

The Art Institute of Atlanta

IMD 470 Special Topics: Findability

Section A Winter, 2006

Course Outline

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Please note: The contents of this course outline may be revised by the instructor during the quarter. The changes may be made to improve and facilitate the students' achievement of the competencies for the course.

The Art Institute of Atlanta
IMD 470 Special Topics: Findability

Section A
Winter 2006

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will explore search engine optimization methods (SEO), digital and analog marketing strategies to drive traffic to a web site, traffic analysis, listing services, search integration into a site, and theory surrounding search behavior. Students will investigate the relationships between Usability, Accessibility, Information Architecture, Marketing, and Findability, and will implement strategies for creating findable content.

Credits

4 Credits, 4 Hours

Prerequisite

IMD 410 Dynamic Web Applications

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Build a web site using various coding and keyword strategies to achieve desirable ranking with major search engines
- Implement a strategy for registering a site with various search engines and directories
- Use analog marketing methodologies to promote a site
- Identify beneficial pay per click marketing services on the web
- Analyze web traffic on a web site to identify methods for improving findability
- Use various Google services to promote products, services, and other web site content
- Use rich email marketing to promote a web site
- Define current issues of findability including folksonomies and social tagging

COURSE INFORMATION

Recommended Reading

Morville, Peter. (2005). *Ambient Findability*. O'reilly Publishing. ISBN: 0596007655

Kent, Peter. (2004). *Search Engine Optimization for Dummies*. For Dummies. ISBN: 0764567586

Supplemental Materials

You will need more than one means of backing up your files created for this class. Advised methods include: server, jump drive, portable hard drive, laptop, or CD.

Technology

Google toolbar for Firefox browser.

Course Online

<http://www.classbot.com/>

Room/time

	Day/Time	Room
Lab:	Wed 6 - 8 PM	216
Class:	Wed 8 – 9:50 PM	416b

Instructor

Name:	Aarron Walter
Phone:	770-689-5006
Email:	aarron@classbot.com
Office hours:	Mondays, 12 - 2 PM Thursdays, 5 - 6 PM Or By Appointment Room 217

COURSE GRADING

The final grade will be based on the following scheduled activities:

Assignments

Activity / Assignment	Title	Points	%
Assignment 1	SEO Site	200	20
Assignment 2	Rich Email Campaign	200	20
Assignment 3	Research Presentation	250	25
Assignment 4	Marketing and SEO Kit	350	35

Extra Credit

Extra Credit	See details at the end of the course outline.		Value varies
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Grading Scale

%	Grade	%	Grade	%	Grade	%	Grade	%	Grade
96-100	A	88-90	B+	78-80	C+	66-70	D+	=< 60	F
91-95	A-	84-87	B	74-77	C	61-65	D		
		81-83	B-	71-73	C-				

Submitting Assignments

Every student will create a personal online jump page for this class. The URL for this page should be posted in the Class Bot drop box by the end of the second week (Jan 18).

All assignments need to be uploaded to a web server by the stipulated time/date and linked from your personal jump page. Each student's jump page should have the following information on it:

- o Your name
- o Course number, name and section
- o Instructor's name
- o Assignment number
- o Assignment title
- o Due date (from the course outline)
- o Date of submission
- o Link to the assignment (typically the assignment title)

Web Server

Please note that all your assignments need to be submitted online. Please remember that servers can go down. If your primary server goes down, please upload your work to a backup server (you could use one of the free web hosting services for this).

Late Assignments

If an assignment cannot be accessed online on the due date, it will not be graded (resulting in a 0 for the assignment). If an assignment is not received on time, it cannot be resubmitted.

Exams and Quizzes

The midterm and the final exams must be taken at the scheduled time/date. Failure to appear for these exams will result in a score of 0 for the corresponding test. Similarly, if you are absent or late on the day of a quiz, you will not be able to take the quiz and will receive a 0 for the corresponding quiz.

Grading Policy

Please note that per the department policy, in order to take the portfolio class and graduate, all students in the Interactive Media Design program need to have a grade of D or higher in all core courses (courses beginning with IMD).

AiA ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is the goal of this policy to improve the academic performance of students in the classroom by stressing the importance of course attendance and reinforcing the work-ready expectations of employers for employee attendance.

Students should be prepared to start the quarter the first day of classes and to drop/add courses early in the first week of the quarter to minimize absences.

