

**ONLINE MARKETING
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

FOR

OSR JURIDISCHE OPLEIDINGEN

OSR Legal Training

BY

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Management Summary

In this dissertation I am answering the following research question:

How can OSR Juridische Opleidingen operate online more visibly to its target groups?

This question is posed by Mrs Ellen van't Hof of OSR Juridische Opleidingen. OSR is dissatisfied with how visible their website, www.osr.nl is in search engines. Currently not enough people are finding OSR through, for example, Google. When searching using keywords that describe the core business of OSR, their website is hardly mentioned in the results page. This means that OSR is missing important potentially new and repeat customers and as such potential revenue.

Online visibility is nowadays mainly determined by being able to be found. Nearly everyone uses Google, or at least knows Google (CheckIT, 2008). Search engines are the modern portals to information and if a commercial organisation is not found through these search engines their online marketing channel is simply not performing well.

There are two ways of improving visibility in Google's search engines.

1. Search Engine Optimisation. This means optimising a website in adherence with the rules about search engines stated by Google, in order to make sure the website is displayed in the search engine results when someone entered a keyword which is highly relevant to the website.
2. Search Engine Advertising. This means paying Google to display your advertisement which is directly linked to the search query of a user of the search engine. The advertisement is only displayed if the advertiser's ad is relevant enough to the search query and if his bid on the keyword is high enough. Detailed conditions are discussed further in the dissertation.

Another method which can benefit the online marketing activities is called Affiliate Marketing. Affiliate Marketing enables advertisers to find ‘affiliates’ who advertise the products or services of the advertiser on their own websites and receive a fee for every sale that is made on the website of the advertiser by a visitor sent to the advertiser via their websites. Affiliate Marketing is often enabled by so-called affiliate networks, intermediaries between the advertiser and the affiliates, who measure all the traffic, sales made, transactions, et cetera. These networks make it easy for advertisers to find more ways to sell his product and for affiliates to earn money selling a product or service which is highly relevant to their own website content.

I performed a small international benchmark of the English, German, and Belgium market and compared those findings to the current Dutch market, and of course, more specifically to how OSR is currently doing business. I found that Germany and, even more so, England is more developed concerning innovative modern solutions using the Internet as platform to sell legal courses. In England I found several parties that sell courses as videos or audio files, which are being accompanied by a small multiple choice test allowing the participant to quickly earn 1 Continuous Professional Development point (similar system as in Holland). These courses are sold for a low unit price and they are fully accredited. I am recommending OSR to research these markets further in order to come up with structural ideas for the future of its online business model. I found no Dutch company currently doing business in this way so this might form an interesting business opportunity for OSR.

Finally I am giving several recommendations how to improve the findability of the website of OSR. Textual content must be written specifically for web users, not for ‘normal’ readers. People browse and read websites differently from how they read printed material. For users and also for search engines, the texts on the website can be written better. I am also recommending structural efforts be undertaken to increase the number of incoming links from relevant sources. This number is important for ranking in search engines and OSR potentially has a lot of resources it can use to grow this number of links, for example, its large number of lecturers.

I am also recommending OSR seriously looks into the advertising programme of Google, called Adwords. Advertising in Google's search engine allows advertisers to set sharp budgets which cannot be exceeded (when the budget is reached, the advertisements are simply no longer displayed). The advertiser pays for every click he receives on his advertisements. Every click means a visitor sent to a specified page in the website. Adwords allows for in depth statistical analyses, multiple advertisements being tested to see which one performs better, unlimited keyword usage (both adding as deleting them), and it can be linked with Google's Analytics software which is already in use by OSR. Analytics can be used to measure 'conversions' (booked courses) and the link with Adwords allows OSR to see exactly with which keyword and advertisement someone has finally booked a course. This allows then for more optimisation.

Because of the fact that OSR sells courses through its website, which is currently not easy to find through Google, I recommend OSR takes action. There are opportunities for it to increase its online sales and strengthen its online strategy for the future to come.

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1. Introduction Chapter

1.1 General introduction

This dissertation is about my work for **OSR Juridische Opleidingen** in Utrecht. OSR sells legal courses to lawyers and law firms, solicitors, and supporting personnel. Recently OSR has had their new website redesigned by Brave Reclamebureau (Reclamebureau, 2009) and implemented by Yellowmind (Yellowmind, 2009). The emphasis during this process has been on design and technical implementation, not on online commercial strategy. In other words, all parties have focused on designing and setting up a new website for OSR but not much effort has gone into building a strategy around the new website in order to attract more visitors and realise more sales.

After the new website was completed, OSR was not happy with how it scored in search engines such as Google (Google, 2009a). When entering an important keyword describing the core business of OSR into a search engine, the website simply was not found. This is remarkable because OSR operates in a niche market and as such does not have many competitors.

The website is an important tool for OSR in selling courses. Therefore a structured commercial plan, which is both strategic and offering practical tools, is useful for the organisation. The purpose of this plan is directive as to which activities should be deployed in order to improve commercial success and how employees can help in achieving this. The end result will be a policy plan comprising online commercial guidelines.

1.2 Justification of the subject

First of all, I have always been active with and on the Internet. My family was one of the early adopters of broadband Internet and from a young age I was busy with installing and configuring software, hardware, playing games, being actively involved with different technical forums and became more and more interested in how hard and software works.

Later in my life I worked for KPN in different positions and currently I also work for an IT company. I am fully convinced that the Internet is becoming more and more a part of daily life and is being increasingly embraced by the masses (Internet World Stats, 2009) (IAB, 2009). With this increase in usage, e-commerce is also becoming more main stream. (Paypers, 2009) (Bizreport.com, 2007) The rise of Internet has enabled new business models such as ‘click-and-mortar’ business like web shops or even businesses which operate solely online. As our society and the way we do business rely more and more on interconnectivity, I believe this is a development to stay.

Secondly, this assignment is interesting for me because of my background but also from the perspective of a communication student. Online communication has different rules compared to traditional communication media (Bizreport.com, 2006) and as such I find it already more interesting. Seeing a real company with a real communication problem regarding its online activities and being allowed to write a recommendation for that company is a real privilege.

Thirdly, a company like OSR is an example of how the use of the Internet can help companies do business more efficiently. Customers can enrol in available courses through the website of OSR, which is much quicker than through regular mail or even via the telephone. As selling legal courses is the core business of OSR, selling online successfully is vital.

Finally, this subject is interesting for others because it treats a real and current problem regarding a relatively new marketing channel, the search engine. For anyone interested in online advertising, online marketing, selling services online, using a website for commercial purposes, et cetera, this dissertation is interesting. At the very least this dissertation gives an example of how a commercial problem regarding online communication tools is approached and attempted to solve.

1.3 Problem definition

The policy problem which is the foundation of this dissertation, stated by Mrs Ellen van 't Hof, Manager Marketing & Communication at OSR is:

How can OSR Juridische Opleidingen operate online more visibly to its target groups?

1.4 Operationalisation of Problem definition

The online operations of OSR are currently purely based on its websites. The main website www.osr.nl is used to communicate about all (new) courses and news about upcoming events, courses, lecturers, and any other relevant news item. The objective of this definition is to attract more relevant visitors that are either looking for general information about OSR and its propositions, specific course information, or willing to book a specific course. It is important to notice that also people who do not yet know OSR but are looking for information or courses that OSR also provides are to be targeted for new business purposes.

To operate online more visibly entails that more means for the target groups of OSR to visit (find) the website of OSR will have to be developed. These means are meant to persuade people to visit www.osr.nl and to perform desired actions on the website (i.e. book a course).

1.4.1 Means to operate more visibly

There are several methods to be more visible on the Internet. One of most important methods is visibility in search engines. Nearly everyone using the Internet to find information makes use of a search engine. The most used search engine is Google (CheckIT, 2008) and for businesses it is important that their website is displayed in the search results when a person searches for a keyword characteristic to their business. There are two ways for companies to ensure their website is displayed in a search engine:

1. Optimising their website and its content to be displayed in the top of the search results. This method is called Search Engine Optimisation.
2. Paying money to have relevant advertisements displayed when a person uses a specific keyword to start a search query. This method is called Search Engine Advertising.

Another way of increasing a company's online visibility is Affiliate Marketing. Affiliate marketing is a form of online advertising using the websites of others to promote your product or service.

In the theoretical framework (p. 21) I will elaborate in detail about these techniques.

1.4.2 Target groups of OSR

The target groups of OSR are:

- Lawyers (and trainee lawyers)
- Solicitors
- Support staff

Both independent lawyers and solicitors as law firms are part of the target groups. As all lawyers and solicitors have to follow training every year, it is very important for OSR to attract and retain these people because repeat business is of course highly preferable and profitable.

1.4.3 Benchmarking

Finally, a benchmark will be made. This benchmark will compare online marketing activities of different companies from Belgium, Germany, and England. This benchmark will provide ideas about possible new methods of online marketing suitable for OSR. These three markets have been chosen because they are culturally and geographically close to the Netherlands.

1.4.4 Limitation

An important factor which this dissertation will be limited by is the website of OSR itself. As of yet, I have briefly discussed methods of generating traffic to a website (search engine optimisation and advertising and affiliate marketing). However, the website itself is of course a very important factor in online visibility as well. It is the basic tool with which OSR does its online business. For the above mentioned methods it is the end station where the actual sale has to take place.

The website has recently been redesigned along with a total change in house style. It was implemented early March 2009. The graphical lay-out, the structural set up, and the user interface of the website will not be subject to this dissertation in the sense that I will give recommendations on these parts. The textual content, the lay-out of this content, specific use of keywords in these texts, will be part of this dissertation as those factors directly impact search engines. This will be discussed in the Search Engine Optimisation chapter.

1.5 The proposed project

In order to be able to give proper recommendations all topics will be explained and analysed in a theoretical framework. This framework will be used to give detailed insights into the various topics and will also provide an answer as to why specifically

these topics are chosen to solve the policy problem with. The framework will provide detailed descriptions of all methods used in the recommendations.

1.6 Purpose of this dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation is to accurately describe how I formalised recommendations how to solve the communication – or policy – problem of OSR Juridische Opleidingen regarding their online commercial activities. This dissertation has as its purpose clarifying the methods used and their theoretical foundations, my rationale behind selecting the methods proposed, and finally to give detailed insight into how I recommend solving the policy problem and why I do so.

1.7 The Client

The assignment this dissertation is based on is done for OSR Juridische Opleidingen in Utrecht. Freely translated Juridische Opleidingen means Legal Training. OSR provides legal courses for lawyers and law firms, solicitors, and supporting personnel. OSR employs many lawyers who are expert in their particular field of law to teach courses.

In the Netherlands, it is compulsory for every lawyer to keep up to date through courses and training. Fully accredited courses are worth a certain amount of points, depending on the length and level. Every lawyer has to achieve a certain amount of points each year, determined by the Netherlands Bar Association (Nederlandse Orde van Advocaten). OSR provides these courses and trainings on a wide variety of areas of law.

2. Methodology

2.1 Deciding on the methodology

The policy question “*How can OSR Juridische Opleidingen operate online more visibly to its target groups?*” combined with the fact that the website of OSR had just been renewed gives this assignment a certain direction. As the website revision did not result in a satisfactory increase in visitors and course sales, other means had to be considered. But, as merely getting a lot of visitors on a website is no guarantee for success, it is necessary to look more closely at these visitors: it is important to attract the *right type* of visitor to a website, namely the type of visitor that is part of the target group (lawyers, law firms, solicitors, support staff) *and* preferably looking for and willing to purchase a course.

2.1.1 Supporting my decisions

To support the choices which form the basis of the methodology, I will provide some key figures about the current situation. These figures affirm my choices and are in line with the wishes of OSR.

One of the main reasons why OSR decided to create this assignment is their dissatisfaction with the number of visitors and sold courses via their website. OSR wishes not only to attract more *new* visitors, who mean new business, while retaining their current ones but also to be more visible in search engines like Google. It is important for OSR to attract visitors who do not yet know OSR.

2.1.2 Key Figures

Below are some key figures for www.osr.nl for the period of 6th of April until 6th of May 2009, obtained from statistical data captured by Google Analytics (Google Analytics, 2009), specifically for OSR. I chose this period because the new website was launched early March 2009 and therefore visitors had to familiarise with the new lay-out. Had I taken figures from an earlier period, those might not represent correctly how many visitors there were and how they browsed the website. Also, this period of one month provides for a good enough representation of the visits OSR receives on its site monthly. This period is used for all applicable Analytics figures.

5073 Visits

3405 Absolute Unique Visitors

22985 Pageviews

4.53 Average Pageviews per visit

00:03:02 Time on Site

38.20% Bounce Rate

43.21% New Visits

Visits mean the number of visits OSR has received on its website (5073) and below that is the number of unique visitors (3405) generating those visits. The difference between these two numbers indicates that some of the visitors came to www.osr.nl more than once because the number of visits is higher than the number of visitors. The statistics also provide how long on average a visitor spends on the website and with 3 minutes and 2 seconds, OSR.nl does not do badly at all. 38.2 % of the visitors immediately leave the website again. This is called the bounce rate. According to Avinash Kaushik of Google, OSR is actually doing better than average on this metric. (Avinash Kaushik, 2007)

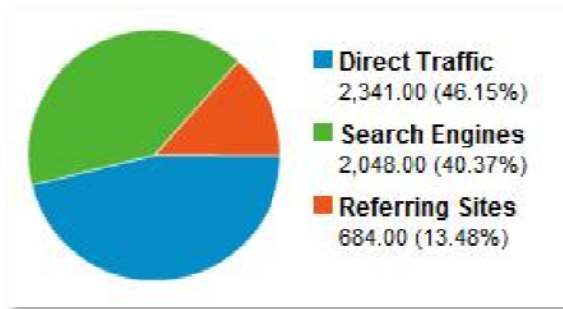


Figure 1 – Sources of traffic OSR.nl, April 6th – May 6th 2009

From Figure 1 we can see that almost half of the visitors of OSR.nl come from *direct traffic* meaning that the visitor simply typed in www.osr.nl or used a bookmark in his web browser. Of course this means that the visitor somehow knows OSR. It could be that the visitor is a regular customer of OSR or it could be someone who has just heard of OSR or was otherwise informed of the existence of OSR. In any case, this type of visitor is *actively and specifically* looking for OSR. This type of visitor is quite important and valuable because quite possibly he already knows OSR and is likely to visit the website of OSR with a specific purpose. Possibly this visitor already knows a certain course is available, or at least suspects that OSR is offering what he is searching. After all, he went directly to OSR to fulfil his need. Alternatively, this type of visitor might have heard about the propositions of OSR and remembered or recorded the website address and took the time to visit the site. In this case the visitor has somehow been persuaded to visit the site and might be open to receiving information or a compelling proposition

Traffic coming from *search engines* is inherently different from direct traffic in the sense that this type of visitor is generally *actively and specifically* looking for a special interest, instead of specific provider (though later I will show there are some slight differences to this). This interest can be a certain product or service, information, a certain concept, a computer file, a location or destination (or how to get there), anything can be searched for. In case of OSR, this means that a visitor entered a keyword *relative* to the business of OSR into a search engine, found OSR in the search results and deemed the presentation of OSR in those search results compelling enough to click on the result. The strength of search engines is that its

users are actively searching for something. They are willing to spend time and energy to find what they are looking for. By offering what they are looking for, providers can attract visitors and if those visitors are looking for a product or service, they can become customers. Being there for those who are searching is a form of pull marketing (Deelstra, 2008a). This is a huge difference in comparison to other types of marketing with which advertisers simply ‘push’ their message to their target groups.





Site Usage		Goal Conversion		Views:    		
Visits 2,048 % of Site Total: 40.37%	Pages/Visit 4.79 Site Avg: 4.53 (5.66%)	Avg. Time on Site 00:03:06 Site Avg: 00:03:02 (2.28%)	% New Visits 45.51% Site Avg: 43.39% (4.89%)	Bounce Rate 37.06% Site Avg: 38.42% (-3.54%)		
Dimension: Keyword ▼		Visits ↓	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
1.	osr	757	6.00	00:03:38	29.59%	21.27%
2.	osr juridische opleidingen	122	6.16	00:04:18	38.52%	15.57%
3.	www.osr.nl	53	4.57	00:04:32	15.09%	24.53%
4.	osr utrecht	48	7.08	00:06:24	47.92%	12.50%
5.	osr opleidingen	38	5.11	00:02:37	23.68%	18.42%

Figure 2 – Top 5 Keywords OSR.nl search engine traffic, April 6th – May 6th 2009

However, when we look at the 5 most used keywords with which the website of OSR is found, we see something remarkable. All 5 keywords are directly related to the name, or business, or location of OSR. So anyone who has entered one of these words in a search engine to find OSR with already knows the company and/or its services. Of the 2048 visitors who visited through a search engine, 48 even know that OSR is located in Utrecht. Basically these visitors are the same as the type of visitors found in *direct* traffic. They know or have somehow heard of OSR and are directly searching for OSR, with the only difference being their method of entering the website. From these figures it can be concluded that a large majority of website visitors is already somehow familiar with OSR and its propositions.

This justifies efforts being made in attracting new visitors who are not yet familiar with OSR but *are* interested in the type of services OSR is offering.

