

Net Results
Helping your business succeed online.
Published by nrichmedia (www.nrichmedia.com)

Volume 1, Issue 1 – Spring, 2005

In This Issue

- Welcome
- FAQs
- Featured Article: Why Doesn't My Site Show Up on Google?
- Web Site Design and Promotion
- About nrichmedia
- Charitable Causes
- The Not-to-be Missed Link: TerraPass

Welcome

Welcome to the inaugural edition of 'Net Results.' Feel free to break out the champagne. It might help to make the experience a bit more enjoyable.

So, what's the purpose of this newsletter? Why did you sign up for it? Good question.

The idea is to cover topics relevant to anyone who is thinking about starting a web site or trying to improve upon the results of an existing web site – whether that be improving the design or getting more hits in search engines. In other words: how to get your web site to attract clients, impress them, and get them to take action.

The Web is an ever-changing environment, much like the world we live in, so what is relevant today may not be relevant a year from now (a little disclaimer for those who hold on to these newsletters and five years down the road blame me for giving them outdated information ;))

It's my goal to enlighten a wide range of Internet users on a myriad of subjects about the Internet, email, design, marketing, and, occasionally, touch on some other issues I deem worthwhile. Maybe you'll even get a bit of a chuckle, as it's my intention to keep the tone of this newsletter light.

Send me your FAQs

If there's something you'd like to ask as far as how to go about creating or improving your web presence, feel free to send me an email (info@nrichmedia.com). It's quite likely a question that someone else has been wondering about and chances are you won't be the only one who finds the answer useful.

So, I'll gladly post FAQs, with a reasonable facsimile of an answer. Or, it might even inspire me to write a featured article on the topic. Don't worry; I won't use your name, so nobody will know if it was you who asked, "Does my monitor need to be turned on for me to see my web site?"

Featured Article: Why Doesn't My Site Show Up on Google?

This is a common question I get asked from people who've had a web site for any length of time. As an example, someone -- let's call him George -- has a site on which he's selling his Okanagan-grown Fuji apple trees (my favourite). George can't understand why, when he does a Google search for the word "trees," his site is not showing up in the results.

Getting good results on Google (or any other search engine for that matter) is generally considered showing up in the top 20 (or, maybe 30) listed sites, i.e., in the first two (or three) pages of results (unless you've sneakily changed the default setting from 10 results per page). It's these first two or three pages that get most of the clicks from people doing a search. Most people don't bother looking past this point if they haven't found what they're looking for.

1. Be Realistic

The problem is that there are literally millions and millions of web sites out there. And many more web pages. (To be clear: a web site is composed of one, or usually several, web pages.) So, every time someone does a search for a word or phrase in Google, your site is competing with many millions of other pages. I just did a search for the word "trees" and Google is telling me there are close to 36 million results found. George would have better luck buying a 6-49 ticket than having his site come up amidst that sort of competition!

Now, if we narrow down our search to the phrase "apple trees" we've cut the number of results to around 8.5 million. Still very high, but we've cut out 75% of the competition. Going to "Fuji apple trees" brings the results down significantly, to 130,000. We've now cut out an additional 98.5% of the competition. Finally, narrowing the search down to "Okanagan Fuji apple trees" diminishes the number of results to 332 -- another 99.7% of

the competition out of the way. In fact, by making our search specific like this, as opposed to the original “trees,” we’ve eliminated 99.999% of the competition!

So, you’re asking, what’s the point of this exercise, other than to prove that your degree in Math has the occasional use? The point is that your web site doesn’t have a snowball’s chance in Tahiti of being ranked highly by search engines when using a very general term, especially if it’s a single-word term. Just like if you were to try to find next-door-neighbour Fred’s auto repair shop’s web site, you wouldn’t search the word “car” and expect to find his site. You would probably use 3 or 4 specific words, possibly including the geographic location of Fred’s shop, and hope to see his site pop up then.

So, what is reasonable for George and his homegrown Fuji apple trees? Well, if his site is well constructed, he can reasonably expect to have good results for specific search phrases, such as “home-grown Fuji apple trees” or “organic Okanagan apple trees.”

