

Diary thesis: Search Engine Optimization specialist

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<p>The purpose of this thesis is a covering observation of my work during 65 days, where I am supposed to record my work on daily basis and keep track of my experience during this period. Being able to recall mistakes and things learned while doing work will provide anyone with a solid background for further skill improvement.</p> <p>The process is straightforward, at the end of each working day I will record things I have done accompanied with daily work plan, then mention what worked, and what did not, write down my observations, and analyzes of different methods used in performing tasks followed by a summary of my experiences during the time frame of this thesis-diary.</p> <p>The output and expectation of this thesis will be a journal report of the obtained results of my work on daily basis, and getting perspective. Besides it is the most convenient way to graduate due to my obligations and time constraint.</p>	
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Abbreviations

SEO	Search Engine Optimization
SEM	Search Engine Marketing
SERP	Search Engine results pages
PR	Page Rank a system for ranking web pages developed by Google
PPC	Pay per Click online advertising payment model in which payment is based solely on qualifying click-through.
CTR	Click through Rate advertising term indicating the percentage of viewers who click on a banner advertisement and follow the link
BLOGS	a frequent, chronological publication of personal thoughts and Web links
RSS	Real Simple Syndication
XML sitemap	Is a document that helps search engines understand website pages while crawling it

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1 Introduction

This is a Thesis Diary report in which I am supposed to record my daily activities and tasks during 65 (starts in 13. 08 and ends on 30.11.2014) days within the company I am working for.

We can define the company as a Web Design and Consultancy Company; it's still a young small company that has 6 multi creative multi-disciplined web designers and web development.

Although the origin of the company was a mere café internet, that was enabling students and others to browse the internet and retrieve information for their needs.

With the spread of the Internet, companies felt the need for their presence on the internet to define its activities and deliver services to customers.

For the time being, we started receiving requests to design web pages, and from this point came the idea to create a web design and consultancy company.

At the beginning we were building simple websites that contain few pages, it was easy tasks that were not requiring very experienced web developers since there was no need for more complicated solutions.

At this stage “Wordpress” was a perfect solution for us, all we had to do is translating ready themes into Arabic.

Struggle to fill the content and the website will be ready to go, so there was no need for more stuff.

By the time we started receiving challenging requests from medium and large corporation for more intricate websites that needs highly experienced web designers.

Our needs comes to recruit Multi-disciplined web designer and front-end developer that are easy to work with others able to do everything in web design

In one word stuff that is able to do web design and more to be able to fulfill our customers' requests.

Yet, the company dream is to grow more and more nationally and deliver services such as:

- Website design/built
- Converting design to Xhtml & css
- WordPress themes
- Responsive web design

Although our company office is not a large one, but yet it's a friendly working environment where every worker is passionate about his job and has the ability to interact with his coworkers, it has been managed to be a sort of own home where the employee feels the will to come for work each day with the same ambition and desire.

On the same note, employees have the full right to come to the office or doing the job remotely, unless the tasks needs to be done within the team.

The company office is located in a strategic geographical location for a comfortable access to the customers with a small parking.

2 The start situation

2.1 Analysis of current job situation

I have been pointed to be the SEO (Search Engine Optimization) specialist because of the experience I had gained during past years doing this work, also charged to run pay per click campaign besides working closely with designers and programmers to review the designed and analyze websites and check if it meets the customers' requirement.

Furthermore, I do look for most powerful and least expensive keywords to boost pages to have the best ranking by the search engine (Google, Yahoo...) since any website search start by meaningful words. This includes the organic search results (Fishkin, 2014)

I also do consult and coordinate between designers and customers to put the best navigation for websites and write original content and proper Meta tag labels for websites and blogs, so it is obvious that is a quite vital task that leads to the success for any website we design, that's why it requires me to be updated with SEO standards.

In summary, as a SEO I have to make sure that all websites under my influence are well optimized to attract visitors and keep them coming back continuously.

In other word is a target keyword to bring visitors to the website. Not only, but also I

- Perform competitor's analysis
- Arabic best keywords
- SEO on Page (titles, Meta tags, Meta-description, page speed, fix errors, sitemap)
- Pay Per Click/SEM
- Link building

- Reviewing and analyzing customers website for possible changes
- Run PPC complain if required
- Use of basic knowledge in programing to enhance the optimization of websites

So, it's all about promoting websites. (The beginners guide to SEO)

All in all I can summarize my all tasks as described in above illustration (figure 1)

