

We can rescue  
*you* from the  
Web Wilderness

Frequently asked  
on-line marketing  
questions

Cravenplan Website design  
and management 



Find out more about Cravenplan and our services by visiting [www.cravenplan.co.uk](http://www.cravenplan.co.uk)  
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## Introduction

Cravenplan Computers Ltd has been building and optimising websites for over 12 years and with a dedicated, experienced search engine marketing team we are in an excellent position to help your company achieve its on-line goals.

Over the years our clients have asked us many questions about on-line marketing and we are pleased to be able to share our knowledge and expertise with this selection of just some of the most frequently asked questions.

## What do I need to do to start selling on-line?

You need a clearly designed website where users and search engines can immediately see which products or services you are selling.

The product needs to be clearly displayed. Professional photographs will enhance the look of the site.

You need to set up a method for accepting on-line payments so that your customers can buy directly from you and feel secure in the transaction.

You also need to consider how to promote your site once it has been built. The two most common methods are Pay Per Click (PPC) and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), with most companies using a combination of the two.



## How do I accept credit card payments?

The most common way of paying for products on-line is via credit card. To make sure you do not miss out on sales you need to ensure you have a merchant account with your bank and a payment gateway such as Worldpay or Secpay. Your web design company and your bank will help you set this up.

Credit card processing is carried out away from your site on a secure server and you will not have access to any credit card details. This guarantees security for both you and the purchaser.

When payment has been accepted, you will be notified that the transaction is ready for processing and you can send the goods to your customer. The customer's payment is then deposited into your business account by the payment processing company.

## How do people find my site?

There are two main ways to drive traffic to your site, Pay Per Click (PPC) and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO).

With PPC you pay each time someone clicks on your advertisement and visits your site, which can be a very good way to get visitors to the site when it is first built.

SEO is a long-term strategy which involves setting up the web pages in such a way that the search engines can find them amongst the many billions of pages on-line. This strategy requires considerable time, effort and expertise so it is advisable to use professionals to ensure maximum benefit.



## How does a search engine know what my site is about?

The search engines use small programs called spiders or bots to gather information on as many web pages as they can find. They use a number of different criteria in order to determine what the pages are about. They then give the page a score and this dictates how well that page ranks for a given word or phrase.

The things a search engine looks for when determining your rank will vary over time, but include the title tag, text on the page and links to your site.

This score changes constantly but can be improved for your specific website through the use of good SEO techniques. However, you need to be aware that incorrect use or indeed overuse of these techniques can cause your pages to fall in the search engine or even get banned.

## What is SEO?

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimisation. It is the art of telling the search engines what a page on a website is about and ensuring that it appears above those of your competitors. The optimisation of a page means that when the spiders from a search engine visit a page they are quite clear that the page in question relates to this specific topic and in particular this keyword or phrase.

SEO also encourages the search engines to give that page the highest possible score for the targeted keyword or phrase, while making sure that they do not get a penalty for incorrect use of the different elements involved.

It is SEO that helps your site rise in the search engine's organic listings and enables you to be found for more terms than your competitors.

## How does SEO help me sell more?

Effective SEO helps you generate more business because it increases the number of visitors you receive from the search engine's organic results, often referred to as the free results.

This increase in relevant focused traffic often results in a much higher conversion rate because the visitors will have found your site by using terms that relate directly to the products and services you offer. In this way you know that they are already interested in what you are offering when they visit.

During testing we have found that websites using SEO get on average 14 times more visitors than those which do not.



## What makes a good website design?

A website needs to follow a few simple rules of human computer interaction design (HCID) for effective on-line marketing:

Easy navigation – the visitor must quickly be able to see what to do, how to find your products, how to get to the check-out and how to pay.

Clear images – a picture is worth a thousand words but only if it is of good quality and relevant.

Good use of colour – bright garish colours can put people off. Your website is a reflection of your company image.

Keep it simple – every element of the page should help your visitor make a purchase not distract them.

## What is human computer interaction design (HCID)?

Human computer interaction design (HCID) is the concept of ensuring that it is obvious to the user what they are expected to do next.

Imagine it is the first time you have looked at your website. Is it obvious how you move through the different pages to make a purchase or to request more information? If it is not, you will be losing customers.

