SEO and the Central Michigan Amateur Radio Club Website

Question: What is SEO and do you understand it?

Answer: SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is what takes your website, no matter what site it is and gets it noticed by Search Engine "spiders" and "web bots". These are the tools the various Search Engines (Google, Yahoo, Dogpile, etc.) use to find and define websites-and then rank them according to the relevance of their content. (Remember…Content is KING!) ANYONE can put up a website, but it takes knowledge and patience to get it noticed and RANKED in a Search Engine!

Question: What do these Search Engines do for our website?

Answer: If you have a website on the Internet, your sole purpose is to drive people to it, so they find out who you are and what you have to offer them. For example, John's Pizzeria might have the best pie anywhere, but until the Internet, the ONLY way that word got spread was by a.) Word of mouth, or b.) VERY expensive advertising. The average person might not care about getting things right on their website, but if you are responsible for a business or an organization, you DEPEND on making that site work for you….because why? Because it is your "shingle", your "calling card" on the Internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year-and it NEVER takes a coffee break! It works while you sleep and it doesn't have territory…Meaning it can be available to the WORLD….and our site IS!

Question: Why shouldn't we have a committee "to help guide the website" and how it's built and maintained?

Answer: "Too many cooks spoil the rue". Ever heard that phrase? It's true. Right now, this website is being HELPED by Ben (WX8BEN), Erv (W8ERV) and Christopher Lombardo (Erv's Brother in Law). Any work done on the site is overseen by Erv and appropriate SEO code is added, as required, so the website doesn't lose ranking in the major Search Engines. You may not always understand why a page is handled as it is, or why this changes regularly and the other doesn't change as regularly, but some things require the changes….and some do not, but it is ALL given great attention, so we don't lose what we have acquired these past 13 months.

Question: What can I do to help make the CMARC Website more effective and more attractive to my interests?

Answer: GREAT question. You can simply submit content. Content is defined as articles, columns, links, photos, etc. that help build a web page….which in turn helps strengthen the webSITE. If you do that, as long as the content is appropriate to the site, it will be added. If we need more pages to do this, we can certainly add them, because it is dangerous and harmful to our ranking status if we place the wrong content on the wrong pages. Everything has its place and if it doesn't we need to make a place for it.

It's not a secret that nobody agrees with each other all the time. We are all individuals and have our own ideas for what makes a great website. But ask yourself one more question…are you willing to put the hard work we've done at risk and toss the rankings we've worked hard to achieve to the wind?

Some of what I do, as far as SEO is concerned, is privileged information and it costs between $200 and $500 a month for businesses to get the same help. We are getting this for FREE right now, because I am related to someone who works with someone who has spent more than TEN YEARS perfecting his skills for getting business owners to the TOP of the major Search Engines. The top is defined as the first page….within the viewable area, when you go to the Search Engine sites.

An example of this is below and the results were taken on Saturday, January 24th, 2009. Google was the Search Engine of choice for this exercise.

Search Engine Query   **Ranking**
CMARC   #3 (formerly dominated by company)
Central Michigan Amateur Radio Club   #1, #2, etc.
amateur radio club, lansing, mi   #1, etc.

But watch what happens when you take the name of someone involved in the Club…

J. Ervin Bates, W8ERV   TOP NINE SPOTS

I have a couple more things for you to consider, with regard to our site. According to our latest statistics, the usage of the site has maintained a steady pace, but the SCOPE has grown over-whelmingly since March of 2008.

Month	Visitors	Page Views	Pages Per Visitor	Scope DL	Transfer
March 08	725	4742	6.54	190	302MB
June 08	1395	8401	6.02	343	1.27GB
September 08	986	5249	5.32	218	884MB
October 08	988	6540	6.61	270	1.13GB

Look What Happened in November!!!

Month	Visitors	Page Views	Pages Per Visitor	Scope DL	Transfer
November 08	905	5374	5.93	796	967.3MB
December 08	965	5948	6.16	561	906MB
January 09	975	5417	5.55	619	900MB

The stats from January of 2009 are (again) from the 24th of the month, so there is another week to add to the mix. But look at the downloads of our newsletter! Considering that we only have about 160 members….and we are averaging nearly 950 visitors and 659 downloads a month for the past three months…this tells me that we are doing something right. We've nearly DOUBLED our visitors, as well as our newsletter readers! We are getting people to our site REGULARLY and if you note the Pages Per Visitor numbers, we are not just getting them here, we are keeping them here…to read, download and enjoy the CMARC website. What more could we want???

ANY business owner would roll into a little ball and sing themselves to sleep if they had this type of traffic sticking around their website, because it would ultimately translate into money through their doors. This is what is so exciting about Search Engine Optimization; it REALLY works! And so my final question is this…why toss what has worked to the curb? Why take that chance, now that our website is doing what it was designed to do from the beginning?

Respectfully,
J. Ervin Bates W8ERV