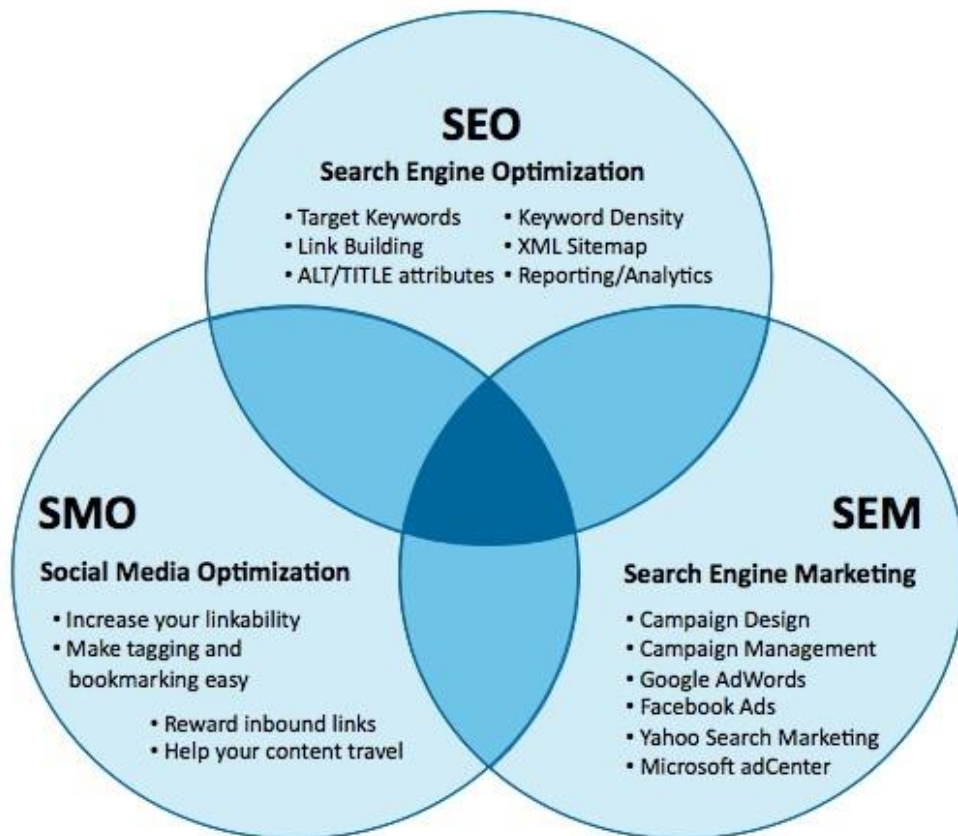


Figure 1: All SEO campaign

2.2 Evaluation

At this stage I can't pretend that I am an expert as a SEO, but all along the time that I have been doing this work, I have had ups and downs. Even though, I am consulting blogs and forums to gain more experience from other experienced people, and learn their tactics and technics. But obviously I am not able apply all what I am learning from these sources because the area where I am working in has it has its particularity

That SEO is not an exact science, for the reason that the search engines change regularly their ranking criteria; one should update his knowledge and skills all the time, it's also good to mention at this point the challenges I face from day to day as SEO job become difficult. And I am more likely improving my experience, with all mistakes I have done during this short time, and these I will be doing during in the future including this frame time of thesis work on doing SEO tasks.

What I like most about this job that it is not boring, there is always something to discover and learn, but you have to prove yourself and stay ahead of the curve.

2.3 Interest groups in the work place

One of the key successes is the continuous communication between the stakeholders during the process of any work.

As our company is a very small one, therefore our circle is as it's shown in the diagram above (figure 2)



Figure 2: Interest Group Diagram

2.3.1 Management

In this small teamed company we do not rely on horizontal steering, instead all the team is involved in some way to ensure the day-to-day work tasks and company management. Moreover it is obvious that by involving team members of the decisions making will be rewarding “They can focus on strategic issues while confidently delegating day-to-day tasks”.

Sales is almost everything without it there is no need to do work, and sales management is a skill without it the company is stuck.

That's why we have a sales manager who has proved to have a good ability of communication and very active, of course he works in coordination with other team members to set up the annual profit and sales plans, because our aim is to monitor the firm's success. (Rosen, 2014)

2.3.2 Employee

The team of programmers who are performing the tasks of the company, they create the website look and features.

Not only they provide maintenance and up-date every feature, also there duties include:

- Designing websites user interface
- Solving code problems
- Writing and editing content

2.3.3 Customers

They are these who are buying our services whether is a design of an entire website from ground, or IT solutions or promoting a website or fixing some problems that have occurred on their websites.

2.3.4 Partners

They are these who are relied to our business such as web hosting companies, advertising agencies, and graphic designers.

However, we put on consideration every partner that might help us to expand our business and increase profitability.

2.4 Interaction skills in the work place

Actually, we suppose that we have a homogenous team as each one of the team has a variety of skills needed for the work fulfilment. And most of all they are passionate by their job, innovative, motivated, furthermore they have willing to learn new things, share knowledge and skills, besides embracing continuous improvement in their brand.

In fact, during the time we have been doing work together, they all shown how passionate they are about their duties on the work, and they have rarely delayed any project or task, for that reason we have never set any strict rules, such as the obligatory presence to the work place, unless the situation needs that, so all we care for is the fulfilment of the work within the time delay, and according to the described requirement.

No wonder, for the success we are having in this debutant company, and it's a joy seeing that everybody cares for its growth, socially no one feels himself a mere employee, rather each one cares about the success as it was his own company, for that reason everyone is aware how important a good relationships with other colleges.

3 Diary entries

In my recording to every weeks work (starting from week 1 up to week 10) I will be eventually talking about the tasks I am performing.

Meanwhile, I will focus each time a little bit on one aspect that consist my job as SEO in order to familiarise the reader with terms I face on my everyday tasks. Besides, talking about the challenges I face during my experience, and the eventual expertise gained that time.

3.1 Week 1

Day 1.1

In this week's project one of our customers wanted us to design a store website that exposes his goods. The team members have to be present for the first meeting to gather the relevant in-formation and requirement from the customer himself. As we avoid always relying on one person's presence at each meeting with customers to let everyone ask questions that lead to better understanding of requirement and good results.

Generally, our customers are not so harsh when it comes to theme choice or other features, for the reason that they have full trust on our sense to get the best solution.

Mostly, we have ready translated themes for all kind of business, and then all we need is to take customer's notes about the possible change that might occur on the user interface or functionalities.

At the end of the day the team has succeeded to agree about one WordPress theme to use for this project.