The correct use of HCID not only makes your website more accessible and user-friendly but it can result in some impressive increases in sales and enquiries.



## How do I know when someone has visited my site?

Most hosting companies will provide a statistical package. The information displayed varies according to the package but should include:

Number of visitors – how many visitors have been to your site in the past month?

Where the visitors have come from – how did the visitors to your site find you? Was it via the keywords you have optimised the site for or did they use a different set of words?

Number of pages viewed – how many pages did the visitor look at?

All of this information can be used to market your website more efficiently.



## What should I sell on-line?

What you sell on-line depends on your area of expertise and the suppliers you have. If you are an established expert, your involvement with selling related items on-line will be given an instant boost by your credibility.

You need to make sure you can guarantee a reliable supply of the products you are selling. Your reputation on-line depends on your being able to fulfil your orders efficiently. How are you going to get the goods to your customers? If they are bulky or too heavy the postage could make the transaction too expensive.

## How do I get more visitors to my site?

Getting more visitors to your site can be achieved using good SEO and PPC.

Both of these techniques also have the advantage of delivering targeted relevant visitors to your site. These are visitors who have indicated they are interested in the products and services you offer.

You also need to consider why someone would want to visit your site. Do you offer unique content that answers the questions people have or helps them with a problem?

If you combine the elements of SEO with unique and useful content then more visitors will visit your site and return regularly.



## How long does it take to see SEO increase the number of visitors?

Every site is different and each keyword that you promote the site for will require a different amount of time and effort.

Non-competitive terms take less time to rank well than the more competitive terms. We would always recommend the use of a combination of both when promoting a site in the organic search engines.

In this way you get a quicker boost in visitor numbers from the less competitive terms and the more competitive terms follow on. This also gives you a base of credibility in the search engines as they will regard your site as more rounded and therefore a more likely source of reliable and helpful information for your visitors.

## How can I improve my conversion rate?

Improving your traffic is the first step to increasing your return on investment from your website. The second is improving your conversion rate.

Ensuring that people land on the page that is most relevant to their search is a good way to boost conversions. This can be achieved through both PPC and SEO.

Using clear, crisp photographs of your products will help to increase your conversion rates. The saying that a picture is worth a thousand words is true, but only if the picture shows the product in a good light.

Having a site that is clearly laid out with an obvious route to the products and a simple check-out process will help you achieve the conversion rates you want.

## What is Pay Per Click (PPC)?

Pay Per Click (PPC) is an advertising tool used on the Internet. There are a number of companies offering this service but the best known at the moment are Google, Yahoo and MSN.

They all work in a similar way and allow the advertiser to create a small advertisement which is then displayed next to the search results when specific keywords are used or on partner sites related to the product or service you are selling.

The main advantage to the advertiser is that you only pay when someone clicks on your advertisement and visits your site. You are also able to impose strict budgets that enable you to control your advertising spend.



## What are keywords?

Keywords should be thought of as phrases rather than single words. They are the words people use to find your site on the Internet. These words are typed into a search engine which then brings up a list of websites related to that phrase.

Not all keywords, however, are worth the same to a company that is marketing itself on-line.

Some keywords are used for research purposes, while others are used to make purchases. Clearly 'buying' phrases will be of more interest to you if you are selling products on-line.



## How do I choose the right keywords?

You need to take your keyword research very seriously as it is the foundation of your entire on-line marketing campaign. If you start to optimise and promote phrases that people are not using, you will not get the visitor numbers you need to succeed.

You can analyse your own statistics to see how people have found your site and then build on those phrases. There is powerful software available that can suggest terms in your niche and provide estimated visitor numbers and competition analysis. Look at your competition and see what they are trying to rank well for.

When conducting your keyword research you need to have an integrated balance of research and 'buying' phrases.

## How do I get links?

The search engines love links; they are seen as a vote from one site to another and as such can be difficult to get if you are new to on-line marketing.

In general you need to offer something of value to the site you wish to get a link from. This can be information which is hard to get elsewhere, tools that can be used by visitors to their site, discounts on your services or anything else with a perceived value.

You should avoid building links too quickly as this can harm your rankings in the search engines. You should also avoid companies offering to build hundreds or thousands of links for you for just a few dollars as they use automated spam that can also harm your position in the search engines.

