

# Securing Your Position

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Search engine optimisation is a thing of the past says Dr David L O Smith, operations director of internet marketing agency Receptional.com.

It's official. Optimising web pages to make them attractive to search engines doesn't achieve much these days. So says David Smith who directs the operations of Receptional.com, the internet marketing agency that originally spent much of its time cracking algorithms to play the search engines at their own game.

David is pragmatic. "You've got to face facts that these days unless you're prepared to type in your credit card details, your site isn't going to appear in the top placings on most search engines and directories.

"The days of reverse engineering – where we worked backwards from the results to find out what algorithms the search engine programs were using – are long past. I wouldn't go so far as to say that it is not sensible to create content-rich pages based on a particular search phrase. That still holds true. But if you think that simply optimising a page and submitting it for free will bring you a bonanza of on-line sales, you're very much mistaken."

David says that Receptional.com has found itself moving gradually into a world where position is dependent upon the client's budget. As the myriad of search engines which existed in the late 1990s have merged, been bought out or simply disappeared, the field has been taken by the larger portals which all derive their content to a great degree from pay-per-click listings from providers like such as Overture, Espotting, Kanoodle and Mirago. There are very few opportunities for free submission. Of the directories, only Google and up and coming AllTheWeb remain as significant traditional search engines with prominent listings procured by the use of an algorithm.

"It's a busy market out there on the internet where everyone now bids for position rather than achieving it by the technical merit of their site alone. Those who mean real business have calculated their return on investment and know exactly what it's worth paying for each visitor," says David.

As an example he gives the phrase 'secured loans' where the price per click of £13 is considered worthwhile for those who are bidding for it and at least £12.17 per visitor is needed to guarantee a place in the top three positions on Overture UK. It is a little cheaper at only £6 per click on Espotting which provides the first five results on Yahoo UK.

"For commercial sites there is no other way than to pay to get into the major directories – LookSmart for MSN and Yahoo!. Big players throw big money at it but if you're a small enterprise the problem is knowing how best to spend a small budget to achieve big results. The skills that were used to unpick algorithms are now directed at understanding the commercial reality of pay-per-click bids and affiliate marketing."

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About Receptional.com

Receptional.com caters for the growing number of companies who wish to realise the potential of their web sites. The company offers a portfolio of internet marketing services to maximise and monitor web site traffic.

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