On top of the page game

When performing Search Engine Optimization (SEO) it's important to look at several factors.

One of those is the pages of your Web site. Google looks at more than words. Here are some handy secrets:

Name yourself. Your title bar should contain no more than 65 characters. Start with a keyword phrase and end with your brand. A 'pipe' is a useful character for this. (e.g. "Vancouver Internet Services | SmarttNet").

Protect yourself. Check for "www" protection: Type your URL into a browser's address bar with "www" at the front, and then again without. Check if you get led to the same URL both times. If not, search engines are seeing two sites, which will hurt your rankings.

There's no place like the home page. If you have an "enter site" intro, rethink it. There's probably no real content on the home URL for Google to read.

Avoid too much Flash. It's pretty, but it doesn't say much to search engines. Keep it for imagery, not content.

Don't overdo it. Once upon a time keyword density used to matter. Today, it doesn't; Google mimics human behaviour in writing styles. Use keywords naturally, and keep recurrences to no more than five per page. Do focus on multiple keywords, but research stats on what people search for to find you; keywords are not just adjectives about your business.

Keep it fresh. Update your site at least once a week for the search engine meta crawlers. A great excuse is to incorporate your blog into your site and give free advice to your audience.

Shake things up a bit. Use a different format for your headings with HTML's H1, H2 and H3 tags. Make your main keyword phrases stick out with bold or italic formatting.

Give more than beholds the eye. Google looks at the file names of photos. Name images by keywords and content. A big no-no would be naming photo files something they're not. Don't confuse search engines.

Anchor in. Find any excuse to link to your site's other pages by burying keywords in hypertext where they fit into paragraphs. Don't link with random words that don't match the topic.

Anchor out. When linking to other sites, make sure they are trustworthy and related to your market. Avoid giving away too much 'link love' because what you want more is people linking to YOU.

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