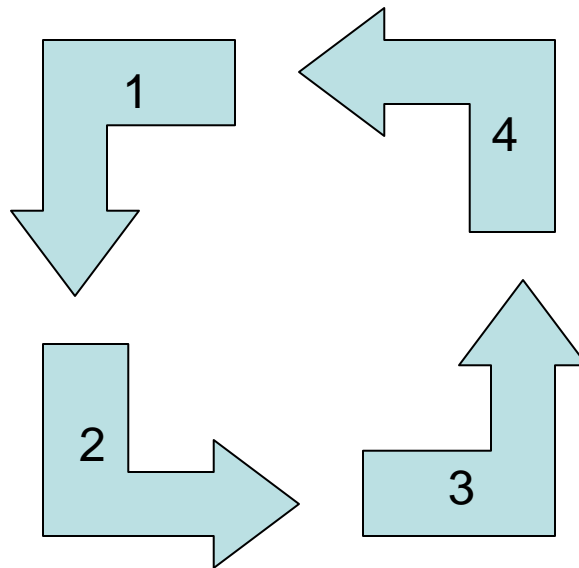
Everyone recognizes the advantages of appearing at the top of a Google search, but few people understand what it takes to make that happen.

This mini-course is designed to explain, in plain English, how the search engines like Google and Yahoo work, and what you can do to maximize your website's presence on those result pages.



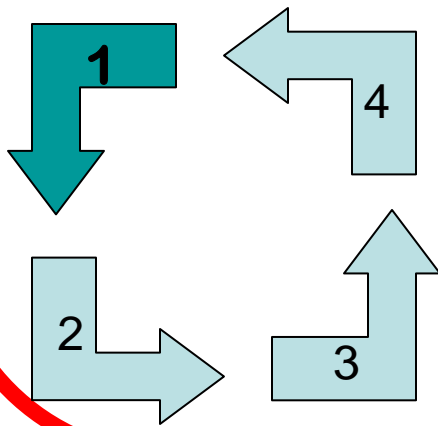
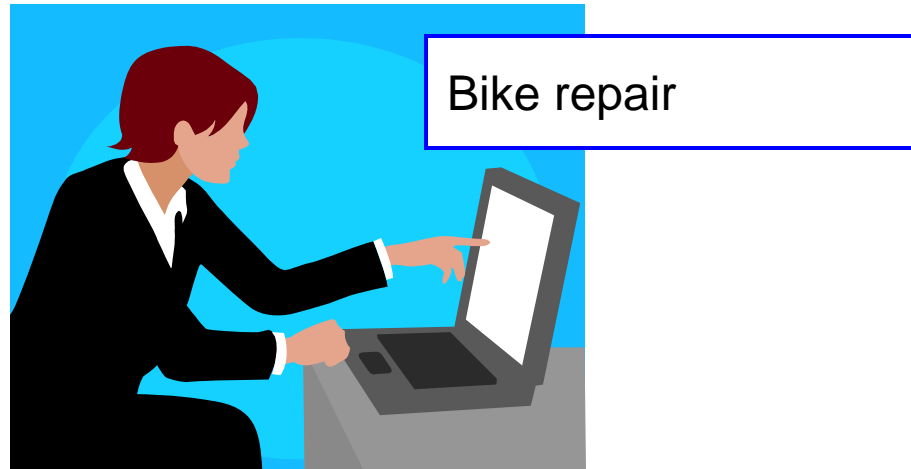
Searches Simplified

First, let's look at how a search actually works, by breaking the process down into four basic steps.



Step 1

A user types a question or keyword into the search box, then clicks “Search”.



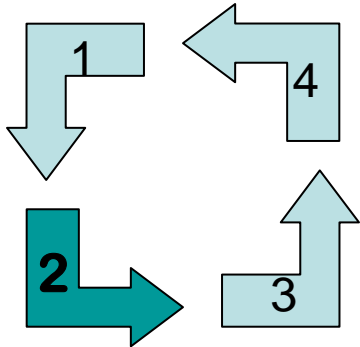
When the user clicks “Search”, that query is sent to Google’s **Web Server**.

