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—Danny Sullivan, editor-in-chief, SearchEngineLand.com
and producer, SMX: Search Marketing Expo

/ theory / in / practice

The Art of SEO

Mastering Search Engine Optimization

Eric Enge, Stephan Spencer,
and Jessie C. Stricchiola

3rd
Edition



The Art of SEO

Three experts in search engine optimization share a comprehensive roadmap for you to plan and execute your SEO strategy. This edition includes updates on SEO tools, tactics, and ranking methods that have reshaped the SEO landscape. Novices will receive a thorough SEO education, while experienced practitioners get an extensive reference to support ongoing engagements.

- Explore SEO's underlying theory and practicalities
- Demystify the role of social media, user data, and algorithms such as Google's Panda and Penguin
- Discover tools to track results, measure success, and reverse engineer competitors
- Look at opportunities in mobile, local, and vertical SEO
- Build a high-performing SEO team with well-defined roles

Eric Enge is the CEO of SEO consulting firm Stone Temple Consulting (www.stonetemple.com).

Stephan Spencer (stephanspencer.com) founded the SEO firm Netconcepts and the Traffic Control seminar, authored *Google Power Search*, and coauthored *Social eCommerce*.

Jessie C. Stricchiola, a digital marketer since 1997, is the CEO of San Francisco-based digital consulting firm Alchemist Media, Inc. (alchemistmedia.com). She serves as a qualified expert witness on internet-related litigation matters, and is an original cofounder of SEMPO.org.

"SEO expertise is a core need for today's online businesses. Written by some of the top SEO practitioners out there, this book can teach you what you need to know for your online business."

— Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos.com, Inc.,
author of *New York Times* bestseller *Delivering Happiness*

"Hype-free, data-rich, and loaded with insight that's essential reading for anyone who needs a deep understanding of SEO."

— Seth Godin, author, *We Are All Weird*

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Praise for The Art of SEO

How serious are you about maximizing and multiplying, monetizing your ability to harness the dynamic force and power of SEO? I say dynamic, because it is *not* something static. Like game theory, your strategy needs to be preeminent, preemptive, and ever-evolving. *The Art of SEO* is deep, serious (yet eminently, elegantly, and stunningly clear and profoundly actionable)! The authors examine, explain, explore, and expose the *real* truths, the *real* inner workings, the *real* ethical means of optimizing SEO in a fast-changing, ultra-competitive online environment. You will finally and meaningfully grasp how to gain *the* most prized outcome imaginable: the sustainable “gift” of your target market’s fullest attention, presence, and trust! Every chapter is sincerely a complete short-course primer, masterfully distilled down to its most actionable, relevant, critical elements. If you’ve struggled trying to figure out who you can *really* trust to understand and meaningfully manage your SEO opportunities, read this book—then use it as a reality check against anyone you are now entrusting your most precious online relationship to.

—Jay Abraham, best-selling author and
Forbes Magazine “Top 5” Best Executive Coaches in the US

An essential guide to best practices and cutting-edge tactics that belongs on the desk of all search marketing professionals, especially in these days of nearly constant change, updates, and new approaches by the search engines.

—Chris Sherman, Founding Editor, *Search Engine Land*, and
VP Programming, *Search Marketing Expo*

The Art of War isn't about Chinese pottery, and *The Art of SEO* isn't a paint-by-numbers kit. This 900-page book is a comprehensive guide to search engine optimization strategies and tactics written by three SEO experts: Eric Enge, Stephan Spencer, and Jessie Stricchiola. The chapters in the third edition on Content Marketing as well as Panda, Penguin, and Penalties are must-reads for anyone interested in mastering search engine optimization.

—Greg Jarboe, President of SEO-PR, and author of
YouTube and Video Marketing

In a world where consumers spend more time on the Web than all other media channels combined, getting found is the a critical path to business success. *The Art of SEO* unlocks the core of what it means to get found and how to accelerate your growth through creating value for your consumers. This is a must have for any progressive marketing team.

—Seth Besmertrnik, CEO and cofounder, Conductor

Staying on top of your SEO is crucial to your marketing game—and for this, *The Art of SEO* is the best resource out there, by experts who know about the art and science of SEO.

