

## **Integrating social media optimization (SMO) and search engine optimization (SEO)**

Whether you want or have a simple brochure website, a more sophisticated content managed website, a blog site or an ecommerce website, then, if you want to be found online, Search Engine Optimisation is essential as it's the most cost-effective way to deliver loyal customers to your website. Search engine optimization is also vitally important as it is estimated that 85% of all new visitors to a web site originate from the major search engines, so every business needs to have a search engine optimisation campaign that allows their customers to find them. Improved search engine placement from effective website optimization means more business.

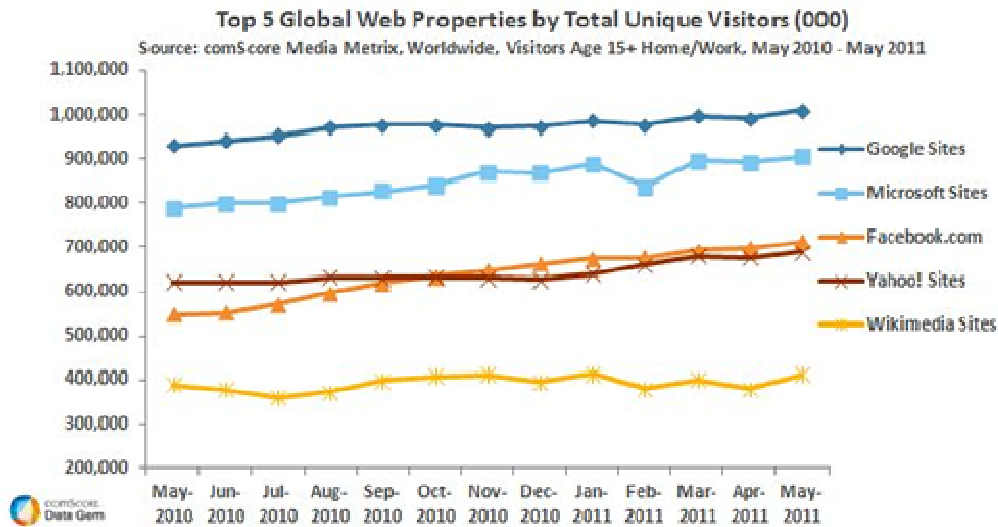


Social media optimization (also known as SMO or social SEO) has become more and more important with the growth of Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites and focuses on driving traffic from such sites. It's a form of viral marketing (or PR as we used to call it!). Social media optimization covers such things as social media features added to your content such as RSS feeds, social news and sharing buttons, commenting on blogs, participating in discussion groups and posting status updates on social networking profiles.

In fact SEO and SMO have become inextricably linked as social media creates links and 'likes' which are important signals to the search engines. Google has this view about the impact and importance:

"Our goal at Google is to get you the most relevant results as quickly as possible. But relevance is about relationships as well as words on webpages.....The beauty of +1's is their relevance—you get the right recommendations (because they come from people who matter to you), at the right time (when you are actually looking for information about that topic) and in the right format (your search results)..... Soon we may also incorporate other signals, such as your connections on sites like Twitter, to ensure your recommendations are as relevant as possible."

One of the most common objections about user-generated signals is that they are easy for SEO 'experts' to 'fake' and, certainly, nothing is perfect, but think how many ways Google has to justify your profile is tied to a real human being account when they track your footprint across the web and maybe you'll think again. Certainly their grasp of technology and statistics and their massive computing power will make it very difficult and social signals will surely not have the same impact on search results for all searches. If there is no strong social footprint Google will almost certainly 'normalise' the impact on rankings and fall back on the rest of its 200+ signals.

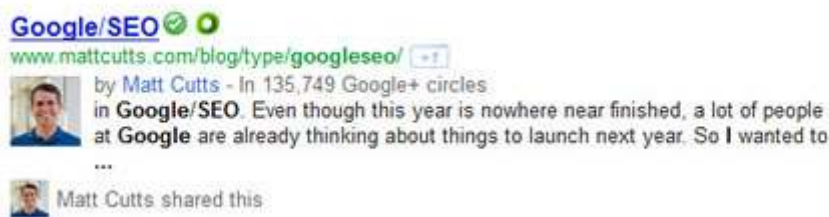


The "900 lb gorilla" of social media is, of course Facebook with over 800 million signed up profiles with 713.6 million unique visitors (May 2011) and 500 million daily users. Facebook is, of course, linked up with Bing, Microsoft's search engine to show 'Likes' when you are logged in. All the Microsoft's sites had 905 million unique visitors (May 2011) and Bing now powers Yahoo search too, so, all in all, the non Google group have some powerful stuff.

Google has had many attempts at social media - Google Answers, Google Bookmarks, Google SearchWiki, Google SideWiki, Jaiku, Google Wave, Google Buzz all of which have failed and/or been withdrawn. Now however it has [Google+](#) and the [+1 button](#).

This allows it to compete with Facebook and their [Like button](#) and [Twitter's tweet button](#).

Social media is having a significant effect on search engine optimization and Google needs to be in the social game as well as search so that Facebook and other sites where consumers and buyers share or may share information do not 'eat its lunch'. So Google+ is important to Google. Google+ still only has 43 million daily users, but Google also has search users and, in May 2011, Google became the first 'site group' to surpass 1 billion unique visitors globally in a month. Since August searches for users logged into their Google Accounts have displayed public Google+ posts from people in their circles as search results alongside web pages. If it's a link it shows up like any other Web result but the person who posted it is displayed underneath it.



For businesses the impact of social media on search has, clearly, been more obvious on those that are consumer facing but this month Google+ added "[Pages](#)



[for Business](#)” and also launched an extension to AdWords to let people +1 your page from your advert as a way to help your it stand out from the crowd and help your long term organic search visibility. This could be a game changer and affect not just B2C but also B2B. There are some great ideas about how businesses can use it on [Business 2 Community](#).

There are some issues as the page is quite difficult to remember, ours is: <https://plus.google.com/114540805450256331333/> which is not exactly memorable, you can't integrate with any YouTube channel or blog you may have nor with Google Places, you cannot 'circle' users without them circling you first, there does not appear to be any possibility of multiple administrators for the page, there seems to be little verification control - there's no claim your business procedure like there is with Google Places for example, Google Analytics is not yet integrated and the API is still quite limited. But then it's early days and no doubt Google will sort out much of this soon.

You can see that there is a lot going on and that SMO is just going to become more important.

## **So what should you do?**

- Recognize that search engine optimization is now at least partially dependent on social media optimization for many businesses, whether you like it or not.
- Read our newsletters from 2009, they are still relevant:

[Social Media Marketing 1](#)

[Social Media Marketing 2](#)

[Social Media Marketing 3](#)

Also check out where you can become involved. Our "[List of the top 750 social networking sites and tools](#)" has not been updated in ages so there are some broken links, but it's still a useful resource.

- Engage in social media. Set up pages on relevant sites like Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn and Twitter. Add your 'social streams' to your website in an integrated way.
- Help your site and content to travel by making tagging and bookmarking your site easy, with social sharing buttons. Of course, if you don't have good content that people want to share.....
- Consider, depending on how interactive your site is or could be, adding [Disqus](#), [Echo](#), [Facebook Connect](#) and [Google Friend Connect](#) or other social implants.