SMX West is coming! Here's everything you need to know



Search Engine Land's SMX® West is just five weeks away, and it's shaping up to be an exceptional show. You can expect the quality content, speakers, networking activities and meals for which SMX events are famous.

SMX West features three packed days exploring the marketing topics that matter most to professionals like you – SEO, SEM, retail, analytics, social media marketing, local, mobile and much more. Each expert-led session dives deep, covering aspects of search marketing that many may not have considered. Our goal is to "wow" attendees, to go above and beyond the ordinary industry conference and to arm them with actionable tactics they can implement as soon as they return to the office.

If this sounds like it's up your alley, continue reading my big show preview, and then register today to save $100 off on-site rates.

Stay sharp on the cutting edge of online marketing at SMX West

Anyone who's tried to stay on the cutting edge of online marketing knows that from time to time, you get thrown by things like unexpected algorithm changes, newly introduced ad enhancements or formats, experimenting with seemingly benign tactics that go wrong or even doing nothing… and watch your hard-earned traffic slip away for no apparent reason.

This is why world-class marketers are on constant alert for solid, proven information and actionable tactics that keep them on the cutting edge of search marketing. And that's why

we designed SMX West to offer both full-scale preventative advice as well as state-of-the-art triage techniques for experienced marketers.

The art & science of SEO

In the early days of search marketing, Bruce Clay popularized the use of the phrase “search engine optimization” (SEO) as the term to describe the art and science of achieving good rankings in the dozen or so search engines that were popular at the time. A lot has changed in the nearly two decades since Google arrived on the scene; today, SEO pretty much means achieving success within Google.

Google has changed a lot in two decades as well. Rather than relying primarily on PageRank to evaluate the quality of webpages, Google now uses a vast array of techniques to suggest a wide range of content in response to queries, from simple, direct answers to multimedia audio and video files to spoken responses – and all this across a variety of devices.

With loads of guesswork and assumptions, the debate about Google’s ranking factors is never-ending and evolves with every algorithm update. What’s on the rise, what’s on the decline, and what still works? How does machine learning affect the tactics SEOs use to influence results? And what impact does voice search have on what works today?

At SMX West, we have SEO sessions dedicated to answering these questions. We’ll cover the ever-changing expanse of issues and tactics SEOs need to keep up with to maintain their edge and achieve exceptional search marketing results. Such sessions include:

- All Google Manual Penalties Explained.
- AMP: Do Or Die?
- SEO For Google’s Mobile-First Index & Mobile-Friendly World.

- SEO Ranking Factors In 2018: What’s Important, What’s Not.

Untangle yourself from crazy-complicated technical SEO issues

Even SEO veterans can run into serious challenges when they dive into website infrastructure and find that things are more complicated than they expected. URL parameter facets + pagination + canonicalization? Mobile + hreflang + international versions? AJAX multiget calls? And if you don’t solve these issues, the fantastic content you’ve created may never be indexed.

Need a life preserver? Our deep-dive sessions into technical SEO include:

- Going All-In On AMP.
- JavaScript & PWAs: What SEOs Need to Know.
- Solving SEO Issues In A World Of Constant Change.
- Successful SEO Using Markup & Structured Data.
- The Latest In Advanced Technical SEO.

See the SEO track.

SEM for fun & profit

Think you know everything about Google AdWords or Bing Ads? Have all the best practices nailed? Are you a master of extensions with encyclopedic knowledge about gaining the upper hand when sparring with the quirky idiosyncrasies of bidding, scheduling and conversion optimization?

Think again. As kung fu masters remind us, “The wise always remain humble, grasshopper.”

You’ll get plenty of unique insight, shared experiences and practical hands-on tips during the SEM sessions at SMX West, including:

- Conversion Optimization: Turning Quick Wins Into Winning Streaks.
- Faster & Smarter: Moving From Manual to Automated SEM Campaign Management.
- How To Maximize & Measure Performance On The Google Display Network.
- Must-Have Reports For Search Advertisers.
- The Art & Science Of Crafting Successful Ads.
- The Great SEM Toolbox Roundup.

See the SEM track.

One of the harsh realities of being a search marketer is that you can become incredibly skilled at your job, technically adept and masterful of all of the nuances of SEM… yet still struggle to get the kind of results you hope for. Why? Because your competitors are working just as hard, or they may be using tactics or techniques that you're unaware of.

