GOOGLE TOOLS IMPLEMENTATION INTO THE PROMOTION OF WEB SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The Internet expansion around the world, of which Croatia is also a part, results in increased electronic business. The business world increasingly realizes that the traditional method of trading and doing business is becoming obsolete and that a different, virtual era has started. Specialized portals and web shops are being opened daily, diversifying the offer and thus attracting buyers. Since the Internet is an ideal medium for the concept of perfect competition, almost identical solutions with the same products or services quickly appear. There are continuous efforts to find ways of reaching consumers by means of "new" media. Web solutions i.e. product promotion are shaped and improved by full adjustment to users after researching their habits.

Google is a corporation which develops software solutions to satisfy both the end user and the service provider. They update their available tools on a daily basis. Lack of training in these tools is the key factor of their insufficient utilization. The research presented here is focused on advantages, that is, in what way their usage will enhance the promotion of a company's web solution, thus achieving competitive advantage in today's business, which takes place online.

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Introduction

At the time of economic fluctuations and aggravated business circumstances, budgets for marketing and market research are being reduced on a monthly basis. Never before was the market saturated with products and information to such

an extent. It seems that the only competitive advantage is the price-related one. However, what happens when we approach the bottom margin of profitability? We simply have to turn to something that will make our business more competitive, without touching the financial aspect. We choose new promotional and marketing techniques that are available to us. Of course, having the technology and using it in the right way are two different things. Research has shown that more than a year ago in Great Britain there were more than 42 million Internet buyers. However, 50.1% Internet buyers who selected something for purchase never went through with it – ordered and paid (http://www.coremetrics.com/downloads/coremetrics-benchmark-industry-report-2009-03-us.pdf, March 10, 2010). The segment which certainly leaves space for improvement is related to the information that Internet shopping satisfaction increased by only 0.36% (IMRG Industry Report, 2009).

If the strategic decision has been made that the development of our company should be based on a web shop, then the last percentage is something on which our development team must intensively work.
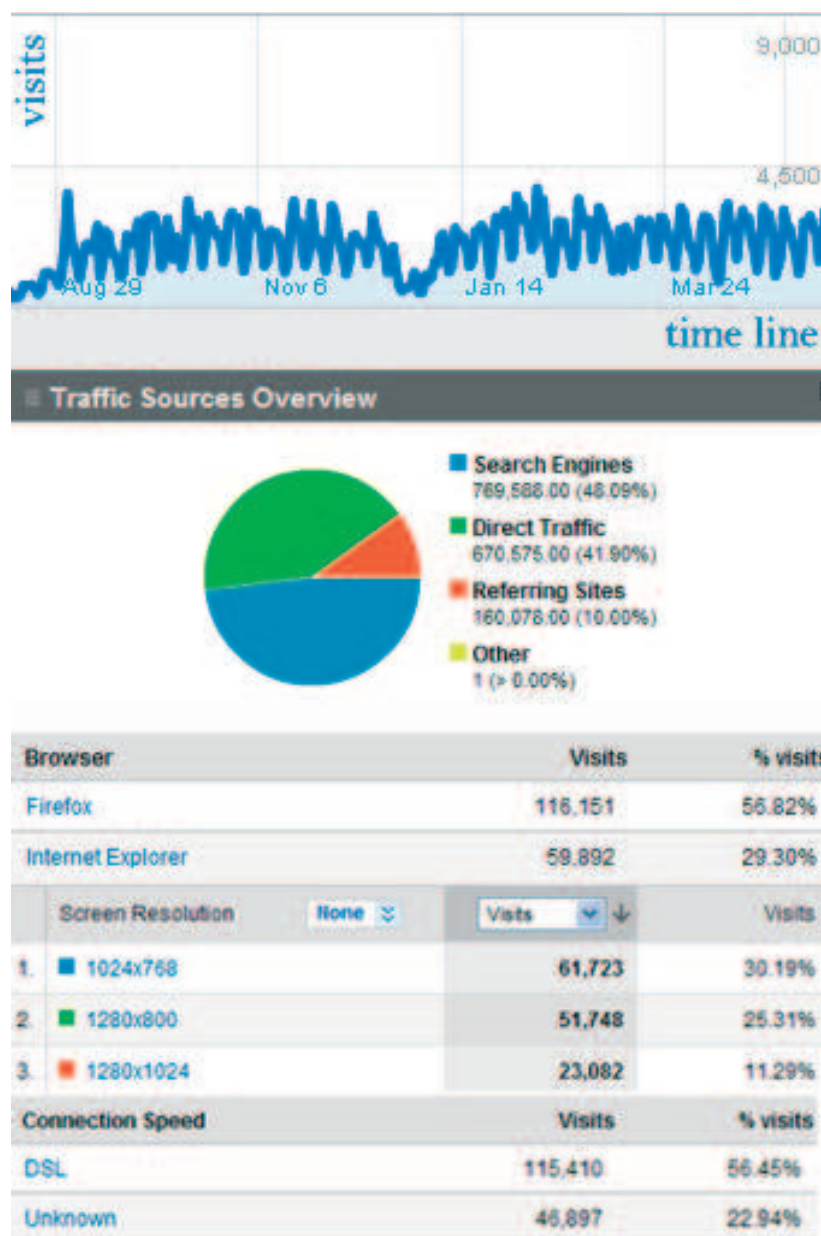
Research and development