Day 1.2

Today we are going to sit down with the customer to consult his opinion about the chosen theme and possible changes to the interface design and additional plugins such as

- Google sitemap
- WordPress SEO
- W3 Total cache
- Add link to Facebook
- Security
- Contact form

We have agreed with the customer about an elegant, responsive and adaptive layout, WordPress theme for his project. And it has incredible features inside, It comes with extended admin panel that allow to customize the style, colours, font, position, so it lets you do everything to get a professional good looking website. Ready boosted with the WooCommerce shopping cart plugin. Great, it lets you run a shop website without special knowledge in inventory management and everything is automated.

All we have to do for now is to create a child theme and translate the parent theme into Arabic language to suit the area customers. Then make the necessary changes to the user interface within the CSS.

At the end of the day I was able to create the child theme with needed (PO file) for the Arabic language. (Sourgoutsidis, WordPress-Poedit: Translation Secrets, 2012)

Actually, I have been doing that kind of tasks so many times, that I could do it with blinded eyes.

The only challenge is these terms, which are not ready translated into Arabic. For this, I am always trying hard to find the right word.

Day 1.3

Today we are going to check that all chosen plugins have been translated properly into Arabic language. Then after installing them, we do have to test them in different machines and different browser in order to make sure they are working properly and they are not slowing down the website.

That is waiting for a website load is like waiting for service in long line, and if takes too long the customer walks out for somewhere else.

Google says in its Webmaster Center Blog

“At Google, we’re striving to make the whole web fast. As part of that effort, we’re launching a new web-based tool in Google Labs, Page Speed Online, which analyzes the performance of web pages and gives specific suggestions for making them faster. Page Speed Online is available from any browser, at any time. This allows website owners to get immediate access to Page Speed performance suggestions so they can make their pages faster.”

That’s why taking care of the site speed is not only good for the customer satisfaction, but also for the benefit of business.

At the end of the day we were all happy that everything was working as expected, no bugs need to be fixed. The truth today tasks were a mere routine work, that was done thousands time before and will be still done after, but still accumulated experiences are always benefit for the process speed to any project.

Day 1.4

Today we will be dealing with the Security issues: changing the database table prefix, removing wordpress version from the website header, and admin user name. (Matin, 2011)

In my experience these tweaks need to be done manually, that's why we have a check-list for that purpose, because we are running many wordpress websites.

I couldn't finish today all security fixes today, it takes generally from 7 to 10 hours of work

Day 1.5

Today the team and I will be checking the accomplished work done during the past days of the week.

Meanwhile I should be performing some security essentials from securing the admin username and password with a hard combination which is a good practice.

That is a WordPress site is often compromised by a username like 'admin' or a weak password.

Protecting access to most important files as (wp-config.php, .htaccess) since this could be the back door for hackers.

I should say preventing a hack in practice is almost impossible, but it is practical by performing these security issues to make the hacker temptations harder.

Today was the last day on the week and all our set goals for this week was achieved in a satisfactory manner, we did had some trouble shoot during our work which is good for our experience development.

Summary of the week:

During this week we have been all busy with the new website design.

We are happy that we managed to satisfy our customer expectation by choosing the appropriate Word Press theme, that fulfil our his requirement and I should mention at this point that most of our clients required this kind of website platforms as it is easy to run afterward besides of its low cost.

Generally the choice of a theme takes some time to pick the appropriate one, luckily this time our customer was far to be a fussy person. But before I talk about the theme and our choice, I find my self-forced to talk about Word Press.

WordPress is considered as the best blogging platform with over 50 million website over the net, not only bloggers also websites such as online magazines and business firms are running WordPress because it's a good CMS solution with its huge plugins library. So there is no wonder if WordPress is gaining ground every day, because it is free like freedom and rich with 26000 free themes and over 32 000 plugin that empower your design, which mean you can do any kind of website you imagine! (Blog, shopping store, magazine, membership site...). It is pretty much suitable for small and medium business.

WordPress is written using PHP as scripting language and MySQL as a database management system.

To use WordPress you don't need to be an expert on them, but a little understanding could help you figure out problems. So it's a great choice because it is:

- Easy to maintain and updates are every 3-4 month with bug fixes
- Has a good documentation and big community for great help
- Huge library of plugins to let you customize your website

- Supported by a huge number of developers around the world who are involved in the development

Luckily, every target task has been planned for this week was done in a very satisfactory manner. Of course there was some troubleshooting, especially on securing the website, but all of that is a prolific addition to our experience.

3.2 Week 2

Day 2.1

Today we continue the last week designed website testing, because we are used to test any website offline before we launch it in the net.

On my side I will be checking the plugins translation, and if the terms are matching these used in Arabic websites. I have checked every translated word to make sure they are matching these circulating around in the net by other Arab translators, as this field is still immature and lays on the volunteer contributions. It's a shame there is no official institution doing the translation like as everywhere in the world, and standardizing terms for the Arabic language users.

Anyway, I feel lucky to have this great chance to contributing on the transmission of technology, when translating these technical terms into my own language.

Today I was able to finish the work with no delay, even though it's hard to think whereas the Arabic programmers are going to embrace the new terms I have created. I wish there was an institution for doing that and avoid us the entire nightmare.

Day 2.2

I took day of

Day 2.3

One of our customers has reported that the default search box functionality is far away to result in desired research; it doesn't give in most times relevant results.

Therefore today my duty should be searching for the reasons that are behind, and what might be the solution.

As a solution I found adding 'relevansi plugin' a better one for the problem, because in contrast of the default search box which sort result according to date.

- Search on relevansi plugin are sorted by relevance.
- Search within quotation mark gives exact match.
- Besides searching pages and posts, search tags and categories.

For my satisfaction this plugin has provided us with the best solution, or at least what we believed at this time.

