



The Open University

SEO Strategy

Online Services | 2007 – 2008



Strategic objectives

- Maximise **visibility and awareness** of the OU brand and offer relative to our competitors within key UK/international search engines
- Maximise the OU's **share of search** within the education category compared to competitors (institutions and other providers)
- Maximise **quality of website visitors** from search engines, attract those that convert to the outcomes the OU requires when they visit the website
- Maximise the lifetime **value of visitors** from search engines



Visibility and awareness

- Ensure that OU brand is visible and appropriately represented within search engine results pages (SERP's)
 - Search/IA mapping to create keyword hierarchy for OU site
 - Identify and optimise keyword entry points/information pathways
 - Gap analysis between OU website and potential search terms
 - Balance of SEO vs PPC
 - On/off page optimisation
- Suggested target

Keyword Group	SERP	Optimal Ranking
Brand	1	1
Core/Generic	1	1-3
Specific	1-3	1-10



Visibility

Brand keyword group	Google UK		MSN UK		Yahoo UK	
	Feb-06	May-07	Feb-06	May-07	Feb-06	May-07
open university	1	1	1	1	1	1
ou	1	1	1	1	1	1
the open university	1	1	1	1	1	1
open uni	1	1	1	1	1	1
open university courses	18	1	3	1	1	1
open uk university	1	1	3	1	1	1
www.open.ac.uk	1	1	1	1	1	1
open university course	18	1	1	1	7	1
open learning university	2	1	8	1	1	1
openuniversity	-	1	20	3	1	1
open university student	2	1	1	1	3	1
open university degree	1	1	3	1	1	1
open universities	1	1	2	3	4	1
course ou	-	1	3	2	2	1
open site university web	1	1	2	1	1	2
home open page university	1	1	7	1	1	1
home open page student university	-	1	6	1	-	1
open university web site	1	1	2	1	1	1



On/off page optimisation

- Integration of SEO with IA
 - Off-Page Factors: domain name, directory structure, filename, URL
- Integration of key SEO factors within style guides and standards and the production process via optimised layout mark-up (OLM)
 - On-Page Factors: title tag, meta tags, page content, copy relevancy, text formatting, frequency/density/prominence of phrases
 - Off-Page Factors: internal link structure, external link structure
- Link building strategy
 - Directory Listings, JISC XCRI CAP project
 - Anchor text of inbound links
 - Page quality of inbound links



Share of search

- Ensure that OU brand is visible against key competitor institution/providers within search engine results pages (SERP's)
 - Identify and monitor search behaviour of competitor institutions/providers websites
 - Search term gap analysis between OU and competitor websites
 - On/off page optimisation
- Suggested target
 - Appear within 2 rankings + same SERP as primary competitor
 - Higher frequency of rankings than competitor institution/provider within 1-3 SERP's



Quality & value of visitors

- Ensure that visitors from search engines are those who convert to the outcomes the OU requires when they visit the website and subsequently engage in an ongoing relationship with The OU
 - Identify and optimise best performing keyword conversion/information pathways
 - Profiling of search engine visitors
 - Profiling of enquirers/students driven by search engines
 - On page optimisation, particularly copy relevancy
- Suggested targets
 - Reduction in single visit visitors generated by search (Feb 06, 30% of SVV)
 - Increase in VVR, PRR & RCR for search (May 07, 1.4, 1.2%, 0.6%)



Work in progress

- SEO review of primary portals within “Open Portals” information architecture
- Target keyword mapping to “Open Portals” architecture
 - Brand (OU Home/About)
 - Core/Generic (About/New/Study/Research/Five)
 - Specific (Study/Research/Five)
- Integration of SEO requirements within Style Guides and Standards



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Online Services
The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

www.open.ac.uk/web