—Taki Moore, Coach Marketing Expert

The Art of SEO continues to be one of the best educational resources for having an SEO strategy that dominates. With SEO being a fast-paced, ever-evolving field, the third edition is a must to stay on top of the latest updates and changes.

—Lewis Howes, two sport all-American, Olympic hopeful,
entrepreneur, and host of *The School of Greatness* podcast

If I'm going to devote time to learn something, I want to learn from the best. The authors of *The Art of SEO* are simply the best at what they do... and they share their expertise in such a way that it's easy to read and understand. Whether you're a CEO or just climbing up the ladder, you should have a solid foundation of SEO and this book is where to start.

—Steve Spangler, founder of Steve Spangler Science

The Art of SEO doesn't just arm you with facts and knowledge, it provides you with the strategies to dominate in the search engines. It continues to be the most comprehensive book out there for everyone, from absolute beginners to advanced SEOs looking to hone their skills.

—Neil Patel, cofounder of Crazy Egg

This is *the* book to read on SEO, packed full of knowledge from beginner to expert to master.

—Ramez Naam,
former Relevance Group Program Manager, Bing,
and author of *Nexus*

The Art of SEO represents a comprehensive and instructive guide to mastering search engine optimization for webmasters new and experienced. While the SEO industry continues to evolve, the primary teachings of this seminal book hold constant—SEO continues to be an art that can be learned and finessed when armed with the tools and tips recorded in these writings.

—Kristopher B. Jones,
founder of *LSEO.com* and best-selling author of
Search Engine Optimization: Your Visual Blueprint to Effective Internet Marketing

Once again, *The Art of SEO* earns its place as the only SEO book on my bookshelf. It is the first resource I recommend to both new and experienced bloggers with good reason; it helped me to lay the foundation that resulted in more than 100 million organic hits to my site and has repeatedly achieved stellar results for those I've mentored. In its third edition, *The Art of SEO* expands to cover the latest on search engine logic, social implementation, and staying ahead of the ever-changing algorithms. A brilliant, concise, essential guide to search engine optimization that every online marketer should read and put into practice.

—Jeni Larson Hott, 7 Figure blogger

If you ever want to sell anything, you can't overestimate the importance of understanding search behaviour. And there's no stronger team of A-players to write about search engine optimization. Everyone should read this book!

—Chris Goward, founder and CEO of WiderFunnel,
and author of *You Should Test That!*

After diving into the third edition of *The Art of SEO*, I felt like a gladiator armed with all the right knowledge and tools to take on the ever-changing world of SEO.

—Ken Rutkowski, host of *Business Rockstars* radio show,
founder of METal

The Art of SEO combines the expertise of the three leading search experts in the world, making it an invaluable resource.

—Gokul Rajaram, Product Engineering Lead at Square,
former Product Director, Ads at Facebook,
former Product Director, AdSense at Google

The Art of SEO is an innovative book that can change your fortune and the future of your company forever, starting with the very first page. The book is full of valuable information that will save you countless hours—and perhaps make you millions of dollars—when promoting your business online. The concepts and ideas presented are easy to understand and follow, which is key for brands or companies that are busy focusing on their product or service, but need to keep well informed. The three authors behind this book, Stephan Spencer, Eric Enge and Jessie Stricchiola, bring together collectively decades of experience, and share some of their most innovative methods, research, and strategies to save you valuable time and money in accomplishing measurable results in your SEO. Being in its third edition, the authors of *The Art of SEO* are constantly following the latest changes, and providing the most up-to-date, comprehensive, tried-and-tested techniques to keep you ahead of the curve. As I've said in many of my talks, if you're not upgrading your skills, you're falling backwards. *The Art of SEO* gives you the latest information to stay competitive in the field, with all the knowledge readily available at your fingertips.

—Brian Tracy, President of Brian Tracy International

When people ask me what SEO book they should read, *The Art of SEO* is the first and only one I mention. Plus, it's the only SEO book that's both technically sound and constantly updated. Highly recommended.

—Cyrus Shepard, Director of Audience Development, Moz

Hands down the most valuable book on understanding SEO!

—Jordan Koene, VP Professional Services, Searchmetrics

It doesn't matter if you have decades in the industry or just want to find out more about this thing people call SEO; *The Art of SEO* is an exceptional guide. Coming from some of the world's leading marketers, the updated theory, insights, and strategies are first class and a must have in your library of knowledge.

