



## **Advanced Web Site Content Development –** Top Strategies for Developing Quality Content For Search Engines and Web Site Users

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## Introduction

One of the keys to keeping a Web site fresh for users and Search Engines is the regular addition of content. Web sites are not always built with that in mind. Many Web sites are nothing more than online brochures for companies. They rarely update content unless a redesign is involved. There are also many Web sites that are updated with new content, but the old information is just written over. This scenario does not lead to Web site growth. The goal of this white paper is to review strategies to assist in content growth on a Web site that causes the site to grow horizontally and provide more opportunities to rank well in Search Engines.

Developing strategies for content growth can cause anxiety for companies that do not have on-staff Web development personnel. Web pages will have to regularly be generated and uploaded to the site for the new content. These strategies also require an ongoing commitment to content generation and copyrighting. Time has to be set aside to write good content and ensure that a "Best Practices" approach to Search Engine Optimization is applied to that content.

## Benefits of adding content to a Web Site

There are many benefits of adding content. This section will review a few:

**Freshness** – Search Engine Spiders visit Web sites that are kept fresh more frequently. Their goal is to discover as much valuable content as possible on the Web and make it searchable. By constantly adding new content to a Web site, Search Engines will see the site as being fresh and relevant. New content from Web sites has recently been spotted on Search Engines within a few hours after posting. This is a dramatic change from the early days of Search, when it could take months for Spiders to find new content and index it (display it in their results).

**Long Tail of Search** – This refers to the traffic that comes to a Web site from a Search Engine but not come from the top keywords. Typically, if keyword traffic was graphed from a Search Engine, a few words drive a large percentage of visitors, but many (sometimes thousands) of keywords drive only a few visits. When the low volume keywords are added together, they can provide more traffic than the top performers. These terms are usually more specific, can have more words in each phrase, and lead to a higher conversion ratio because they are more targeted. The long tail exists based on the size and content of a Web site.

The more content a Web site has, the more likely it has a very long tail of keywords.

**Search Engine Real Estate** – A Web site’s ability to show up in the Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) is directly correlated to its size and content. A small five page Web site may only be able to rank for a handful of keywords. Ebay on the other hand can rank for millions of keywords. So as the Web site grows with keyword rich content, it is more likely to occupy the valued real estate of more SERPs.

**Becoming an Industry Resource** – As a Web site grows and provides valuable content for users, it has the ability to become an Industry Resource. Search Engines view these types of Web sites higher than a typical brochure Web site that does not offer much content. Industry Resource Web sites have the opportunity to generate more free traffic because of the repository of valuable articles and content.

**Visitor Loyalty / Repeat Visitors** – Ultimately, new content generation is for the users. Even if Search Engine Optimization is the impetus for its creation, new visitors will find the content and read it. If the content is valuable and compelling, it will bring visitors back. Good content can lead to linking, word of mouth advertising, and new streams of visitors to the Web site. The site can become more engaging. Brand awareness and familiarity can grow with visitor loyalty. Comfort levels with the site users can increase and lead to higher conversions.

**Archived Content** – Companies with a Web presence can document part of their history, development, and growth through archiving content on their Web sites. This content is valuable for users when analyzing and researching the viability of the company. A company that has a News section that dates back multiple years may be an easier choice to do business with than a company who may appear to be a fly-by-night venture. Archiving content is one of the easiest ways for a Web site to grow steadily.

**Horizontal Site Growth** – Web sites should grow horizontally with simple navigation. Web designs should be built to accommodate growth within a category structure that is accessible from the main navigation. The “about us” and “contact us” type pages do not have room for much content growth. The strategies below will address how to build out content in other areas of the Web site. This growth will increase the breadth of the Web site without having to redesign its structure.

## Advanced Strategies for Content Growth

There are many strategies that can be implemented for content growth on a Web site. One of the most common areas is the News and Events section. Even there, a common mistake is not keeping an archive of past news and events. Below are some of the top techniques for developing fresh, valuable keyword rich content on a continual basis.

**WHITE PAPERS** – The simplest definition of a White Paper is an online essay of targeted subject matter. White Papers were originally technical documents that were blueprints for software or hardware. Today's usage is much broader. Start by finding subject matter that can be written about and be very informative or educational. Popular keywords within the target industry can make great topics. Five to Seven pages is a general rule for the minimum size of a White Paper. They can certainly be longer based on the subject and extent of copy needed to properly convey the information. Examples, statistics, and can be a natural as part of their content. Their overall style is somewhat formal and structured.