3. Theoretical Framework - The how and why of Search Engine Marketing and Affiliate Marketing

In this chapter I will demonstrate why Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is a powerful set of tools to increase *relevant* traffic to a website. There is distinction here between Search Engine Optimisation and Search Engine Advertising and figures will show how both can contribute to the online strategy. In the Theoretical Framework I will demonstrate in depth how both parts of SEM can add to the online visibility of OSR. To conclude the framework I will explain Affiliate Marketing.

3.1 Search Engines?

Simply stated, an Internet search engine (often just called search engine) is a software program that indexes web pages and allows this index to be searched. Of course there is much more (technically) to a search engine but the basic premise is that it allows people to search for a topic of their interest, displaying relevant results instantly.

In the Netherlands, in December 2008, of Dutch Internet users 99% knows Google and 97% have used its search engine at least occasionally. Google is by far the most used search engine with 95% (CheckIT, 2008). It is the opinion of the author that such a well-known and frequently used medium needs to play an important role in an online commercial strategy. As explained before, people using a search engine are actively and specifically looking for something of their interest. Therefore if a company is able to provide the right information to cater to this need, right at the moment that the person is searching (when he is making an effort to find that what he is looking for), they are able to meet the need of the searcher and make a meaningful and relevant proposition. Search engines provide the circumstances for ‘searchers’ and ‘providers’ of content to *meet* each other.

Search engines allow searchers to have results of their search query presented to them practically instantly, which greatly enhances the user experience. Another vital aspect for search engines is *relevance*. If someone is searching for *coffee* and only sees search results about *tea*, the results are not relevant to what the searcher wants. Presenting the most relevant results to the user is what makes or breaks a search engine. Google has become the dominant search engine worldwide because it presents highly relevant results to its users and does so very fast. Not long after Google launched its search engine it offered the easiest to use interface and the most relevant results for users. It outperformed its competitors and has gained momentum ever since.

3.2 Search Engine Marketing

“Obtaining sufficient returns on the investment in a website is only possible by being found on the Internet. (Jansen, 2008a)”

As a search engine provides highly relevant results to a person who is actively and specifically looking for something that is of special interest to him, it is not difficult to see how search engines are an appealing medium to businesses. After all, the searcher, a potential customer, knows what he wants (or at least has an idea of what he is looking for), is willing to invest time and effort into finding what he wants, and if he is looking for a product or service he quite possibly is willing to make a purchase or at least find a party that appeals enough to his needs to make contact with that party.

For companies to be able to do business with people using search engines it is imperative to be found through those search engines by means of *keywords* that are relevant to their business. A company selling espresso machines definitely wants to appear in the search results when someone entered *new espresso machine* into Google’s search engine. However, as there are many companies selling espresso

machines that all want to be found on the keyword *new espresso machine*, efforts can be made by companies to be more prominently displayed in the search results than their competitors. These efforts are called Search Engine Marketing (SEM). SEM is the combined process of optimisation and advertising for search engines. While advertising is a method with which an advertiser pays money to a search engine to display his advertisements, optimisation is an effort to achieve not-paid-for search results. However, optimisation is, as is advertising, a specialised activity and is certainly not free. Optimising a website, so that it will be displayed in the search engine results when someone searches using a relevant keyword, is often a difficult and time-consuming task (Deelstra, 2008b). Search engine optimisation and search engine advertising, though complementary, are treated separately in this dissertation. Search Engine Marketing can be divided into two distinct categories:

- Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)
- Search Engine Advertising (SEA)

Because the target group of OSR can be seen as a niche market, search engine marketing is quite suitable for OSR to deploy. “A *niche* is a more narrowly defined group, usually identified by dividing a segment into sub segments or by defining a group with a distinctive set of traits who may seek a special combination of benefits” (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, Principles of Marketing, 2005b p. 393). This definition is quite applicable to the target groups of OSR. Compared to, for example, the total amount of businesses in the Netherlands, there are not that many people working as a lawyer or solicitor and because these people are so highly educated, they form a niche. When the needs of this group are known, targeted SEM activities can be deployed to attempt to attract this group.

3.3 Search Engine Optimisation

SEO is the process of making a website as easy to find as possible in the unpaid search engine results for a specific target group (Deelstra, 2008b). To clarify what the unpaid search engine results are, see figure 3 below.

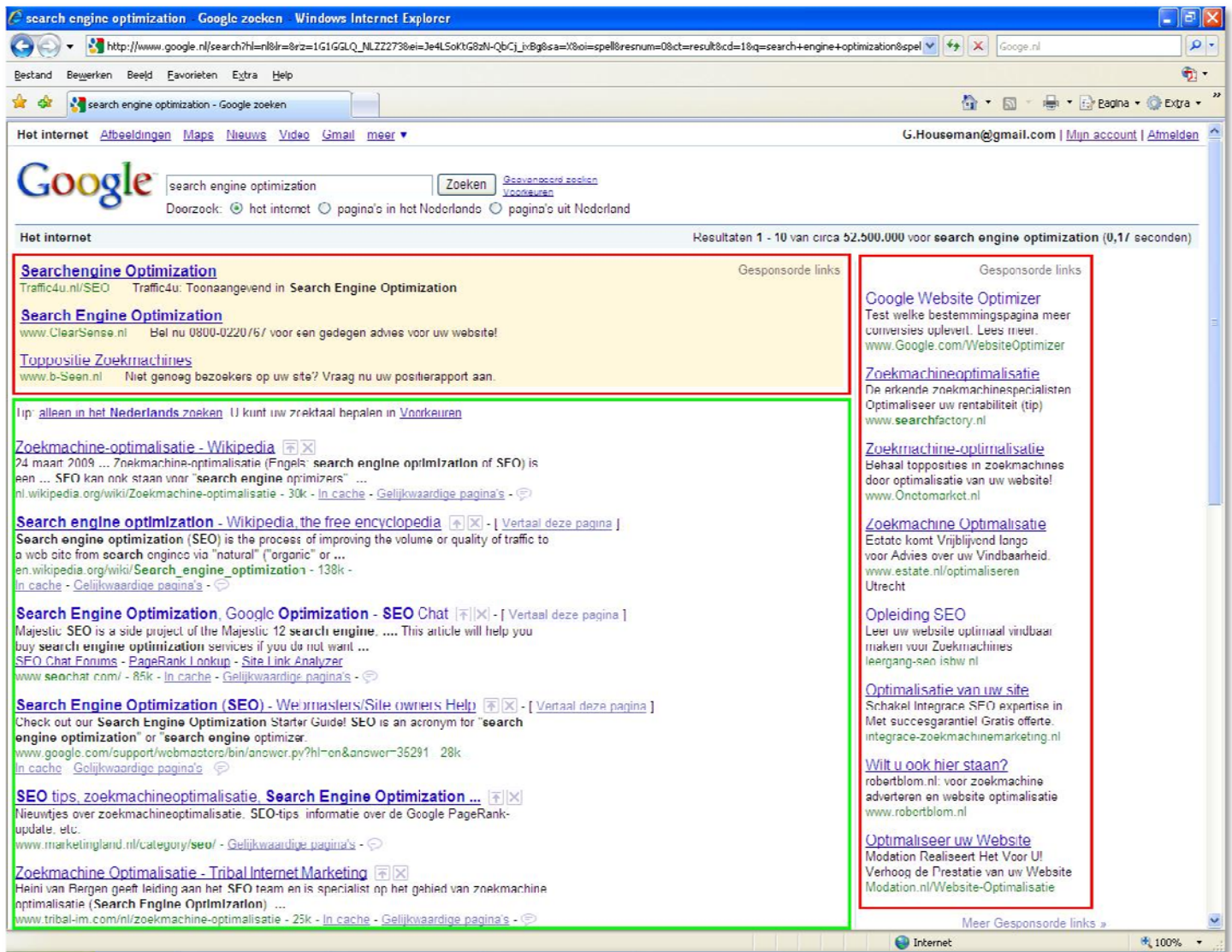


Figure 3 - Search engine results on Google. Paid and unpaid

In this example the keyword entered into Google's search engine is *search engine optimization*. In 0.17 seconds I am presented with the relevant results for this keyword. The results in the **red rectangles** are sponsored links. Companies advertise

there, thus they pay Google to display their advertisements. This is further explained in chapter 3.4 about Search Engine Advertising on page 41.

The results displayed in the **green rectangle** are *natural* or *organic* results. These results are displayed there because according to Google these are the websites that are most relevant to the entered keyword. It is called *natural* or *organic* because these results are generated by the software of Google, which is specifically designed to display the information that they think a person would naturally be looking for (i.e. finds most relevant to his search query). The displayed results are the first 10 results of, in this case, around 52 million, meaning there are many more resources about this topic. However, because most users of search engines do not look further than the first few pages or even only the first, it is important to be mentioned on this first results page (Jansen, 2008b p.26).

3.3.1 Rules for Search Engine Optimisation

The algorithm Google uses to determine whether a website is relevant to a keyword is called PageRank (Google, 2009b). How the PageRank system works exactly is kept secret by Google, however, there are several criteria that are communicated clearly by Google to which websites should adhere to positively influence their ‘ranking’ in the search results. Google is very keen on delivering an excellent user experience and therefore they have stated rules for webmasters (Google, 2009c)(see Appendix A, page 105 for a full list) with which Google believes the best possible experience is delivered. Although Google is very strict regarding activities that possibly impact their users’ experience, there are quite a few possibilities for website owners to optimise the structure and content of their website in adherence to the mentioned regulations. In essence, SEO means applying optimisation methods to optimally comply with Google’s regulations in order to score as high as possible in the results of a search query on a relevant keyword. It is important to note that Google can change, and has changed before, the rules and algorithms it works with.

Search engines interpret sites differently, resulting in different search results. If one would search for *coffee* in Google he would see different results than a search in Yahoo. These differences exist because engines use different algorithms. Google created its algorithm with the user experience in mind. Google does its best to make its search algorithm give the best results possible, namely exactly what the user is searching for. Of course Google can only provide results based on the entered keyword and sometimes the user does not even exactly know what he is searching for. Whatever the intentions of the searcher are, Google tries to provide results that are as relevant to the entered keyword as possible. The user can narrow his search by using more than one keyword. *“This narrowing of search queries by using more keywords is a development that has become more of a trend lately.”* (Tjeenk Willink, 2009)

The most important concept that search engines are all about is *relevance*. Without the search results being relevant no one would use them. Search engine optimisation is a process that is intended for websites to be present in the top search results. Because a website is *only* displayed when it is relevant enough to the search query, SEO is a process that is all about relevance as well. Google measures relevance in a number of different ways. Deelstra (Deelstra, 2008c p.56) mentions a three way division based on Shari Thurow’s *Search Engine Visibility* (Thurow, 2007):

- Text component
- Link component
- Popularity component

The text component determines mostly whether or not a website is relevant to a search query. After all, the text contains (key) words that search engines try to index. The link component determines how well the website can be indexed and the popularity component measures how ‘important’ the website is regarded (based on the amount of links towards the website).

3.3.1.1 Text Component

The text component is the main component that is used by search engines to determine how relevant a website is to a search query. An important aspect of this component is that all text which is visible on a webpage is read by search engines and therefore should be used to optimise for search results. Visual textual aspects such as titles, URLs (Uniform Resource Locator), body texts, links, textual descriptions of images, et cetera are all important. These parts are used by search engines to index a website and are also displayed in the search results as links.

For example, the title of a website has become hugely important because it is displayed in search results and should persuade the user to click on that specific link. It should describe as concisely and effectively as possible what the site is about. The same applies to the URL or the address of the website, which tells the user something about where he will be taken when he clicks on the link. For example, the URL: <http://www.example.com/viewcatalog.asp?category=hats&prodID=53> tells the user absolutely nothing (at least it does not to the untrained eye) about where on the example.com website he will be taken once he clicks the link. It would be much better to name the URL something like: <http://www.example.com/catalog/hats/53/> (Shannon, 2009). This URL tells the user several things. First of all, you can immediately see that the link takes you to a catalogue. Secondly, it is clear that the link takes us to a section which is about hats. Finally, the more experienced Internet user will probably understand that the number 53 corresponds with the item number. Though this last fact is not very important, it is preferable that the user is able to accurately guess at least what he can expect. If the user is able to do this, he will be much more inclined to click on the link than if he is not able to discern any information from the URL. Handling URLs like this helps people to quickly judge a link as to its relevance to their search and to trust the website and its content. Another advantage of this method is that it also helps search engines to better understand the website and the content on it. Just like this URL structure helps the user in learning

what the site is about, it also helps the search engine to learn what the site is about and how it is structured.

Structural lay-out

Another important aspect about a webpage regarding how well it will be indexed by search engines is its structural lay-out. Titles, subtitles, body text, links, anchor text links, and any other textual content are measured and indexed. The algorithms of search engines value these different textual parts differently. For example, a title is used to draw attention so it is more important than body text. A search engine ‘looks’ more closely on these prominent parts and uses them to measure how relevant the website is to a search query. The following figure is a screenshot (Figure 3) of www.osr.nl with an explanation of some of the textual elements used on this website. These are the elements that search engines use to draw information from about the website and to measure its relevance to a certain search query.

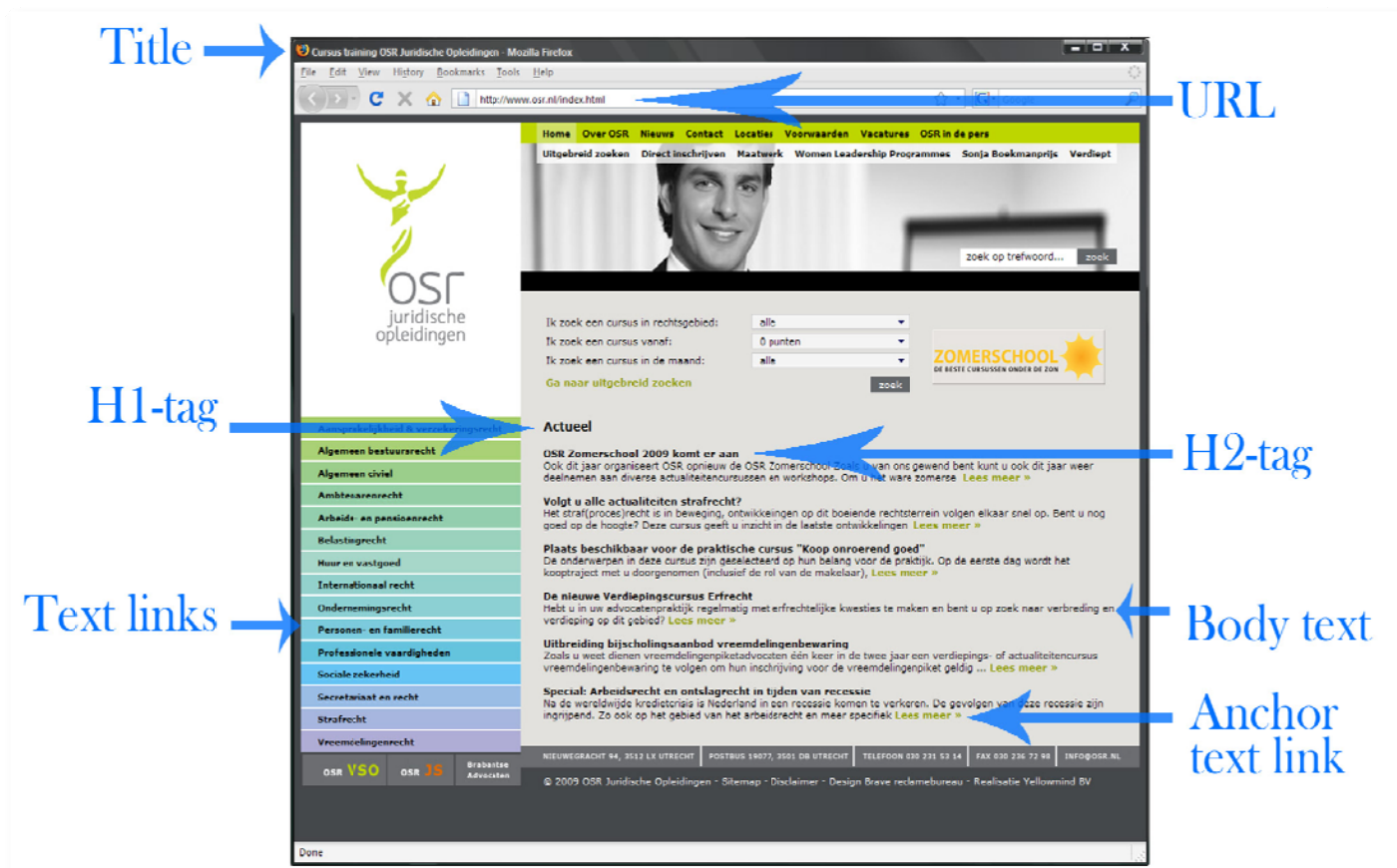


Figure 3 – Text parts on www.OSR.nl

The text which is called Title here can be seen as the name of the website. This title is displayed on the search engine results page (SERP) to notify a user of which website he is looking at. The URL obviously displays the address of the website and can give an idea about where the user is currently located on the website. The H1 and H2 tags are technical terms for titles used on a page. H1 dominates H2, meaning that H1 is used to display larger font sizes than H2, and so is more important. With H1 and H2 tags a clear structure can be made in the text, making it easier to scan and read and also for search engines to interpret. The anchor text link is a piece of text which links to another webpage and is displayed as normal text. Usually, the anchor text already describes the content or purpose of the webpage it links to. For example in figure 3 the anchor text **Lees meer** (Read more) links to a webpage with more elaborate content about the topic mentioned. Anchor text links are placed within the body text of a page. Normal text links as displayed in figure 3 link to their respective, topical

web pages. In this example all text links link to different areas of law for which OSR provides courses.

