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Three Far-Reaching Internet Myths

By David Evans, PhD, MBA



Just like urban legends, new Internet marketing myths tend to gather strength and speed each year. But before you make any meaningful changes to your strategy based on these whisperings, separate the hype from the hope.

Here are the top three Internet myths that may be hurting your rankings and conversion ratio in 2015:

Myth #1: Bigger Is Better

Reality: A website with more pages in the Google index will not automatically rank higher than sites with fewer pages. If this myth were true, the US Food and Drug Administration site would rank higher than WebMD and Wikipedia for any of the search terms related to breast implants, as the FDA has 20 million indexed pages and the other sites have far fewer. In fact, the Google Panda algorithm was designed to penalize sites that have an excessive number of pages with low-quality content.

What to do: Type your site's address in the Google search box, and a list of indexed pages will appear. Next, count the number of true content

pages on your site. If your site has 7 to 10 or more times the number of indexed pages as pages of real content, you could have a problem. You can do the same exercise for your competitors.

Myth #2: Citations Can Be Automated

Reality: Citations are increasingly important for Google rankings. A citation refers to the appearance of your business name and address on other websites, blogs, and social media channels—even if this doesn't include a link back to your website. Another word for a citation is NAP, which is short for name, address, and phone number.

If your citations are inconsistent, your rankings will suffer. Unfortunately, software cannot circumvent this problem. Yes, there are a number of software services that can help with citations, such as Universal Business Listings, Yext, and Localize, but they can't access or update listings you have in society or vendor websites. These listings are important because they appear on highly credible websites. In addition, these automated services are hardly infallible, and have been known to incorrectly overwrite citations.

What to do: Keep on top of all your citations, and make sure they are consistent. Don't outsource this important exercise without oversight.

Myth #3: Security Increases Rankings

Reality: Über-secure websites—ie, those with the HTTPS—don't have a ranking edge on Google. This is only a ranking factor for websites that store protected information—

not plastic surgery practice websites. Moreover, moving to a secure server is not necessarily going to aid conversion. For a site to be fully secure, all sources of information that appear on the site must also derive from secure sources. If you want to pull videos or other interactive tools into your site to help with conversion, and these do not come from secure servers (which many do not), then you can't use them. That could limit your flexibility without providing any benefit.

What to do: Nothing. You can keep your http and continue with business as usual.

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