I have checked the plugin functionality in few websites we are working on, and it seems to give better result than the WordPress default one, but I do rather wait for some extra testing in the next days to give final judgment.

Day 2.4

Today I have no special task to do, so I took the opportunity to surf around forums and blogs to learn new things and tips.

Summary of the week:

This week we have agreed with the customer about an elegant, responsive and adaptive layout word press theme for his project, and it has incredible features inside. It comes with extended admin panel that allow to customize the style, colours, font, position, so it let you do everything to get a professional good looking website

Ready boosted with WooCommerce shopping cart plugin, it's just great! It let you run a shop website without special knowledge in inventory management and everything is automated.

All we have to do for next week is to translate the theme into Arabic language to suits the area customers, then we do have to create a child theme. But why use a child theme?

Well, child theme is a theme that inherits the functionalities of another theme which we call parent theme, the child theme allow designer to make any changes without affecting the original theme, and whenever the theme's developer has made updates to the parent theme it won't erase the changes you have done to the child theme. By creating a child theme you are creating a new set of files that let you to customize your design without changing the original theme.

I like when doing a diversity of tasks every time

3.3 Week 3

Day 3.1

Today we will discuss hosting plan with the customer, and the best recommendation according to his budget.

Generally, most clients have no idea about all this jargon, so all they need is their website running on the net and seen by customers. Moreover it should be cheap and reliable webhosting.

It has cost me many hours to explain the control panel and all other features to the customer, like installing WordPress, setting up ftp accounts and setting up emails. For the reason that most of our customers are 'technical impaired'!

Tutoring customers about all the hosting stuff provide me with good review to the hosting plans and their services. Furthermore these reviews help us to update our list for the best hosting companies, and categorize theme for the different needs of our customers.

Day 3.2

Today I will continue the tutoring of Control Panel uses, and if possible the WordPress dashboard. Generally we have videos that contain a detailed explanation of how to use the different features of the control panel, but customers prefer to be guided step by step.

In my experience though, most people utilize only a very few features of cPanel. I tried my best to make things simple and easy to understand for the customer, it has taken me many hours to explain every feature on cPanel and it is use.

I can't say tutoring customers is a pleasant task, but the truth is I am taking every experience further. One of the things that surprises me time and time again when guiding customers is how difficult to them working with the cPanel!

It is amazing that things that might be easy for you are without doubt hard and very confusing for others. One should always imagine himself on the other side to adjust his everyday experiment, when teaching others new aspects.

Day 3.3

Today we will be exploring with our customer the use of WordPress dashboard. WordPress dashboard allows us to control every task behind the scene of managing our website.

As I did yesterday, I took the customer for a tour from login to WordPress to the dashboard home screen with detailed explanation about pages, posts, tags, categories and all other major components.

For my luck, the client has found it easier to deal with the WordPress dashboard than to work with web hosting cPanel, that the last one needs more ‘technical’ person. These experiences on doing “customer services” are never been pleasant, that you must be dang polite all the time, and makes you harsh to solve any one’s problem.

For my luck, I have been a teacher for a while, the fact that helped me in this matter of teaching.

Day 3.4

Today since I have no special tasks to do besides blogging or reading posts in some SEO forums, I will try to solve one tiny CSS problem.

In the theme’s setting it says that the recommended size for the logo is 300 x 100 pixels, this works like a charm on the desktop and laptop screens.

However it looks horrible on the smart phones screen, the logo image sticks out of the theme layout. (Coyer, 2012)

Therefore, solving this problem has pushed me to make a little investigation over the net for further optimization of the image, and yes there is always a solution.

I am happy for today I have managed to solve the problem with a tiny css trick, and I gained another experience.

Day 3.5

Today I was lazy for doing any special task except for some reading related subjects on blogs.

Academic blogging as it is seen as ‘idea’s garden’ is a great ways for getting feedback from readers’ comments. So I spent many hours reading about SEO issues and commenting them.

Week summary

During this week I was slightly far from technical tasks, the fact I have been tutoring most of the week days provided me with new idea that I am sitting on a gold mine.

Tutoring benefits you with extra income, besides it provides you with:

- Better understanding to the subjects that you have not attempted to learn in deep in your prior time.
- Review of concepts with which you are struggling.
- Help in determining your strengths and weaknesses in particular topics.

As a result, I felt the satisfaction working one-to-one and seeing the customer's overcome challenges. Furthermore it opens your eyes on the hidden aspects that a customer see from his point of view.

3.4 Week 4

This week we did not have much to do that's why I will be busy with translating Khan-Exercise plugin into Arabic. This is one of my favorite tasks and most challenging ongoing project, is without a doubt my piece of cake. This plugin lets any one host khan exercises framework on his WordPress website, and makes mathematic subject learning funny and attractive.

I have translated many WordPress plugins in the past, and the work did never required technical knowledge such as (html, css, javascript...), however this khan-exercise plugin seems to require having all this knowledge and more. For my surprise I found this plugin not ready for translation, so I did my research to learn the proper way to get the easy way for translating the whole plugin, rather than translating scripts one by one. (Sourgoutsidis)

Finally I localized this plugin to make it ready for translation, which means that you have to tell WordPress where to find the language files by adding a text file.

Frankly, I never thought localizing a plugin was that easy, so...voila!

I did learn new thing. For my excitement I discovered the Khan-exercise contains lots of code strings and needs a bit more complex work to put it into Arabic.

Generally, translating a plugin takes me about two or three hours, depending on the number of words. But this khan-academy plugin seems requiring a lot of effort. Furthermore, I think this translation require a lot of time to achieve and continuous testing.

