How to SEO Twitter

Thu, Aug 27, 2009 | Posted by Addam Hassan

Marketing research company, comScore, has reported that Twitter.com visitor traffic has risen to an impressive 51.6m unique users worldwide in July 2009. The same researchers also rank Twitter 42nd in their ?Media Metrix Ranks Top 50 U.S. Web Properties for July 2009? report.

Meanwhile, back in the UK, Nielsen NetRankings shows that in July 2009, 28% of sites referring traffic to Twitter came from Search Engines.

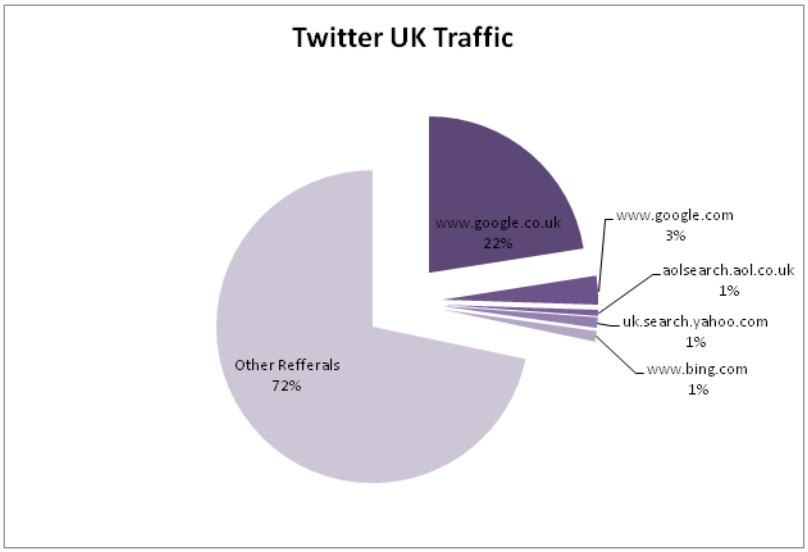


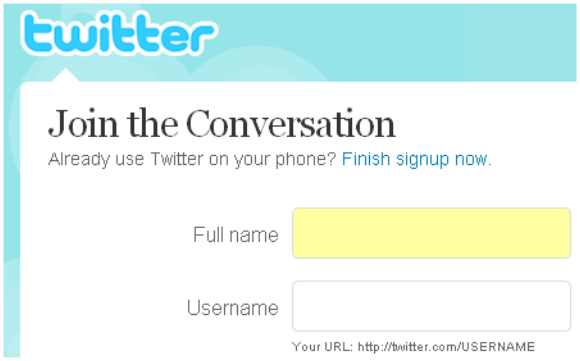
Figure 1 Raw Data from Nielsen NetRankings

What are the ranking factors?

This rise demonstrates an increasing opportunity to engage with your target audiences and capture traffic. In much the same way as SEO is conducted, it is important to understand what variables you can influence and how to efficiently use them to your advantage. Let?s have a look at them now

Above are the key Twitter profile attributes that are then indexed and used by Search Engines. Below is an example of how this is translated in to a Google SERP once cached.

The title and, to a lesser extent, the URL are ranking factors that will influence where you are placed within a SERP. In this case we are viewing a Google SERP. The title is compiled of the full name and Twitter username. This is our first optimisation opportunity.



Ensure that the full name relates to you and your brand name. For instance, a quick search for ?Debenhams Twitter? shows the Debenhams Twitter account at the top. That?s simply because they have used Debenhams for their Twitter full name and ?DebenhamsRetail? as their username. Just before we move on do not forget to ensure you keep your username short, as that will become the fixed URL through which people can access your Twitter page.

Another factor that relates to click-through rather than ranking is the small paragraph that describes you and your Twitter account, which you can see in the bio of your profile page. This bio information will be used as the Meta Description for your profile page and will probably be the first part of your page that any potential visitor will see before accessing your page from the search engine. If you look at this example for iCrossing UK Twitter you?ll notice that we have defined who we are and what the account is about.

Tweet Optimisation

Now let?s consider the actual writing of a tweet. With any content it?s all about being useful and applying the right language to appeal to your targeted audience, especially as Twitter does not pass Page Rank. If you remember, we said that the title is a very important ranking factor. If people are to find your tweets, then we need to ensure this the title is optimised as best we can without ruining the quality of the Tweet. Have a look at this SERP result that shows all the titles for iCrossing UK. Best practise here ensuring that the keywords you want to include are featured at the beginning of the tweet. Be mindful though: in the same way that the Bio works as a Meta Description, the actual tweet will also be used as one when your tweets are indexed.

Make sure your Tweets are re-tweetable

These are the main ranking factors from a search engine optimisation perspective but one other tip you may want to employ involves making your tweets small enough that people can re-tweet your message easily, and without losing the original tweet. Aim for your tweets to be a maximum of 125- 130 characters long.

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