The following attendance requirements are in addition to and amend those currently published in the AIA Student Handbook and Daily Planner.

Course Attendance Policy

- Students are required to attend all class meetings, to arrive on time, and to stay for the full duration of the class.
- Students arriving 20 minutes after the start of each class will be marked absent. Students who leave class before the class is over and without the approval of the instructor will be marked absent.
- Students who accumulate more than three absences may be dropped from the course and a grade of “FS,” Fail/Suspension, will be recorded for the course. Students who are suspended receive no refund for the course.

There are no excused absences. Students may verify their attendance with the instructor of the course. In the event a student is suspended from a course and believes an error in recording attendance has been made, he or she should first contact the instructor.

Attendance Appeals Process

Students may appeal a course suspension. Such appeals must be made in writing to the Registrar. Appeals will only be considered when the absences were beyond the control of the student and **all** absences are fully documented.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

As a member of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. Under all circumstances, students are expected to be honest in their dealings with faculty, administrative staff, and fellow students. In speaking with any member of the college community, students must give an accurate representation of the facts at hand. Students are required to refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable or unethical conduct related to academic work. In class assignments, students must submit work that fairly and accurately reflects their level of accomplishment. Any work that is not the product of the student’s own efforts is considered dishonest. Engaging in academic dishonesty can have serious consequences for the students. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Submission of the same work in two or more classes without prior approval of the faculty members of the classes involved.
- Submission of any work (full or partial) not actually produced by the student.
- Submission of any work without clear acknowledgement (reference/credit) of the original author or creator of work.

Students proven to have been dishonest in submitting or presenting their work in this class will receive the F (fail) grade for the class. Record of this incident will also be kept in the student’s file. If such an incidence occurs and you would like to file a written appeal, you may do so with the academic director of the department.

DISCLAIMER

All work designed and developed in this class should carry the following statement (typically displayed at the bottom of the page):

This interactive media project was created by students for educational purposes at The Art Institute of Atlanta and is in no way intended for commercial gain or as a source of public information.

SCHEDULE

Date		Readings to be Completed Before Class	Assignments Due	Topic/Activity
Wed Jan 11 (wk 1)	Lab			Introduction to course goals and syllabus. Introduction to Findability. Foundation nomenclature. View Del.icio.us and Flickr.com.
Wed Jan 18 (wk 2)	Lab	http://www.alistapart.com/articles/ambientfindability http://www.alistapart.com/articles/accessibilityseo	Jump Page	Group Exercise: Identify key players in SEO service industry. What are their fees? What do they offer? Introduction to SEO. Accessibility increases Findability. Selecting keywords with Overture.com.
Wed Jan 25 (wk 3)	Lab	http://www.google.com/webmasters/guidelines.html http://msnbc.msn.com/id/10415455/site/newsweek/		Group Exercise: Dig up more details on methods for higher Search Engine ranking. Introduction to rich email marketing.
Wed Feb 1 (wk 4)	Lab	http://www.mailchimp.com/resources/gen_email_design.phtml http://www.sitepoint.com/article/get-the-bug-viral-marketing	Assignment 2: Rich Email Campaign	Presentation of rich email campaigns. Discussion of analog marketing techniques. Viral marketing explained.
Wed Feb 9 (wk 5)	Lab	https://www.google.com/froogle/merchants/welcome https://www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/login https://adwords.google.com/select/ https://www.google.com/adsense/		Introduction to Google's various listing services. Group Exercise: Create feeds for Froogle and Google Sitemaps.
Wed Feb 15 (wk 6)	Lab	http://www.returnofdesign.com/81/ethical-search-engine-optimization.html	Assignment 1: SEO Site	Presentation of SEO sites.
Wed Feb 22 (wk 7)	Lab	http://www.bloombergmarketing.com/articles/little_matters_count.html http://bloombergmarketing.blogs.com/	Questions for Guest Speaker	Toby Bloomberg Guest Speaker
Wed Mar 1 (wk 8)	Lab	http://www.digital-web.com/articles/seo_and_your_web_site/	Assignment 3: Research Topic	Presentation of research topics.
Wed Mar 8 (wk 9)	Lab	http://www.digital-web.com/articles/measuring_user_experience/		Complete research presentations. Analyzing web traffic.

