Meet the Search Engines by @beanstalkim

Editor's note: This is a chapter from Search Engine Journal's new e-book, ***SEO 101: Learn the Basics of Search Engine Optimization****. Want to read the full guide? Download your copy of SEO 101 now!*

While we battle daily to create an uptick in our analytics when we're reviewing our *"google / organic"* or *"google /* cpc" traffic, there can be a *lot* of missed opportunities.

Sometimes it pays to take our blinders off and look at the myriad of other opportunities around us that can create bigger improvements in traffic and/or conversions with less work.

Here's a look at seven of the top search engines (that's right, there's more than one), a brief exploration of the ins-and-outs of each, and some links to some of the best articles on how to market to and monetize them.

Google

With over 75 percent of the search market share, one hardly needs to introduce readers to Google. However, it clearly needs to head up any list of search engines.

Created as a research project in 1996 by Sergey Brin and Larry Page, they offered to sell their engine in 1999 to Excite for a whopping $750,000. The offer was rejected putting Google at the top of my list of "bad business calls" as well. Google's parent company Alphabet is now worth about $650 billion.

Apart from powering their own search results, Google also provides the search results for a wide array of other engines, including the old favorite Ask.com.

Pros & Cons

The big appeal to ranking on Google is clearly the massive potential traffic. The downside is that everyone else wants this traffic, making organic search the most competitive and paid search often more expensive than on other sites.

Further, many argue that Google is moving searchers away from clicking through to websites and toward fulfilling their needs and intents directly on the Google website via featured snippets, reduced numbers of organic results on the first page, increases in paid search results, etc. making the competition more costly with less potential reward.

Optimization Tips

A few valuable pieces on marketing on Google can be found at:

YouTube



YouTube was founded in 2005 by veterans of PayPal and was purchased just over a year later by none other than Google, giving it control over the top two search engines on this list.

YouTube receives more than 1.5 billion logged in users per month and feeds over 1 billion hours of video each day to users (that’s right… billion).

If you’re curious about the first video uploaded (which has

over 41 million views) it’s a 19-second clip of co-founder Jawed Karim at the zoo. Not exactly MTV playing “Video Killed The Radio Star”, but it got the job done.

Pros & Cons

As with Google, it’s easy to see the allure of such massive traffic but that’s also the pitfall for marketers.

Using YouTube as a vehicle for traffic cannot be underestimated in its impact if successful. However, considering that over 300 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute, it can be challenging to stand out.

With paid opportunities under the Google AdWords system, it can also get pricey to compete on that front.

That said, if you can get the attention of your target demographic on YouTube with amazing campaigns such as those by GoPro or Blendtec, you can get incredible exposure inexpensively.

Optimization Tips

A few valuable pieces on marketing on YouTube can be found at:

Amazon

Amazon was launched in 1995 and, thus, is considered as one of the first large companies to sell goods online. They started out selling books online but expanded rapidly. In 1999, founder Jeff Bezos won Time’s Person Of The Year for making online shopping popular and accessible.

So successful is Amazon, that last year more than half of all online shopping searches began not at Google but at Amazon. Combine this with their acquisition of Whole Foods, which gives them access to fresh foods, and one can be pretty sure we'll see this number continue to climb.

Anyone want a Bluetooth adapter with their organic avocado?

Pros & Cons

The positives, like on Google, are obvious – scale. If you sell blue widgets and you want to be where people search for them, then you want to be on Amazon.

In fact, some can argue based on the numbers that having a ton of great and useful content might help you rank on Google and get all those folks trying to figure out what blue widgets are and which one they need, *but* unless you're on Amazon, you won't be where they are when they're actually looking to convert.

The downside is that the competition is fierce, the pricing and other details are easy to compare vs. competing products, and the cost for selling there can get pretty costly at times.

Entering early can be difficult if you don't have a unique product as sales and reviews are important for rankings. For the same reason, well-established companies with good products and reputations can hold their placements well.

There are also CPC options for product promotion. It can be pricey, but you're also getting the searcher at the buy end of the cycle, so what engine isn't?

It's too early to tell right now how Alexa will impact searches and sales but this is an area to watch. To prepare yourself for the possible scenario where Amazon wins (or at least does well in the personal assistant race), the third article below discusses it further.

Optimization Tips

A few valuable pieces on marketing on Amazon can be found at:

Facebook

In 2006, Facebook (as we know it) was born. From 2004 until then, it was accessible only by students and in 2006, it was opened up to the world.

It’s not a natural go-to when thinking of search engines, however, last year it surpassed 2 billion searches/day putting it ahead of Bing.

With more than 1.5 billion logged in visitors per month, Facebook also gives businesses and advertisers incredible market access and tends to be where people are when they’re not working (present company excluded obviously), meaning they may be in a better situation to follow their nose and get side-tracked by your offering if it’s of interest.