Now since this is not ASAP task, then I will be doing it whenever my hands are free, since it is going to cost me hundreds of hours of work. Meanwhile during this week I was able to perform some translation.

3.5 Week 5

Day 5.1

One of our customer claimed that his site's home page is not cached by Google?

Frankly, this was the first time I am required to do such kind of problem and that will require me to do a lot of search and reading.

For today I have been quite busy on searching for all the possible cause of the non-cached website on Google. I need digging deeper on the problem to investigate why the website is experiencing issue.

Day 5.2

Today I will be busy trying these tricks I have learnt from my recent research on the caching matter. So that is my plan as it is suggested by some SEO (Martinez, Why your website is not cached in Google, 2013):

I will be checking the source code, whereas it contains noindex markup, and whereas the home page is crawlable?

Then I have spent hours in some issues to fix possible problems causing the site not being crawlable, such as embedding links in pages that contain flash content to let Google index them.

Day 5.3

Today I will keep an eye on the changes we have made and see what changes might occur to the website cache. Once again, I can't see the result before Google's update the cached pages because it depends on how often Google crawl the website. Besides, some says that could happen for no well-known reason, and in most case the cache shows up again. In my side, I will be trying every tips I learned, the most important thing that I solve the problem. Yet, we can do an old trick by updating some content of the website and we will probably see the results within one or two days, that is updating content will ensure frequent Google's visit.

It's really nice to get some tips from experienced people, thank you Google.

Day 5.4

Week summary

That is the beauty of SEO world; you face new challenges that make you challenging yourself every time you have a new problem.

During this week, while I was trying to solve my client's website cache problem, I had to learn a lot from others experiences. These gurus blogs has always been my favorite source of information, I never got stuck with them. So, this week I did a lot of reading to update my information, otherwise I am behind and I lose my ability to solve my customer's problems.

I have to confess that I was lucky in most cases that I handled so far, that is competition in Middle East is not harsh as it is in the global internet which make our tasks a bit easier.

3.6 Week 6

Day 6.1

Today as usually, I will be promoting one website to be indexed and ranked in the major search engines, so that's what we will do:

Customize the design to promote for the most used social media:

Facebook

Google+

YouTube

Posting as guest

Of course there are more social media on the net, but these are the most frequented in our country.

For today we have been gathered the team and I to take an overall look at the website design to suggest the eventual changes that might improve the website.

It is known that designing a website is not the whole process, you could have the most well designed website filled with the most relevant content, but it is useless if no one is

seeing it. The website user interface is the face that communicate with surfers, the truth is that the user don't care much about how beautiful your website is, the most important thing for him is the content and how easy to navigate!

In 2011, HubSpot conducted a survey they found that 76% said that the most important factor is that (the youmoz blog, 2013)

“The website makes it easy to find what I want” (see figure 3)

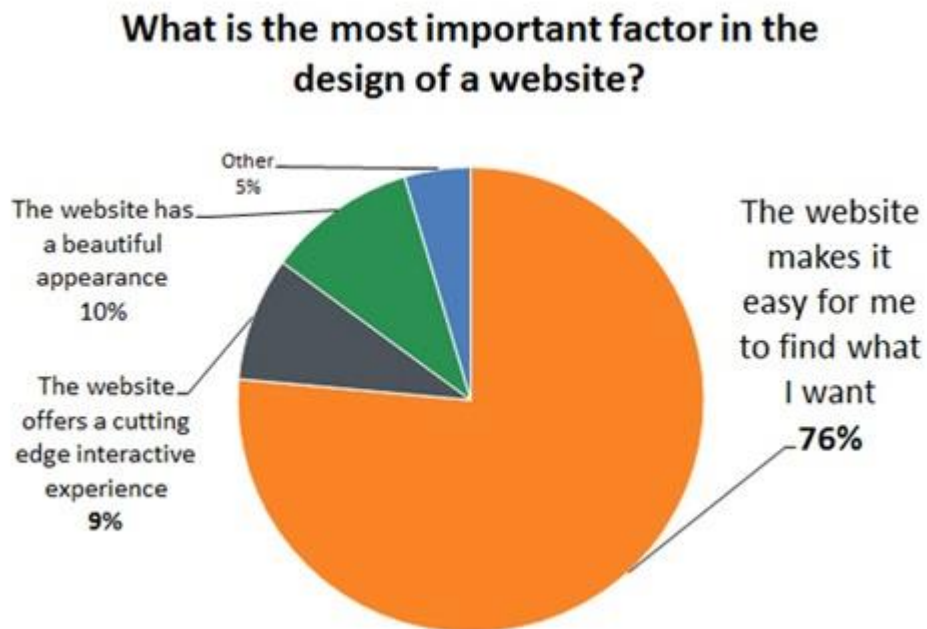


Figure 3: source: <http://moz.com/ugc/10-reasons-custom-web-design-is-dying>

So today we did spent the whole day in customizing the website interface that matches the particularity of the local users. It's amazing that some customers likes flashy, colorful website even though it is not matching the SEO standards, that's why we are here advising our customer to avoid putting flash content, but it is still hard to convince

them that flash content is bad for SEO. We have a long way ahead to teach people what useful and what useless for their website when it comes to website promotion.

Day 6.2

Today I will be promoting the website on Facebook.



Facebook is one of the most used social networking, with its 56 million and more Arab active users. (Facebook in the Arab region)

“Facebook is rising rapidly” (according to Facebook statement).

So today I have managed to create a Facebook page for the website, and added some picture that are related to website on the fan page, this has a magical effect to attract more views.

