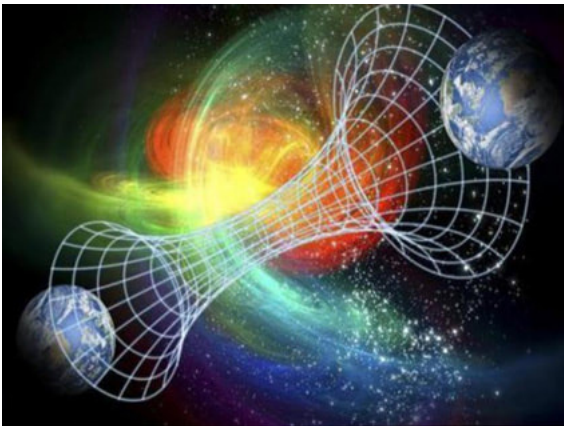




## 5 Reasons to Never Hire OPM

Avoid The OPM (Online Program Management) Trap



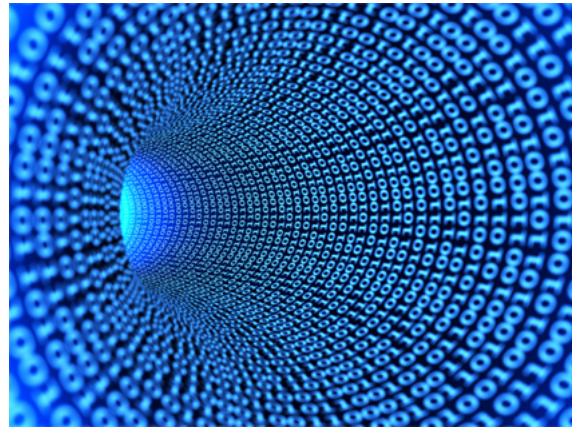
Subdomains are Alternate Universes

**1. Alternate Universe** – Most OPMs operate by creating subdomains (*subdomain.university.edu*) as an expedient way to deploy. Subdomains give the false impression they're integrated with the university website, but from a technical standpoint they're treated as distinct websites, introducing a cascade of potential problems in search rank, traffic flow and data analysis. Ultimately, if the OPM

relationship sours and terminates, the OPM often "owns" and retains the subdomain, which provides tremendous leverage in renewal negotiations.

**2. Protect Your Data** – Ads are running, prospects are clicking, and responses are flowing. Who owns that data? Read your contract carefully, you might find that upon termination, the OPM retains sole ownership of performance data, without restriction. It can be argued a well-managed dataset is the single most valuable asset on campus, and is central to a process of continuous

improvement. Allowing it to be taken, or worse, having it offered for sale to competitors, can be a crushing setback.

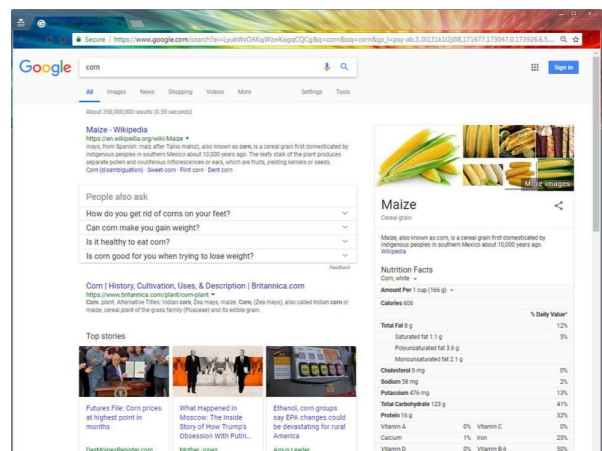


Protect Your Data

**3. Five Years Is An Eternity** – Five years ago, the Yellow Pages still dominated local restaurant ad budgets. OPMs argue their investment in program setup and buildout requires an unbreakable long-term commitment. It may seem sensible on its face, just remember how quickly market behavior evolves, especially at the youngest end. Google makes over 500 changes per year to their search algorithm, and results pages from just a few years ago look foreign today. In addition, new communication services emerge routinely, especially targeting teens and young adults. Digital marketing methods and techniques for higher education must evolve at breakneck speed, offering little assurance of future performance excellence. Any long-term non-cancellable contract should be a bright red flag, potentially crippling the ability to support programs in a rapidly changing environment.



Google SERP circa 2006



Google SERP circa 2016

**4. Cannibalization** – Consider the "best case" scenario, where an OPM successfully dominates searches for online degrees, especially high-value graduate degrees. Typically the best performing keywords are institutional brand, curriculum topic, and degree level (eg: "Stanford University Masters in Psychology"). The problem is those keywords apply to both campus and online



Never Send Two Bidders to the Same Adwords Auction

programs, so inherent competition emerges, where OPMs are solely concerned with online, and campus resources have to work harder just to be heard. In many cases, where both are buying ads, they're bidding against each other, raising the auction price for every click. The result is spiraling costs for the institution with no incremental benefit.

**5. Revenue Splits** – As partners in business, OPMs expect to share the revenue. It's a tempting offer for institutions, allowing them to make little or no investment in their new online initiative. Plenty have reasoned that a smaller piece of the action is better than none at all. That may be true in the short term. However, if long-term predictions for explosive growth in online learning are remotely close, the future years are far too lucrative to allow the lion's share out the door. Always remember what's motivating the institution's migration to online education in the first place. Especially for public universities supported by taxpayers, allowing so much revenue to enrich a private partner invites public scrutiny.



OPMs Take Half (or More!) of Revenues!

#### Top Five Reasons to Never Hire an OPM | Online Education | College and University

Marketing consulting with a balance of traditional and digital. Branding and SEO. Offline and online. GRPs and PPC. Making the cash register ring and the conversion pixel fire. Flexible and affordable engagements for the specific mix of marketing services you need to succeed. On time, on budget, and on the mark. Let us recommend a marketing action plan today.

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E-Commerce (/e-commerce.html)  
SEO Optimization (/search-marketing.html)  
PPC Pay-Per-Click (/ppc-pay-per-click.html)  
Banner/Display (/display-banners.html)/Retargeting (/retargeting.html)  
Google Certified Partner (/adwords-certified.html)

## Traditional Marketing

Branding (/branding.html)  
Strategy and Positioning (/strategy--positioning.html)  
Broadcast Advertising (/broadcast-advertising.html)  
Media Buying (/media-buying.html)

## Give a Shout

Contact (/)  
LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com/in/evansaks/>)  
SEO Optimization Checklist (/seo-best-practices.html)  
FREE Evaluation (/free-evaluation.html)

## Case Studies

University of Massachusetts (/case-study-umass-amherst.html)  
Gulf Electricity (/case-study-gulf-electricity.html)  
Caregiver Homes (/case-study-caregiver-homes.html)  
Bridgewater State University (/case-study-bridgewater-state-university.html)  
Create-A-Mattress (/case-study-create-a-mattress.html)  
Spark Presentations (/case-study-spark-presentations.html)  
North Shore Community College (/case-study-north-shore-community-college.html)  
Baril Corporation (Medical Devices) (/case-study-baril-corporation-b2b-contract-manufacturing.html)



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