By selecting the research tools we also determine the direction of an organization's progress in accordance with the obtained results. We have previously decided that we will use all the available *Google* tools on the virtual market. Less than five years ago *Google* launched the service for running and overview of visits to a website. The system was developed by *Urchin Software Corporation* which was taken over by *Google*. Created over years of development, *Google Analytics* with its advanced statistical and analytical data can be, without any doubt, beneficial to our business.

The research that we conducted was based on a new program code that we integrated on the test station. The expected results: user's resolution, average time spent on the site, existence of a relation between the number of visits to the web page and the change of its appearance, the way of finding the page, etc., will assist us in developing a better web solution.

By the research shown in Figure 1 it was determined that changing the appearance of the home page attracted additional users. Almost 48.09% users in the observed period reached our website through search engines. Therefore a conclusion is made that we should focus on the best possible placement within search results of search engines. Optimization of the page itself should be done with emphasis

on *Firefox* and *Internet Explorer* search engines, since they account for 86.12% of the market of our potential users. The era of web pages adjusted to *dial-up* or ISDN modems has ended, because 56.45% of users now use broadband access to the Internet. Visual attractiveness and a good layout of the page content should be adjusted to 1024x768 resolution (17" monitor).

Figure 1. Interpreted results of Google Analytics service

Source: Authors
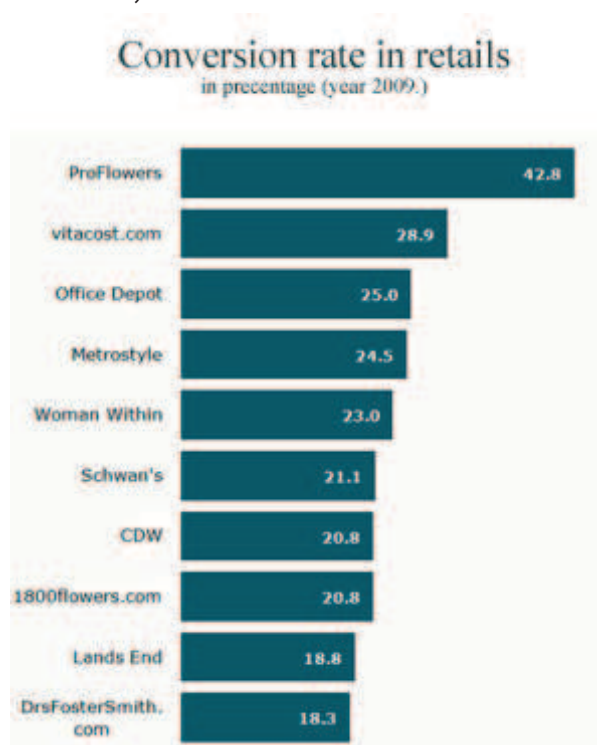
EFFICIENCY AND UTILIZED POTENTIAL

Following the research-based development of a website, it is important to use the tool that will utilize the maximum potential. The tool with which we wish to achieve the maximum efficiency in attracting visitors and converting them into buyers is *Google Website Optimizer*. Its complex algorithms have the possibility of testing two different versions of a website. By means of this, A/B testing, we wish to determine which version of our website is more adjusted and more acceptable to the user. The assumption is that we want to analyze every part on the page, using an advanced function of testing multiple variables and elements – multivariate testing. In this way the position of modules and their emphasis (photos, headlines, phrases, etc.) will be optimized.