Writing for web

Another important aspect when considering texts is that they should be written specifically for the target groups *and* in a style suitable for web users. Writing a text for a target group goes further than simply writing about a certain topic that is probably of interest to a target group. It is important to keep the texts concise, easy to scan, and they should be written using words that can be used as keywords in search engines. Online visitors judge a website in less than a second on average so when creating copy for a website it is important to offer enough visual and textual content that is interesting enough for the visitor to stay interested. It is also important to use synonyms of important keyword because not every user searches using the same keywords and so different users will still find the content relevant.

There are many software tools available which can help to find suitable keywords and synonyms for a website. Such tools can scan a website and suggest keywords or a certain keyword can be entered and the tool automatically suggests related words. An example of such a tool is Google's Keyword tool in Figure 4 on page 31 (Google Adwords, 2009a). This tool provides alternative keywords based on the scanned website. Implementing some of these keywords can help boost finding the right results in search engines. This tool is part of Google's Adwords (SEA) programme but because it conveniently comes up with keyword suggestions, it can also be used for SEO purposes.

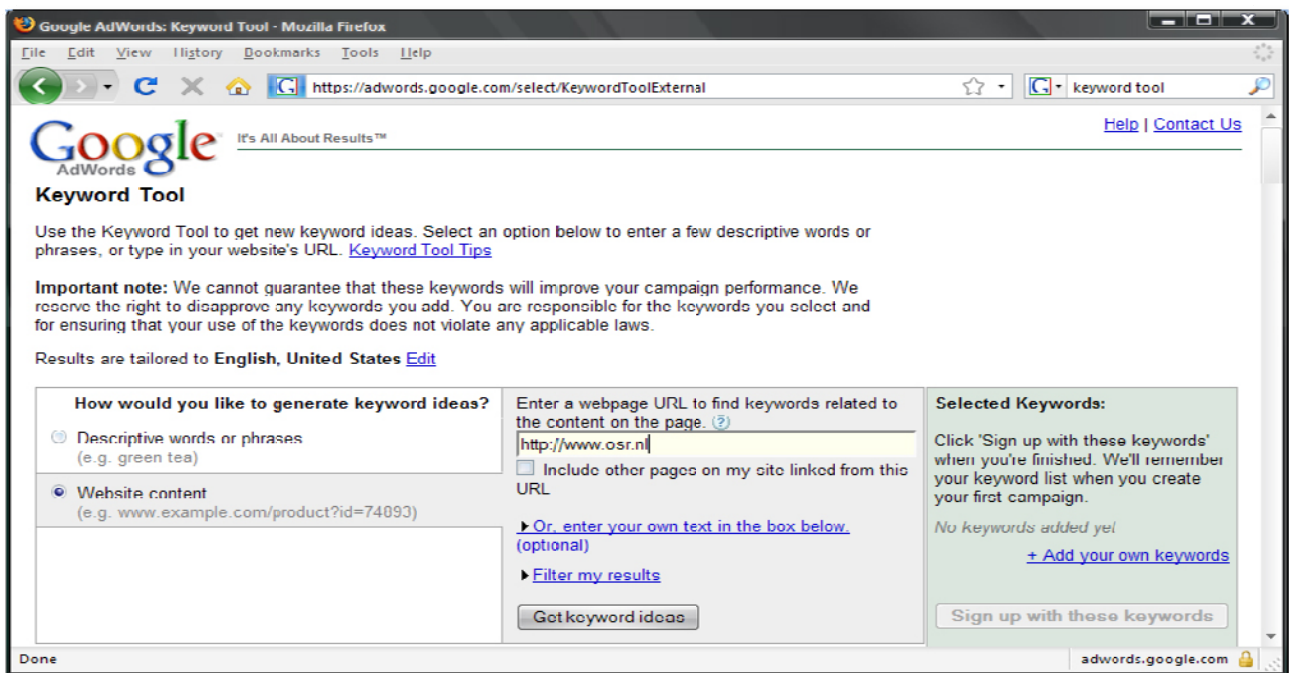


Figure 4 – Google’s Keyword tool – Analysis of www.osr.nl

Zoekwoorden	Concurrentie van adverteerders	Lokaal zoekvolume: april	We
Relevante zoekwoorden voor advocaat - gesorteerd op relevantie			
advocaten		246.000	
advocaat alimentatie		720	
advocaat van onvermogen		1.300	
faillissement advocaat		140	
gratis advocaat		1.300	
no cure no pay advocaten		260	
bestuursrecht advocaten		140	
no cure no pay advocaat		590	
pro deo advocaten		590	
advocaat familierecht		2.400	
advocaten familierecht		1.000	

Figure 5 – Google’s Keyword tool – suggested keywords based on www.osr.nl

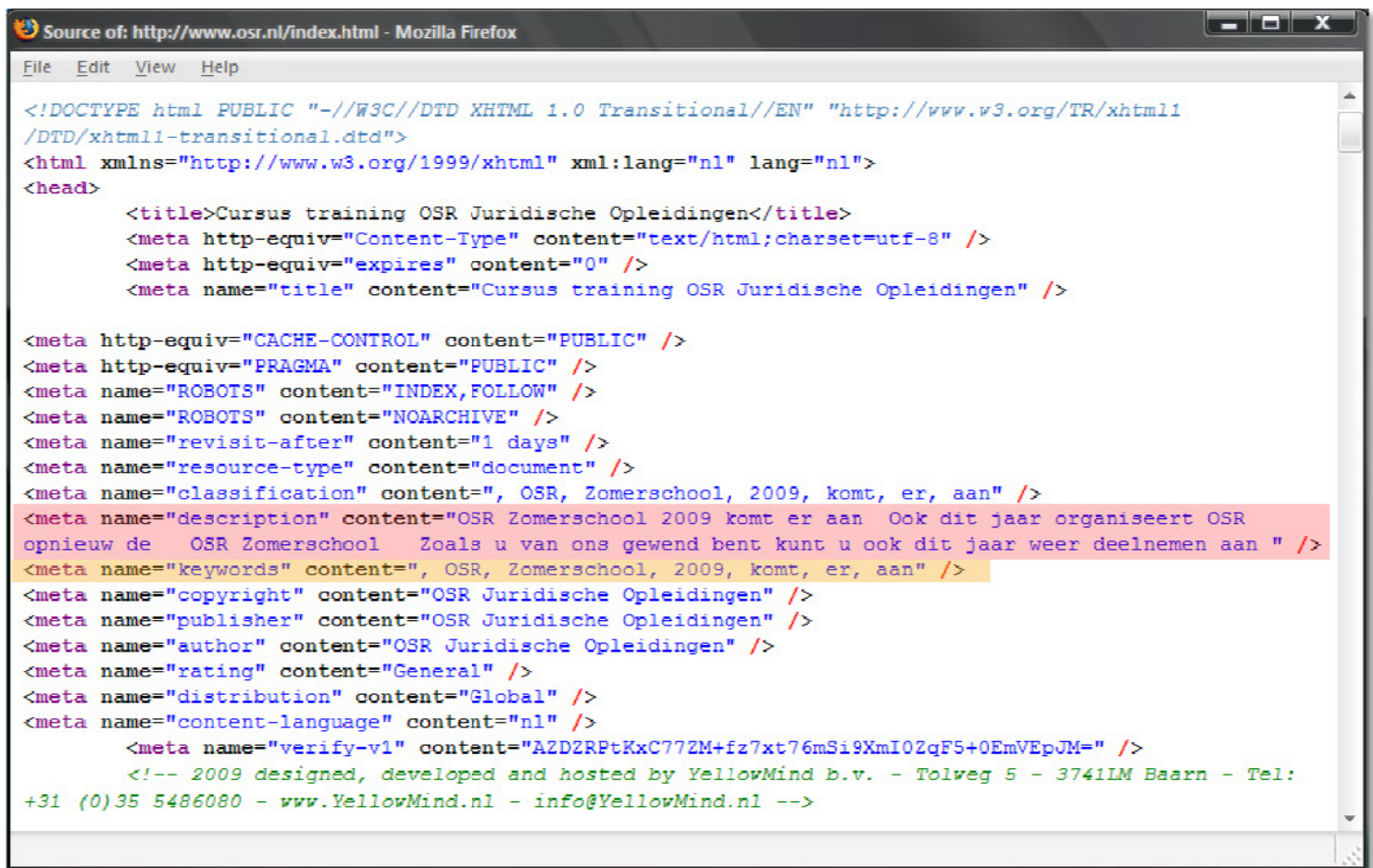
Meta Data

Meta data are data that describes other data. “It provides information about a certain item’s content” (Techterms.com). The meta data of a website do exactly the same as the definition, it describes the website’s content. It tells what the website is about, in

(semi) technical terms. Websites also have so called meta tags. These are basically keywords that also describe the contents of the website. Next to the meta tags, websites also have a meta description which is the actual description of the website. These meta data are invisible for the Internet user because they are defined in the code of the website. However, search engines are able to access this information and process it.

Experts argue about the importance of the meta data of a website regarding search engines. Deelstra argues that because the meta data are not visible for the user, it has lost its importance regarding search engine optimisation (Deelstra, 2008d p.104). His main point here is that search engines stopped assigning much value to the meta data of a website because this data is invisible for the user and therefore it should also not be used in determining the relevance of the site. After all, the user judges a website only on the parts that he can see. Because search engines generally try to provide the best user experience as possible, they argue that only the visible data must be used. Alan Linnenbank, a SEO expert of Yellowmind argued during a meeting with OSR I attended, however, that these meta data are indeed important to optimise for every webpage in a website. (Linnenbank, 2009).

Another argument heard against the use of meta data by search engines is that webmasters 'abused' the fact that meta data are invisible for the user by entering a huge amount of keywords as meta tags or by using keywords that did not accurately describe the content of the website, just to rank it higher in the search engine results. However, at least Google's algorithm has been refined and now quickly discovers such abuse and actually punishes websites that have such practices and ranks them much lower.



```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1
/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" xml:lang="nl" lang="nl">
<head>
  <title>Cursus training OSR Juridische Opleidingen</title>
  <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8" />
  <meta http-equiv="expires" content="0" />
  <meta name="title" content="Cursus training OSR Juridische Opleidingen" />

  <meta http-equiv="CACHE-CONTROL" content="PUBLIC" />
  <meta http-equiv="PRAGMA" content="PUBLIC" />
  <meta name="ROBOTS" content="INDEX,FOLLOW" />
  <meta name="ROBOTS" content="NOARCHIVE" />
  <meta name="revisit-after" content="1 days" />
  <meta name="resource-type" content="document" />
  <meta name="classification" content=", OSR, Zomerschool, 2009, komt, er, aan" />
  <meta name="description" content="OSR Zomerschool 2009 komt er aan Ook dit jaar organiseert OSR
opnieuw de OSR Zomerschool Zoals u van ons gewend bent kunt u ook dit jaar weer deelnemen aan " />
  <meta name="keywords" content=", OSR, Zomerschool, 2009, komt, er, aan" />
  <meta name="copyright" content="OSR Juridische Opleidingen" />
  <meta name="publisher" content="OSR Juridische Opleidingen" />
  <meta name="author" content="OSR Juridische Opleidingen" />
  <meta name="rating" content="General" />
  <meta name="distribution" content="Global" />
  <meta name="content-language" content="nl" />
  <meta name="verify-v1" content="AZD2RptKxC772M+fz7xt76mSi9XmI02qF5+0EmVEpJM=" />
  <!-- 2009 designed, developed and hosted by YellowMind b.v. - Tolweg 5 - 3741LM Baarn - Tel:
+31 (0)35 5486080 - www.YellowMind.nl - info@YellowMind.nl -->
```

Figure 6 – Meta Data from www.osr.nl

With every web browser it is possible to retrieve the source code of a website. This code is generally only interesting for web developers but this code also displays the meta data of a website. In figure 6 we can see the meta description marked in the red area. This code gives the description of the website which can then be displayed in the search engine results page after a search query. The meta tags or keywords that are defined are in the orange area (see above).

3.3.1.2 Link Component (indexation component)

The link component is about the technical aspects of a website. This dissertation is not about web design or programming and therefore this technical part will be discussed in depth only in areas relevant to this dissertation.

The link component determines how well a website can be indexed by a search engine. Special software programs called *spiders* or *crawlers* are designed to index webpage after webpage. This is, of course, done totally automatically. Crawlers try to follow the navigational structure of a website to be able to clearly index the website and its content. As for human users, a clear navigational structure is also very important for these crawlers. This clear structure is also important for the popularity component which is further elaborated on in paragraph 3.3.1.3 on page 35.

There are many different programming languages with which websites are built. Plain HTML (Hyper Text Mark-up Language) is what can be *crawled* best by search engines. However, because HTML is quite limited in its possibilities, newer languages are used, like JavaScript. Search engines have a lot of trouble properly indexing links that are programmed in JavaScript and this can have the effect that a website which is perfectly optimised for the text component is still not found in search engines.

Another possible problem for crawlers is a dynamically generated URL. In this case a web address (URL) is created automatically by a content management system (CMS) as soon as a user follows a certain link. This web address is only valid temporarily and when the user leaves the site the web address disappears over time. For a human being browsing the website this is usually not a problem but search engine crawlers have quite some difficulties with this method because:

1. It forces crawlers to index the same content every time they visit the website
2. It might corrupt the search results (because the page might no longer exist)
3. Some crawlers cannot handle dynamically generated URLs at all.

A website can be designed using all the modern programming tools and languages and still be very well found in search engines. The web designer who is responsible for the technical implementation should be able to know how to apply the different tools. In the case of OSR, this is the web design bureau Yellowmind.

3.3.1.3 Popularity Component

The popularity component is the last component of search engine optimisation. This component is about measuring the popularity of a website. The popularity of a website is important because it determines whether a search engine finds a website to be more or less important to a search query. For example, if there are two websites which are exactly evenly relevant to a search query (text component) and evenly easily indexed (link component) the website which is most popular will be shown higher in the search engine results page than the other. Popularity is measured by:

- Number of links to your website
- The popularity of the websites that link to your website.

This means that if a website which is very popular, let's say www.microsoft.com, links to your website (and you are in IT as well) this link is much more valuable than when an unknown website links to your website.

Search engines assign more importance to a website with a lot of incoming links because apparently a lot of people think that the content on that website is worth linking to. When such a website in turn links to another website, that link is more valuable because of the apparent authority or popularity of that website. As explained in the previous paragraph 3.3.1.2 it is important that incoming and outgoing links are able to be indexed by search engines. If an outgoing link from a popular website is somehow unable to get indexed the receiving website will not benefit from it at all. Search engines have also developed algorithms that measure the relevance of a link to another website. A link from Microsoft.com to a website about gardening for

example is not really relevant, even though Microsoft's website is very popular. This method measuring relevance is called Topic-Sensitive PageRank. This shows that for any website it is important to be clear about its content and topic. Links from a popular website in the same category are more relevant than links from a site in another category. Google has not made public how these categories are measured so it is difficult for companies to judge whether they are doing well or not.

3.3.1.4 Influencing the popularity component (Link Building)

Obviously it is preferable for a commercial organisation to be 'popular'. There are several methods with which link popularity can be positively influenced. An important one has already been mentioned with submitting the website to Dmoz but there are others as well. The overall term for this activity is *link building*. The purpose of link building is of course to attract more valuable traffic to your website that generates more sales. The means to achieve more sales are all the (new) links that improve the position on the search engine results page with relevant keywords.

Directories

Submitting the website to the right categories on directory websites (a website collecting and structuring links) can help link popularity. The most well-known directory is www.Dmoz.org. It is the largest directory and also one of the most strictly moderated. Submitting a website to the right category on this website can definitely help the popularity of a website. It is said that all the big search engines use this directory to help them determine link popularity but this has never been confirmed. Link building can be done by simply contacting directories and websites that are related to your website and ask them to link to your website. This *cold approach* however is time consuming and probably less effective than approaching organisations that are already somehow linked to the business in question.

Partners

Approaching parties that are already known to the organisation such as suppliers, partners, unions, customers, et cetera, to have them link to the website of OSR is easier than the cold approach and the response is probably also higher.

Press releases

Publishing press releases online will also help link popularity. Not only are press releases spread easily, they should also contain a link to the organisation's website. There are many press release services to be found online, where companies can publish their releases and which keep the press releases accessible on their website. This way, the press release of the organisation will be indexed, including the URL and the keywords which were incorporated in the document.

White papers

Providing white papers about topics close to the organisation's core business is also a way of gaining link popularity. If the white paper is professional, topical, and of high quality, chances are that others will start linking to the document. Of course it is also possible to include a link to your website in the white paper which the reader can simply click. So when the white paper is spread in any way it still can bring more people to the website.

Link exchange

There are many websites that provide information about a certain topic and collect links about that topic to provide their visitors with more information. A website about web design might present links to web design software, tutorials, well-known web designers, resources, et cetera. This principle can form an opportunity for any link-building company. Efforts can be made also to find websites which link to competitors. Such a website might be interested in linking to our organisation as well.