		http://www.markboulton.co.uk/journal/comments/measuremap_mint_and_googleanalytics/		
Wed Mar 15 (wk 10)	Lab	http://www.alistapart.com/articles/perfect404 http://www.alistapart.com/articles/slashforward		Group Exercise: Identify pay per click services and compare services. Introduction to microformats.
Wed Mar 20 (wk 10)	Class	http://www.digital-web.com/articles/seo_and_non_html_sites/	Assignment 4. Marketing and SEO Kit	Presentation of Marketing and SEO Kit.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Week 1

1. What is a folksonomy?
2. What is social tagging?
3. Identify the potential dangers and benefits of social tagging.

Week 2

4. Explain the difference between white hat and black hat search engine optimization.
5. Identify the relationship between Accessible content and search engine optimized content.
6. What is keyword density?
7. How might you go about selecting keywords for a web site?

Week 3

8. Explain the major considerations of designing a rich email campaign.
9. How might you send a rich email campaign and track the results?

Week 4

10. Identify various methods for increasing your site's perceived popularity with search engines.
11. Identify various sites and resources for submitting your site to search engines and directories.
12. Identify the difference between a search engine and a directory service.
13. Identify various analog techniques and resources to market a web site.
14. Identify best practices in dealing with all customers o your web site.

Week 5

15. What are some SEO issues that may arise from using non-HTML based content?
16. What is the difference between black has and white hat SEO?
17. What black hat SEO techniques could get your site banned from search engines and why?

Week 6

18. What are microformats and how might they potentially help sites be more effectively indexed by search engines.

Week 7

19. Identify and compare the popular web traffic analysis tools on the market.
20. What information about web site traffic might be most important to track?

Week 8

21. Identify methods for creating search engine friendly URLs.
22. What services does Google offer that might help drive traffic to your site?
23. What is a Froogle feed?
24. How might a web page site map assist search engine listing?

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1. SEO Site

Create a web site (10 page minimum) for a fictitious product or service built for optimal search engine indexing. Create an additional page on your site that outlines all SEO techniques implemented on your site. Your site should have the following:

- Site Map
- Robots.txt file
- Froogle feed file
- Google Local feed
- Google Site Maps feed
- Resource of Resources (RoR) file

Provide links to each of the feed files from your SEO techniques page. If you have an existing site that will appropriately suit the goals of this assignment discuss with the instructor the option of rebuilding it for optimal search engine indexing.

Use <http://www.webconfs.com/search-engine-spider-simulator.php> to evaluate your web site's SEO success before submitting the assignment.

Marking Criteria

Total Points: /200

- Professional presentation (50)
- SEO success (100)
- Usability (20)
- Inclusion of requirements (30)

Assignment 2. Rich Email Campaign

Create a rich email to advertise the fictitious product or service you created in assignment 1. Identify the goals of your campaign (examples: increase sales, increase members on mailing list, etc.) and design to achieve these goals. Build your email keeping in mind the differences discussed in class between a web page and a rich email. Include a means for your recipients to unsubscribe from your mailing list and indicate to them why they are receiving this email.

Use <http://mailchimp.com> to send your campaign to at least 5 email addresses (preferably to a variety of email accounts such as Hotmail, MSN, AOL, etc. so you can identify display differences). Read the MailChimp.com free rich email how to at http://mailchimp.com/resources/gen_email_design.phtml.

Write a one page summary of your campaign's goals and the methods you used to achieve them (present as an HTML page).

Marking Criteria

Total Points: /200

- Visual design (75)
- Marketing strategies (50)
- Description of goals and methods (75)

Assignment 3. Research Presentation

Create a 10 minute (minimum) presentation discussing a Findability topic of your choice. Please discuss your topic with your instructor before beginning research. Your presentation should be legible to a classroom of people and should include graphics, text, links, etc. illustrating your findings. Include a resources page with links to your sources and other useful places where your audience can learn more.

Below are suggested research topics:

- Using PHP to create search engine friendly URLs
- Optimizing Flash content for search engines
- Detailed compare and contrast of traffic analysis tools
- Viral marketing techniques
- Google AdWords
- Fahrner Image Replacement (FIR) and SFIR for better Findability
- Creating custom 404 Pages with Findability in mind
- Using RSS to reach and draw more users/customers
- Google API
- Cost Per Click (CPC) services compare and contrast
- Integrating search into your site
- Microformats

Marking Criteria

Total Points: /250

- Research quality (150)
- Professional presentation (50)
- Class presentation (20)
- Innovative approach (30)

Assignment 4. Marketing and SEO Kit

Create a PDF document summarizing the various SEO and marketing strategies you have learned this quarter. It is hoped that this document will serve as the basis of a lucrative Findability consultation service you can offer clients after graduation.

