Lungfish communications
Adaptive Marketing for an Evolving World

Search Marketing Glossary

AdCenter   *See "Bing."*

Adwords   A paid Google service allowing advertisers to create search-based ad campaigns and specify the circumstances under which they appear, including keywords, budget controls, audience definition, and sophisticated reporting. Originally launched as a text ad platform, Adwords now includes display ads, video ads, "retargeting/remarketing", "Product Listing Ads," and more.

AdSense   A Google advertising network that pays website publishers who host ads a fee whenever a visitor clicks on the ad.

Affiliate   A partner website that refers traffic with the purpose of earning a commission if specific conversion(s) take place. There are simple affiliate programs where individual links are arranged, and affiliate networks where link exchanging is conducted at a higher pace.

Analytics   Measurement of website visitors, including demographic information, visitation patterns, and the performance of specific goals. Google Analytics is a free service that has become an industry standard, though there are others available.

Anchor Text   The specific words that carry a hyperlink. For example, if I write a blog entry about my new digital SLR camera, the anchor text is "digital SLR camera."

Arbitrage   A method of acquiring search engine traffic inexpensively (often by posting thin content that's highly optimized) and redirecting it through AdSense ads to earn commissions. Many search engines, led by Google, spend considerable effort suppressing arbitrage sites.

Backlink   A hyperlink between a publisher's website, and another site allowing visitors to access specific content.

Banner   A display ad, generally in a standard size.

Bing   Also called "Microsoft AdCenter." A joint venture by Microsoft and Yahoo modeled after Adwords allowing advertisers to create search-based ad campaigns.

"Black Hat" SEO   OPPOSITE OF "WHITE HAT" – A collection of unauthorized approaches to lifting search rank by "tricking" search engines in various ways. In most cases, Black hat SEO success is temporary, as search engines eventually detect the

methods used and punishment can be severe (including banishment from the search index).

Blog   An online journal or publishing outlet including text, images, video, and more. Blogs started primarily for news reporting and analysis, and now include myriad purposes.

Bounce   Analytics term referring to a scenario when a visitor visits a page, then leaves without taking any other action. Generally, a bounce is a negative behavior indicating that the visitor did not find the relevant information they sought. However, a bounce may also indicate a scenario where the visitor found exactly what they were seeking (for example, a page displaying a calendar of events), meaning they did not have to look any further.

Branded Search   When a user queries terms related to a specific organization, for example "best price Ugg boots."

Breadcrumbs   A navigation tool that displays the sequence of pages a visitor has taken, allowing them to easily orient themselves and/or backtrack.

Cache   A stored computer record. Search engines periodically visit ("crawl") and capture a cache record of everything it encounters.

Click   When a prospect take a desired action by choosing a measurable text or graphic hyperlink.

Cloaking   A BLACK HAT SEO PRACTICE in which different information is shown to human visitors and crawlers/spiders, indicating different content on the page.

CMS   "Content Management System" – Software used to edit/manage content on a website that automatically generates and updates the underlying code.

Conversion   Critical events when a visitor completes a specific action, like an online purchase, often involving a series of steps. Conversions are the reason for online marketing, and many tools are available to analyze conversions to determine the methods and practices that led to conversion in a continuous effort to achieve more conversions.

Cookie   (*Also called "tag," "kernel," "pixel"*) A snippet of code that stores small tidbits of information identifying a specific device relative to a specific website or page. For example, if you visit an ecommerce site offering pet food, and look for organic dog food, a cookie may store your shopping session so the next time you visit the site will recognize that on your last visit you shopped for organic dog food. Cookies are very common and generally harmless, though it is possible to use cookies for malicious purposes.