Also I did put a cover picture and the company logo from the website, next step I will teach the website owner how to keep posting events on his Facebook page to enlarge his audience and business.

My experience has showed me that Facebook gives a huge boost for any business, that's why I always put this as my first option when promoting any website.

Day 6.3

Today I will promote the website in Google+, and my strategy is to perform these steps:

- Share the link with existing contacts
- Add Google+ badge to the website
- Follow the other Google+ pages and begin networking

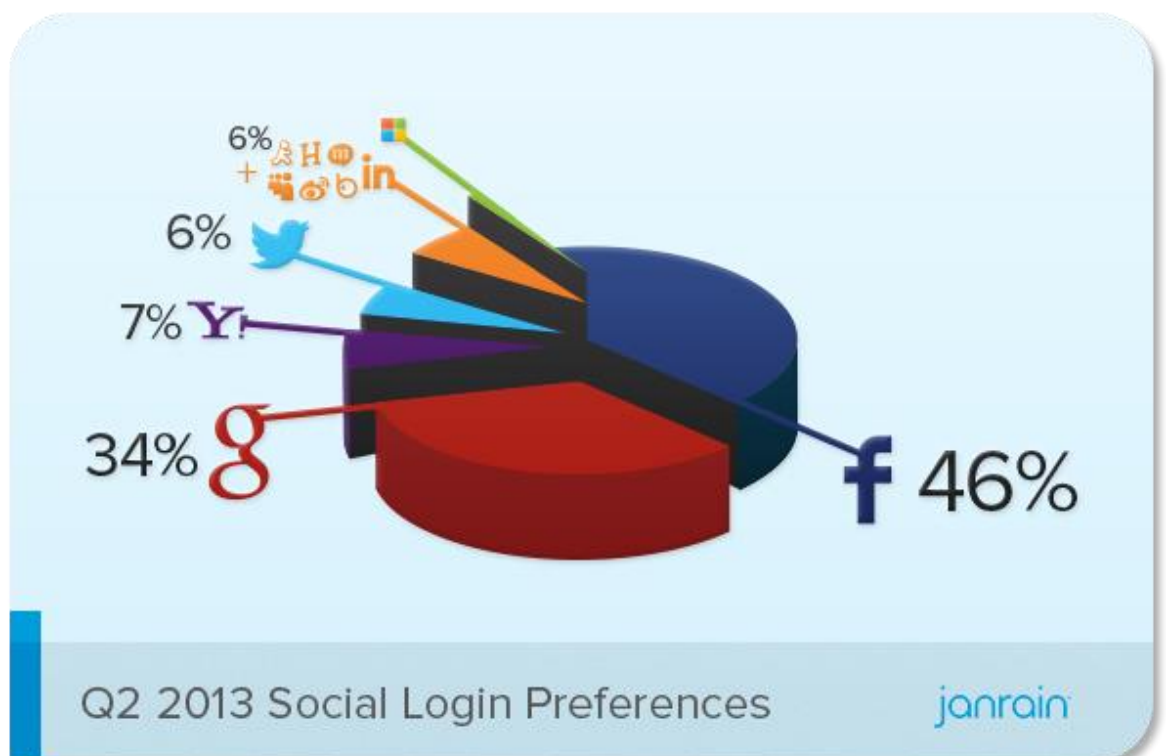


Figure 4: Social login preference

Source: <http://janrain.com/blog/social-login-trends-across-the-web-for-q2-2013/>

From a study conducted by janrain, Google+ seems more poised than any other social media platform to compete Facebook. (Olson, 2013)

For this reason I always consider the same amount of initial interest to Google+ as I do for Facebook when it comes to promoting any website. I can't suppose that I have completed the planned objective set for today, because I still need to learn more about the use of Google+ from the guru's tips. I need still to develop my experience on using Google+, for the reason I am new comer for the use of it comparing to my Facebook experience, so that's why I need more tips from more experienced people, although it's said that you can

“Learn it in no time”

Day 6.4

Today target will be posting comment as a guest in forums

But what are the benefits from posting as a guest? Briefly it will send readers to your website.

Reader will interact with your comments in the social media, which mean good back-links to your website, although it's said that posting as a guest is dead. So for long hours, I have written many comment posts on the most reputed forums...did I say forums! Yes this is true, that is blogging in the Arab world is still immature and most of readers goes to these forums for information gathering.

Still guest posting is one of the effective way to market any business on the net, at least as it used to be for me.

My point, posting as a guest has always worked for the sites I promote, and will as I guess serve the business promotion until further notice.

Week summary

When promoting any product or website it is important to include the social media, which is a good potential due to the number of people you can reach, besides it is a huge benefit for the business.

Social media pages are great free marketing tools for any business, since that it is obvious. We consider that our prime choice and we put a lot of effort on it.

This week, I did spend long hours commenting on Facebook pages that has big amount of followers. But Facebook is not the core component of our commerce strategy; we do also use other social media to lead customers to the targeted website. For the simple reason, when a customer comes to visit the website he is already logged in, so you can easily obtain his information for our customers business.

In addition, social media is a great opportunity for businesses to reach out directly to their follower without having to spend a lot of money on expensive campaigns.

In the past, I was used to use much more effort on building backlinks to the websites that I run or I promote to get them ranked on search engines, then with experiences I realized that social media drive more users to the website.

It's amazing how market strategy is changing, when you thought that is the best method for what you are doing then a different method comes out. Also, a strategy that might work for one place will not introduce the same expected results.

3.7 Week 7

This week I was supposed to promote one website, the owner aims to be ranked in first Google page.

This was not a daily basis work, so I will summarize work done during this week.