—Sean Kainec, Head of SEO at The Home Depot

No industry has gone through as much change in the last five years as SEO, and no resource captures how we adapt to that change better than *The Art of SEO*. From planning your strategy and understanding all the technical considerations to demystifying mobile and local, *The Art of SEO* covers it and makes it very clear that SEO is not only very much alive, but quickly becoming the strongest traffic-driving channel. Anyone working in digital or anyone who owns a website needs to read this book.

—Erin Everhart,
Lead Manager, Digital Marketing, SEO, at The Home Depot

The moment you think you know everything about SEO, this book will put you back in your place.

—Zac Johnson, Superaffiliate and Blogger at ZacJohnson.com

Hype-free, data-rich, and loaded with insight that's essential reading for anyone who needs a deep understanding of SEO.

—Seth Godin, author of
We Are All Weird

The Art of SEO is the perfect complement to the science of conversion optimization. This book is a must-read volume by three highly regarded industry veterans.

—Bryan Eisenberg, New York Times best-selling author of
Call to Action and *Always Be Testing*

Anyone who wants to know how SEO really works must read *The Art of SEO*. This is a true reference work.

—John Chow, Superblogger, JohnChow.com

The third edition of *The Art of SEO* expands and enhances a book that was already the industry standard for SEO education and strategy. Anyone looking to optimize their website and get better rankings on the search engines should keep this book on their desk and refer to it daily. All of the advanced technical SEO strategies are covered in a straightforward method that is easy to understand and action-oriented. When you are finished reading this book, you will have a better grasp on how search engines work and how you can optimize your website with expert proficiency. If you want to drive more traffic to your website, engage your audience on a deeper level, generate more sales, and grow your business—this book lays the plan out for you.

—Joseph Kerschbaum, author of
Pay-Per-Click Search Engine Marketing: An Hour A Day

DO NOT BUY THIS BOOK. Please. I beg of you. If you compete with us or any of our clients, do not buy this book. It's become our go-to source for anything—and everything—we need to know about successful search engine optimization.

—Amy Africa, CEO, *Eight By Eight*

I've known and followed the authors for years, each a bona fide expert in their own right. Their collective wisdom in one book is truly a gift to the industry. This has to be the #1 "must-read" SEO book ever written.

—Eric Ward, a.k.a. *Link Moses*

In *The Art of SEO*, Eric Enge, Stephan Spencer, and Jessie Stricchiola have taken on the daunting task of compiling a comprehensive, step-by-step walk-through of what it takes to rank well on search. They go well beyond the usual tactical aspects, addressing fundamental challenges like understanding user intent, integrating an SEO culture within your organization, properly measuring success, and managing an SEO project. This is a deep, deep dive into the world of organic optimization, and you couldn't ask for better guides than Enge, Spencer, and Stricchiola. Clear a place on your desk, because this is going to be your SEO bible.

—Gord Hotchkiss, President, *Enquiro Search Solutions*

An amazingly well-researched, comprehensive, and authoritative guide to SEO from some of the most well-respected experts in the industry; highly recommended for anyone involved in online marketing.

—Ben Jesson, cofounder and CEO of Conversion Rate Experts

There is an art (and science) to search engine optimization. It's not always easy, it's not always obvious, and the results depend a lot on what the major search engines are tinkering with under their own hoods. Thankfully, there is a book like *The Art of SEO* to shine a light, give you some clues, and help you get ahead of your competitors.

—Mitch Joel, President of Twist Image, and author of *Six Pixels of Separation*

The world of SEO has had to adapt to many changes in the past few years, so the third edition of *The Art of SEO* is a must read. If you want to know the latest tried-and-true SEO techniques, then look no further.

—Ross Dunn, CEO/founder, StepForth Web Marketing, Inc.

With over 80% of Internet sessions starting with a search, you should be looking for ways to develop traffic from search engines. *The Art of SEO* is a book I continually recommend to beginners and more experienced marketers. This book can shave years off the learning curve for anyone thinking of delving into the world of search marketing. *The Art of SEO* walks you through the most important steps in planning and executing a top-flight program. The authors of this book are trusted individuals whose repeated, proven success working with SEO and social media marks them as leaders in the field. Easy to understand and well written, this book walks you through everything you need to understand to be successful with your own SEO campaigns. Read now, prosper now and later.