“Linkbuilding 2.0”

More modern forms of link building are activities as writing blogs in which links to relevant content (on our website) are incorporated. These links, presented as anchor text, are more valuable because they are added to a relevant text and linking to a relevant website.

With the introduction of the website www.Twitter.com, the term ‘Micro blogging’ has become well-known. This form of blogging has quickly become very popular and when used in the right way it can definitely help the link building process. On Twitter, users can post messages of only 140 characters in which they write about what they are doing. Users can follow each other’s status updates and stay up-to-date about what’s happening. In these messages people can also post links to websites, videos, blogs, pictures, or any other online media. It allows them to quickly share thoughts, opinions, et cetera but also possibly interesting professional resources such as a good white paper someone found on Online Marketing that is posted on Twitter so others can read it as well.

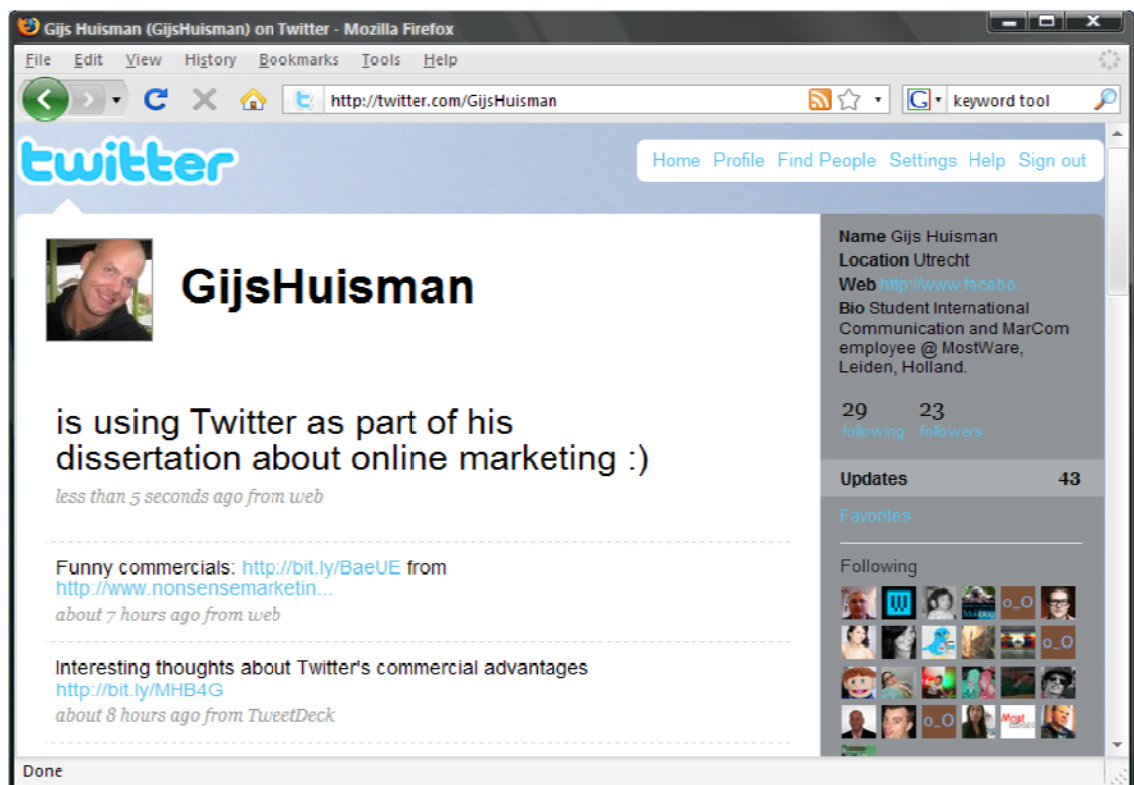


Figure 7 – My personal Twitter page

Social networks

Next to Mirco blogging there are of course many online social networks such as Facebook (www.facebook.com), MySpace (www.myspace.com), Hyves (www.hyves.nl, mostly popular in The Netherlands), the more professionally oriented LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com), and many, many more. On all these networks users can share all kinds of information, including links.

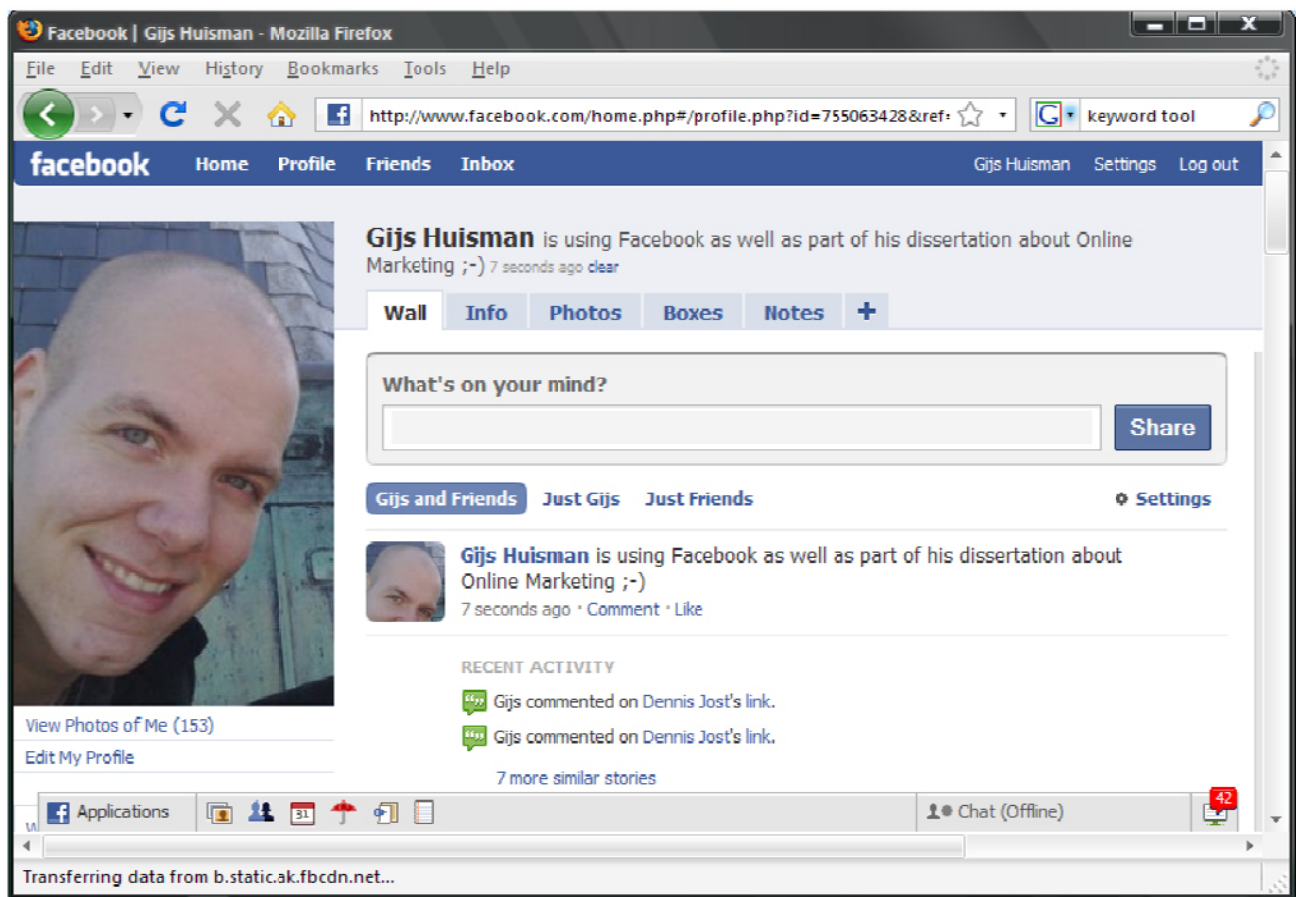


Figure 8 – My facebook profile. Facebook is probably the largest social network in the world.

Popularity

It would be beneficial for the popularity of our website to receive a link from a website which is more popular than ours. However since does not help the popularity of that website, its owner may not want to exchange links with our site. It is preferable to link to (and be linked back to by) sites of about the same popularity level.

Final notes about popularity

Finally, some other variables that search engines take into account to determine where on the results page our website will be mentioned:

- How often users click on the website's link in the search results
- How long users stay on the website
- How often return to the website from the search results page

Some search engines use the click-through-ratio to help determine whether a website should be listed higher in the results page. If a website receives more clicks than should be expected regarding its position in the results it moves up on that results page because obviously users find it more relevant. If a website receives more clicks than a website that scores higher in the results page, eventually it will surpass that website because it is more popular. This clearly shows why only a fully optimised text and link component is not all there is to SEO.

3.4 Search Engine Advertising

Next to Search Engine Optimisation, discussed in chapter 3.3, the other part of Search Engine Marketing is advertising in search engines. Google revolutionised online advertising with its advertising programmes. Google was the first company to recognise the value of displaying advertisements which are based on the search query of a user. Google realised that when someone enters a keyword into a search engine, that person is actively seeking information and willing to spend time on finding that information. They also realised that quite many people use search engines to find products or services that they need or want and that companies offering those products or services could be enabled to directly answer to that need through an advertising programme. In their turn, commercial companies quickly picked up on this development and saw what potential this model offered. Corporations recognised that many consumers were actually making an effort looking for their products and services. Google's advertising model allows companies to specify into great detail to which search queries they want to display their advertisement. The programme allows the advertiser to initiate a highly measurable form of (online) pull marketing (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005). Advertisers can exclude irrelevant but grammatically related keywords, target specific geographical areas, display advertisements only on a certain time and date, et cetera. Another hugely appealing benefit of this advertisement model is its in-depth measurability. Advertisers can determine exactly how much money they are willing to spend on a single click and they can specify this per keyword, group of keywords, or a whole account. Advertisers can specify budget limits, so they know exactly how much money they are going to spend. Also, the model allows for in-depth analyses of how successful the advertising campaign has been. For example it is possible to measure exactly how many people have clicked on the advertisements, how many have purchased a product through the advertisements, how the visitor browsed through the website, et cetera.

3.4.1 Advertising using Google Adwords

In this dissertation only the Google Adwords advertising model will be elaborated on. Google is by far the biggest search engine in the world with the most used advertising programme. Competing search engines like Yahoo! or MSN only cover a very small part of the search engine market (CheckIT, 2008). Alternatives however will be mentioned at the end of this chapter.

Google's Adwords programme allows advertisers to display their self-written (text) advertisements next to search engine results (see figure 3 on page 24).

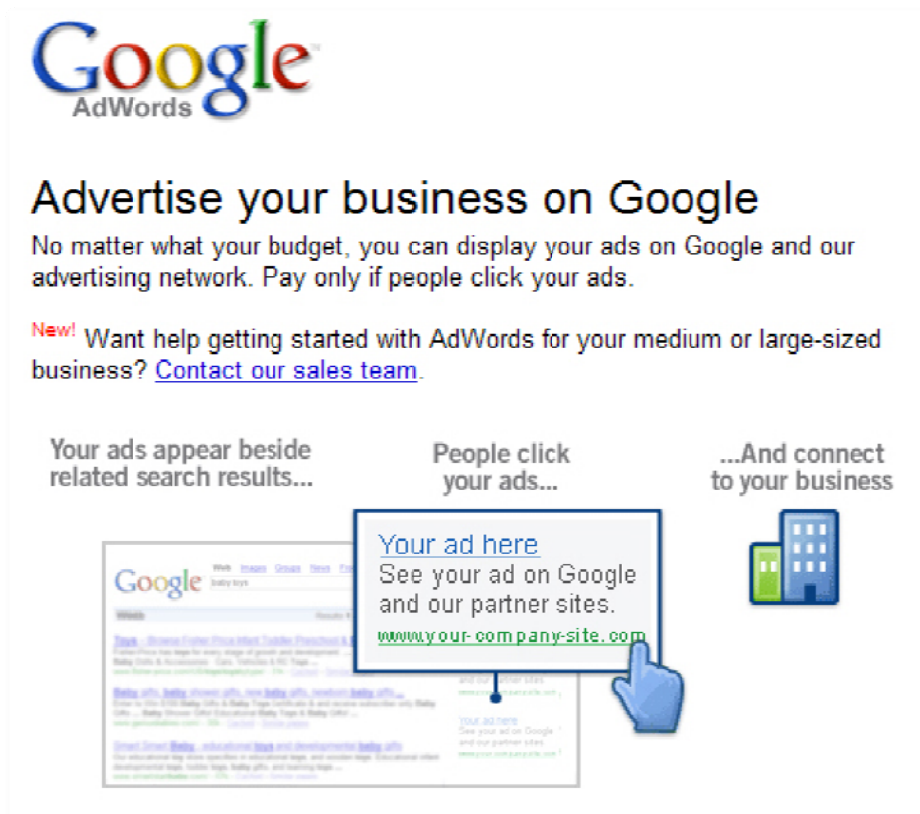


Figure 9 – Google Adwords' simplified model

3.4.2 Outlines

In simple terms Adwords works as figure 9 (p. 42) very briefly explains. An advertiser creates a text advertisement, links this to a list with keywords that he thinks is highly relevant to his advertisement, and finally determines to which website the users who click on his advertisement have to be sent. Of course the Adwords system is a bit more complex than that. Though I will provide detailed information about Google Adwords, in this dissertation I will not provide a detailed user guide to the Google Adwords advertising system. This chapter is about how advertising in search engines works and how Google Adwords can help doing this.

3.4.3 How Google Adwords works

Just like in the chapter about Search Engine Optimisation, the most important concept in SEA and in the Google Adwords programme is relevance. Google will not display an advertisement if it is not relevant to a search query. After all, this does not help the user, the advertiser, or Google itself.

Advertising using the Google Adwords programme allows advertisers to have their ads shown in two distinctively different areas. The first being the search engine results page which is already discussed thoroughly (also see figure 3 on page 24) and the second being the Adwords Content Network. This content network requires some elaboration. The content network consists of thousands of websites that have partnered up with Google and allow Google to display advertisements on their websites. Just like in the search engine these advertisements are purely text based and often look exactly the same as the ads in the search results (though partner sites are allowed to modify the colour of the advertisements to better suit the lay-out of their website. These advertisements are not displayed on the partner sites randomly. Google tries to display those advertisements which are the most relevant to the content of the web page on which they are displayed. See figures 10 on page 44 and 11 on page 45.



Figure 10 – Article on Times Online in the banking & financing section

Below the article on the Times Online website (figure 10) three advertisements are displayed through the Google Adwords content network (highlighted in orange). See Figure 11 on page 45 (both figures are taken from the same web page).

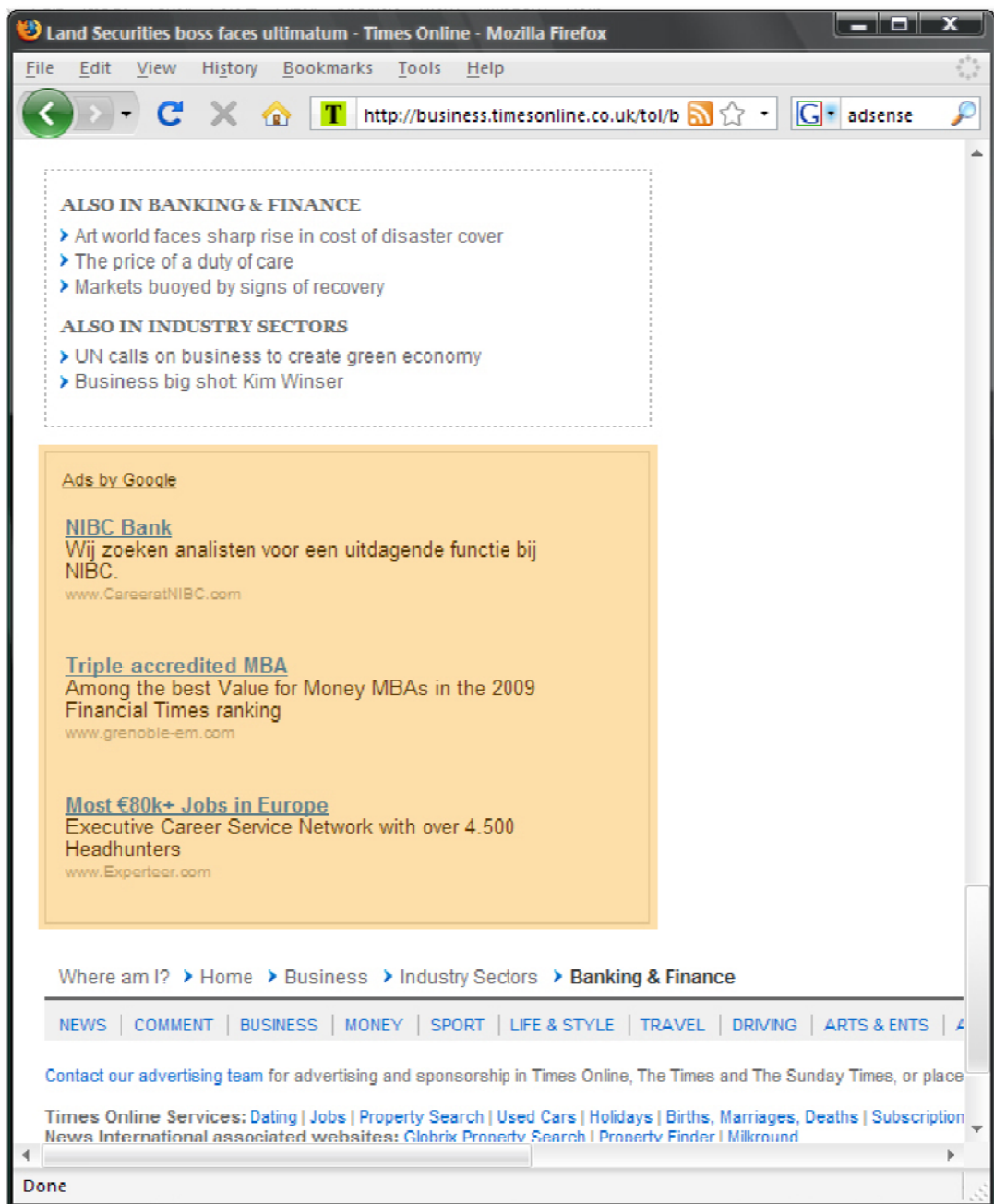


Figure 11 – Three advertisements through the Google Adwords content network

The companies advertising here hope that the reader of the article is part of their target group and may be interested in a new job or an MBA course. These advertisements of course are displayed here because this article is placed in the banking and financing section of the Times Online website. Because this article is about quite a specific subject (financing), it can be assumed that most people reading

such an article are somehow relevant to this section. After all, only someone interested in financial information would bother to read this article. Another place where we can find advertisements displayed through the content network is Google's free e-mail service Gmail. Anyone can use Gmail freely and unlimitedly but the user will have text ads displayed next to his messages. The advertisements are displayed there based on the contents of the message that the user is currently reading.

