

BRAND POSITIONING STRATEGY USING SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

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Appendix A

Experimental Search Engine

The screenshot shows a Google search results page for the query "heavy-duty backpacks". At the top right, there is a "Sign in" link. Below it, the Google logo is followed by navigation tabs for "Web", "Images", "Groups", "News", and "more »". A search bar contains the text "heavy-duty backpacks" and a "Search" button. To the right of the search bar are links for "Advanced Search" and "Preferences". Below the search bar, it says "Search: the web" (selected) and "pages from Hong Kong".

The results section is titled "Web" and shows "Results 1 - 8 of 1,430,000 for heavy-duty backpack (0.01 seconds)". The first eight results are:

- Kurton--Maker of heavy-duty Backpacks ...**
Kurton **Heavy-duty Backpacks** are great for traveling, sporting events, and daily **heavy** usage. Weave of high quality material that will withstand **heavy** use, well-designed suspension system supports your pack of load. Many styles to choose ...
www.kurtonbackpack.com/default.html - 53K - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)
- Heavy-duty Columbia Backpacks for you ...**
Columbia **Heavy-duty Backpacks**, made with **heavy-duty** material, Suitable for travel, outdoor sports as well as daily **heavy** usage. Feature a full suspension system that offers maximum support and stability. Comes with variety of styles ...
www.columbia.com/backpack/index.htm - 57K - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)
- Heavy duty Gregory Backpacks ...**
Gregory **Heavy-duty Backpacks**, build with sturdy material, strong enough to carry **heavy** stuff, advanced suspension system that support heavy loads for you. Ideal for travel, sports, or daily **heavy** use. Different styles available ...
www.gregorypacks.com/prod_info/list.html - 61K - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)
- Nike--Heavy-duty Backpacks ...**
Nike **Heavy-duty Backpacks** are specially designed for outdoor sports, travel, and other **heavy** uses. Made of durable materials. Well-crafted suspension systems support the carrying of heavy loads. Choices of different styles ...
www.nike.com/nikestore/backpack.html - 64K - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)
- eBay: Heavy Duty Backpack School bag Back Pack ...**
Luggage , **Backpacks** category on eBay. Many sellers, many styles ...
[Heavy-Duty-Backpack-School-bag-Back-Pack](#) - 19k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)
- Apparels, accessories, heavy-duty backpacks, and much more ...**
Shop our huge selection of apparel, accessories, and **heavy-duty backpacks**. Competitive prices. We offer free shipping and a 100% satisfaction guarantee ...
www.appareldepot.com/backpack.htm - 39k - **16 May 2006** - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)
- Heavy Duty Backpacks - Compare Prices, Reviews and Buy at NexTag ...**
Compare prices of **Heavy Duty Backpack** from online retailers. 125 results like the Speedo Youth Team **Backpack**, Riot Threads Small Canvas Alice Pack / **Backpack** - Unisex - Black, OMS **Heavy Duty** Mesh ...
www.nextag.com/heavy-duty-backpack/search.html - 25K - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)
- Epers Design Heavy-duty Backpacks -- About Us**
Multi-purpose **heavy-duty backpacks**, bags, and cases that are customizable to fit travel and sporting activity needs. You will like our design styles ...
www.epersdesign.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/B000CSP3NE?v=glance - 22k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

At the bottom of the results section, there is a "Go" button and a "Next" button. Below the results is a search bar with the text "heavy-duty backpacks" and a "Search" button. Below the search bar are links for "Search within results", "Language Tools", "Search Tips", and "Dissatisfied? Help us improve". At the very bottom, there are links for "Google Home", "Advertising Programs", and "About Google", and a copyright notice "©2006 Google".

Appendix B

Scales Used in the Study

Heavy-Dutiness ($\alpha = .88$)

“What are your opinions about the statement that ‘X backpacks stand up well to heavy use in outdoor travel?’”
(strongly disagree/strongly agree, extremely unlikely/extremely likely, not at all probable/very probable)

Stylishness ($\alpha = .92$)

“What are your opinions about the statement that ‘X backpacks are stylish?’”
(strongly disagree/strongly agree, extremely unlikely/extremely likely, not at all probable/very probable)

Luxuriousness ($\alpha = .84$)

“What are your opinions about the statement that ‘hotel X in Chiang Mai, Thailand is a luxurious hotel property?’”
(strongly disagree/strongly agree, extremely unlikely/extremely likely, not at all probable/very probable)

Friendliness ($\alpha = .89$)

“What are your opinions about the statement that ‘hotel X in Chiang Mai, Thailand is a friendly hotel?’”
(strongly disagree/strongly agree, extremely unlikely/extremely likely, not at all probable/very probable)

Internet Search Skills ($\alpha = .86$ in Experiment 1; $\alpha = .91$ in Experiment 2) (adapted from Novak et al. 2000)

Seven- point Likert scale (agree/disagree)

- “I am extremely skilled at using Internet search engines.”
- “I consider myself knowledgeable about good search engine use techniques.”
- “I know somewhat more than most users about using Internet search engines.”
- “I know how to find what I am looking for using Internet search engines.”
- “Compared to other things that I do on the web (e.g., email, chat, etc.), I’m very skillful at using Internet search engines.”
- “Compared to others skills that I have (e.g., sports, cooking, singing), I’m very skillful at using Internet search engines.”

Appendix C

Fictitious *BusinessWeek* Article

BusinessWeek

“Fooling Google and cheating for a high ranking position”

Christopher Palmeri Edited by Deborah Stead. *BusinessWeek*. New York: Sep 12, 2005, Iss. 3950; pg. 75

Google is good. Type in what you’re looking for and you have an excellent chance of finding it on the first try. That’s why more people use Google to scour the web than any other search engine. ***But what if you could no longer rely on Google to return the best search results?*** After all, when you’re number one, everybody wants a piece of you. For instance, online mom-and-pop shops want to appear high in Google’s listings, because Google has become the most popular way for shoppers to find brands on the web.

Although most of Google’s 100 million daily users consider it a trusted source of unbiased information, ***the result of a search query is often manipulated for commercial benefit by web experts.*** To achieve a higher ranking, websites have to prove their popularity and usefulness through plentiful links. No wonder, then, that ***Google optimizers have sprung up to help sites achieve an artificial boost in Google’s search results.***

Efforts to outfox the search engines have been around since search engines first became popular in the early 1990s. Early tricks included stuffing thousands of widely used search terms in hidden coding, called “metatags.” The coding fools a search engine into identifying a site with popular words and phrases that may not actually appear on the site. Another gimmick was hiding words or terms against a same-color background. The hidden coding deceived search engines that relied heavily on the number of times a word or phrase appeared in ranking a site.

In addition, the optimizers found they could boost their clients’ sites by creating websites that were nothing more than collections of links to the clients’ site, called “link farms.” Since Google ranks a site largely by how many links, or “votes,” it gets, the link farms could boost a site’s popularity.

In a similar technique, called a link exchange, a group of unrelated sites would agree to link to one another, thereby fooling Google into thinking the sites have a multitude of votes. Many sites also found they could buy links to themselves to boost their rankings.

Despite ranking on Google is determined by a number of factors, such as key words, popularity, spam, metadata, etc. all of which can be faked. ***Until now, there is no standard practice to prevent companies from manipulating search results.*** And as long as Google remains a top search engine, opportunists will try to rig the system.