It is amazing how I succeed by a mere chance to rank this website on position 3 in Google's first page for only one keyword.

For this, I don't remember where I got the brilliant idea to discuss the product keywords with ordinary people, so I asked my wife for what word she might use when searching for the named product. Directly on Google keyword planner, I started searching for the keyword search volume provided by my wife, and it has high quality score, but for my surprise it was not used by competitors.

It's worth mentioning in my experience that score is highly good for optimizing to drive traffic to the website. I am not in need to dig into details which could be very long, but the idea behind, is not necessarily some time to have the most relevant keywords to gain good ranking in Google.

The coincidence has it law sometimes in doing result that are not expected. This is another experience, which will mark my itinerary as a website SEO.

3.8 Week 8

Day 8.1

One customer claimed that his four year old site has over 60% drops on 23 of September? It has been always in spot 1-3 in Google search in their brand for the most of keywords.

And now Not only the most of keywords does not show up the website at the three first pages at Google search, but also the keyword "site.com" did not! Which is very strange, could that be caused by Google penalty?!

I have to investigate on the possible causes; it could be tons of reason including Google penalty! So this is what I do check usually in this case

- sitemap.xml

- The originality of the content
- The website Backlinks
- Keywords.
- Internal linking

So far these are at my experience the most common causes of the website dropping.

Since the team members are busy with other project, I will be dealing with the problem and I have to go through the steps one by one, but not for today.

Day 8.2

Today I will be checking if the website has an XML sitemap that is an important document for search engines to crawl a website while understanding the website structure.

Furthermore it provides:

- When the links was last updated
- Changes that are made

I have performed a very tedious checking for each and every link to see if it is working or not, generally I hate doing this task, because it is time consuming and effort. I did found many broken links in the sitemap.xml, as a solution I wasn't going after each broken link, instead I simply did deleted the old sitemap from the root and created new one for submission to Google.

In the past, I used to check all the Brocken links then repair them one by one, but this process was taking ages, then I realized that the best way would be creating the whole sitemap instead. Still, I am searching for the best way.

Day 8.3

Today target is checking the content whereas it is duplicated; I always put this in first grade investigation. Duplicate content will eventually causes many issues for the website such as:

- Confusing the search engine on which page to index, for the reason that several version for one page exist
- Search engine don't know which page to rank for a query

Duplicate content it might be because the site owner is a distributor as in our case, so the content is pasted from the producer as it is. As result, the website will lose traffic and rank.

Well, yes it was the case, it may be considerate as duplication, even though I found that very strange from Google to consider such a case as duplication. I will suggest to my client writing his own description.

Day 8.4

Today I will be Checking keywords ranking

There a lot of tools over there on the net, yet my favorite tools are these provided by Google it self, who knows better than Google.

After spending many hours on doing some research on the keywords used by competitors on the local market, I couldn't find serious competition about keywords used by our customer. I did managed adding some relevant keywords which has less competition, though I don't believe this small problem is behind this drop of website.

That's why it wasn't wise to spend more time with this issue for today.

Day 8.5

When it comes to website ranking, every thought goes to link building, and most of people tends to rush into getting hundreds if not thousands of links at a fast pace.

Google logarithm is smart enough to detect whereas the links are built in unmoral pace. So, I have detected the same problem, as our client has hired a service to get him all these links to websites which have been dropped in Google ranking, the fact that has caused to his website to have the same fate.

I couldn't check for today all the links, as this website has more than 5000 backlinks!

I will continue the process for the next days, with new link building strategy as this is not a one-time process.

Week summary

Hit by panda 4.1

It's a shame that a website has been around for long time, has been hit by Google update. This is a problem that we have faced few times, so we never developed a strategy to solve such kind of problems, which is different every time that happens.

There could be many reasons for a website drop that you should explore, and you need to do lot of research to figure out all possible causes for that. Besides you need to be informed of the Google updates, which mean a lot of reading on blogs and forums.

I am not saying that all tips I got from these blogs will work for me, that is different regions will work with different strategies. So, methods that might work in the oxidant won't necessarily do the same results in the Middle East?

But, tips I learn from other could put some light on the darkness when looking for a solution to some new problems.

Back to our case, the problem was that after all fixes we have made to the site, from which we thought the problem is coming for the drop problem we cannot see any positive impact before the next Google panda refresh. The fact that could take from 1 up to 12 months, it depends all on Google and how runs it logarithm.

Of course, I did learn this week the importance of keeping an eye on these malicious backlinks, because it's fatal for any website.

3.9 Week 9

Day 9.1

Today task will be designing multilingual WordPress website (Arabic, French), and if left any time I translate some scripts from khan academy.

By default WordPress is not multilingual this means that I have to add this functionality, for that I have many scenarios, whether create multisite within one site and configure everything from user's permission to content translation every time I want to add a language, or just implement a translation plugin. From the first sight I was thinking this is mere plugin choice and the work will be done and tested within couple of hours, but after reading on some websites I realized that it needs more time and consideration for the best solution according to my client budget and requirement. I will continue searching all options for the best solution in the following day.

Day 9.2

Today I and the team members will be investigating the options we have to set up the multilingual website.

On my side I did let the team members choosing the best option for the multilingual website after giving them all possibilities I found yesterday on the net, then I will be busy with translating some scripts from khan-academy. Translation of this plugin requires as I experienced it before many skills including math knowledge, and most im-

portant knowing the mathematical terms used in Algeria, thanks to my earlier experience as a mathematics teacher, that was a great tool that made my work easier.