2. Include Relevant Copy on Your Page

Now, I’m not going to go into all of the details of what I mean by a well constructed site, but one of the most important things is that the copy (i.e., the text on the web page) actually includes the words that you want to be found for. How else are the search engines supposed to know what your page is really about? You’d be surprised how often I’ve heard people complain about getting poor search results for a web page of theirs that doesn’t even mention the word(s) they want it to be found under.

3. Get Linked Up

Another key factor is to have relevant links to the page. Essentially, this is like a popularity contest where Google wants to see how many of the cool kids have your phone number in their little black books. The more links you can get to your site the better, but it’s really the number of relevant (there’s that word again) ones that matter the most. Having a link from your Aunt Jane’s personal web site to yours won’t really do you much (if any) good (although it doesn’t usually hurt). But, for our friend George, he’d be much better off having links from web sites about apple sauce or apple cider producers, other fruit tree growers, gardening shops, etc. They bear far more weight than good old Aunt Jane, well meaning as she may be.

How do you get these links? Ask the site owner or Webmaster. Often they’ll want a return link to their site, which you can decide if you want to do or not. Also, you can probably find at least a few directories or associations you may belong to, which will gladly list you at no charge. It just takes a bit of searching. Keep in mind it’s the quality, rather than the quantity of these links that matter most.

Finally, remember that most search engines take a while to index new or updated web sites. It might be a few weeks or even a few months until you see the “fruits of your labour.”

To summarize, keep these three points in mind:

1. Have realistic expectations. Your odds of being found in a search engine for a specific phrase are much better than a very general term.
2. Include text in your page that talks about the term(s) you want the page ranked for.
3. Get good quality links to your site.

These three things, and a bit of patience, should get you far better results and save you a lot of frustration!

Web Site Design and Promotion

Are you looking for a professionally designed web site that attracts clients?

Is your existing web site not giving you the results you're wanting?

nrichmedia has partnered up with Marketing Coach and Consultant, Juliet Austin (www.julietaustin.com), to provide you with complete web design, development, copywriting, and promotion packages. See www.nrichmedia.com/results.htm to find out how we can help your business or non-profit organization to succeed on the web.

About nrichmedia

nrichmedia creates innovative and unique web sites and other multimedia for ethical and socially responsible businesses and organizations. We also offer web site maintenance, CD-ROM production, and more.

nrichmedia was founded by Nathaniel Richman in 2000. Nathaniel graduated from the Vancouver Film School with a Certificate of Recommendation in Multimedia Studies in 1997 and has been working in the web design and new media industry ever since. He previously received a Bachelor of Mathematics degree (Honours Actuarial Science) from the University of Waterloo and worked in the pension consulting field.

Nathaniel works with several other designers and programmers, according to the needs of the project, to provide the client with the most professionally designed web site or presentation possible.

"Nathaniel has been our website consultant at the Brokers Association for several years and he's wonderful to work with. He responds to my requests for changes to our site quickly and efficiently. He's also very talented and creative. He always has excellent suggestions for me when I'm not sure how a new web page should look or operate.

Nathaniel's services are simply excellent and I have highly recommended him to many of my associates to create new websites for them or to improve upon their existing ones."

- Greg Mansfield, Continuing Education Coordinator, Insurance Brokers Association of B.C. (www.ibabc.org)

To learn more about nrichmedia's services, view our online portfolio, and read glowing testimonials from many satisfied clients, please visit www.nrichmedia.com.

Charitable Causes

At nrichmedia, we donate 5% of proceeds on all projects of \$500 and above to charitable organizations. We are pleased to have supported and continue to support several worthy causes. To see a list of the organizations we support, please visit www.nrichmedia.com/causes.htm.

The Not-to-be Missed Link: TerraPass

I don't pass on links to other sites lightly, so it's got to be something that I think is really worthwhile. I figured if this one is good enough for David Suzuki, it's good enough for me!

I read about TerraPass in the Globe and Mail recently and thought I'd share it with those of you who haven't heard of it. The idea is to neutralize the effects of driving your car. By purchasing a one-year pass, the company promises to eliminate the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide that your car would produce. A very interesting and commendable idea!

For more information, see www.terrapass.com.

Pass it on and Enjoy

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to anyone you feel may find it useful.

To subscribe, please visit www.nrichmedia.com.

nrichmedia
www.nrichmedia.com
250.898.8795