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CPC	Cost-Per-Click, the amount paid for online advertising relative to the number of clicks generated. For example, $100 spent on an ad/campaign for 20 clicks = $5 CPC.
Crawl	The process of mapping a record in a search engine index by visiting a website and recording every word and every link encountered. Automated "crawlers" (also called "spiders" and "bots") follow specific rules in mapping the content that's encountered, and publishers can provide instructions to facilitate accurate crawling.
CSS	"Cascading Style Sheets" – A method of designing websites by pre-defining specific structures, for example, how a table will appear (defining number of columns, column widths, spacing, colors, fonts, etc).
CTR	Click-Through-Rate, the number of clicks relative to the number of impressions. For example, an ad/campaign appearing 100 times with 3 clicks = 3% CTR.
De-Listing	Temporary or permanent removal from the search index, usually as a punishment for Black Hat SEO practices.
Domain	The root directory of a website, the characters that appear in between "www." and ".com"
Doorway Page	A "thin" website that may consist of just a single page, highly optimized for search, intended to attract and re-direct traffic to another website. Doorway pages are generally frowned upon by search engines, and are not allowed to be used as landing pages for PPC ads.
e-Commerce	Broad term referring to electronic purchase transactions.
Favicon	A small icon, or a mini logo, associated with a website that appears in the browser window.
First Page	Generally considered appearing among the top 10 results for a given query, though the evolution of search engine results and page layout is changing, and Google's newer templates feature 7 results on the first page.
FTP	"File Transfer Protocol" – A method of transferring and storing large files and large volumes of files so that website servers can easily access content stored there.
Footer	The content appearing at the bottom of a webpage, often appearing universally on every page. Footers may contain details about the site, the publisher, legal/copyright, etc. Recently, footers have become important to SEO methods by expanding footer links to carry keyword-rich language and making deep content immediately accessible.

Geo Search	When a user queries terms related to a specific location, for example "wedding photographer Boston MA." Geo search can include countries, regions, states, counties, cities/towns, zip codes, etc.
Google	The world's dominant search engine, Google effectively sets the rules for search engine marketing best practices, and most other search engines respond to the same cues.
H1 / H2	Coding shorthand for a headline/subhead.
Header	The content appearing at the top of a webpage, often appearing universally on every page. Headers may contain prominent branding, contact information, navigation, and feature visuals.
IAB	Internet Advertising Bureau, an organization that develops universal standards for online advertising, primarily determining display ad sizes, also advising on advertising practices.
HTML	"Hypertext Markup Language" – A common web programming code.
Impression	When an ad is presented to a user, whether it is visible to the viewer or not (many ads appear in positions that require scrolling to be visible).
Index (*noun*)	Comprehensive digital record of content appearing on a given website/page. Also refers to the entire master compilation of all website content.
Index (*verb*)	The process of compiling a comprehensive digital record of content appearing on a given website/page. Search engines periodically visit every page on the internet, click on every link, and record every word encountered along the way.
Inline Rectangle	Standard "square" ad unit 300x250, often appearing in a feature position nested into content.
Internal Link	Links within a website, often provided by navigation and footers.
Kernal	*See "Cookie."*
Keyword	Defining word(s) and/or phrase(s) that relate to a given topic or desired behavior. Any word (eg: "shampoo") or phrase (eg: "pillowtop mattress") can be a keyword, and the process of selecting and using keywords is central to both paid and organic search engine marketing.
Keyword Stuffing	A black hat SEO practice in which terms appear in meta tags that do not appear in content on the page, even if inadvertent.
Landing Page	A continuity page created to bridge respondents from a specific solicitation into a conversion funnel by carrying over messages, graphics, and promotional details.