At SMX West, you'll get content that's specifically focused on how to do competitive research for SEM. You'll also learn how to optimize and re-architect your campaigns for maximum effectiveness, taking advantage of new ad formats, extensions, enhanced campaigns and other changes. Our speakers will discuss everything needed to squeeze new levels of performance out of existing campaigns, from design and testing through execution and measurement. If you're looking for practical tips or just a bit of inspiration to tackle a necessary job, you won't want to miss these sessions:

- Competitive Research For SEM.
- Advanced Audience Targeting & Management Tactics.
- B2B SEM: Meeting Specific Challenges With Really Smart Tactics.
- Beyond Text: Mastering Other Ad Formats.
- How To Develop Multichannel Attribution Models That Move The Needle.
- Perfect Your SEM Testing: How & Why To Evaluate

Everything.
- Thinking Outside the SEM Box.

See the SEM track.

Focus on e-commerce & retail

Key for online merchant success is the ability to run effective marketing and advertising campaigns. Both Google and Bing have had shopping search options for ages. But both introduced big changes over the past few years that changed the experience for shoppers. You need to understand these changes to be a successful online vendor. And it's not just Google and Bing. Amazon is racing to market with powerful e-commerce tools, as are Reddit, Pinterest, and of course, social networks like Facebook and Twitter. Each has its pros and cons, and all are all great channels to interact with and sell to customers in their own ways. At SMX West, you'll get juicy insights into critical aspects of running profitable e-commerce efforts across these channels if you attend these retail sessions:

- Driving Sales On Social Media.
- Shopping Campaigns That Keep Paying Off.
- Winning More Customers With E-commerce Offer Testing.
- Your Mission: Increase Sales, Cut Costs, Maximize Profits.

See the retail track.

SMX Boot Camp gets you in shape

If you're new to search marketing, our SMX Boot Camp will get you up to speed. Boot Camp runs during the first day of the show, Tuesday, March 13. Attend and you'll learn the fundamentals you need to get in shape quickly. Sessions include:

- Keyword Research & Copywriting For Search Success.

- Link Building Fundamentals.
- Paid Search Fundamentals.
- Search Engine Friendly Web Design.

To encourage new people to learn about search marketing, we offer all of these sessions through a low-cost SMX Boot Camp ticket. Boot Camp includes admission on the first day to the Expo Hall, networking lunch and that evening's Expo Hall reception. You can upgrade to a full pass if you want to attend more sessions on the second and third day of the show.

SMX Boot Camp is also open to anyone with a full All Access conference pass. Everyone who attends every Boot Camp session gets a Certificate of Completion.

Exploring important search marketing issues

We all love the art and science of search marketing, the tactical aspects of optimization or bid management and the thrill of seeing analytics demonstrate successful and improving campaigns. But there are other aspects of online marketing that are often overlooked and just as important.

Each of the sessions below features speakers who take deep dives into a topic, providing you with actionable, thought-provoking insights, often sharing the results of their own research. You won't want to miss out on:

- How Cisco Harnesses The Power Of SEO For Digital Transformation.
- Local Search: Significant Changes On The Horizon.
- Optimizing Content For Voice Search & Virtual Assistants.
- Using Search Ads & Social To Deliver The Ultimate Knockout Punch.
- Understanding Offline Targeting And Attribution.
- Unleashing The Power Of Online Video Ads.

See the complete agenda.

The clinics are open!

Craving specific advice from experts about issues with your own sites or campaigns? The specialists will see you now! On the second and third days of the show, our popular clinics return, covering these areas:

- SEO Site Clinic.
- Social Media Clinic.
- Link Building Clinic.
- PPC Tune-Up Clinic With The SMX Mechanics.
- Analytics Clinic.

See the complete agenda.

Ask the experts who are obsessed with SEO & SEM

Got a puzzling issue? Wondering about emerging trends or tips and techniques? Ask the experts! During the “AMA (ask me anything) With Google Search” session, Webmaster Trends Analyst Nathan Johns will open up about how Google interacts with your site and content. And he’ll also answer your questions about algorithms, ranking factors and other components of Google’s “black box.”

And during the “Meet The SEOs” session, it’s no-holds-barred as veteran practitioners take any and all questions.