—Duane Forrester, author of *New York Times* best-seller *How to Make Money with Your Blog and Turn Clicks Into Customers*, and Senior Product Manager, Bing, former SEMPO board member

The Art of SEO is really about the science of SEO. This detailed and practical guide to SEO mastery, from a panel of all-star practitioners, will give you the edge. Get it before your competitors do!

—Tim Ash, CEO of SiteTuners.com, and author of the best-selling *Landing Page Optimization: The Definitive Guide to Testing and Tuning for Conversions*

SEO expertise is a core need for today's online businesses. Written by some of the top SEO practitioners out there, this book can teach you what you need to know for your online business.

—Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos.com, Inc.,
author of New York Times best-seller *Delivering Happiness*

Rarely does a work so thoroughly deconstruct the art and science of SEO: what it is, how it works, who makes it happen, and why it is important to the modern firm.

—Sara Holoubek, CEO, Luminary Labs

The Art of SEO, Third Edition, reads like an Ian Fleming novel; intriguing the reader with surprising insights and exciting new ideas...all while making SEO seem oh-so-sexy.

—Sean Singleton,
Digital Marketing Manager, American Apparel

As a coauthor of a book people refer to as the "Bible of Search Marketing," you might think that I wouldn't recommend other search books. Not so. But I recommend only excellent search books written by outstanding search experts.

The Art of SEO easily clears that high standard and is a must-read for anyone serious about organic search success.

—Mike Moran, coauthor of *Search Engine Marketing, Inc.*,
and author of *Do It Wrong Quickly*

Search is becoming increasingly important for marketers to understand. Businesses that don't include organic search as a core component to their marketing efforts risk being left behind as their competitors and their customers move forward. This book covers a lot of ground—it's full of stats, advice, and tools to equip marketers in their organic search efforts.

—Vanessa Fox, author of
Marketing in the Age of Google

Roll up your sleeves, buckle your seat belt, and take your foot off the brake. You are about to go on a journey from the very basics to the very high-end, enterprise level, and then into the future of the art of SEO. These three authors have been involved in Internet marketing from the very start and have hands-on experience. These are not pundits in search of an audience but practitioners who have actually done the work, know how it's done, and have the scars to prove it. This is a dynamite primer for the beginner and a valued resource for the expert. Clear, concise, and to the point, it may not make you laugh or make you cry, but it will make you smart and make you successful.

—Jim Sterne, Producer of the eMetrics Marketing Optimization Summit and Chairmen of the Web Analytics Association

Regardless of whether you're a beginner or an expert search marketer, *The Art of SEO* delivers! From keyword research and search analytics to SEO tools and more!

—Ken Jurina, President and CEO, Epiar

There are no better guides through the world of SEO—the combined experience of these authors is unparalleled. I can't recommend highly enough that you buy this book.

—Will Critchlow, cofounder, Distilled

Simply put...*The Art of SEO* is a smart book on search engine optimization. Neatly laid out, comprehensive and clear...this edition explains the nuances of cutting-edge tactics for improving your SEO efforts. I refer to it constantly.

—Allen Weiss, founder and CEO, MarketingProfs.com

There is only a small number of books I recommend to people who want to truly grok search, and this is one of them. *The Art of SEO* is practical, tactical, deep and wide. There is no other book more comprehensive in scope that also goes so deeply on the technical requirements of competing in today's search marketing war. Both beginners and experienced web developers can find wisdom and guidance in its pages, and will find themselves referring to it daily for examples and decision-making help.

—Dana Todd, *President of Interimpathic and cofounder of SEMPO (Search Engine Marketing Professional Organization)*

In your hands is a definitive collection of SEO knowledge from three leading practitioners of the art. This book is required reading for my company, and we're also recommending it to our clients.

—Adam Audette, *SVP, Organic Search, Merkle, and lead SEO for Zappos.com*

There are no better names in the search marketing industry to write a book on the art of SEO than these three authors. Each author has gems of knowledge to share individually, and all of them teaming up to create a single book is like discovering a treasure.

—Barry Schwartz, *News Editor, Search Engine Land, and Editor, Search Engine Roundtable*

I have personally known and respected each author for many years, and this book is a superb collection of their collective wisdom for implementing SEO for your website. I trust the information presented in this book will help readers accomplish their traffic goals. You can never know too much about SEO in this ever-changing and competitive space. Read this book.

