NEWSLETTER

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easySEO

SMARTPHONE AND MOBILE DEVICE USAGE ESCALATING

LATEST HAPPENINGS IN THE WORLD OF LOCAL SEARCH FOR THE MONTH OF

NOVEMBER 2016

1 LATEST HAPPENINGS IN THE WORLD OF LOCAL SEARCH FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2016

2 GOOGLE IS GOING TO SEPARATE MOBILE AND DESKTOP SEARCH INDEXES

3 SMARTPHONE AND MOBILE DEVICE USAGE ESCALATING

4 SEARCH ADS ARE LEADING DIGITAL REVENUE GENERATORS IN 2016

5 8 BEST WAYS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR SITE FOR UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

6 FACEBOOK INTRODUCES IT'S BUSINESS VERSION "WORKPLACE"

– Mike Blumenthal gives us a blast from the past with an article on what it took to rank in Local Search 10 years ago. You'll find it interesting to compare it to today's local algorithms.

– Lyft is planning to turn most of its fleet into robotic by 2021.

– If you are striving to get 5-star reviews, every time, give this article a read to find out why you don't want all 5 star ratings.

– Google has recently shared some advice on how to choose the "right SEO company for your business".

Deceptive Behavior

Many third-parties represent the best interests of their clients, but some third-parties are less reputable. Here's a list of red flags to watch out for when selecting and working a third-party:

- **Not being transparent**. You have a right to know how users are interacting with your business, including specific data like the number of views and clicks to your business listing.
- **Guaranteeing placement on Google**. It is not possible for third-parties to influence the order in which your business appears on Google Search or Maps. Learn more about local search ranking
- **Claiming to work for Google**. If a third-party representative claims to be employed by Google, ask for their name and request that they email you from their @google.com (not @gmail.com) email address.
- **Making threats**. Third-parties can't remove your business from Google or access your listing without your explicit permission.
- **Deceptive pricing**. Malicious third-parties may not charge you using the pricing you agreed to. Always get an official copy of your agreement before working with a third-party.

– If you are looking for some templates for creating a city page on local sites, here it is. Hope you'll find ideas you haven't thought of yet. You don't just need city pages - you need good city pages. The content needs to actually be useful to searchers looking for a business like yours in that area and not just stuff repurposed from Wikipedia and the town website.

– Now it will be easy to encourage users to drop a review about your business because Whitespark has just launched a new tool using which you can provide direct URL to the users: It's called the Google review link generator. Unfortunately, it doesn't work for Service Area Businesses (SABs) that hide their address in their Google My Business listings.

– People have reported that Google is now showing 4 ads above the local packs on mobile devices. If the news coming is indeed true, we will have to hone our AdWords skill.