### Search Engine Optimization Considerations:

- Title the document with targeted keywords based on its theme
- Use a description meta tag that summarizes the key points covered
- Use a keywords meta tag that only references keywords that appear several times within the document
- Use keyword based links to reference points on the Web
- Use H tags for topic points
- Name the document with relevant and intuitive keywords
- Due to the focused subject matter of the paper, it is often not necessary to focus too heavily on frequency and density of keywords
- A great White Paper will naturally generate links from Web sites, Blogs, and other sites that may discuss it
- White Papers should be permanently hosted on the Web site with good internal linking

### Example:

A Web site that focuses on Mortgage Refinancing wants to become a resource for people looking for these types of loans. Possible White Paper topics could be Advantages of Mortgage Refinancing, How to Consolidate Your Loans through Mortgage Refinancing, How to Shop for Mortgage Refinance Companies, and Benefits of Fixed Rate Mortgage Loans.

**EDITORIALS** – This type of content is less formal and shorter than a White Paper. Topics can include reviews of an item or service, opinions on current events, opinions on basic industry topics and events, and analysis of other editorials. Consider this content to be similar to an editorial found in a newspaper or magazine. Editorials that are based on timely events have the ability to drive quick Web traffic. Editorials based on hotly debated topics can drive timely traffic. Reviews of new products can capture the innovators who are searching for the latest and greatest.

#### **Search Engine Optimization Considerations:**

- Title the editorial with targeted keywords based on its subject matter
- Use a description meta tag that summarizes the key points covered
- Use a keywords meta tag that only references keywords that appear several times within the document
- Use keyword based links to reference points on the Web
- Use an H1 tag for title
- Name the document with relevant and intuitive keywords
- The average size of an editorial is one page or a few paragraphs. Important keywords should appear two to three times in the content
- A great editorial will naturally generate links from Web sites, Blogs, and other sites that may discuss it
- Editorials should be permanently hosted on the Web site with good internal linking

#### **Example:**

The Mortgage Refinance Company now wants to write a few editorials based on recent news. Since an article about the risks of low interest ARM (Adjustable Rate Mortgage) loans was featured on the front page of a leading national newspaper, this company is going to write an editorial that is that explains how to get out of that type of mortgage.

**NEWSLETTERS** – Newsletter content is frequently overlooked as a great source for valuable Web site content development. Newsletter design plays into the optimization. Newsletters can have many purposes and contain great content. MoreVisibility has a great [implementation of this strategy](#). Each month a newsletter is put together with new articles. These articles come from multiple authors and cover a variety of important topics for Search Engine Marketing. This newsletter also contains links to SEM Industry news, client spotlights, and occasionally promotional

specials. MoreVisibility's newsletter and its linking on the Web site is a blueprint for success in this content development strategy.

**Search Engine Optimization Considerations:**

- Newsletters and articles should be optimized
- Title both with targeted keywords based on their content
- Use a description meta tag that summarizes the key points covered
- Use a keywords meta tag that only references keywords that appear several times within the document
- Use keyword based links in the Newsletter for the articles
- Name the articles with relevant and intuitive keywords
- The articles within the Newsletter should follow the rules of the editorials
- Archive Newsletters on the Web site
- Do not use tracking links that may have been in the email version

**Example:**

The Mortgage Refinance Company has serviced 50,000 leads in the last six months. Those leads opted into a list to receive more information from the company. A newsletter is developed to maintain contact with former borrowers. This newsletter will provide information on the latest mortgage rates, a free mortgage calculator, and one new article about refinancing.

**PRESS RELEASES** – This type of content is one of the most valuable for optimization and can quickly drive traffic from new sources to the Web site. Press releases can be written on almost any topic and released on a wire. They can have an astounding affect on links if they are optimized for Web release. Good topics would be centered on important industry keywords.

**Search Engine Optimization Considerations:**

- Title the document with targeted keywords based on its content
- Keep it short and to the point
- Use keyword based links in the Press Release linking back to the Web site
- Post the release to the Web site prior to releasing in on a wire service

**Example:**

A press release about a new program to transfer ARM mortgages to fixed rate mortgages was developed by the company. This release focuses on a brand new service that eases the path to refinancing. The press releases

uses “easy mortgage refinancing” as the anchor text for links back to the Web site for this new service.

**BLOGS** – The Web 2.0 user generated content revolution has developed this effective channel for fast and easy communication online. Using services like [www.Blogspot.com](http://www.Blogspot.com) or <http://spaces.live.com> provides the novice Web user with simple tools to publish content on the World Wide Web. Blogs can be an informal channel for communication and content development. Traffic streams can come from Blog Search Engines and other Blogs in the Blogosphere (the world of Blogs). MoreVisibility has a White Paper available on [Blogs and Search Engine Marketing](#). It covers content development strategies in more detail. The abridged version – almost any content is fine as long as it is kept fresh and updated regularly.