—Bruce Clay, *President, Bruce Clay, Inc.*

Presenting the inner mechanics of search engine optimization is a daunting task, and this book has accomplished it with flair. The book reveals the closely guarded secrets of optimizing websites in a straightforward, easy-to-understand format. If you ever wanted to unravel the mysteries of the most enigmatic discipline on the Internet, this is the book you want as your guide. This book is so comprehensive and well written, it just might put me out of a job.

—Christine Churchill, *President, KeyRelevance*

Written by some of the top minds in SEO!

—*Danny Sullivan, Editor-in-Chief, SearchEngineLand.com,
and Producer, SMX: Search Marketing Expo*

The Art of SEO is a masterpiece in search engine optimization techniques. Whether you're technical or creative, whether a coder, a designer, a copywriter, or a PR professional, you need this book.

—*Andy Beal, coauthor of Radically Transparent,
founder of Trackur and Marketing Pilgrim*

As an online marketing guy, I'm aware of how much your search engine visibility can either skyrocket or impede your traffic and earning potential. I rely on traffic from Google to drive my business forward. *The Art of SEO* is hands down the most complete and user-friendly resource for real-world application of SEO, the kind that gets you paid.

—*Jeremy Schoemaker, founder of ShoeMoney Media and
author of Nothing's Changed But My Change: The ShoeMoney Story*

This must-have book by industry heavyweights is a milestone. The material is convincing and compelling. Most important of all, the ideas make powerful strategies for successfully marketing sites online.

—*Disa Johnson, CEO, SearchReturn*

Stephan Spencer, Eric Enge and Jessie Stricchiola represent three of the most respected minds in SEO. This book is packed with both comprehensive "explainer" content, and also actionable strategies backed by data. It's an ideal foundational study for beginners, and a critical update for veteran marketers who want to get current. If you're looking for just one book on SEO, this is it.

—*Jenise Henrikson, CEO of Search Engine Journal*

In an ever-changing digital landscape, implementing a successful SEO program remains a crucial foundational priority for leading brands. It drives paid, owned, and earned visibility that is critical to capturing intent wherever it is expressed.

The Art of SEO is a must-read for any brand or agency that wants to drive discoverability and results through SEO. This book takes deep, technical topics and breaks them down into something applicable, accessible and usable.

—*Michael Kahn, Global CEO, Performics*

Integration of SEO into any strategic PR plan represents the evolution of our industry. Ultimately it's this combination of SEO and PR that realizes the greatest message pull-through. With its practical tips, *The Art of SEO* has been invaluable to our PR firm and to me as a PR professional, helping us form our content and social media strategy as well as acquire more valuable backlinks from top media outlets.

—Heidi Krupp, CEO of Krupp Communications

After diving into the third edition of *The Art of SEO*, I felt like a gladiator armed with all the right knowledge and tools to take on the ever-changing world of SEO.

—Ken Rutkowski, host of *Business Rockstars*

Written by in-the-trenches practitioners, *The Art of SEO* is a well-written step-by-step guide providing sensible and practical advice on how to implement a successful SEO program. The authors have created a readable and straightforward guide filled with concise and easily adopted strategies and tactics any online business can use. I now have a great resource to recommend when people ask, "Know any good books on SEO?"

—Debra Mastaler, President, Alliance-Link and
Marketing Tools 24/7

Fundamentals, data, science and hard work will get you only so far. It is the artistry of SEO that can make you truly great. The backgrounds and experience of the SEO artists—Stephan, Eric and Jessie—is all but guaranteed to help you reach that next level. Read this book and take special note of what is the *real* art of SEO.

—Todd Friesen, Director of SEO, Salesforce

SEO can be a minefield if you're not armed with the knowledge and resources to safely navigate this ever-changing landscape. Think of *The Art of SEO* as your field survival manual. Simply put, don't leave home without it.

—Jamie Salvatori, founder and CEO, Vat19.com

The definitive book on SEO just keeps getting better, as the new third edition of *The Art of SEO* is packed full of helpful new information.

—Brett Tabke, founder and CEO of Pubcon, the premier optimization and new media conferences

The Art of SEO is the go-to book when it comes to SEO. It is what I recommend to everyone wanting to improve their understanding of SEO, novice or seasoned expert.

