

Adroyt Whyte Paper

The Relevancy Movement

Defining SEO for the Artificial Intelligence Age



A Decade of Dramatic Changes

The ways in which SEO has changed during the past decade is as dramatic as the explosion of social media. In its infancy, SEO was the shady practice of stuffing keywords, tweaking back-end code and spamming links until a site made traction with the keywords that translated to traffic. With each of Google's algorithm tweaks, the Black Hat tricksters who gamed the system fall farther out of favor.



Content Becomes King

Perhaps one of the most significant changes in SEO is the continued rise of the importance of content. The groundswell of influence that high-quality content began to exude started with the Panda update in 2011, which was the death knell of keyword stuffing and spammy content. Anyone foregoing substance and quality after this point saw their sites continue to decrease in rankings.

The Chain Gang

The demise of link schemes is another major change in SEO during the past decade. Google defines these as “any links intended to manipulate PageRank or a site’s ranking in Google search results.” This includes any behavior that manipulates links to your site or outgoing links from your site. It’s been almost a full decade since Google put significant effort into stamping out practices intended to rank with Black Hat tactics and spam-based link-building practices. Now only natural link attraction and valuable link building with guest posts will earn the authority everyone is vying for.

Leaning Local

The 2014 Pigeon update brought local attributes to bear on search results pages (Have you noticed SEOs have quite a sense of humor when naming Google’s algorithm tweaks, which the company deigns to bestow?). With the explosion of mobile devices, local searches have become more common, so well-optimized sites and high-authority directory websites got a leg up in search thanks to this update.

SERP Savvy

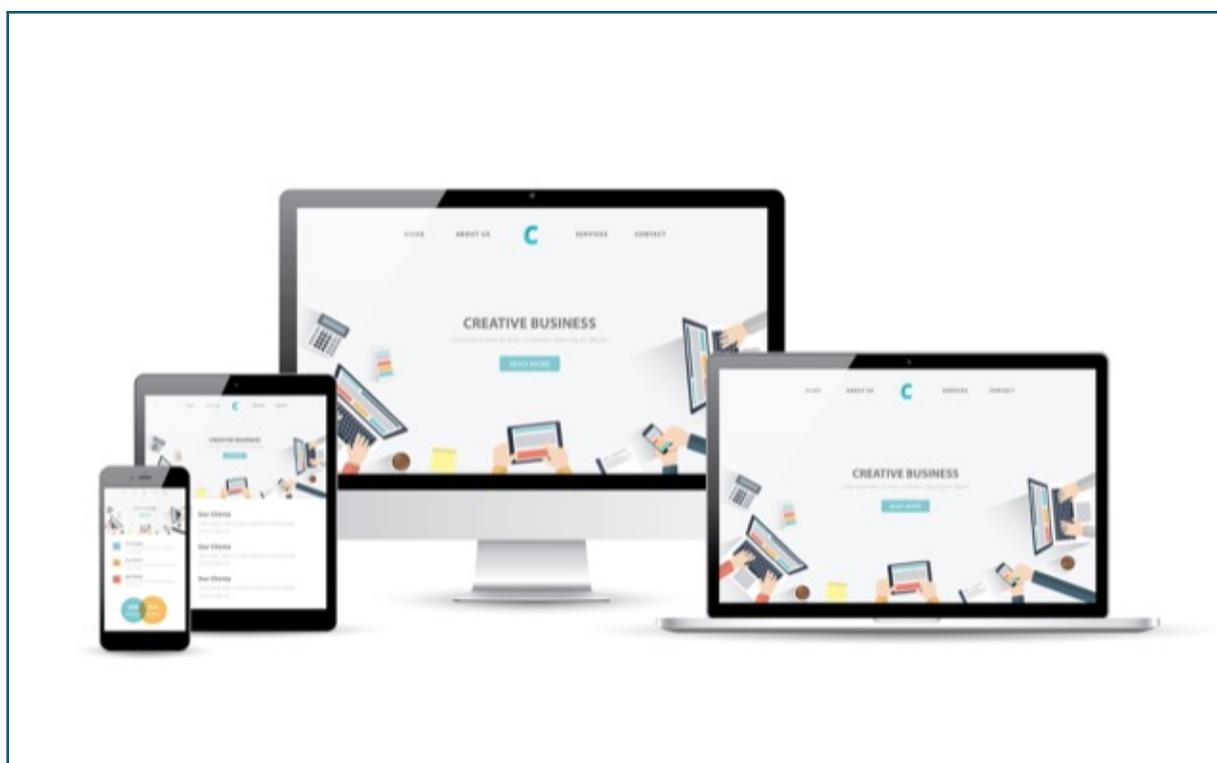
The smartness of the spiders that crawl the internet have grown tremendously as we move toward the age of artificial intelligence. If you saw a SERP from a decade ago, not only would you realize how disorganized results were, you’d see how much sophistication has been brought to the pages themselves, making for a much more user-friendly experience (always Google’s M.O.).

Meta Mastery

Google’s Knowledge Graph, which first came on the scene in 2012 was a major shift in SERPs, as it is intended to provide users with concise, direct answers to their questions. This is another design tweak that has brought greater aesthetic pleasure to results pages, the box of information when it appears to the right side of a return providing the feel of an editorial experience when it’s an Informational Search and a page from an e-commerce site when it’s a Transactional Search.

On the Go

Mobile queries surpassed desktop queries in Google searches in 2015 so it's no surprise that tweaks relating to searches have continued to prioritize the hand-held device over the monitor. If you're not optimizing your site for mobile you're going to be penalized big time—if you haven't heard of a responsive theme, get thee to the theme store!



Word to the Wise

The practice of keyword stuffing met its matches with the Panda and Penguin updates, but the SEO world was all aflutter when Hummingbird was rolled out in 2013. Search Engine Land called it the “soft death of keyword optimization altogether.” This powerful update that conjures up a tiny form introduced semantic search, which gave Google a leg up in being able to decipher user intent rather than relying upon a map of individual keywords and phrases.

The Rhythm Section

We can attest to the fact that, as Search Engine Land also notes, the shock to the system for SEOs has slowed down a bit during the past few years, as major updates to Google's algorithm tweaks have decreased. That's because the search engine has reached a strong foundation, allowing the significance and pacing of updates to be fewer and farther between. When they do arise, we at adroyt follow them religiously because you never know when that little tweak is going to reward our clients with an uptick in traffic.

Can you imagine where we will be in another ten years?

If you would like to dig deeper into our understanding of SEO, you can visit adroytLABS.com and download knowledge-base tutorials that cover many of the issues that affect a site's SEO.

About Adroyt

Adroyt offers a number of SEO-related services. We perform SEO fixes to sites that have never been optimized or have been optimized in the wrong way. We also create exemplary content using SERP (search engine results page) strategy; and we maintain SEO competency on sites. We're master mixologists when it comes to creating the powerful cocktail of advantage required to maintain relevancy. As search engines continue to push web masters to create high-quality, relevant content that does not include the SEO tricks that once gave websites a leg-up in organic search results, we follow their leads each time they set new rules.