Step 2

The web server sends the query to the **Index Servers.**

The content inside the Index Servers is similar to the index in the back of a book.

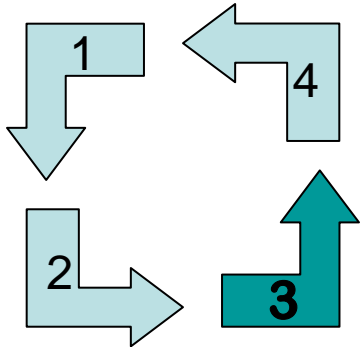
Index Servers tell which web pages contain the words that match the query.



Step 3

The Index Servers send the list of sites to the **Doc Servers**, which actually retrieve the stored documents identified in Step 2.

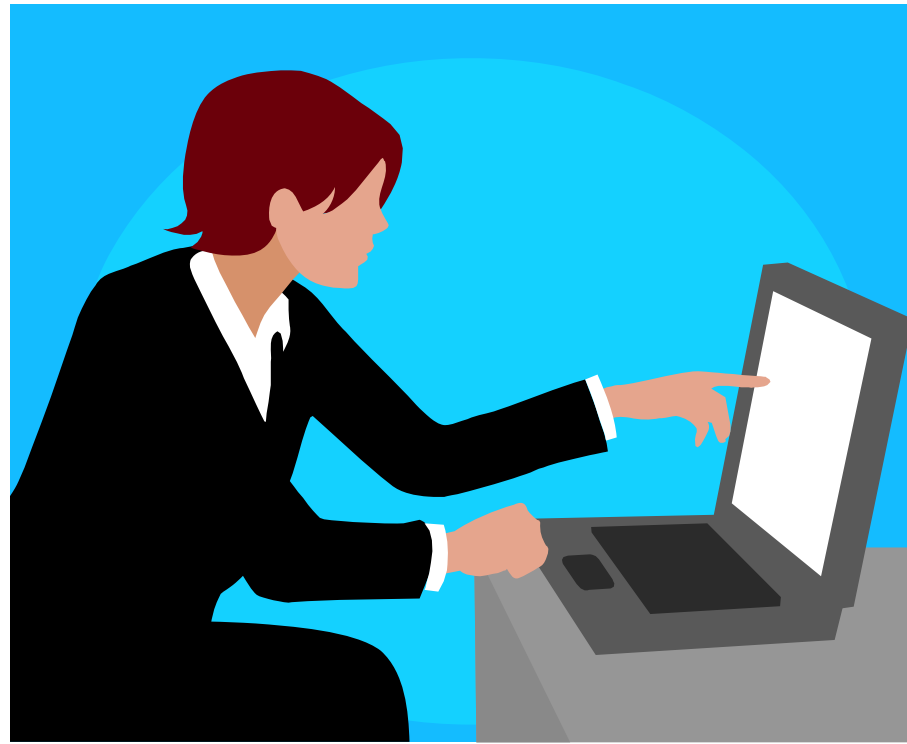
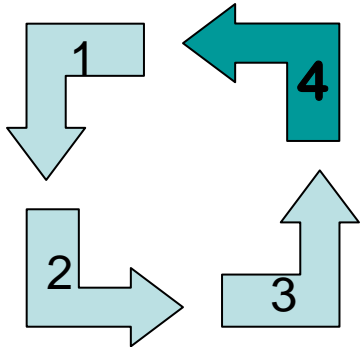
Here, the documents are **ranked** according to a number of criteria to determine the appropriate order to place them on the results page.



(We'll discuss these ranking criteria shortly.)

Step 4

The search results are returned to the user in a fraction of a second.



Google Rankings

Google ranks websites based on a number of factors, and those rankings determine where a site ends up on a search result page.