Pros & Cons

It’s probably becoming pretty obvious how this story plays out, the biggest “pro” is the user base but as is true with almost all platforms. With that user base comes the biggest “con” – the price.

Depending on your target demographic, the price can run up to many dollars per click making it cheaper than Google AdWords but still pricey. Some can argue that the traffic isn’t as targeted.

Therein is another pro-and-con: while traffic via the AdWords

search system revolves around search queries (on Google at least) lending an inherent relevancy, a lot of Facebook advertising revolves around job titles, locations, interests, and other demographic data. You tend to lose a bit on relevancy, *however*, it's a great medium for getting in front of people when they aren't looking for you.

Want to launch a new product? Get your new e-book in front of a bunch of SEO professionals who might not be searching for "seo ebook"? Facebook lends a lot of flexibility in this area.

While their organic reach has tended to drop dramatically in the past few years, Facebook also can be a solid source of unpaid traffic. This involves ensuring you have brand loyalty and are consistently producing good content as consistent engagement is the key to ranking organically.

Optimization Tips

A few valuable pieces on marketing on Facebook can be found at:

Bing



Bing replaced MSN Search as Microsoft's answer to Google in 2009. Launching with just 8.4 percent of the search market share, they quickly crossed 10 percent, and in a deal later that year to power Yahoo search, rose to 28.1 percent. In 2016, they added AOL to the sites they provide search results for.

These additions made them a real contender and the latest data from Microsoft indicates they are now powering 33 percent of U.S. searches.

Bing has been making a lot of plays recently in the advertising space in their effort to catch up with Google, adding a number of features to Bing Ads – ranging from improving their AdWords import functionality to keyword match changes, as well as reporting improvement to bring their systems up-to-standard and help managers already familiar with AdWords to work in their system.

Pros & Cons

While Bing doesn't have the market share that Google has, it is respectable in many markets including the U.S. and U.K.

Organically their algorithms aren't as sophisticated as Google's, making them easier to understand, predict, and optimize for. While this won't be an indefinite state, it's likely to be true for the next couple years.

Due to the lower traffic, there are less SEO pros vying for the top 10 positions and studying the algorithms providing good ROI for those who do.

On the ad side, there are less sophisticated systems to work with, however, Bing is clearly catching up quickly. Due to the lower volume and ease of setup from existing AdWords campaigns, the lower traffic can easily be made up for by the lower CPC.

Note: This isn't to say to simply copy your AdWords campaigns into Bing and be done with it. Each engine needs to be managed individually for its CPC and demographics (resulting in different conversion rates, etc.). However, copying campaigns can greatly speed up the setup process.

Optimization Tips

A few valuable pieces on marketing on Bing can be found at:

Baidu



Baidu was founded in 2000 and is the dominant search engine in China with over 82 percent market share where Google comes in at 0.61 percent and Bing at 0.37 percent.

They’re making huge investments into AI and setting the structure many others will have to follow or at least contend with in regards to deciding which companies (like NVIDIA) will have the monetary and competitive advantages.

Outside of China, Baidu holds little influence. Within the country, Baidu powers 3.3 billion searches per day.

Pros & Cons

The downside to Baidu is that it only gives access to one market. The upside is that the market it gives access to is huge.

That said, it’s critical to understand that accessing the Chinese market is not like accessing any other (such is the curse of international SEO). The visuals, verbiage, and customs are entirely different and Google Translate isn’t going to help you win any customers over.

To access the Chinese market via Baidu, you need someone on staff who speaks the language and understands marketing to the culture (not just “someone on my team who took two years of Mandarin in high school”).

Overall, the organic algorithms are more simplistic than Google’s and their paid systems can be easier once you’re setup but that setup is more difficult if you reside outside

China.

Optimization Tips

A few valuable pieces on marketing on Baidu can be found at:

Yandex



Yandex has its roots in a project started by two Russian developers to aid in the classification of patents in 1990 under the company Arkadia.

The term Yandex was adopted in 1993 standing for "**Y**et **A**nother i**NDEX**er." The Yandex.ru domain was launched in 1997.

In 2011, they went public on the New York Stock Exchange with an IPO of $1.3 billion making it the second largest at the time (right after Google). Yandex currently powers more than half of all searches in Russia.

Pros & Cons

As with most smaller engines (compared to Google at least), there is less traffic on Yandex but the competition is lower both organically and in paid. The algorithms used by Yandex are less sophisticated than Google's and thus, easier to assess and optimize for.

Now the bad news: While Yandex's algorithms are less sophisticated than Google, they have elements that make it difficult for outsiders – including a higher weighting on geolocation.

The paid system is obviously more flexible in this regard and

compared to Google, Facebook, and Bing it tends to be less expensive per click. For example, ranking #1 for “casino” would cost over $55 per click in the U.S. and only $0.80 on Yandex. Of course, that’s an English word but even the Russian “казино” is only $1.02.

Optimization Tips

A few valuable pieces on marketing on Yandex can be found at:

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