**Search Engine Optimization Considerations:**

- Title the Blog post with targeted keywords based on its content. The titles become the links to the posts in the archives
- Tag keywords that appear several times within the document
- Use keyword based links to reference points on the Web
- If using an external Blogging host (recommended for external link value), link to it from the Web site

**Example:**

The Mortgage Refinance Company has many more niche keywords than the Web site can accommodate. A Blog strategy is developed to chronicle the areas that the refinances are being fulfilled in. These posts create geocentric keywords like “Atlanta mortgage refinance.” They are also going to chronicle the uses of the mortgage loans. These posts target keywords like “lock in your mortgage rate”, “consolidate mortgage payments”, and “lower your monthly mortgage payment”.

**Additional Strategies for Ecommerce Web sites**

Ecommerce and other database driven Web sites can benefit from the strategies mentioned above. There are a few more techniques that are especially appropriate for Ecommerce type Web sites.

**CUSTOMIZED DATABASE CONTENT** – One the most common issues for database driven Web sites is not having unique content. Frequently, manufacture’s provided databases are just displayed within the design of the site. It was ok to do this several years ago when there

was less competition, but today the Search Engines can sniff out duplicate content with ease. A little extra time to rewrite manufacture's descriptions can make the difference between a successful Web site with strong natural traffic and a struggling one.

### **Search Engine Optimization Considerations:**

- The title of the page should be the product name
- The description meta tag should be somewhat different from the product description on the page
- The keywords meta tag should reference the product name, variations, possibly categories, and possible accessories if they appear on the page.
- Use keyword based links to point to related products on the Web site
- Use an H1 tag for the product name that should be slightly different than the title
- Name the document with relevant and intuitive keywords

### **Example:**

A Web site that sells sporting goods has over 10,000 products available online. In the past they have just used manufacturer databases to populate the content of their site. Recently traffic has increased to their home page, but the traffic to their product pages has been waning. They researched the competition and found that many Web sites had the exact same product specs on their pages. A content strategy was set in motion to rewrite the product descriptions and spice them up. Product pages would also now link to related products and accessories that were hand picked by editors.

**PRODUCT REVIEWS** – User generated content can quickly allow database type Web sites to have unique content. When a user reviews a product, they are speaking very specifically about one item. This copy is very keyword rich by nature. Reviews are also useful for shoppers interested in the items. Reviews should appear on the product page, but not add clutter it.

**Search Engine Optimization Considerations:**

- This content is very valuable and has to appear on the Web page of the product

**Example:**

The sporting goods Web site was pleased with their initial changes but found that Web sites that were ranking at the top for some of their products also had a reviews section. They added reviews to their products and provided incentives for their users with 10% off future purchases if they reviewed their recent product purchase.

**PERSONALIZATION STRATEGIES** – This is currently one of the hottest strategies for Ecommerce Web sites. It involves tying a persona or character to the Web site. This character then comments on every product on the Web site. The character can take on a life of its own. It can even have its own profile on popular Web sites like Myspace.

**Search Engine Optimization Considerations:**

- The comments should include keyword rich text where possible
- Recommended links should use good keyword anchor text

**Example:**

The sporting goods Web site decided to add the brother of the owner to the Web site because he was an avid sportsman. Bronco Bill now has his picture, his comments, and his recommended products on every page in the site. He became a quasi celebrity to their client base. His fame is continuing to grow thanks to video clips of product reviews and his additions to the monthly newsletter.

**Monitoring Traffic and Links**

Once the new content has been added to the Web site, tracking its progress will let the Web site owners know if the time investment was worthwhile. Two of the simplest ways to track new Web page progress are page entry points in the log analyzer and backlinks. The logs should be monitored for increases in traffic. Traffic directly to the pages from outside sources is very track-able. Other benefits from the new content are more intangible. Overall site traffic may increase. Other pages may move up in the SERPs because of new keyword linking from the new content.

Use [Google Webmaster Tools](#) (formerly Google Sitemaps) for tracking the backlink information. Once a Web site is verified, Google will display links to particular pages within the Web site that they recognize. Yahoo provides similar information through their [Site Explorer](#) tool.

## Conclusion

Adding content to a Web site is not an easy task. Implementing strategies for new content requires an ongoing commitment to copywriting and Web page development. Several strategies were discussed in this document. All of them can be used on the same Web site. The net gains from the time invested should be well worth the effort. Search Engine Optimization should be considered part of the process for every new page that is created. Free Web traffic and quality content for the users are the two main goals of this content. As the Web site grows as repository of information, it becomes more valuable to users and Search Engines.

MoreVisibility regularly assists our clients with content development strategies. We have been very creative for many of the Web sites that have been serviced in the past 7 years. If you are having trouble implementing any of these strategies or are interested in further guidance, please contact us.

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