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Ever wanted to know how Yahoo and MSN rank websites as opposed to Google?

Here is a quick look:

Google

Based on the model of academic citation, uses relevance, trust and authority to rank websites and is biased towards informational sites that serve as resources (based on backlinks analysis) within their specific industries.

- Is the best search engine at determining whether a link is a true editorial citation or an artificial link
- Prefers natural link growth over time - a site getting many backlinks quickly that are not editorially earned will most likely get the site penalized
- Biased towards informational resources (as opposed to commercial results)
- Much more biased towards link-based data than either Yahoo or MSN
- Site age matters a lot in establishing trust
- Keyword variation is important; heavy keyword densities will trip quality filters and will work against the web page
- Anchor text variation is important, for the same reason as above
- Reciprocal links and site wide links (and especially those link lists in the sidebar (or blogroll) and the site footer) have very little benefits - Google prefers in-text links as they are more likely to indicate editorial citations
- Effective at eliminating duplicate content
- Site crawling (and indexing) is determined by a certain threshold of PageRank and link quality
- Uses a series of quality filters that simulate a 'sandbox' effect for websites - it will normally take your website several months to achieve good rankings in Google, more if it is a competitive niche
- Uses a site's history in search engines as part of its ranking algorithm

Google takes time to get top rankings in and its ranking algorithm forces SEOs to adopt new practices that take more than just old-fashioned link building and link exchange networks (even though those still work).

Yahoo

Based on the model of academic citation, uses relevance, trust and authority to rank websites and is biased towards informational sites that serve as resources (based on backlinks analysis) within their specific industries.

- A Yahoo directory listing can do wonders for your site's rankings in Yahoo search results
- Responds much better to sheer link popularity as compared to Google - thus links from non-related sites and reciprocal links (as well as those blogroll links) still work well in Yahoo
- Less biased towards links than Google
- Gives much more weight to site metadata (such as page titles and descriptions) than Google (even though Title tags are fairly important in Google as well)
- Better than MSN but far away from Google in determining link quality - as a result uses site authority more than link type (editorial, paid, reciprocal, link list, etc) itself
- Pushes Yahoo Answers heavily in its search results and is constantly looking at ways to include the social side of ranking into its algorithm
- Search results in many competitive industries (or those prone to spam) may be manually edited to minimize spam

MSN

New to the search engine race, and not very good at it.

- Relatively new to the search engine races
- Relies heavily on Microsoft's dominance of the OS market to push MSN

- Poor at link analysis
- To compensate, they place more weight on on-page factors than either Yahoo or Google
- 'Fresh' links matter a lot - if your site's backlinks grow consistently, this could help you in MSN
- Is quick to index and rank websites
- Poor at determining relevance
- Favors frequently updated sites

In February 2007, Google was used by 48.1 percent of the US search market - almost double than that of Yahoo (28.1 percent) and more than four times of MSN (10.5 percent) ([comScore](#), February 2007).

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