– In order to counter Craiglist, Facebook has just launched Marketplace. This is a natural addition for Facebook, as there are many communities that already have active Facebook Swap groups that push out newly listed items via FB Messenger.
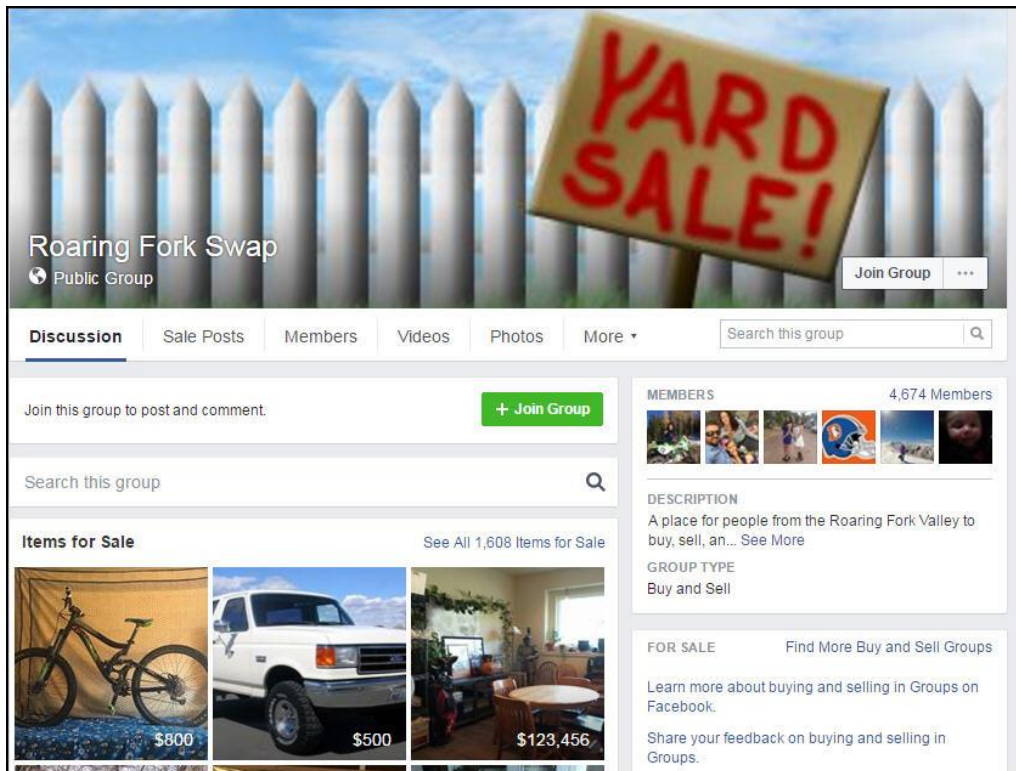
- Want to know the secrets of top ranking local landing pages? Well, Nifty Marketing has decoded it for you. Read it here.

- Local business can compete in the SERP's with the help of structured data. Here's how.

- It seems like Google is giving preference to fresh reviews instead of old ones. A recent survey revealed that new reviews are shown at the top and is also giving a temporary boost in the rankings.

- Do you know that you can not demote site links from within the Google Search Console anymore? Well, the reason is that Google understands what's important on your site. Now, that makes good site structure and internal linking even more important.

- AMP is going to be the new norm, so it's better to get on the train than sitting on the side tracks. Here's a tutorial that can be of some help, also you can get an AMP report from Google here.

- If you are keeping an eagle eye on the Facebook, you can easily guess that they are trying to push themselves into the local shopping flow. To know what can be the possible outcome, click here.

- Google has made available the click to message ads in the Google Adwords. It's an impressive addition in the Adwords because most of the customer will prefer text over Call. However, it's best for the business who can reply to the customers promptly. So before opting for it, you may want to decide that whether you can reply on time or not.

- Maybe the Email marketing looks pretty old school and you highly doubt that whether anybody opens any marketing emails or not. But you will be surprised to know that it gives one of the highest ROI in online marketing. Here's an article by Chad White on the power of email marketing.

- Better AVVO rating for lawyers translates to increased number of calls, so make sure you read some tips from Juris digital on how to increase your AVVO ratings.

Seems like Google is on a revamping spree. After making the Penguin real time and doing some major changes in the local search, Google is now going to take a much bigger step. The Google's Webmaster Trends Analyst, Gary Illyes has announced that Google is going to split its index between mobile and desktop, within the next few months.

We all very well aware of Google's obsession with Mobile devices, but now they are taking it a bit too far! They are going to have a "Mobile first" approach. OK, we understand that Mobile users are most likely to use the "Near me" feature hence it seems logical to provide them with the latest information, but doesn't a desktop user require the latest information as well?

However, it's not clear that how out-of-date desktop index will be. But one thing is clear that Google will run ranking algorithm in a very different way across mobile content rather than the current pattern that extracts data from desktop content to determine mobile rankings. Google is still trying to figure this out and you can see that in play within this thread here.