The goal is to achieve higher level of converting visitors into buyers. The process is called conversion rate, and according to research, it is about 0.25% (http://www.conversionrate.net/55-google-website-optimizer-tips).

The calculation formula is as follows:

P (conversion rate) = (number of buyers / number of visitors) *100

Figure 2. Retail companies / services by conversion rate (2009)

Source: http://www.marketingcharts.com/direct/top-10-online-retailers-by-conversion-rate-april-2009-9322/ (March 10, 2010)

By using the tool, we do not use our financial and marketing resources. We only use time resources by examining the opportunities offered to us. The marketing advantage of offering our services in this way is the least possible mistake in estimating positioning and determining elements of our website. After conducting the experiment we will determine that better results are achieved by each simpler visual solution. The tool will sum up, quantify and present the data which we will then use to avoid additional expenses for redesigning the entire solution.

After launching a website, the tools will continue to measure users' reaction to certain changes.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PROMOTION

The highest expense generated so far is time and human resources. The task of the next tools is placement of our website and its promotion. In our marketing and research work so far we had to determine, i.e. segment the market on which we would like to focus. If the website were to be left on the broad spectrum of offer, it would face too much competition of other suppliers. In earlier times this way of thinking, programming and placing a website was possible with a relative success. Situation is different nowadays. Specialization of offer and reduced number of key words is our largest advantage. Further narrowing the focus of our e-business leads us to the desired target group.

Determining the environment and user segmentation makes further course of action much easier. *Google* search service is based on the *Page Rank* technology which uses a complex algorithm code in the process of ranking websites according to their relevancy. The process is preceded by comparing the importance of the content and the user's query, followed by interpretation of results. The whole system excludes any human work, which contributes to the objectivity of search. Hypertext matching analysis is also a parallel process that is used to refine results for the user, considering the web pages with similar content. Understanding the way in which they act and the complexity of the above mentioned technologies is the foundation on which to create a company's e-promotion strategy. Successful positioning depends to a great extent on the content, which must confirm and follow the defined key words. From the empirical point of view, the business should be defined by up to 10 words. What is advisable is a smaller number for the purpose of optimization of the search itself, but also in view of the complexity of algorithms for content indexing.

Figure 3. Simplified account of the Google indexing algorithm
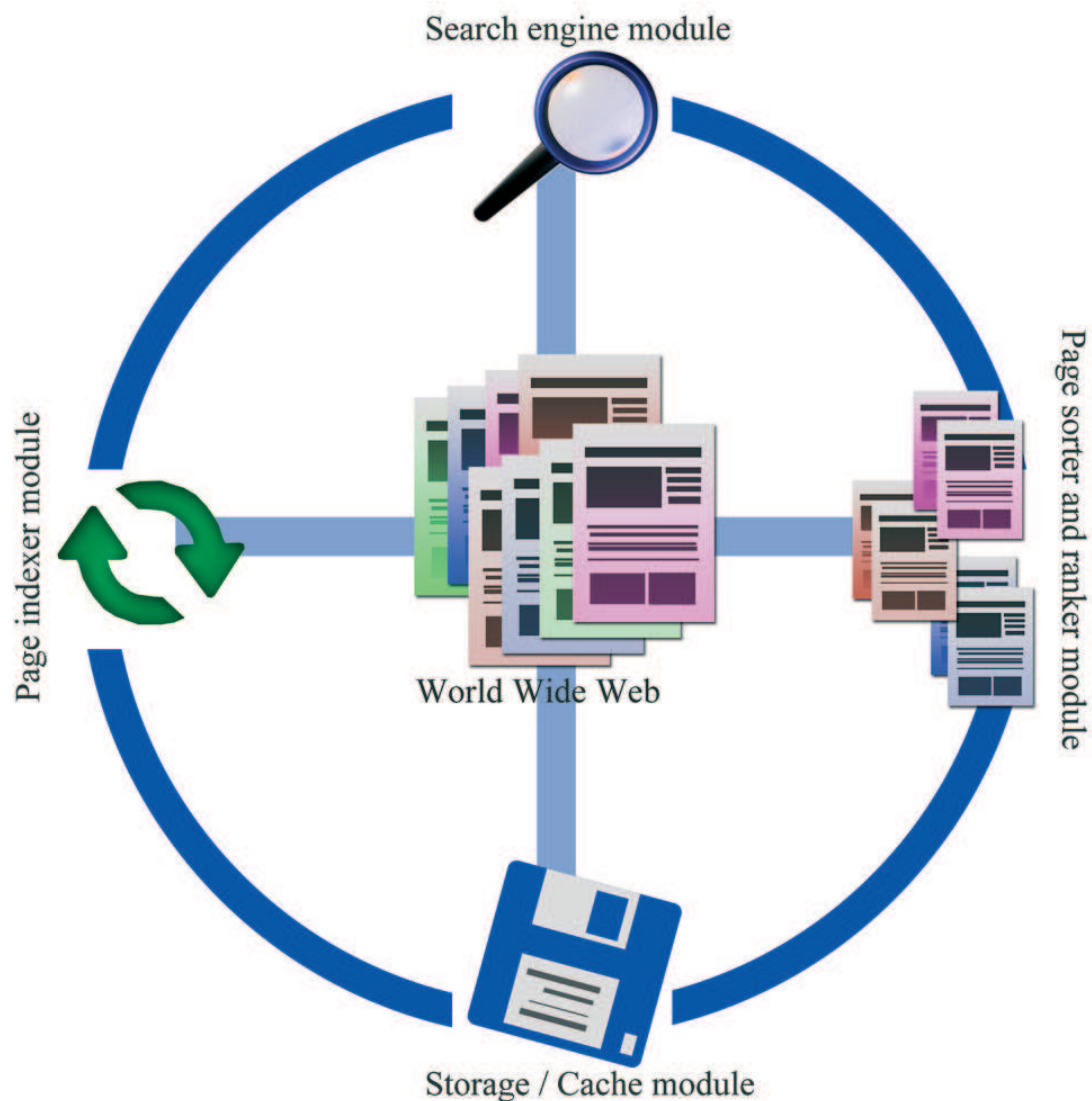
Source: Authors