We know you wish you could attend every session at the conference, but have no fear! SMX West wraps up with a perpetual favorite: “Best Of Show / Key SMX Takeaways.” In this session, speakers and fellow attendees will share their personal highlights from SMX West.

You’ll also be able to identify, document, share and take home key pieces of information, new tactics and ideas via our event

hashtag: **#SMXInsights**. We've asked each speaker to include up to three key, actionable takeaways in their presentations. And best of all, we'll discuss those insights during our Best of Show session, and we'll share them on Twitter in real time. Follow along, add your own insights and share with your colleagues!

Quality programming & speakers

All of the 50+ sessions I've described above are editorial sessions. People are speaking on them because we feel they have great information to offer. No one bought their way onto a panel.

Each session is developed by a session coordinator who reviews speaking pitches and reaches out to knowledgeable people to assemble a panel. The coordinator works with speakers to create a session where presentations support each other, rather than overlap. Formats also vary. Sometimes we have panels with multiple people or only one or two speakers. Some panels are all Q&A. Some feature formal presentations. We use several formats because different topics require different approaches. This makes for the optimal SMX experience.

View all SMX speakers.

Expo Hall & Solutions Track

Our many SMX West sponsors and exhibitors also have great information to share with SMX attendees. That's why we provide several ways for attendees to hear from them.

Solution Track sessions are part of the agenda; they are produced by sponsoring companies. These companies know they are competing for your attention with our educational sessions, so they're highly motivated to deliver quality information and top value.

Google will conduct a full day of programming on its search

advertising offerings we call “Learn With Google.” LwG will run all day Tuesday, March 13.

The Expo Hall is open Tuesday, March 13, and Wednesday, March 14. In the Expo Hall, you can get information from exhibitors and sponsors about the many products and services that can accelerate your business and performance.

Looking to exclusively network and explore the Expo Hall? An Expo+ Pass might be the right fit for you. Learn more.

Hands-on workshops

You deliver results daily, but keeping up is a challenge. And you know staying successful means identifying opportunities, implementing new technologies and processes, developing great people and preparing for the next big thing.

Agree? Then attend one of the SMX intensive workshops.

Invest a day learning from thought leaders in search and online marketing. Our experts will address topics that push your performance to the next level. You’ll benefit from their wisdom and meet them in an intimate, hands-on environment.

These small-group in-depth workshops and training classes take place a day before SMX West on Monday, March 12. The workshop topics include:

Want an even better deal? Save $200 off on-site rates when you register for an All Access + Workshop combo pass.

Networking with like-minded peers

SMX West brings together the most accomplished search marketers in the world, and we provide plenty of organized and social networking activities for you to connect with them.

If you’re new to SMX, be sure to attend the SMX Kick Off, where we’ll show you how to optimize your conference

experience and give you the scoop on accessing presentations, WiFi, power food, networking and more great content.

Then we'll go into high gear with a round of Speed Networking, where you'll meet some of the SMX team and get to know other attendees with quick introductions. Share your reasons for attending, exchange business cards and make powerful connections before the show even starts.

The SMX Kick Off and Speed Networking are Monday, March 12, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in Salon III on the second floor of the Marriott. It is open to All Access attendees and speakers.

Immediately after the SMX Kick Off, relax and enjoy the SMX Opening Reception, sponsored by Bruce Clay, Inc. Pick up your registration materials and join us on the second-floor Ballroom Foyer of the Marriott for an informal evening reception with fellow attendees, speakers and invited guests.

During lunch, sign up for a Meet & Eat/Obsessed With networking table, where you'll network with other attendees and discuss specific topics over a delicious hot meal. Being grouped with people who share a common interest is a great icebreaker.

The SMX Expo Hall Reception, sponsored by Stone Temple Consulting, takes place on Tuesday, March 13, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The reception offers another great chance to mingle and check out the best-of-breed marketing solutions from our exhibitors and sponsors.

Our featured networking event is the always-popular SMX After Dark party, sponsored by WordStream. After Dark takes place Wednesday, March 14, from 9:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at the awesome Tech Museum of Innovation, just a block away from the convention center in downtown San Jose.

All of this information can be found on our SMX West

networking page. We keep SMX West intentionally intimate, so you are guaranteed to meet plenty of amazing people!

I hope you've found this preview useful and that you'll be joining us in San Jose. Register today!

About The Author

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