So now is the time to get all of the mobile ranking signals correct so when the shift happens, you move up in the rankings and not down. Make sure that your website has:
- Responsive Design
- AMP Optimization
- Fast Loading Pages
- Error Free Pages
- High Quality Content

If you need any help with mobile websites, we can be of assistance. We have been developing mobile websites for more than 3 years now and almost all of them are recognised by Google as Mobile friendly.

Features of our Google Mobile Friendly Website:

- Responsive website recognized by Google as mobile friendly.
- Click-to-Call, Click-to-Email and Click-to-Text features.
- Advanced mobile lead tracking and analytics.

Just connect with your account manager to get started.

3

SMARTPHONE AND MOBILE DEVICE USAGE ESCALATING

Last month Google released a very detailed research on the prospected growth of cross-device search and also shed light on the ever-growing use of mobile devices for searches.

Following were the points to consider:

- The Mobile devices have taken over the world by storm. Now, more than 1/4 of all users only uses a smartphone. Which is twice as compared to those who only use a PC.

- We keep jumping from one device to another to complete the task and sometimes use two at once.

- I know I will sound like captain obvious but anyways, the top three places people use their smartphone are home, work and in a store.

- On average, 4 out of 10 searches are conducted only on a smartphone.

- More than 7 in 10 users browse the web on their phones or computers in an average day.

Because information is just a click away, we now turn to search engines right when we think of the question. Following is a chart depicting our behavior.

Below are some common search themes:

HEALTH	PARENTING	BEAUTY
cold & flu, sunburns, cold sores	maternity & new parenting, teething	nail care, hair styling, manicures & pedicures

The report also shows us the top 4 places that people are most likely to use Smartphones to conduct a search.

1. Home
2. Work
3. Stores*
4. Restaurants and Bars

Mobile is here to stay, it will keep dominating the search field and so it's a no-brainer that you should get updated about it and get ahead of your competitors. Here's Google's full report which will help you grasp a clear picture of the present and near future of mobile devices. Go through it and you will find out some good ideas to utilize it in your favor.

IAB's new report revealed that online ad revenue in the US has reached a whopping $32.7 billion, that also in just the first half of 2016. The combined search revenue of desktop and mobile represented 50% of the total spendings, 19% more as compared to last year.

As expected, the Mobile advertising was the leading growth driver ($15,5 billion) as it witnessed 89% growth since last year. The search revenue was also jaw-dropping as it came to $16.3 billion including mobile and desktop where 8.9 billion is been contributed by desktop and $7.4 billion by Mobile.

Ad Formats Mobile Included – HY 2015

10%
9%
50%
31%

Ad Formats Mobile Included – HY 2016

8%
12%
50%
31%

- Search
- Banner*
- Video
- Other**
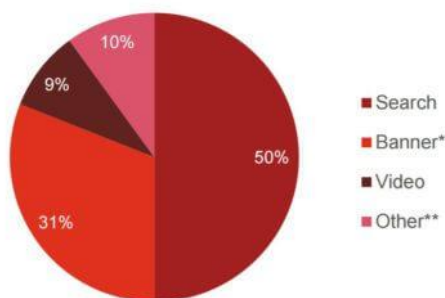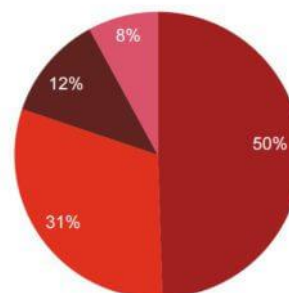
Source: IAB/PwC Internet Ad Revenue Report, HY 2016
* Display-related formats include: Banners (Banners, Rich Media, and Sponsorship) and Video.
** Other includes: Classifieds, Lead Generation, and Unspecified Other ("Unspecified Other" category was not specified by respondents).
***Amounts may not equal 100% due to rounding and omission of minor categories.

The reports also highlighted that the top 10 ad sellers and big publishers got the biggest piece of the cake (74%). Unsurprisingly, Google and Facebook enjoyed the highest revenue from Mobile. The report also revealed the top ten industries that spend maximum dollars on digital advertising.