—Brent Csutoras, social media strategist and founder of Kairay Media

Whether you are a neophyte or an advanced search engine marketer, this book will take your business to the next level and help you drive real revenue opportunities.

—Joe Pulizzi, founder of Content Marketing Institute and author of *Content Inc.*

Since the science of search engine optimization changes daily, understanding those changes and executing from that understanding is critical to today's business. This map in book form can help you navigate the seas of change and take control of your ship. The essential SEO guide will move you into the captain's seat of online marketing.

—Toni Sikes, CEO of CODAworx and founder of The Guild

The Art of SEO

Mastering Search Engine Optimization

THIRD EDITION

Eric Enge, Stephan Spencer, and Jessie C. Stricchiola

Beijing • Boston • Farnham • Sebastopol • Tokyo

O'REILLY®

The Art of SEO

by Eric Enge, Stephan Spencer, and Jessie C. Stricchiola

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Foreword

IN 2004, WHEN I DID MY FIRST PROFESSIONAL WORK IN THE FIELD OF SEARCH

engine optimization, Google was estimated to receive ~200 million searches each day. In 2014, that number jumped to more than 6 billion, a 30x increase over 10 years. Since its inception, web search has been a powerful tool for people to find what they need, and as a result, it's also been a powerful channel for those seeking to attract attention, traffic, actions, and customers. But in 2004, discovering how search engines worked and how to drive that traffic was a daunting challenge.

Web forums, blogs, and a handful of industry news sites were the first to take on the problem. They built communities and published resources to help both industry insiders and those aspiring to learn SEO. That's where I first cut my teeth. But learning from those sources was hard work—and there were no alternatives. Schools didn't teach SEO (the great majority of them still don't!), online courses were extremely rare (and many were low quality or straight-up misleading), and there were almost no books on the subject.

When I founded the SEOMoz blog (which became the company known today as “Moz”), my mission was to educate and to learn by doing so. Nothing has made me a better student of SEO and of marketing than being forced to write about and teach it to others.

That's why it was a great honor to have been one of the contributing writers for the original two editions of this book. When we finished that first full draft, I remember

skimming through it and thinking, “Man...I wish they’d had this when I was learning SEO.” That was a good feeling.

Search engines are complex. The Web is massively complex. And the human beings doing the searching, sifting, clicking, and converting—they’re the most complex of all.

But all that complexity shouldn’t create an impenetrable wall for those seeking knowledge. In the past, when it has, the reputation of SEO itself has suffered. CMOs, marketing managers, and small-business owners have hired or contracted professionals to perform SEO and been frustrated by the process, the requirements, and the results, often because they themselves didn’t know enough about the practice to make a good choice or to create the right expectations.

By pulling back the veil on SEO, those of us tasked with teaching are enabling the right expectations to be set, the right people to be hired, and the right results from SEO investments. Arguably, no one is more qualified or has done more than the team of writers, editors, and practitioners behind this new edition of *The Art of SEO*. In this book, you’ll find not only the wisdom of its authors, but the work of thousands around the world who’ve contributed their insight directly (and are properly cited, of course) and indirectly (we thank you, too, unacknowledged teachers of us all) to transparency in a sometimes too-opaque field.

While I could not personally contribute to this edition as I would have liked, it was my honor and privilege to once again grace these pages (even if only in this paltry foreword) alongside such an excellent team. Welcome to *The Art of SEO*.

—Rand Fishkin
July 2015

Preface

The book before you is designed to be a complete and thorough education on search engine optimization for digital marketers at all levels. This third edition has been completely revamped and updated from the second edition, taking into account the vast number of changes in the search engine industry, and the digital marketing field as a whole - from the rise of social media to the explosion of mobile. Nonetheless, as with the first and second editions, you can think of it as SEO 101, SEO 102, and SEO 500. Our goal has been to help simplify a very complex, layered topic and to make it easier for people to grasp, as well as to make it easier to focus on the most important aspects of SEO for individual businesses—while at the same time providing depth of knowledge and expertise that the most advanced search veteran can utilize. As a group, we have over 40 years’ experience working on SEO, a discipline involving deep proficiency in all aspects of digital marketing—from website development, information architecture, and user experience (UX) to market research, content strategy, analytics, conversion optimization, and data-driven decision making. These technical skills, along with the ability to merge the analytical with the creative, compose the SEO professional’s toolkit. We have seen how SEO works over a relatively long period of time, across thousands of different websites. Any one of us could have written this book individually (in fact, one of us tried to), but we discovered that by working together we were able to create something of much greater value for you, the savvy marketer who recognizes the value of the most highly converting digital channel.