Leaderboard	Standard horizontal ad unit 728x90, typically appearing in a feature position at the top of the page.
Log File	A running transcript or record of computer operations as they're performed, including details about any failures or unusual conditions. Website servers keep log files of search queries
Long Tail	Describes the tendency of search keywords to form a familiar graph shape, with "head" terms at one end representing the highest popularity and competition, and the "tail" terms at the other end representing broad diversity and low competition. These collectively form a graph with a familiar shape: a tall head, a gradual sweep in the middle, and a long tail at the end. The insight that makes the phrase famous is that in most cases, the aggregate performance of the long tail terms dwarfs the head. Similarly, a bookstore may have best sellers with outstanding individual sales, and the rest of all the diverse books in the store represent the bulk of total sales.
Malware	Malicious software programs like viruses and Trojan horses. They are often inadvertently downloaded and installed along with other more desirable software.
Meta Tags	Instructions to search engines in the code about the content on a page. Proper use of meta tags can dramatically enhance a page's organic search performance. A common misconception is that SEO optimization is about using meta tags to magically create instant page rank; the reality is that meta tags and page content must work hand-in-glove with matching language. Meta tags cannot generally rescue a page with weak, flimsy, or non-indexable content.
Organic Search	Natural results presented by a search engine believed to best satisfy a user query. Organic search results are distinguished from paid search results, which are ads that may appear on the same page in nearby locations.
PageRank	A numeric value 0-10 assigned to the authoritativeness of a website domain. For example, everyday citizen blogs tend to have a PageRank of 1-2, trustworthy ecommerce sites have a PageRank of 4-6, colleges and universities have a PageRank of 7-8, and Google itself has a Pagerank of 9. A PageRank of 0 usually indicates a new site that has not established sufficient track record to be considered reputable.
Pixel (1)	A unit of measure for electronic publishing.
Pixel (2)	*See "Bing."*
Places	A free Google service allowing organizations to establish their geographic locations, and appear in verified maps on search results.

Quality Score	A benchmark used by ad-serving platforms to determine the relative performance of a given keyword in an ad program. Generally, a higher quality score results in ads appearing more often, in higher positions, and costing less per click.
Query	Specific term(s) entered into a search bar.
Retargeting	(also "Remarketing") A method of presenting ads to a specific target audience defined by prior behavior, specifically visiting a page and acquiring a cookie.
Robots.txt File	A set of instructions for search engines crawling a website, particularly for situations where the publisher wants specific content excluded from the index. "NOINDEX"=don't record this content in the index, and "NOFOLLOW"=don't record the hyperlink destination in the index.
RSS	"Real Simple Syndiation" (also called a "feed") – A method of subscribing to published content with automatic delivery of new entries as they're available.
SEM	Search Engine Marketing, a term that encompasses many forms of online marketing, including SEO, PPC, display advertising, and more.
SEO	Search Engine Optimization, a practice (or set of practices) for improving organic search engine performance.
SERP	(rhymes with "burp") Search Engine Results Page, the totality of all results returned for a given search, including organic results, paid results, navigation, and every element on the page.
Shopping Feed	Method of integrating content on a major shopping engine (eg: eBay or Amazon) by electronically supplying ("pushing") catalog details from a merchant, allowing items to be offered for sale.
Skyscraper	Standard vertical ad unit 160x600, typically appearing in a feature position near the top of the page, usually on the right hand side.
Spiders	*See "Crawl."*
SSL	"Secure Socket Layer" – A security encryption protocol that allows merchants to safely handle financial transactions without exposing customer credit cards.
String	*See "Query."*
Tag	A broad term referring to several ways to identify individual users online. Visits can be tagged with unique IDs that are passed through, for example from an email to a landing page that recognizes and presents the right offer. *Related meaning, see "Cookie."*

Taxonomy	A language classification system used to prioritize keywords into an appropriate hierarchy.
URL	"Universal Record Indicator" – The web address, usually expressed as "http://www._____.com/_____"
Visitor	Analytics term referring to a person or device who viewed any page on a website. Visitors may be subcategorized as Unique Visitors, New Visitors, Returning Visitors, etc.
Webmaster Tools	A free Google service allowing content publishers to understand how their content performs in searches, detailing keywords and pages that appear in searches and generate clicks, and many technical measures of website performance.
"White Hat" SEO	OPPOSITE OF "BLACK HAT" – A collection of authorized "best practices" for raising organic search rank by strictly following the guidance of the search engines and focusing on quality content and proper coding.
Wordpress	A popular blog site that offers many plug-ins from independent developers, making it viable to host an entire website, complete with e-commerce functionality.

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