1. Retail
2. Financial Services
3. Auto
4. Telecom
5. Leisure Travel
6. Consumer Packaged Goods
7. Consumer Electronics and Computers
8. Pharma and Healthcare
9. Media
10. Entertainment

So next time you know which industry to approach first.

The holiday season is just around the corner and according to the National retail foundation, the 2016 holiday season is going to be awesome. It is estimated that holiday sales will increase a solid 3.6% to $655.8 billion.

To get the biggest piece of the cake, you need to optimize your pages in advance so that you can reap maximum benefits. Below are 8 simple tips that can dramatically escalate your sales and profit.

Redirect your last year product pages
Make your previous years holiday promotion pages work for you this season as well by 301 redirecting them to relevant products.

Optimize for mobile devices
Well at this point of time, it has become unnecessary to state but still there are many business owners who haven't optimized their site for mobile, despite knowing the dramatic rise in usage of mobile devices for search and shopping. It is estimated that almost 40% of the sales will be made through mobile devices. Utilize Google's mobile friendly test to review your pages.

Update your information
Update your policy pages and make sure that you are providing your clients and customers with all the information they need. Don't forget to update the contact us, return policy and about us section.

Use holiday specific keywords to optimize your website
Building your pages around unique holiday specific keywords will give you a major boost. Also, make sure that both your home page and internal pages are optimized with holiday and gift specific keywords. Following are are optimization guidelines you can follow:

- **Page Titles** - Use holiday keywords in page titles.

- **META Description** - Get 1-2 minimum reps of target keywords in this displayed snippet for the search engines.

- **Header Tags** - Use one H1 tag and 2-4 H2-H3 tags to highlight specific keywords/products on each of your pages.

- **Body Content** - Make sure you have detailed product descriptions and information. Seed your pages with italicized, bolded and underlined versions of your target keywords to denote added emphasis to the search engines. Make sure also to seed your body content with special 2 for 1 offers, free shipping, or discount pricing where appropriate.

- **Use Schema Markup** - Have you added aggregate ratings, reviews or appropriate product schema markup to your pages? Google prefers JSON-LD. Use it.

- **URL Structure** - Use hyphens, not underlines, when writing up your holiday page URL structures. Include holiday specific keywords where possible and keep them tightly confined to the actual content on the page where possible.

- **Internal Linking** - Make sure to link to your holiday specific pages internally with specific target anchor text. Use Holiday Gifts Page or Christmas Gifts for Him as opposed to something more generic like Gift Page.

- **External Linking** - Start a concentrated link campaign now from external niche-related authority relevant sites/pages targeting your holiday gift pages. Make sure you use the same or similar target anchor text to those you plan to use internally.

- **Update your XML Sitemap** - Remember to update your XML Sitemap with any new holiday specific or seasonal pages.

- **Get Social!** - Make sure you have a clear strategy to use your social media channels to push-out and promote your various holiday promotions. Instagram and Pinterest continue to drive buckets of traffic. Retailers and online merchants who created featured holiday bulletin boards drove steady traffic in 2015, they will again in 2016. Review our resources on them here and here and plan accordingly!

- **Test your Web site** - Be sure everything works! Proof your Web site for broken links, slow-loading graphics or grammatical errors. We recommend downloading and running either Xenu or Screaming Frog on your site. Nothing kills conversions like a poor user experience.

Highly optimize your landing pages
Make sure that your shopping pages have clear calls to action, so when a prospected customer reach on the landing page, he can know what to do next and where to go.
Make full use of use of the following sites : Google Content Experiments Interface, Hot Jar and User Testing to test different pages on your Web site.

Reduce shopping cart abandonment rates
Cart abandonment rates has been rising at an alarming rate. As per the recent study, it has gone up to 78% in 2016. But if you are not interested in loosing your prospective customers, you can refer to this article where 13 ways has been mentioned in a great detail on how to lower the shopping car abandonment.