Who Should Read This Book

A little-known fact in digital marketing is that many of the most successful growth hackers name SEO as their initial core expertise upon which they developed their growth strategies. Andy Johns (@ibringtraffic), a well-respected growth strategist, started in the SEO field. He was previously the SEO lead for Facebook, Twitter, and Quora, among other roles, and is now the Director of Growth and Revenue at Wealthfront.com. People who are involved in digital marketing at any level—especially those tasked with developing online growth strategies—should consider this book invaluable. Web developers, development managers, product marketers, brand marketers, and key business personnel should all be exposed to the information in this book if online traction and growth are part of your business objectives. If you are currently focused on SEO as a growth channel for your company or your clients, or you are looking to dive deeply into this broad yet specialized area of digital marketing expertise, you would be well served to read this book from cover to cover. After reading the entire text, you will have been exposed to all aspects of the art of SEO, and will have laid the necessary groundwork for beginning to develop your SEO skills to become a more effective digital marketer and a more educated search marketing professional.

An experienced SEO veteran will find this volume invaluable as an extensive reference to support ongoing SEO engagements: both internally, within an in-house SEO group or SEO consultancy, and externally, with SEO clients. Finally, the book will serve as a refresher course for working SEO practitioners, from the novice to the pass: [professional].

Finally, this book is perfectly suited for the academic environment as a powerful resource for digital marketing, IT, and engineering disciplines. Georgetown University, UCLA, USC, UCSD, UC Davis, University of Wisconsin, the University of Mumbai, the City University of Hong Kong, and many other academic institutions have used *The Art of SEO* as either required or recommended reading in course syllabi.

Conventions Used in This Book

The following typographical conventions are used in this book:

Italic

Indicates new terms, URLs, email addresses, filenames, file extensions, and search terms.

Constant width

Used for program listings, as well as within paragraphs to refer to program elements such as variable or function names, databases, data types, environment variables, statements, and keywords.

Constant width bold

Shows commands or other text that should be typed literally by the user.

Constant width italic

Shows text that should be replaced with user-supplied values or by values determined by context.

TIP

This element signifies a tip or suggestion.

NOTE

This element signifies a general note.

WARNING

This element indicates a warning or caution.

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Danny Sullivan—for his role in launching this industry
Marcus Tober—tools access
Dana Todd—awesome work as a reviewer
Mark Traphagen—authorship and social media
David Warmuz—tools access
Jeff Whelpley—Angular.js SEO

Search: Reflecting Consciousness and Connecting Commerce

Search has become integrated into the fabric of our society. With more than 197.9 billion searches performed worldwide each month as of April 2014, approximately 6.6 billion web searches are performed every day. This means that on average about 7,500 searches are performed every single second of every day.¹ In addition, users have grown to expect that the responses to their search queries will be returned in less than one second.

If you have ever come across the various “SEO is dead” claims that make the rounds periodically in the digital marketing world, rest assured: SEO is both alive and well—and has not, as many feared, been “killed” by social media marketing as a driver of web traffic. In fact, in November 2014, **Twitter** announced that by renewing its focus on SEO, it increased the number of logged-out visitors coming to the site tenfold—from 7.5 million to 75 million visitors per month.²

The high demand for search continues because people can now obtain in mere seconds information that 20 years ago would have required a trip to the library, the use of a card catalog and the Dewey Decimal System, and a physical search through halls of printed volumes—a process that could easily have consumed two hours or more. Through the new channel of search, people can conduct many of their shopping,

1 comScore, “comScore Releases April 2014 U.S. Search Engine Rankings,” May 16, 2014, <http://www.comscore.com/Insights/Market-Rankings/comScore-Releases-April-2014-US-Search-Engine-Rankings>.

2 Danny Sullivan, “Twitter: Renewed Focus On SEO Generated 10 Times More Visitors,” November 12, 2014, <http://searchengineland.com/twitter-seo-more-visitors-208160>.