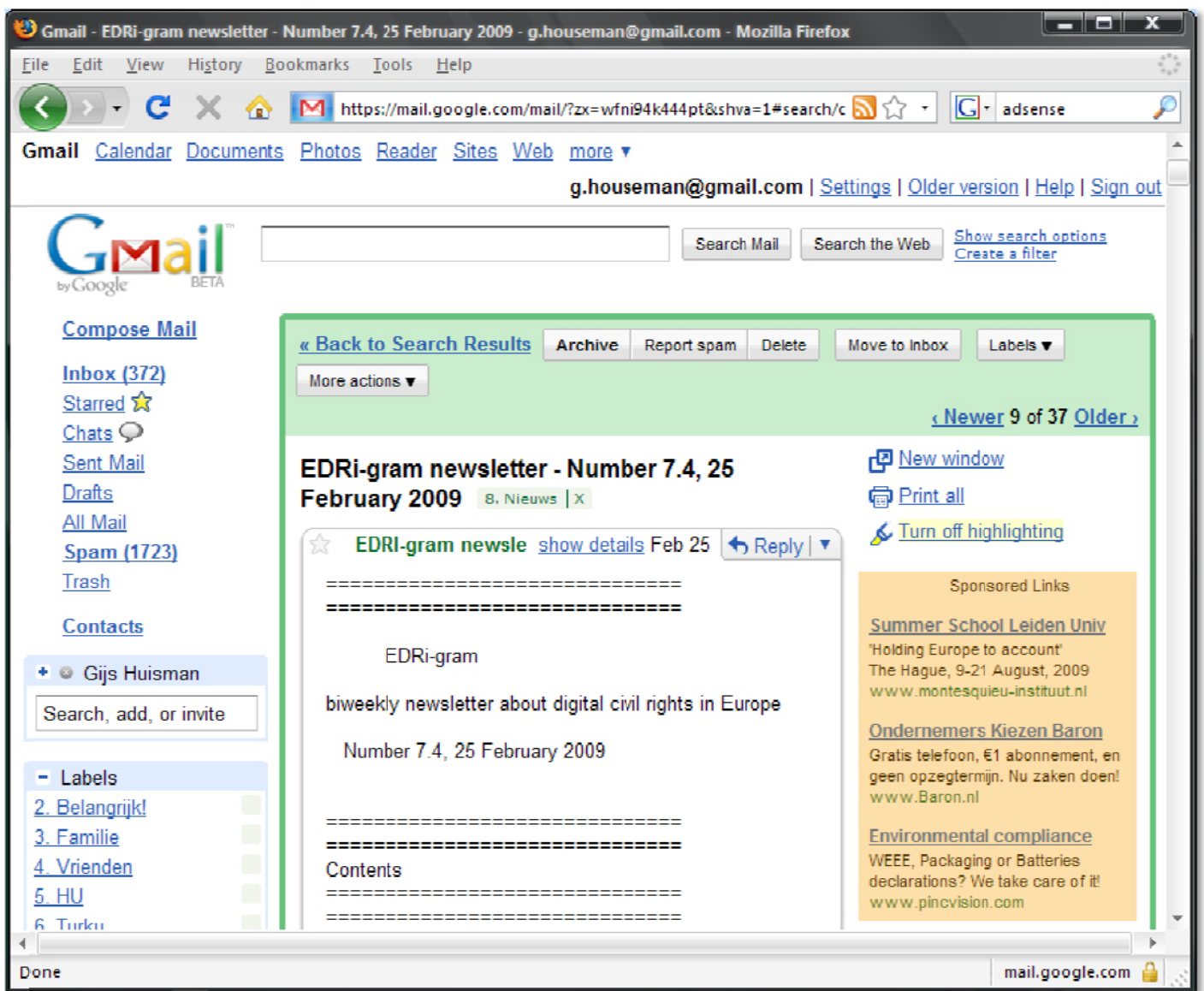







Figure 12 – Sponsored links displayed next to e-mail message

In the orange-highlighted area of Figure 12 on page 46 three advertisements are displayed which are based on the contents of a newsletter I received in February 2009.

3.4.3.1 There's a difference between search and the content network

Though people browsing the web are also looking for information, they are not as specifically searching for information as people using search engines are. This is why generally the cost per click (CPC) for advertisements displayed in the content network is lower than the CPC for the search network. This is compensated by the fact that advertisements in the content network are displayed much more often than those in the search network. After all, people spend most of their time browsing online, not searching using a search engine (every time someone opens a website which is part of the content network one or more ads are displayed).

Country	Unique Reach
 United States	76%
 Germany	89%
 Japan	86%
 France	79%
 United Kingdom	76%
Global	75%

Source: comScore Networks machine-based panel

Figure 13 – Reach of Google's content network (Google Content Network, 2009)

Figure 17 shows how Google itself believes it penetrated the online advertising market. They claim to reach 80% of global Internet users (Google Content Network, 2009). Compared with the CheckIT figures (CheckIT, 2008), although those only apply to the Netherlands, this claim does not appear to be unlikely.

3.4.3.2 Important concepts to Search Engine Advertising

Now that it is clear where the Google advertisements are displayed I will continue with the basic elements of the Google Adwords programme. There are some important concepts about advertising in search engines that are worth noting:

Pay Per Click (PPC): *A payment model for advertisers with which they pay for every click on their advertisement. Google Adwords provides this model.*

Pay Per Action (PPA): *A payment model for advertisers with which they pay for every action performed by a visitor. What this action exactly is is agreed upon by advertiser and advertising platform/network. This is used more often in Affiliate Marketing.*

Cost Per Click (CPC): *This metric shows the actual cost per click. This is what an advertiser actually pays to the advertising network (Adwords for example).*

Cost Per Mille (thousand) (CPM): *This metric shows the actual cost of displaying an advertisement a thousand times. Regardless of whether someone clicked on the ad, this is what an advertiser actually pays every time his ad is displayed a thousand times. This metric is common when advertising on websites. It can also be used in Google's content network.*

Click Through Rate (CTR): *This metric shows how many people clicked on an advertisement compared to the amount of times the ad is displayed. This metric is in percentages. It is a good indication of how well an advertisement is doing, although it does not say anything about the conversion rate.*

Conversion: A metric showing how many desired actions have taken place. A desired action is often a sale, a registration, a download, or another action that the advertiser is pursuing. In the end, it's all about conversion. After all, that's what the advertiser is advertising for. This metric is in absolute number.

Conversion Rate: This metric shows how many desired actions there are compared to the total amount of clicks. This is shown in a percentage. The higher this metric is the better.

Keyword bid: The maximum amount of money an advertiser is willing to for one click on a keyword.

3.4.3.3 Explaining an Adwords campaign

Before starting an advertising campaign in Adwords, it is important to define a clear objective for this campaign. What is it that we want to achieve with advertising on Google's search engine? Driving sales, generating leads, increasing the amount of downloaded material, or perhaps branding a new brand name, all different objectives require a different tactic towards setting up Adwords *and* towards setting up the website that is behind the Adwords campaign. It is very important to understand that Adwords only allows for getting people to a website. The desired action (i.e. selling a product) has to take place on the website itself. This means that if the Adwords campaign is working fine and driving traffic to a website which is very poorly made, the only thing that will happen is that visitors leave the website immediately after they have seen that the website is not what they expected it to be. This is a costly activity because of the PPC model; every click will be billed even though no sale is made. An important assumption I make here is that the website to which traffic has to be driven through an Adwords campaign is fully prepared for facilitating the desired action of its visitors.

Budget

Another important factor that has to be decided on is the budget available for advertising. Adwords allow an advertiser to specifically define a daily budget which cannot be exceeded. If the budget is reached the advertisements will simply no longer be displayed. The Adwords system is programmed in such a way that over a month's time, the daily budget is not exceeded. This leaves room for campaigns to exceed budget on a daily basis should there be a lot of people clicking on the advertisements. This way the advertiser can benefit from (temporary) high traffic. It would be a shame if the advertisements would no longer be displayed if there were still a lot of people that would possibly click on the ads.

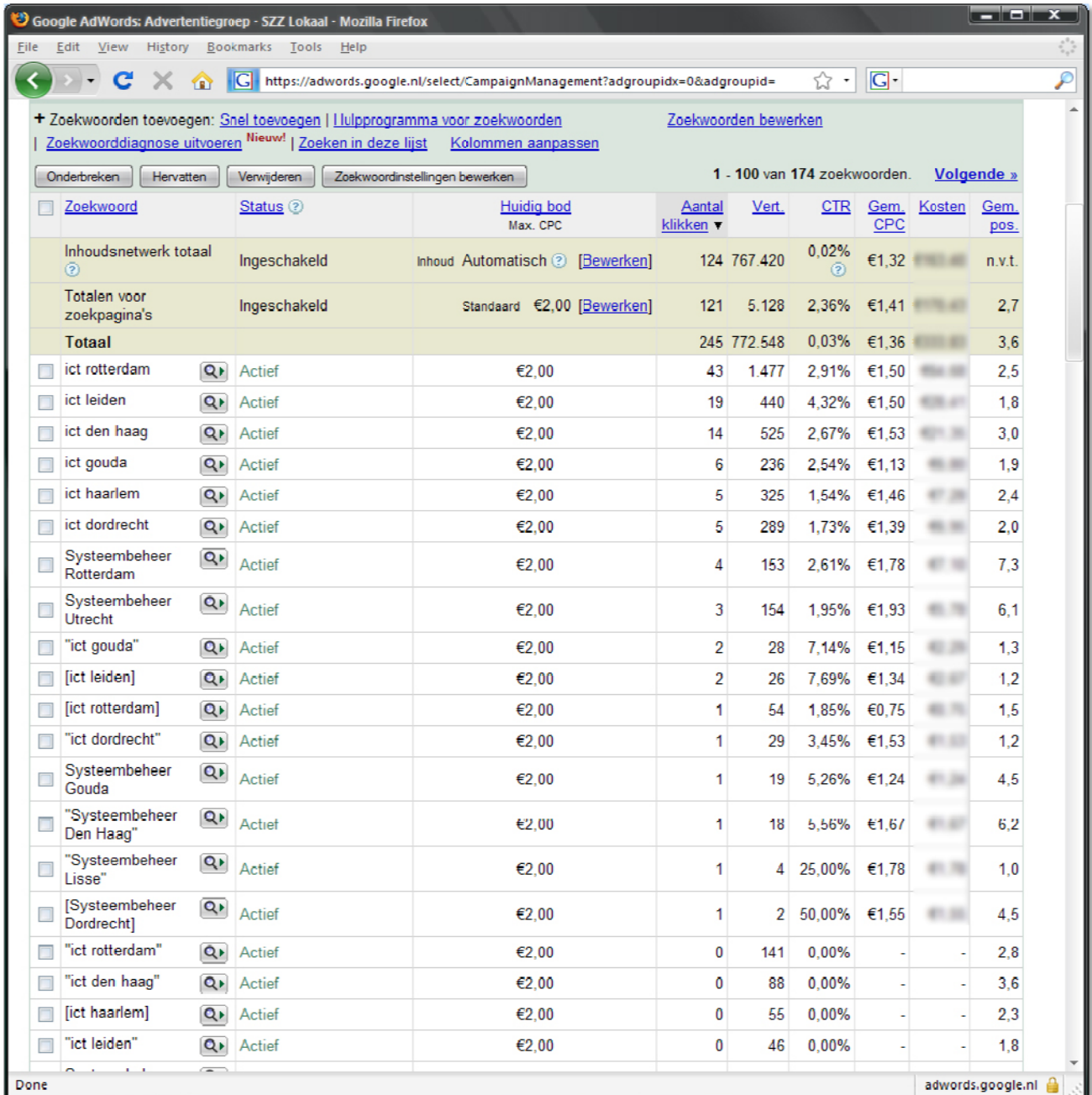
If Google notices that there are structurally more people clicking on the ads than the budget currently allows for it sends a warning to the advertiser that he is missing potential customers. The advertiser can then decide to raise the daily budget to attract the additional traffic. This is of course also in favour of Google's own interests because they make more money this way. An advertiser should therefore always keep his own targets and budgets in mind.

Keywords

The most important aspect to any campaign is of course the keywords used. As has been explained in the SEO chapter, keywords are used to bring the visitor to your website. While with SEO the keywords are incorporated into the website's copy, with Adwords keywords are defined in the Adwords programme. A combination of keywords on the website (SEO) and in the advertising activities (SEA) is even more powerful.

The advertiser only enters keywords into the Adwords programme that are relevant to his proposition, his website, and his desired action. The keywords must accurately describe his product or service, type of business, or even brand name. Advertising on brand names can be illegal if the advertising party is not a reseller of the brand mentioned. It is also possible to use a certain brand name of a competitor as a keyword and display your own advertisement based on this keyword. This is of

course illegal and companies can easily complain to Google about this behaviour. I personally filed such a complaint to Google when we discovered that a competitor of OSR was using the brand name of OSR as a keyword. The advertisement of the competitor was taken down the same day I filed the complaint.



The screenshot shows the Google AdWords 'Advertentiegroep - SZZ Lokaal' interface in Mozilla Firefox. The browser address bar shows the URL: <https://adwords.google.nl/select/CampaignManagement?adgroupidx=0&adgroupid=>. The interface includes navigation links like 'Zoekwoorden toevoegen', 'Hulpprogramma voor zoekwoorden', and 'Zoekwoorden bewerken'. Below these are buttons for 'Onderbreken', 'Hervatten', 'Verwijderen', and 'Zoekwoordinstellingen bewerken'. The main table displays 174 keywords, with the first 100 shown. The table has columns for 'Zoekwoord', 'Status', 'Huidig bod', 'Aantal klikken', 'Vert.', 'CTR', 'Gem. CPC', 'Kosten', and 'Gem. pos.'. The keywords are listed in descending order of clicks. The first row is 'Inhoudsnetwerk totaal' with 124 clicks. The second row is 'Totalen voor zoekpagina's' with 121 clicks. The third row is 'Totaal' with 245 clicks. The following rows list individual keywords with their respective click counts and other metrics.

Zoekwoord	Status	Huidig bod	Aantal klikken	Vert.	CTR	Gem. CPC	Kosten	Gem. pos.
Inhoudsnetwerk totaal	Ingeschakeld	Inhoud Automatisch	124	767.420	0,02%	€1,32		n.v.t.
Totalen voor zoekpagina's	Ingeschakeld	Standaard €2,00	121	5.128	2,36%	€1,41		2,7
Totaal			245	772.548	0,03%	€1,36		3,6
ict rotterdam	Actief	€2,00	43	1.477	2,91%	€1,50		2,5
ict leiden	Actief	€2,00	19	440	4,32%	€1,50		1,8
ict den haag	Actief	€2,00	14	525	2,67%	€1,53		3,0
ict gouda	Actief	€2,00	6	236	2,54%	€1,13		1,9
ict haarlem	Actief	€2,00	5	325	1,54%	€1,46		2,4
ict dordrecht	Actief	€2,00	5	289	1,73%	€1,39		2,0
Systeembeheer Rotterdam	Actief	€2,00	4	153	2,61%	€1,78		7,3
Systeembeheer Utrecht	Actief	€2,00	3	154	1,95%	€1,93		6,1
"ict gouda"	Actief	€2,00	2	28	7,14%	€1,15		1,3
[ict leiden]	Actief	€2,00	2	26	7,69%	€1,34		1,2
[ict rotterdam]	Actief	€2,00	1	54	1,85%	€0,75		1,5
"ict dordrecht"	Actief	€2,00	1	29	3,45%	€1,53		1,2
Systeembeheer Gouda	Actief	€2,00	1	19	5,26%	€1,24		4,5
"Systeembeheer Den Haag"	Actief	€2,00	1	18	5,56%	€1,67		6,2
"Systeembeheer Lisse"	Actief	€2,00	1	4	25,00%	€1,78		1,0
[Systeembeheer Dordrecht]	Actief	€2,00	1	2	50,00%	€1,55		4,5
"ict rotterdam"	Actief	€2,00	0	141	0,00%	-	-	2,8
"ict den haag"	Actief	€2,00	0	88	0,00%	-	-	3,6
[ict haarlem]	Actief	€2,00	0	55	0,00%	-	-	2,3
"ict leiden"	Actief	€2,00	0	46	0,00%	-	-	1,8

Figure 14 – Keyword list in an Adwords account of MostWare (my employer). Used with permission.

