

Insights of the German SEO-Community regarding the relevance of Search Engine Visibility Indices

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Abstract: Actually Search Engine Visibility Indices are the most popular but also criticized key performance indicators discussed in the SEO community. This paper summarises present opinions of the SEO-Experts, who discuss the relevance of Visibility Indices in blogs and newsgroups. There is a controversial understanding of three issues. Is there a correlation between Search engine visibility indices and the organic (visitor) traffic on websites? What is the impact of Google updates like Venice or Panda on the visibility indices? Does Search engine visibility indices are correlating among each other? As yet relevant scientific results on these issues are not available. To support a better understanding of the issues, the paper presents the result of a study with experts of the SEO community.

1. Introduction

Some years ago, the page rank was the most important figure for the majority of web masters [1]. However, this performance indicator became less important and the search engine visibility index has become the most popular as well as the most controversial value in the German speaking SEO-community [2] [3]. The search engine visibility index is a value that indicates the visibility of a website at the Search Engine Result Page (SERP). Various SEO tool providers as i.e. SISTRIX GmbH [4] calculate the value.

This paper aims at the secondary research of expert opinions of leading Web 2.0 media and summarizes the main statements and contributions to discussions of German speaking SEO-experts. There were n=9 blog posts of experts analyzed, including comments of the German speaking SEO-community.

2. Correlation Search Engine Visibility Index and Traffic

- According to SEO strategist Hanns Kronenberg, a duplication of the Search Engine Visibility Index from SISTRIX entails a duplication of the number of visitors. Furthermore, a Search Engine Visibility Index of three points would correspond to a number of about 100,000 visitors per month [5] [6].
- However, case studies show that there might be an increasing divergence between Search Engine Visibility Index and real Traffic [7].
- Isolated case studies prove that Search Engine Visibility Indices do not reflect the actual traffic of a website and the traffic cannot be estimated according to Search Engine Visibility Indices [8].
- Case studies show that there might be an increasing divergence between Search Engine Visibility Index and Traffic [9].

3. Search Engine Visibility Indices of individual providers act in a very similar way:

Case studies show, that the Visibility Indices of different providers of SEO-Tools have similar performance. But the exact characteristics of the indices are not published by the providers[10] [11].

4. Search Engine Visibility Indices and Google Updates

Search Engine Visibility Indices may reflect changes at the Google algorithm and increase the divergence between Traffic and named KPI. A decrease of the Search Engine Visibility Index, however, does not automatically imply the influence of Google updates [12].

5. Conclusion:

- Search Engine Visibility Indices have an only low significance regarding niche websites or websites that are directed towards a specific region, as the key words used are not represented in the average of the analysis keyword sets of the SEO-Tool providers [13].
- Search Engine Visibility Indices should be used by many as a single KPI. However, it is necessary to know about the development and correct interpretation [14].
- Search Engine Visibility Indices are suited to observe the visibility process of the own website over a longer period and allow to compare competitors of the same branch of trade [15].

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