

SEO Tutorial 1: Introduction to search engine optimization

1. What is search engine optimization (SEO)?

Search engine optimization is the practice of improving where your site appears when people perform searches, and uses techniques that are both on page (within the pages of the site) and off page (outside the pages of the site) in order to increase traffic a site receives from the search engines. An example of an on page technique would be adding keywords to your pages, and an example of an off page technique would be exchanging links with another website. We will discuss these techniques in more depth later.

It's very important to note with search engine optimization that pleasing your site visitor and providing a good user experience will often also lead to good results with the search engine. It is the search engine's goal to provide the best results to Internet users - make this your goal as well!

2. Why is search engine optimization important?

Any website that needs traffic to survive needs search engine optimization. There are millions of webpages on the Internet, and it is the search engines job to add all of those pages to its index and whenever a query is performed find the very best webpages to display to the searcher.

There are many, many factors that the search engines take into account when choosing which webpages to display in what order in the search results. They look at factors such as the amount and quality of links coming into a site which is considered extremely important, and the site tags and page content. Performing various search engine optimization techniques on your site will help your site get noticed by the search engines and give them reasons to send searchers to you.

3. What is a search engine?

Search engines provide Internet users with a way to find information in an organized fashion. A search engine uses special software called an algorithm or spider to go through the entire web and add pages to its index. These engines are used by millions of people every day, and it is up to the search engines to provide the people who use their service with the best information possible. When you do a search the search engine will pull the most relevant web pages from their index to show you.

The three major search engines are [Google](#), [Yahoo](#) and [MSN](#), although there are various smaller engines.

4. What does it mean to be indexed?

Search engines have extremely large indexes which hold a copy of all of the webpages they have crawled and chosen to add to their index. The search engine spider crawls through the web, following links, and when it finds a page to add, it will make a copy of it, and add it to its index. When this has happened to your site, it is called being "indexed". This can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few

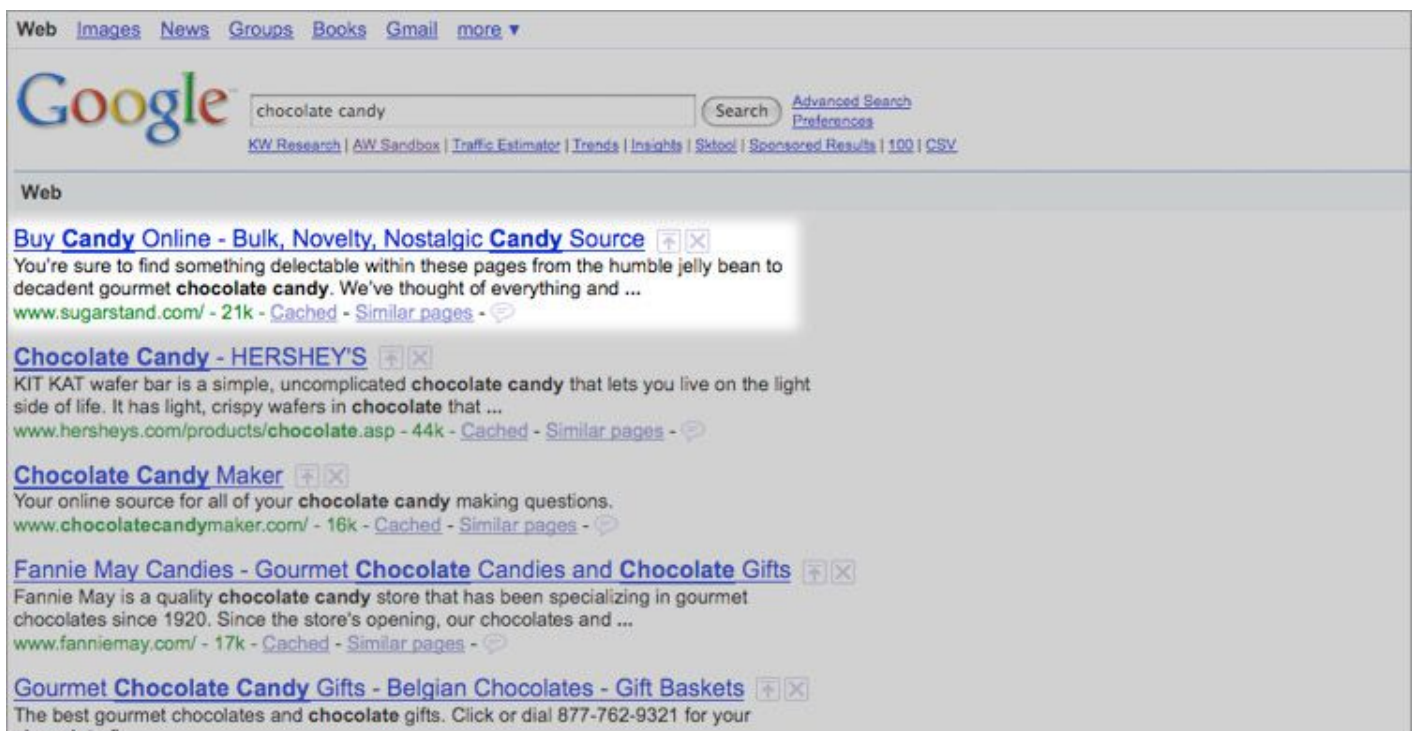
months for a site to be indexed, and the process must take place for every new website. Your site will only show up in search results after it has been indexed.

5. How to find out if your site has been indexed

Go to Google and in the search box type *site:mysite.com* (substituting your web site for mysite.com). This will give you a list of your website pages that are in the index. If there are no results, the indexing has not happened yet. You can do this same search at Yahoo and MSN.

6. What is "ranking" and how do search engines rank pages?

Ranking refers to where a website or page appears in the search engine results page.



Continue to the next tutorial in this series: [Planning your site with SEO in mind.](#)