In figure 14 (p. 51) we can see some of the concepts mentioned earlier. The left column (*zoekwoord*) displays the keywords on which this advertiser is currently advertising. In the middle we can see the keyword bid (*huidig bod*) that the advertiser is currently willing to pay per keyword (per click). This bid is now a maximum of € 2,00. We can see the number of clicks every keyword has received (*aantal klikken*), the number of times the advertisement has been displayed per keyword (*vert.*), the CTR per keyword, and the average cost per click (cpc) (*gem cpc*). The actual costs (*kosten*) have been blurred for competition sensitivity reasons. The last column displays the average position on the search results page that the keyword yields for the linked advertisement.

We can also see from figure 14 that the content network (*inhoudsnetwerk*) resulted in much more displays than the search network. There were 772,548 displays in the content network and only 5,128 through the search engine. The content network resulted in 124 clicks and the search network in 121. This affirms my earlier statements about the content network in the fact that it displays advertisements so many times more because people spend a lot more time on regular websites than on search engines. We can also see that the average CPC is a bit lower on the content network than the search network.

This overview of keywords is just one out of many of this account. These keywords belong to an ad group, and an ad group belongs to a campaign. One campaign can have many ad groups.

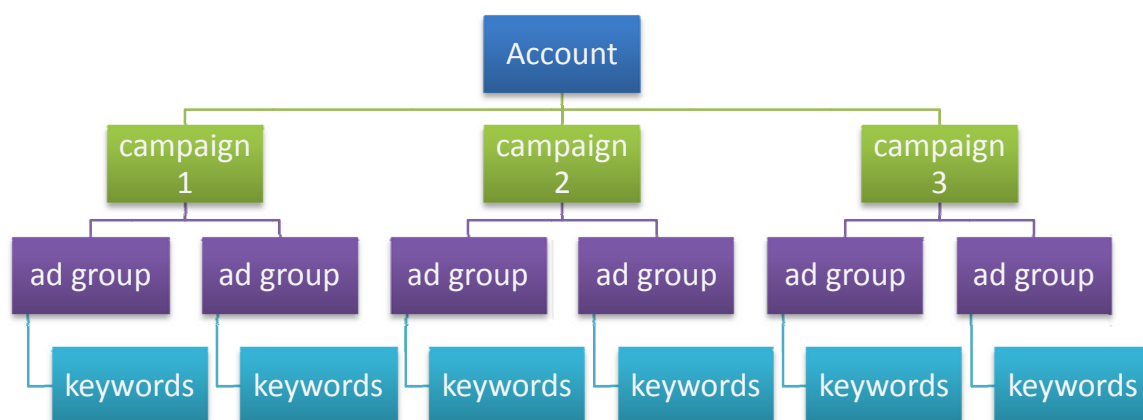


Figure 15 – Hypothetical structure of an Adwords Account

Generic or specific keywords?

Depending on what market an advertiser is in and how big his budget is, choices have to be made regarding what kind of keyword strategy should be used. A difference between generic and specific keywords has to be explained here. A generic keyword is a keyword which is descriptive in a very broad sense. Such keywords result in a huge amount websites *and* advertisements of competitors. For example, the keyword *travel* will result in many websites offering all kinds information about travelling. From backpacker websites to luxury hotels, everything will be displayed using this keyword. If a company wants to displays its advertisement when this keyword is used, it has to compete with a huge amount of competitors. Thus, CPC is extremely high and all other factors Google measures (relevance) have to be tip top.

On the other end of the spectrum are the so-called *long tail keywords*. These keywords are so specific that not many people use them. This has a few important implications for advertisers. Because these long tail keywords are so specific they generate a lot less traffic and are therefore a lot less expensive than the more generic keywords. Also, the people that *do* use these keywords are searching much more specifically for something of their interest. They know much better what they want and therefore these people are very interesting for advertisers. After all, advertisers generally advertise to drive sales, not to freely spread information. So, long tail keywords generate fewer visitors to a website but the visitors that it does generate are more valuable than visitors coming to the website through generic keywords. If the advertiser is able to successfully market to these visitors, conversion rates will most likely rise.

See figure 16 on page 54 for a detailed explanation.

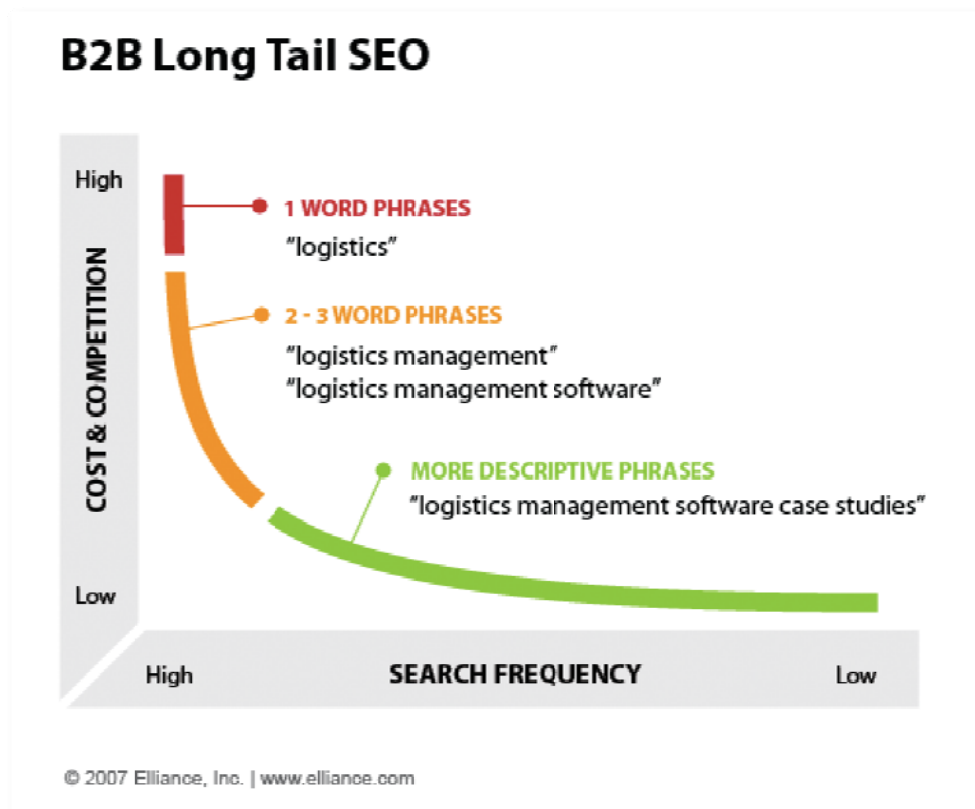


Figure 16 – Long tail keyword concept explained. (searchenginepeople.com, 2007)

To continue with the *travel* example, for instance the keyword *travel to Holland* is already more specific than merely *travel*. Any website not offering any information about travelling to Holland will probably not be mentioned in the search results for this keyword. *Travel to Holland by boat* will rule out all airline carriers' websites. *Travel to Holland by boat in June* will rule out more sites that might offer trips only during other periods. The more specific the keyword gets, the less frequently it will be used, so the more down the green line in figure 16 it will go. If you are a company offering trips to Holland by boat and you accept booking in June, and you've got your website optimised and/or have an advertisement in Adwords, you're quite likely that someone using this keyword will visit your site. Another important point that (searchenginepeople.com, 2007) makes is that people using long tail keywords are "further along the buying process". This makes sense because someone who would search so specifically knows what he wants. In my example, the searcher is specifically searching for something and likely to be willing to book a trip to Holland.

Costs

Why does Google not charge the full € 2,00 per click that this advertiser offers per keyword? Below I quoted Google's own answer to this question:

“Keyword-targeted ads are ranked on search pages based on a combination of the matched keyword's CPC bid and Quality Score. Quality Score is determined by the keyword's clickthrough rate (CTR) on Google, relevance of ad text, historical keyword performance, landing page, and other relevancy factors.

Having relevant keywords and ad text, a high CPC bid, and a strong CTR will result in a higher position for your ad. Because this ranking system rewards well-targeted, relevant ads, you can't be locked out of the top position as you would be in a ranking system based solely on price.” (Google Adwords, 2009b)

It is important to notice that the landing page, the web page that is defined in the destination URL, directly influences the overall ranking of an advertisement. This means that if the landing page loads very slowly, has some kind of pop-up, is badly coded, or has some other negative factor, the performance of the advertisement is directly negatively influenced. Bidding more money per click would not result in much improvement. This would be a bad choice anyway because the visitor of the website would most likely leave rather quickly because of the poor performance of the website.

Google deliberately lowers the Quality score of such websites because it wants to protect its users and the overall user experience. Google realises that the huge amount of people using Google is its biggest strength and that by offering the best possible user experience the people keep coming back to Google's search engine and not someone else's.

Advertisements

The Adwords programme allows advertisers to easily create many different advertisements. Advertisers can link these ads to a group of keywords and let Google's system determine which advertisements are most successful. Often advertisers will find out that small changes to an advertisement result in better performance. This testing mechanism allows advertisers to continuously optimise their campaigns and learn which advertisements work and which do not.

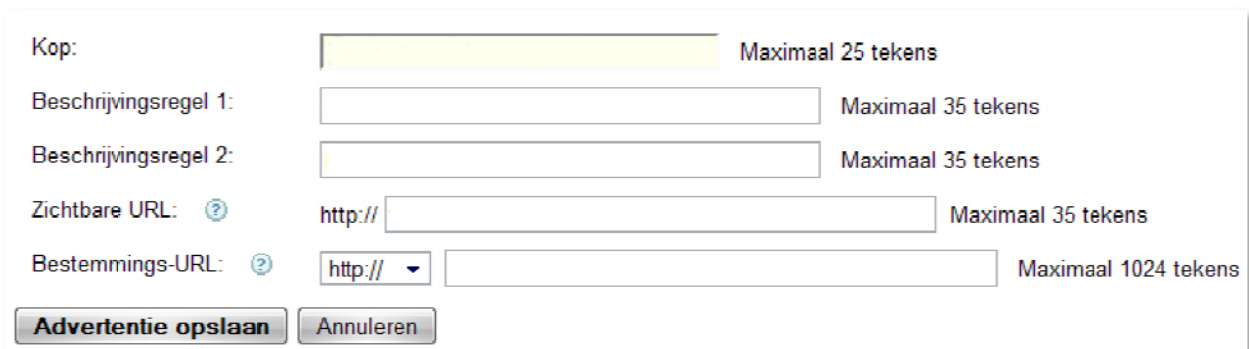
The image shows a web form for creating a new advertisement in Google Adwords. It contains five input fields with labels and character limits: 'Kop:' (Header) with a yellow background and 'Maximaal 25 tekens'; 'Beschrijvingsregel 1:' (Description 1) with 'Maximaal 35 tekens'; 'Beschrijvingsregel 2:' (Description 2) with 'Maximaal 35 tekens'; 'Zichtbare URL:' (Visible URL) with a help icon, 'http://' prefix, and 'Maximaal 35 tekens'; and 'Bestemmings-URL:' (Destination URL) with a help icon, a dropdown menu showing 'http://', and 'Maximaal 1024 tekens'. At the bottom are two buttons: 'Advertentie opslaan' (Save advertisement) and 'Annuleren' (Cancel).

Figure 17 – Making a new advertisement in Google Adwords

In Figure 17 we can see how a new advertisement can be entered. The lay-out is like this:

Header	(kop, 25 characters max)
Description 1	(beschrijvingsregel 1, max 35 characters)
Description 2	(beschrijvingsregel 2, max 35 characters)
Visible URL	(zichtbare URL, max 35 characters)
Destination URL	(bestemmings-URL, max 1024 characters)

The destination URL is the web address of the website where the advertiser wants the visitor to go to. This is not visible in the advertisement. See figure 19 (p. 57) to see how the advertisement is displayed on the search engine results page.

Search Engine Marketing
SEM Agency Offer Customer & Profit
Focused PPC and SEO. Get A Quote!
SearchLaboratory.com/SEM_Services

Figure 18 – Advertisement on Google.co.uk after a search query for Search Engine Advertising

The header, description lines 1 and 2, and the visible URL as displayed in figure 18 result in the advertisement displayed in figure 19. Important to note here is that the more similar the text of the advertisement is to the search query, the more bold text will appear in the ad. Bold text stands out more and thus signals that the advertisement is relevant to the search query. In the example above I searched for Search Engine Advertising but this advertisement is displayed as well. The Google Adwords system understands that Search Engine Marketing is very similar to Search Engine Advertising. Moreover, this particular advertiser, SearchLaboratory.com, most likely has Search Engine Advertising as a keyword in their Adwords programme but they do not display an ad specifically for it.

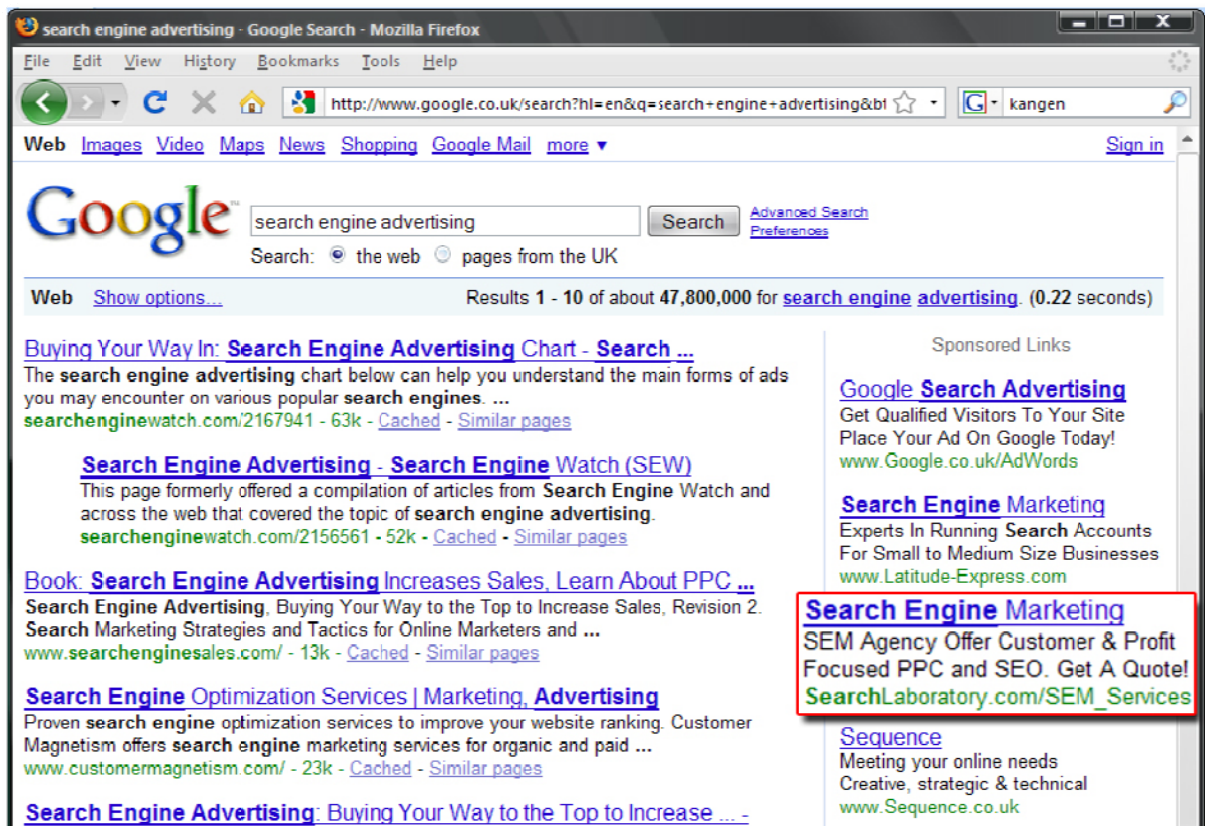


Figure 19 – Google results page where the ad is displayed

3.4.3.4 Concluding Adwords

Now it should be clear in general terms how an advertiser can use Google Adwords to advertise by using Google's search engine and Google's content network using relevant keywords and advertisements. An insight has been given into the cost structure and how the advertiser can control his budget. Also, some important factors that influence the performance of an advertisement have been discussed.

Some advantages of advertising using Google's Adwords programme are:

- Its huge market share. Almost every Internet user worldwide uses or at least know Google.
- In depth control over budget.
- In depth targeting of prospects. Determine in extreme detail on which keywords you want to be found.
- Endless variation regarding Advertisement copy. Google automatically records statistics about which copy is working better.
- Very detailed statistical information.
- Useful link with Google Analytics to further analyse visitor behaviour.
- Set up in a matter of hours.