An important element of *Google*'s indexing robots is also the time required for the first indexing of a website. Since people are not always familiar with the program code itself or with the manner of robot functioning, there are frequent attempts to find ways to use the potential offered by them as efficiently as possible. Behind many search engines there is still a lot of human work and people, while *Google* uses a fully automated search system. Clear definition of terms and words in line with the product a company offers, website optimization and taking indexing out of unimportant elements and sub-pages certainly raises its ranking in search query results of search engines.

Continuous adjustments must be made by means of search algorithm evolution and all tools must be simultaneously used to achieve the best possible efficiency of web content optimization that will guarantee desired results.

CONCLUSION

The only market which is not slowed down by recession or influenced by external factors and which does not know working hours is the Internet. In expansion of ever better, more efficient and more effective websites, it is becoming increasingly difficult to compete with programming and design companies, especially the Western ones. However, even if we do outperform the design of a website itself, this does not provide any guarantees for commercial success of our business. How to reach the buyer and approach him or her with an offer is the question that has replaced all previous questions. It has been proved in the paper how important preliminary Internet research is, telling us about users' habits and characteristics. The results are used to build web elements, which will be, after optimization and testing of users through *Google Web Optimizer*, joined in a single unit. Every new update will be submitted to the same procedure. Such method of work opens the possibility for the growth of visitor-to-buyer-conversion. Radical changes of a website can result in increased visitor numbers by 30-40%, which can be used to keep the visitor longer and promote our e-business.

The research of the way a company is conducting its Internet business as well as the Internet promotion can be observed almost in real time through the *Google Analytics* service. By using the same program a negative trend among users can be observed, followed by immediate remedial measures. Free tools are used for many improvements, without spending any resources. Average, but also advanced users are not very familiar with all these processes. This statement can be supported by the growing number of specialized companies whose sole activity is optimization of websites and their ranking on search engines. Among these it is even more difficult to find a certified *Google* partner, both locally and in the wider region.

Popularization and interest for this business area is growing on a monthly basis, because economic operators increasingly realize the power of placement on search engines and the speed of finding their website. However, what is still worrying is an extremely poor conversion rate (visitor-to-buyer) at the global level, which is low, compared to the level of e-business. Considering the increasing information awareness and promotion of available tools, our opinion is that this is a temporary

situation. In a long-term aspect, this will generate more efficient and more adjusted websites that will find their buyers.

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