Offer gift cards and certificates
Gift cards are great when it comes to boosting your sales. it's not just for the fortune 500 companies, but for business of all sizes. You can utilize it to the maximum by doing some simple research. But before implementing this idea, make sure to customize your gift cards.

Utilize Comparison-Shopping
Comparison-Shopping sites are great to market your products. If you are not utilizing it, you should. Following are some choices you have:

- **Google Shopping** - We've covered the past changes with Google shopping in detail here in SEN. Formerly free, Google Shopping became paid-only inclusion in 2012. Retailers participate via a product listings CPC model. If you are a retailer and you are not in Google Shopping, get in there now. It can't be ignored, at any price!

- **PriceGrabber.com** - PriceGrabber.com is among the best in total monthly consumer searches and are highly-trafficked. Retailers participate via a CPC model.

- **Bing Product Search** - Bing provides two products for retailers looking to drive clicks: Rich Caption Ads and Product Ads. Rich caption ads are Bing's version of structured markup, they are free. Product ads are their paid product. To participate in both follow the steps in Merchant Center.

- **Shopping.com** - Very popular choice. Its partner site DealTime.com offers identical results so you can get two sites for the price of one when listing your products. Further, participating in Shopping.com also covers EBAY, ShopLocal.com, Pronto, and others. Retailers participate via a CPC Model.

- **NexTag.com** - Has some great customer features that bring back lots of repeat traffic. Consumers can track specific product price changes over time and be alerted when it drops to specific levels. A great engine to be listed on. Retailers participate via a category CPC model.

- **ShopZilla** - This site along with its partner site BizRate.com (identical results) is also very highly trafficked. However, overall product inventory tends to stagnate and they serve A LOT of results that end up being out of stock. Retailers participate via a CPC model. There is a $100 minimum starting deposit.

Things are looking good this holiday and in order to cash this opportunity, your site must be ready to handle the enthusiastic visitors, ready to spend dollars. Follow the above tips and ensure maximum profit.

Facebook launches its business version called 'Workplace', specifically for businesses, companies, non-profit organisations and other organisations. Workplace is a mode of communication for a particular company's employees to use at work. Through Workplace an organisation can connect internally with their employees, departments and management, bringing everyone on one platform to share updates and much more.

To get access to Workplace businesses need to sign up as an organisation and add employees as users, this costs monthly fees depending upon the number of users. Workplace is free for educational institutes and non-profits organisations.

Likewise Facebook Workplace consists news feed, chats, videos, reactions, voice calling and video calling along with some additional features like dashboard with analytic and integrations with single sign on. Workplace will enable employees come together and interact with each other irrespective of their departments, hierarchy and work location.

As per Facebook, Workplace will be a social layer in organisations that will simplify and accelerate communications making it easier for people and knowledge to connect. It will increase the liquidity of knowledge, experience, and intelligence for organisations. The higher liquidity of knowledge, the more agile you become. And in this age of disruption, agility is very high on executive's priority list.

Workplace is advertisement free and doesn't link with personal Facebook account. Users can also operate workplace from their smart phones via two Apps Chat and Work, when they are away from office. The App Chat works like messenger, which enables user to chat, voice call and video call with individual or in group. Work acts as your Facebook app, where you can check news feed to know what your colleagues are sharing or what are the new updates and developments at the work.

It is believed that workplace will bring a new revolution in the organisation's way of working and communicating with their employees, besides emails and intranet.

Facebook official launched Workplace on 10th October, after working on its development for years and testing it for around 18 months on beta mode with selected organisations, located in Europe, Asia-Pacific and America.

Facebook considers that Workplace will be a success as majority of people knows how it works and are familiar with it, so it won't be difficult for them to access Workplace. Workplace is now available all over the world and is gaining the popularity among many countries, India, U.S., U.K., France and Norway are top countries accessing it.

Workplace is chargeable it will cost according to the number of users, more the number of users, lesser is the cost. Till 1,000 users it costs $3 per user per month, for 1,001 to 10,000 user it will cost $2 per and $1 for more than 10,000 users.