

## Summary

### **CIS244 Web Development IV – Introduction to Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**

My initial reaction to SEO was “this is like two popular girls paying someone to fight for them over the title of Prom Queen”. I just didn’t understand the need to be at the top of the list, especially since (in my experience) a lot of the first entries in the results of a search engine query have “stacked the deck” in their favor and would often have unreliable or even unrelated data. A lot of search engines have matured, even over the last year, so I am beginning to appreciate the results more. If these results are representative of a change in SEO technologies and search engine formulas and functionality then I suppose I’ll have to adjust my opinion accordingly.

SEO allows websites to enhance their positions in search engine results. These positions are determined by formulas used by search engines to determine popularity and relevance based upon things like pertinent content, external links to the page, localization of results, etc. SEO allows web professionals to optimize a site using strategically placed content and wording to increase the likelihood of a site’s placement closer to the top of the list. Most search engines like Google and Bing have specific rules and regulations about how many times a word can appear in specific elements of a web page to prevent “stacking the deck”, and reputable search engines will penalize blatant attempts by SEO professionals to “cheat” their way to the top of the list. Many companies are now focusing on narrowing search results to weigh location as a determining factor as well.

The techniques and methods we learned in this class to optimize a website are constantly evolving, especially considering the fact the search engines constantly upgrade both their formulas and their rules for what is considered allowable optimization practices. This requires constant evaluation of websites by SEO professionals using collected statistics about website performance, as well as continual optimization of websites to address formula updates without being penalized for stepping outside of the guidelines.

Because of the theoretical nature of most of the assignments in this class, I have chosen not to include any projects for this class, especially since most of them were simple exercises such as determining the most popular words to determine placement for specific types of companies such as a roller skating rink or cleaning service.