Include a cover sheet and a table of contents. Include sections in your document covering the following areas:

- Summary of search engine popularity and sources of search results
- Description of how search engines rank sites
- White hat SEO techniques (focus a great deal of attention on this section)
 - Keyword selection
 - Methods for creating keyword density
 - Keyword formatting methods
 - Selecting a URL
- Accessibility techniques to create more search engine friendly content
- Search engine and directory submission resources
- Cost Per Click (CPC) resources with summary of each (cost, tracking conversions, etc.)
- Google services descriptions with feed format examples
- Search integration resources with summary of each
- Rich email marketing resources with summary of each
- Analog marketing resources with summary of each

Marking Criteria

Total Points: /350

- Professional presentation (50)
- Assignment requirements (60)
- Code quality (40)
- Quality assurance (30)
- Usability (20)

RESOURCES

SEO

- <http://forums.seochat.com/>
- <http://www.pagerank.net/>
- <http://www.mobilesearchmarketing.com/>
- <http://www.searchenginesbook.com/resources.html>
- <http://submit-it.com/subopt.htm?print=1>
- <http://www.google.com/webmasters/guidelines.html>
- <http://www.seochat.com/>
- <http://www.urltrends.com/>
- <http://www.wordtracker.com/>
- <http://www.digital-web.com/topics/seo/>

Listing Services

- <http://dmoz.com/>
- <http://submit.search.yahoo.com/free/request>
- <http://www.google.com/about.html>
- <http://sponsoredlistings.ask.com/>
- <http://search.msn.com/docs/submit.aspx>
- <http://sp.ask.com/docs/about/aj/teoma.htm>
- <http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com/rc/srch/prod.php>
- <http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com/index.php>
- <http://www.andyhagans.com/>

Rich Email

- <http://www.mailchimp.com/>
- <http://www.campaignmonitor.com/>

Search

- <http://www.google.com/services/websearch.html>
- <http://www.interspire.com/fastfind/>
- <http://www.atomz.com/applications/search/index.htm>

Marketing

- <http://www.pheedo.com/>
- <http://www.atlantaima.org/home.cfm>
- <http://www.bloombergmarketing.blogs.com/>

Mod Rewrite

- <http://www.sitepoint.com/article/guide-url-rewriting>
- <http://www.zend.com/zend/spotlight/searchengine.php>
- <http://www.sitepoint.com/article/search-engine-friendly-urls>

Traffic Analysis

- <http://www.haveamint.com/demo>
- <http://www.google.com/analytics/>
- <http://www.coremetrics.com/>
- http://www.digital-web.com/topics/web_analytics/
- <http://www.fireclick.com/>
- <http://statcounter.com/>

Informative Articles

- <http://www.alistapart.com/articles/ambientfindability/>
- http://www.digital-web.com/articles/ambient_findability/
- <http://www.alistapart.com/articles/accessibilityseo>
- <http://imd398.blogspot.com/>
- <http://www.sitepoint.com/cat/site-marketing>
- <http://www.freepint.com/issues/080600.htm#feature>
- http://www.ryerson.ca/~dgrimsha/courses/cps720_02/resources/Scientific%20American%20The%20Semantic%20Web.htm
- http://www.bloombermarketing.com/articles/little_matters_count.html
- <http://www.alistapart.com/articles/perfect404>
- <http://www.alistapart.com/articles/slashforward>
- <http://www.returnofdesign.com/81/ethical-seach-engine-optimization.html>
- http://www.memography.org/index.php/Main_Page
- <http://searchenginewatch.com/searchday/article.php/3095871>

Microformats

- <http://www.microformats.org/>
- http://www.digital-web.com/articles/microformats_primer/
- <http://usabletype.com/articles/2005/usable-microformats/>

General

- <http://del.icio.us/>
- <http://del.icio.us/livlab/ambientfindability>
- http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/guides/guide-display/-/227XDXBR7MZZB/qid=1130679102/sr=18-1/ref=sr_18_1/103-6261793-5681457
- <http://www.searchenginesbook.com/searchengineglossary.html>
- <http://findability.org/>