Though Adwords has certainly revolutionised the advertising world and professionalised the online advertising world rather quickly, there are also some disadvantages to Adwords. The main argument is that maintaining Adwords accounts is very time consuming. Especially when a company is using several accounts with several ad group (with many keywords), tuning every account can become a very strenuous job. Properly managing Adwords requires quite some knowledge about cost structures, bidding procedures, relevance, some technical aspects about websites, and coding. Not every company has the expertise nor the time to learn it all.

3.5 Affiliate Marketing

“Where a third party advertises products or services on behalf of a retailer in return for an agreed commission for a sale or lead.” (Refreshed Media)

This is how one company I found (when searching on Google using “definition of affiliate marketing” as a search query) defines affiliate marketing. They further mention that the success of affiliate marketing is the pay-for-performance principle. Advertisers only receive a commission when they have actually sold a product of the retailer. This is an important concept to understand because it clearly characterises affiliate marketing.

One of the final points Refreshed Media makes is that affiliates are often *“selected to ensure they are suitable to market the products of the retailer.”* A retailer who is looking for doing business through affiliates will most likely contact affiliates which are related to his type of business. For example, a retailer selling children’s toys looking for an affiliate might find a suitable one in a website that writes about the latest toys on the market. After all, the audience of that website is likely to be interested in children’s toys so the retailer can expect that sales will be higher than when advertising his products on a website about football.

The last point made is that often affiliates are aggregated into affiliate networks. These networks then do business with retailers, allowing them to do business with only one party which then selects the right affiliates for them and handles all the payments. For affiliates such a network is also preferable because they receive payments from one party (the network) while advertising for different retailers.

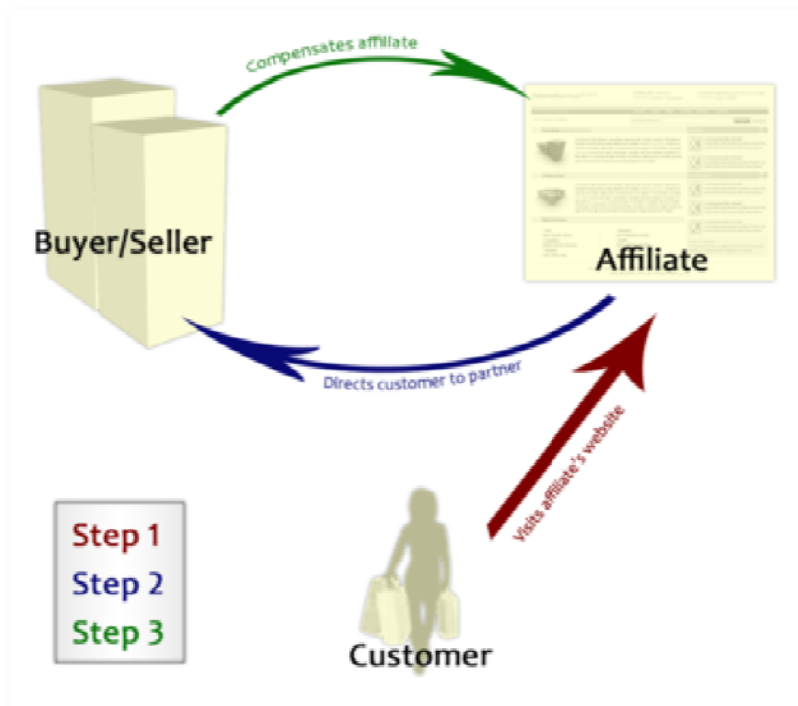


Figure 20 – Affiliate marketing scheme (GDIexplained.com)

Figure 20 explains in a schematic way how an online customer comes to the affiliate's website, browses and clicks on a product he finds interesting or wants to buy and with this click the visitor is redirected to the retailer's website. If the customer makes a purchase, the affiliate who directed the customer to the retailer will be rewarded. Often, affiliates advertise the products or services they are selling even though the products are not property of the affiliate. It is possible that the affiliate website looks like it is actually part of the retailer's business instead of being an independent business. In any case, affiliates too can engage in SEM activities to generate traffic to their website and hopefully drive sales.

3.5.1 Affiliate marketing only suitable for B2C?

If we look more closely at one of the Netherlands' oldest affiliate networks M4N (www.m4n.nl), it appears as if they mostly work together with web shops or websites selling to consumers. They even mention on their homepage that they have a dominant position in the Shopping segment. M4n offers the possibility to browse through a list of all the 'merchants' that are doing business with affiliates through their network. A closer study of their list of merchants (<http://www.m4n.nl/affiliate/merchants.jsf>) confirms that a very large majority consists of 'web shop' like websites. On all these websites the visitor is able to immediately make a purchase through a transactional system and order a product. The only 'merchant' in the B2B section is actually M4N itself.

B2B Affiliate Marketing

Guise argues that B2B budgets primarily used for building awareness are no longer acceptable. She says that also B2B online campaigns must drive high-quality leads which in turn increase sales (Guise, 2008). In her article she mentions the example of an affiliate sending a visitor to a website of Microsoft (merchant in this example) where the visitor registers before downloading a white paper. In her example the affiliate is then rewarded because the visitor registered, providing Microsoft with a qualified lead. This scenario is also applicable to OSR, with the white paper being a legal course which is booked.

3.5.2 Concluding affiliate marketing

Affiliate Marketing is a system which is currently mainly used by websites selling to consumer. The principle however of sending traffic to a partner website should be suitable for B2B purposes as well. After all, many businesses have partnered before in various ways to gain mutual profits. Traditional affiliate marketing networks have not yet embraced the B2B aspect, at least not yet in the Netherlands. Nonetheless I personally believe there are possibilities for either those networks to further specialise or for business to initiate their own activities in this field.

4. International Benchmark

4.1 Introduction to the Benchmark

In this chapter I am looking at three different countries and more specifically to their markets for legal courses and training. I want to look at companies providing similar services as OSR in each specific country and discover any remarkable and useful information about how those companies are approaching the market, trying to attract customers, generating leads, dealing with competition, or in short how they are doing business. Because the focus of this dissertation is on answering the main research question, how OSR can operate more visibly to its target groups, a full benchmark with a predefined set of conditions is beyond the scope this work. After all, comparing foreign markets does not directly impact the online operations of OSR. This benchmark is an aggregation of ideas coming from the following markets that can possibly be applied to the recommendations for OSR:

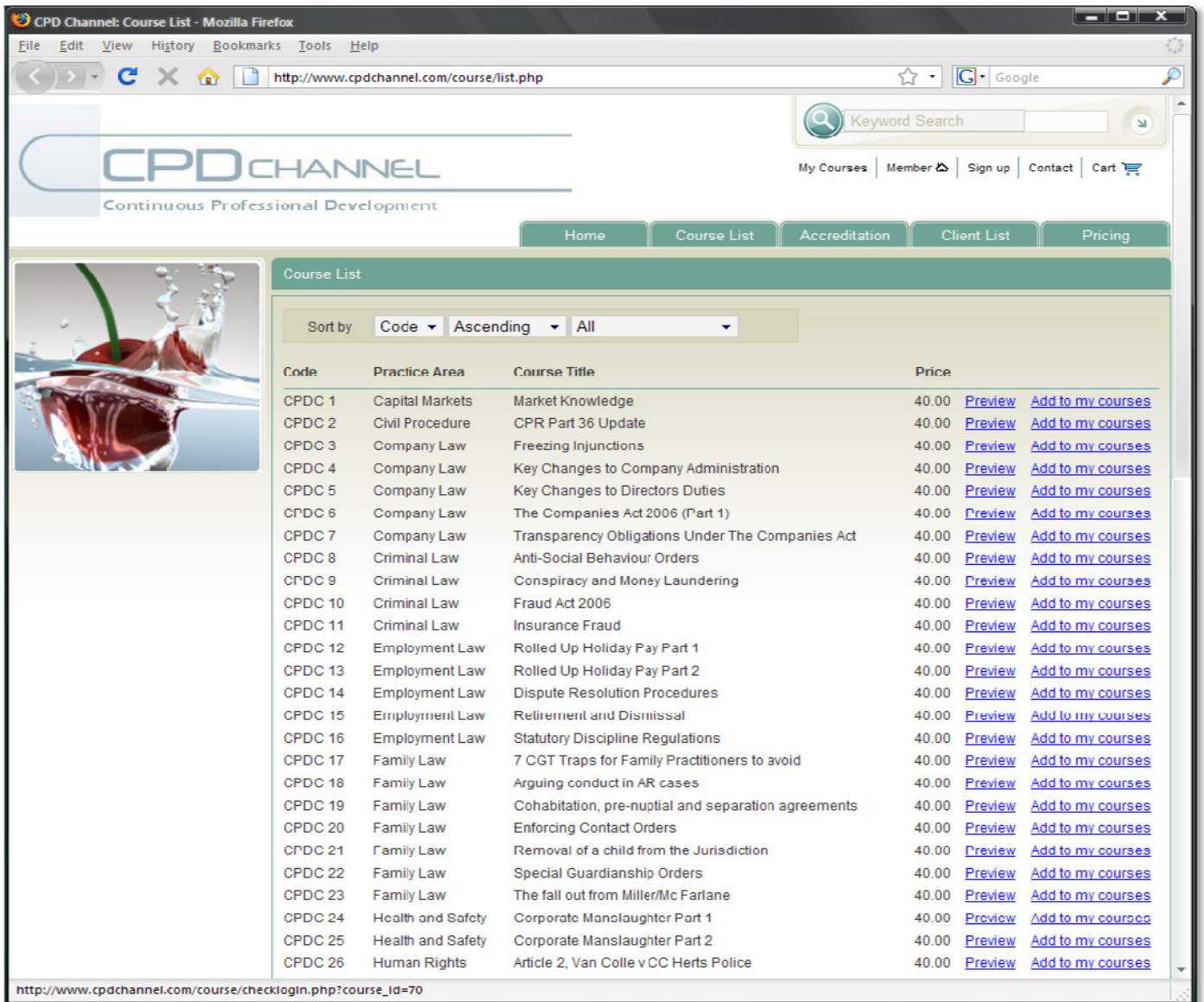
- The UK market
- The Belgian market
- The German market

4.2 The UK market

As is common in the Netherlands, in the UK it is compulsory for any law practitioner to continuously keep himself up-to-date regarding their profession. Every barrister or solicitor has to obtain a number of points each year. Researching the UK market for barristers and solicitors I quickly came across a few companies that offer legal courses in quite a different way than I had seen in the Dutch market.

First of all there is CPDchannel (<http://www.cpdchannel.com/index.php>). This is a company that is offering courses online purely through their website. The courses

consist of videos presented by professional barristers, on various topics. They offer various one-hour courses and these are worth one Continuous Professional Development (CPD) point.



CPD Channel: Course List - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.cpdchannel.com/course/list.php

Keyword Search

My Courses Member Sign up Contact Cart

Home Course List Accreditation Client List Pricing

Course List

Sort by Code Ascending All

Code	Practice Area	Course Title	Price		
CPDC 1	Capital Markets	Market Knowledge	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 2	Civil Procedure	CPR Part 36 Update	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 3	Company Law	Freezing Injunctions	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 4	Company Law	Key Changes to Company Administration	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 5	Company Law	Key Changes to Directors Duties	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 6	Company Law	The Companies Act 2006 (Part 1)	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 7	Company Law	Transparency Obligations Under The Companies Act	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 8	Criminal Law	Anti-Social Behaviour Orders	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 9	Criminal Law	Conspiracy and Money Laundering	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 10	Criminal Law	Fraud Act 2006	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 11	Criminal Law	Insurance Fraud	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 12	Employment Law	Rolled Up Holiday Pay Part 1	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 13	Employment Law	Rolled Up Holiday Pay Part 2	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 14	Employment Law	Dispute Resolution Procedures	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 15	Employment Law	Retirement and Dismissal	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 16	Employment Law	Statutory Discipline Regulations	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 17	Family Law	7 CGT Traps for Family Practitioners to avoid	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 18	Family Law	Arguing conduct in AR cases	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 19	Family Law	Cohabitation, pre-nuptial and separation agreements	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 20	Family Law	Enforcing Contact Orders	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 21	Family Law	Removal of a child from the Jurisdiction	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 22	Family Law	Special Guardianship Orders	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 23	Family Law	The fall out from Miller/McFarlane	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 24	Health and Safety	Corporate Manslaughter Part 1	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 25	Health and Safety	Corporate Manslaughter Part 2	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses
CPDC 26	Human Rights	Article 2, Van Colle v CC Herts Police	40.00	Preview	Add to my courses

http://www.cpdchannel.com/course/checklogin.php?course_id=70

Figure 21 – CPDchannel's list of courses

In figure 21 we can see CPDchannel's list of courses. All courses are worth £ 40,- and can be previewed on site. Customers can earn additional points by taking the accompanying multiple choice test. After submitting the test and passing they receive a certificate via e-mail.

The second interesting party I found is called CPDcast (<http://www.cpdcast.com/static/home>). As CPDchannel, this company is fully accredited by the UK Bar Standards Association. CPDcast is specialised in offering courses online as Podcasts. A podcast in this sense is nothing more than an audio recording of the legal course, which can be listened from the website or downloaded and played using any portable music player supporting MP3 or simply on the user's computer.

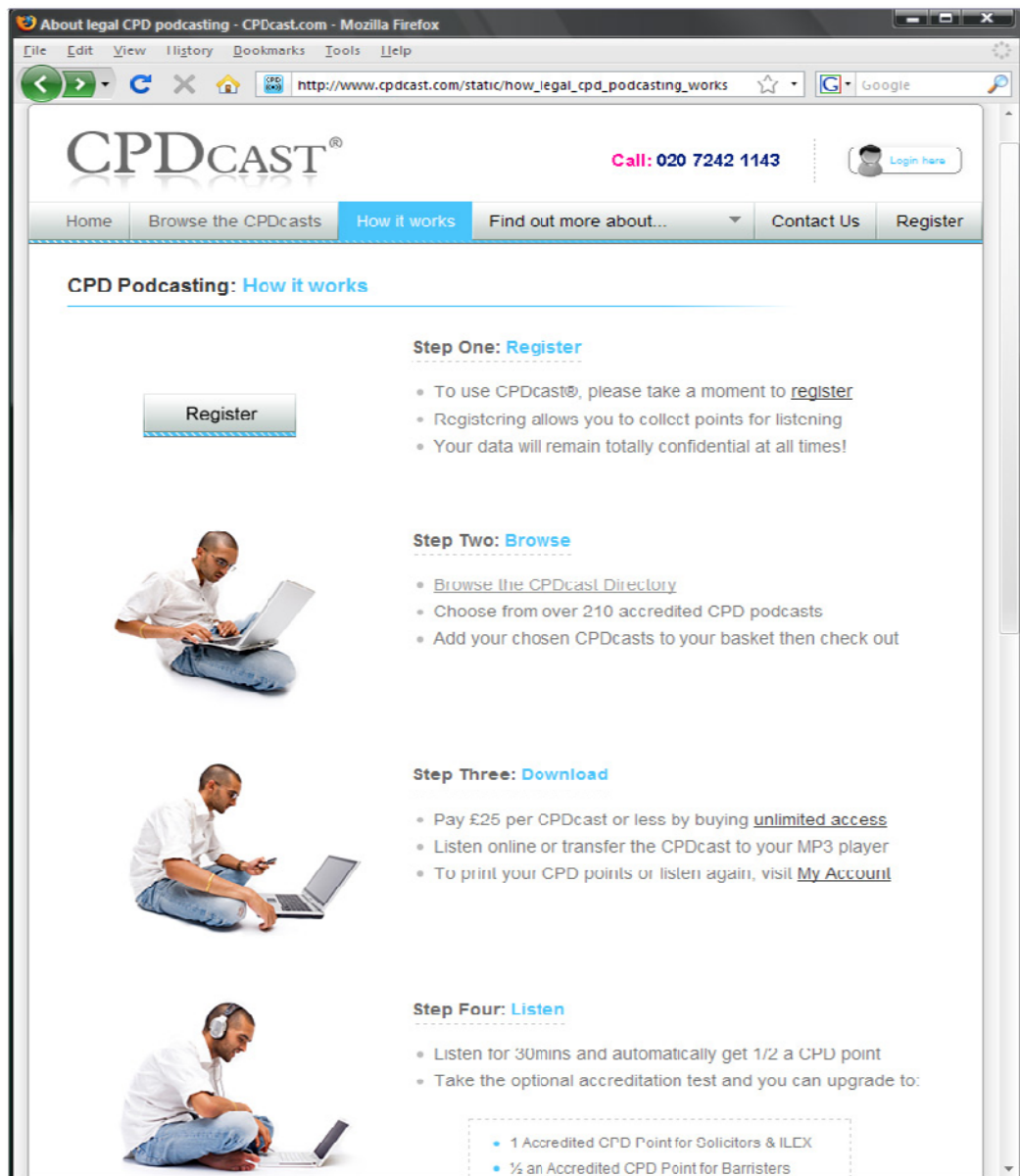


Figure 22 – CPDcast, providing courses in audio for barristers, solicitors, and support staff

Solicitors:

Solicitors will get **1 Accredited CPD Point** (60 minutes) for listening to the CPDcast and passing the (optional) accreditation test; or $\frac{1}{2}$ a CPD point (30 minutes) for just listening to it.

Please visit our [CPD for Solicitors](#) page for more details.