If you get the right links from the right sites, formatted in the right way, you do not need thousands. Quality is more important than quantity.

## Should I have a blog?

If you have a website that offers information as well as products and if you have the time to post new information regularly, then you should have a blog.

A blog can be a useful addition to your existing site and as an expert you can give helpful information about new products, write product reviews and give tips on how to get the most from new purchases.

Blogs can be a good way of interacting with your visitors and discovering what they need from your site. However, it is very important that the information is up-to-date and relevant.



## What is social networking?

Social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace provide a forum where people with similar interests can get together.

Social networking and book marking sites are among the most popular sites on the Internet and they allow users to share information on the products and websites they like in an informal manner. These groups can be arranged geographically and may only have the one subject in common. A member of the social networking site can join as many groups as they like, so someone in Dorset with an interest in dogs can join groups related to Dorset, beaches in Dorset, Bournemouth night life, dog grooming and anything else that might be connected.



## How can social networking help with my on-line marketing?

Social networking and social book marking sites allow people with similar interests to get together in groups and discuss the subjects and products they are interested in.

This can be of use if you are marketing your products and services on-line as you can also join these groups. You can find out what people are talking about and what they are looking for when it comes to your products. This will help you with your keyword research and with producing tools or information to attract new visitors to your site.

When using these sites, you must be careful not to appear 'spammy' and just out to promote your site. You should offer help and advice to members of the group and become recognised as the expert in your field. This will result in not only more visitors but also visitors who trust you and are ready to buy from you.

## Can I use on-line marketing to promote my company branding?

The branding of a company is important as it builds long-term trust and recognition; people need to believe in a company before they make a purchase.

The Internet can be used to build brand awareness and to pass on information about products and services. It can also allow the company to communicate with visitors and inform them of its goals, ethos and standpoint on different issues. Companies which have successfully built on-line brands include Google, eBay, Amazon and Yahoo and they are now easily as recognisable as off-line branding giants like Coca-cola and Nike.

## A-Z of Internet terms

**Anchor Text:**

text on a web page that contains a hyperlink that directs you to another page.

**Blog:**

a weblog is an on-line diary containing information on a specific subject.

**Conversion Rate:**

the percentage of traffic viewing your website which then leads to a sale or purchase.

**Domain name:**

the name of your website, for example [www.cravenplan.co.uk](http://www.cravenplan.co.uk).

**E-commerce:**

selling goods and services via the Internet.

**Flash:**

technology that uses free software to allow your browser to display animations and flash movies.

**Google:**

the largest of the search engines.

**Hosting Provider:**

a company that provides space on their server to enable you to make your website accessible to everyone on the World Wide Web.

**Internal Links:**

links that allow users to navigate to other parts of your website.

**JavaScript:**

a programming language that allows more features on a web page.

**Key Words/Key Phrases:**

the key words and search phrases targeted when optimising your website.

**Link Farm:**

a large number of websites all linked to each other to gain links back for the process of spamming the search engines and in turn damaging your website.

**Meta Tags:**

the tags used to describe your website to the search engines.

**Natural/Organic Listings:**

the results shown in Google and the other search engines below the paid for sponsored links.

**Optimisation:**

the optimisation of links and content to let the search engines know what your site is about.

**PPC:**

the pay-for-performance pricing model where advertising cost is based on the number of clicks rather than the number of times shown. These adverts are displayed within the search engines and on other websites.

**QuickTime:**

the video format used by Apple.

**Reciprocal Link:**

a link to another website in exchange for a link back to your website.

**SEO:**

search engine optimisation, the process of optimising the content of your website in order to appear higher for the natural search engine listings.

**Traffic:**

the number of visitors and search engine spiders to your website over a given period of time.

**URL:**

uniform resource locator. The address of a page on a website that identifies it on the World Wide Web. For example <http://www.cravenplan.co.uk/>

**Viral marketing:**

used by on-line marketers to promote discussion of a product. It starts with a small number of people and then spreads out as they tell other people.

**Web Page:**

page contained within a website.

**Xml site map:**

a site map in the format agreed by the big 3 search engines.

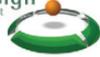
**YouTube:**

a website that allows users to post their own video content for free.

**Zip Files:**

allow you to send large files via the Internet more quickly by compressing the information.

Cravenplan Website design  
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