In order to maximize your site's position, your Web Designer needs to incorporate those factors in the design of your site.

Ranking Factors

Google incorporates a very complex collection of algorithms to determine the importance of a site to the end-user. To illustrate these factors, let's compare two websites:

nytimes.com and tinytownnews.com

Both sites are online newspapers, but Google sees their sites very differently.

Why?

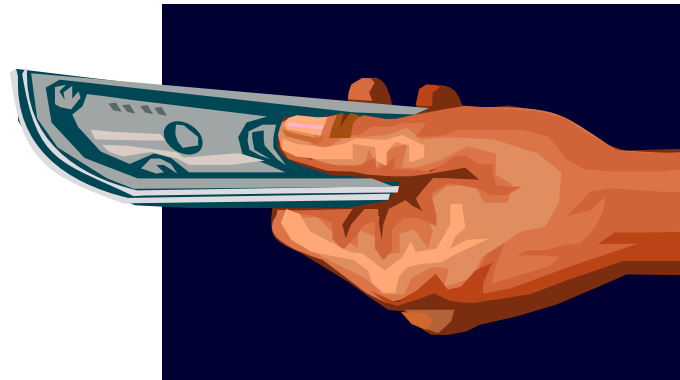
Ranking Factors

Google's algorithms consider many factors to determine a site's importance including:

- ✓ Number of visitors to the site
- ✓ Number of websites that link to the site
- ✓ Importance (or ranking) of the websites that link to the site
- ✓ Appearance and prominence of the words in a user's search
- ✓ How much they pay to Google

Pay for Position

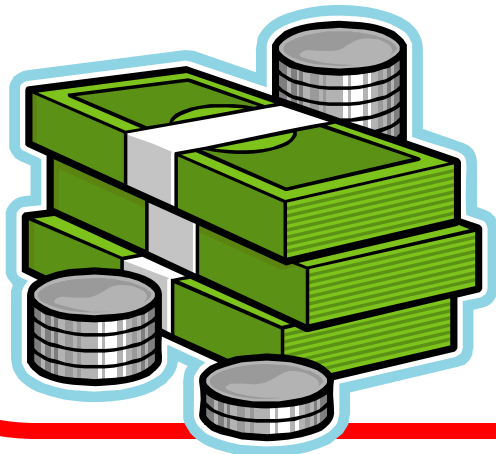
The only sure-fire way to guarantee a top position in a search result is to pay for it.



How much it costs is determined by another set of equally-confusing algorithms, but essentially, **it goes to the highest bidder.**

Pay for Position

Companies tell Google how much they want to spend on their Google advertising, and that amount is compared to other companies that meet the user's search criteria. The higher the price you pay, the more points you get in the ranking scheme.



Paying the highest price doesn't guarantee you the highest ranking, but it helps your score.

Pay for Position

The NY Times has a bigger advertising budget than Tiny Town News, but maybe Tiny Town News has more than a local competitor.

If the user Googled:

newspapers in Tiny County

Tiny Town News might just receive top billing.

But probably not...

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Pay for Position

The NY Times has probably paid an enormous fee for all searches involving the word “newspaper”, so they will probably still be on top.

Tiny Town News might only hope to be placed above their local competitors.

But maybe that's enough for them.

What else can you do?

Here are a few tips that can help improve your ranking:

- Ask your business partners to link to your site from theirs. Reciprocal agreements can benefit both companies.
- Encourage visitors to your site. Place your URL (your web address) in all your print advertising, and give people a reason to go there. (“Visit our website for money-saving coupons.” or “Enter a sweepstakes at www.yoursite.com”)
- Make sure your website is **optimized** for search engines.

What's Optimizing?

Search Engines like Google and Yahoo run programs that “crawl” across the internet, sniffing out content from all the websites out there.

Optimizing means making the content of your site easily available to the web crawlers.

Emcie Graphic Design has the tools and the expertise to optimize your website so that Google and other search engines can find you and point end-users to your site.



Questions?

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