Day 9.3

For today I have no special task, so it's good that I continue translating scripts from khan-academy. What I like about this work that it combines all the knowledge I got from all kind of studies. So yes, it's a task that requires a lot of work, more than I imagined at the starting of it. Furthermore, it has provided me with a good understanding of JavaScript libraries.

Week summary

This week was as always a diversity of tasks and works from redesigning website and optimizes it to search engines and mostly for Google as it's the most used search engine in Algeria. Then there are daily tasks such as social bookmarking, forums commenting and sharing own experience, blogs post reviewing and commenting, checking the traffic drops to detect the causes on its time. So there is always something to keep an eye on it and plenty of work that keeps me busy all day. Besides some contribution for the community as translating plugins, like I am doing at this moment, though I am paid for doing it, but it remains a great contribution for both internet marketers and students as it is a good tool for on line learning.

I must confess that I loved the task of translating khan academy as it's a combination of thing I like to do, sometimes this fulfill a desire at me to go back for math teaching as used to be many years ago, it might look strange but I am learning JavaScript through this work, isn't said learn JavaScript from JavaScript!

I might say my days are never boring; I am not a slave for doing the same thing day after day; rather I have a variety of tasks that I do regularly including ongoing education because of the continuous changes of internet marketing, and when I feel bored there is no harm of taking some days off. This week I did a lot of routine tasks to keep

track of the performance of the website under my influence, needless to say that I gained new experiences that boost my skills.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

SEO is a demanding job that requires a continuous skill building, you have got a lot of reading to do from seo blogs, forums and specialized websites. But still the SEO is an art no one could get it from only reading, you have to get your hands dirty, meanwhile searching. It's all about promoting a website to be ranked in the first page in most major searching engines.

I have been doing that for almost 3 years, and still I feel there is no clue to set a defined strategy. Having started this SEO work without knowing 'know-how', I have had a lot of reading, consulted other SEO's opinions and apply their accumulated strategies. That is skills building is a critical aspect of SEO career.

Surprisingly, on my day to day job I face new challenges with different problems, that needs a lot of skills building. During this diary period and before, I was spending almost 12 hours daily to solve my clients problems. Fortunately, Google has provided every tool to analyze any website, you just need to familiarize yourself with innovative SEO's tools. This is by no means, that I am spotting every tip I learnt, that is promoting a website in the arab world has different aspects. Companies in middle east are not so keen about using SEO to promote their companies, business is bit slow but clients are getting mature with the time. Optimization for search engine in Arabic will require intelligent choice of keywords and the right use of social media, because of the many dialects used in different countries. So, you need to choose the best keywords that match all the regions.

that where reside my struggle every time I am promoting a website.

“Content is still the most effective way”(Google)

Who said that, in middle east no one care, I have seen all along my experience many websites ranking in front of google with ridiculous or stolen content.

There are no voodoo magic that gift you a perfect formula when it comes to promoting a website in middle east, you have to study continuously the tendance since internets' intellectuality is getting matura by time. My problem, there is no much websites around, where Arab profesional SEO's are posting there comments about there experiences. Despite this, I am struggling to find the best solutions for my client to every problem I face, never mind digging around it.

I have learned from experience, before diving into SEO world one has to learn web development. That is personal skill can be aquired, developed and improved by accepting construct criticism. Yes, I can tell that my studies at Haaga-Helia had big impact on my experience as websites SEO that had elarged my eyes on the importance of web development process. It just let you look to things from every corner. That is SEO job, as I have experienced it during all the time including this flash periode of thesis, has showed me that it is a continious skills development. When I think back at my first time, at the first begenning of my performance as a SEO when I was following all these tips I read on blogs without taking in count the particularity of the area I work in, it has lead me to a big fealure? It was a wonder, while it was working for some it is not doing the same for me indeed.

The fact, that pushed me to develop new strategies by conducting debates with colleagues working within the arab world, and analyse these discusion with the combination of my experience to a working output for the business. However, this does'nt mean I did not take advantage of these valuable advices and tips I read from others, I am just concluding that not every tips has worked for me as it has done for others. It is important to bear in mind, that SEO is the most effective way to get trafic.

The great thing about SEO you don't have to have a degree to do it. Seo is a skill you learn by doing it. During my experience, I have succeed to put some sites into google top 10 for competetive keyword, it could be a strock of luck, but I believe learnig was truly behind the some success I got. I will just keep learning and doing things, also

spend some time getting to grips with PPC. That is, as I believe having both SEO and PPC working for your business is a real asset.

This thesis-diary has provided me with a great opportunity to settle down and make some notes about my work experience, checking my ups and downs for further improvement. While doing this report, signing up and engaging in forums and groups, posting questions and asking for opinions. The best thing in SEO that you are not only working on the desk, you will, at one point or another to work with customers, and have conversation. You can't beat results to show your experience.

Finally, I feel pleased to have this thesis opportunity for note making about my experience during this time and before. This as I believe, will provide me with the focus to explore my strengths and weaknesses that bring me the greatest tool for the improvement of my skills, furthermore it highlighted where I have to be most engaged.

5 Summary

This paper meant to put light on my work experience during 65 days, it had objectives to record my daily tasks and activities with accumulated experiences for the time being.

The process was quit simple, writing notes about all my tasks, analyse theme and tell what was the addition to the experience I have gaigned during that time.

No matter what problem I faced during my daily work, I have been using all possible methods from analysis to discussions with collegs and other SEOs to progress further in my work.

The output was really as expected, I have written the required report with many intersting notes concluded from my work experience, these notes will be a good base for me to develop my skills and knowlodge and stay ahead of the curve, furthermore it provides me with a backyard notes for more concederation from me and other searchers for further developmpment of the SEO strategies in middle east.

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