Barristers:

Barristers will get $\frac{1}{2}$ a CPD point (30 minutes) for listening to a CPDcast. If they take and pass the accreditation test they will get **Half an Accredited CPD Point** (30 accredited minutes).

Please visit our [CPD for Barristers](#) page for more details.

Legal Executives:

Legal executives will get **1 Accredited CPD Point** (60 minutes) for listening to the CPDcast and passing the (optional) accreditation test; or $\frac{1}{2}$ a CPD point (30 minutes) for just listening to it.

Figure 23 – CPDcast score system

The system with which extra points can be obtained by taking an additional test is exactly the same as that of CPDchannel. CPDchannel does however not make a distinction between barristers and solicitors while CPDcast does.

4.2.1 Innovative compared to Dutch providers

Techniques such as these two companies use have not yet been adopted in the Netherlands. None of the providers of (legal) courses in the Netherlands offer such services. Providing video or audio files whether it is for download purposes or not, allows the organisation providing these files to be more adaptive and cost-efficient. Also, an interesting point is that these two companies offer courses of only $\frac{1}{2}$ or 1 point. Established Barristers have to earn 12 points yearly and solicitors even 16 (of which 4 by attending training).

4.3 The Belgian Market

The Belgian market is not very dissimilar to the Dutch market. There are many institutes offering courses and training and there only very few which are offering courses specifically for legal professionals. A large majority of the organisations offer legal courses for ‘normal’ professionals. The organisations that I could find offering courses for lawyers or solicitors are large institutes which have only some areas of law in their portfolio.

The biggest and most well-known organisation is Kluwer (<http://www.klu.be/Default.aspx?culture=nl>), which is also a competitor of OSR in the Dutch market. Kluwer offers a wide range of courses in a large variety of areas. Also, their judicial section is extensive. Although Kluwer has a large number of courses that they offer, their way of presenting their offerings is exactly the same as any other training provider.

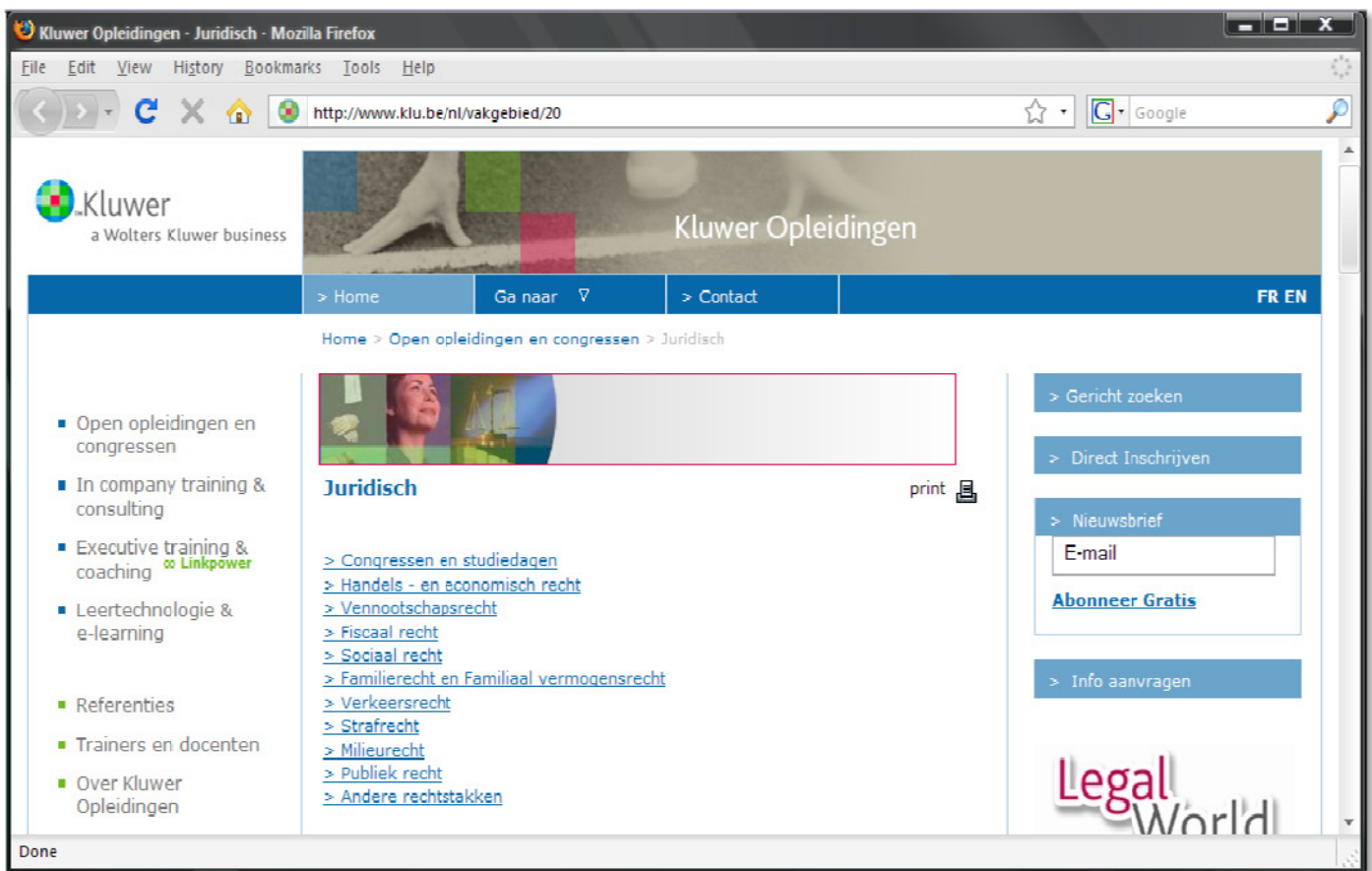


Figure 24 – Kluwer’s overview of legal categories.

Next to Kluwer I found a lot of providers offering only a few legal courses. Following is a short list of some of the more relevant Belgian companies I found:



Figure 25 – Sdworx is offering some social law courses

1. **SDworx.** This company offers training in various areas. Their legal proposition consists solely of some courses in the area of social law. (SD Worx, 2009)



Figure 26 – Upgrading offers some social law courses

2. **Upgrading.** Upgrading is also offering some courses in the area of social law next to several non-legal areas. (Upgrading VZW, 2009)

4.3.1 Not much difference with the Netherlands

The Belgian market of legal courses and trainings is not innovative as the UK market nor as transparent as the Dutch market. There are many small institutes that offer a little bit of training in a lot of different areas. Except for Kluwer, I have not been able to find another significant party offering a lot of legal courses aimed at legal professionals.

4.4 The German Market

With Germany being such a large country, I would have expected more innovative solutions like we saw in the UK market. I could find the Podcast and video provider in the UK quite easily using a search query in Google. Finding a provider in Germany was a bit more difficult, but I managed:

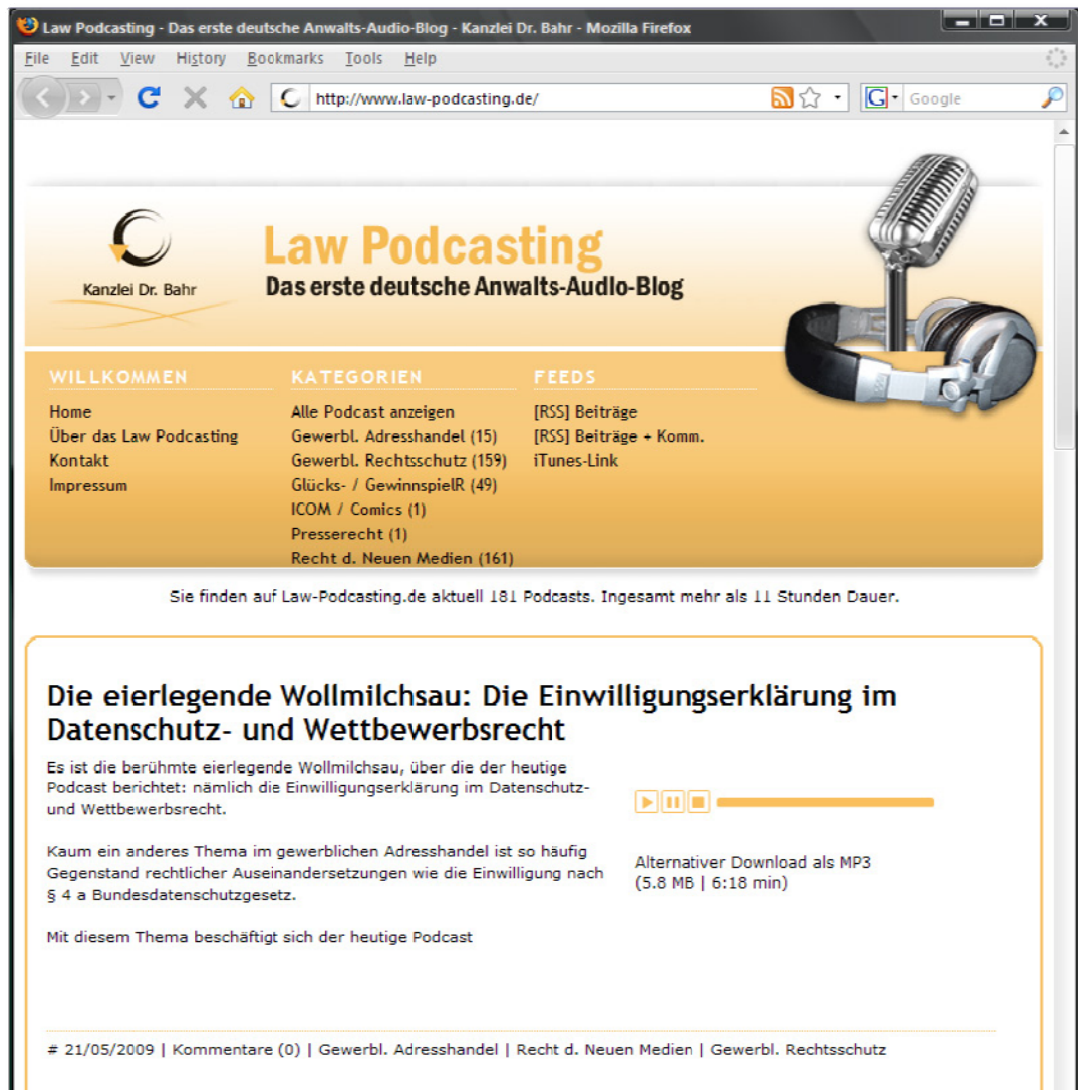


Figure 27 – Law-podcasting.de, currently offering 181 podcasts

Too bad for all the lawyers and solicitors in Germany though, this website provides *actual* podcasts, namely recordings of radio sessions and these recordings are not accredited by the German Bar association. The podcasts are about all kinds of judicial developments (in Germany) but they are no way near the level of an actual course.

Another company has done a similar job to the English by providing online videos “for lawyers, by lawyers.” This company is Advobildung. Though much can be said about the lay-out of their website, at least they offer online video material.



Figure 28 – Advobildung’s old fashioned looking website is offering online video material

Advobildung offers its video content for € 89,-, which then allows the customer to view the material as often as he wants for a period of three months. All video material is certified.

The last German company in this benchmark is the Anwaltakademie. This is obviously a more traditional organisation compared to the others because their website simply lists all their courses in categories in which Anwaltakademie is specialised. The list is rather impressive as it is probably the biggest of all companies mentioned in this comparison.

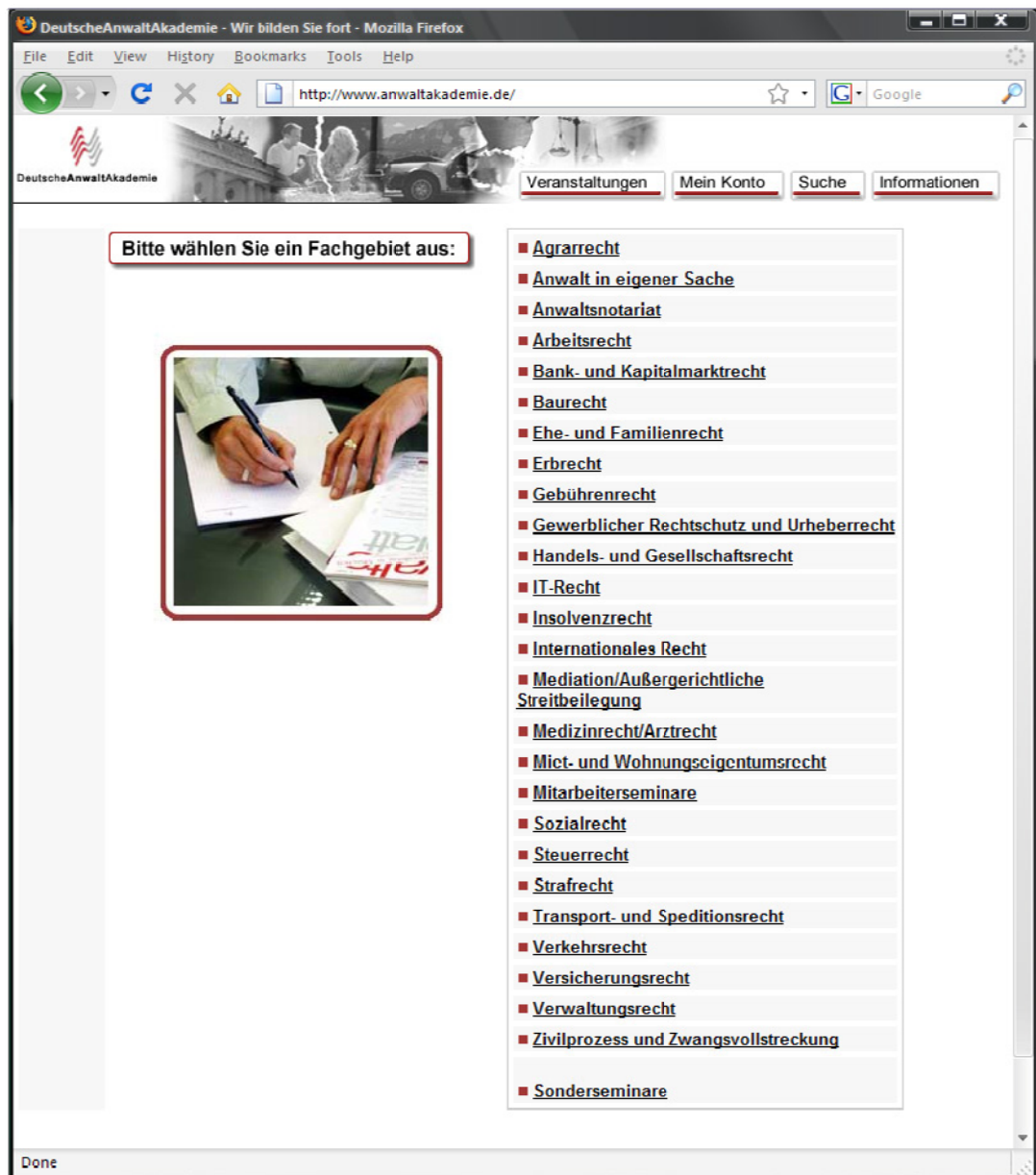


Figure 29 – The website of the Anwaltakademie with all its areas of expertise.

4.4.1 Concluding the German market

The Germans are definitely a bit more conservative in their approach to the legal training market. In this very small comparison we have seen some attempts to provide courses (and information about courses) in a more modern way but those attempts do not match up to those seen in the UK.

4.5 Concluding the benchmark

This comparison's only purpose is to provide some ideas about how business is done abroad. The research is far too small to draw any serious conclusions. I believe it is however interesting to see that the UK market was by far the easiest for me to research, almost even more so than the Dutch market. Another thing that struck my attention was the fact that there is a lot more advertising in the UK search engines on the keywords I used than for example in Germany. When I looked for "juristische fortbildung", which freely translated means legal training, not any advertisements were displayed. While searching using the keyword "legal training" however, many advertisements were displayed.

5. Analysis and results

5.1 Introduction to Analysis

In this chapter I will use all the information and conclusions from the theoretical framework (p. 21) and apply that as best as I can to the situation of OSR Juridische Opleidingen. This analysis will provide the basis for the recommendations which will answer the vital question to this thesis:

How can OSR Juridische Opleidingen operate online more visibly to its target groups?

It is important for OSR to be more visible for its target groups:

- Lawyers (and trainee lawyers)
- Solicitors
- Support staff

Both independent lawyers and solicitors as law firms are part of the target groups.

We know the target groups of OSR are looking for propositions like those of OSR because the target groups must follow courses and earn enough credits to stay in business. This is compulsory. Every fresh graduate and every seasoned veteran must adhere to this principle.

5.2 Current situation of OSR

The main driver for this dissertation is the current situation which is not satisfactory in terms of number of attracted website visitors and accompanying course sales. On the very first day I discovered that there was a critical error in the technical design of the new website (launched beginning of March). A file called Robots.txt (The Web Robots Pages, 2008) which is part of every website and which determines which crawlers are allowed to index the website was configured incorrectly. Before the launch of the new website, Yellowmind had built a test version of the website which should not be indexed yet. After all, a test version is where you make your changes and where you try things. It is not preferable to have those tests be indexed. Because of this, Yellowmind blocked Google's webcrawler. However, when the new website was finished and launched, they forgot to terminate this blockade, rendering the new website unindexed for more than a month. After I discovered this, the blockade was immediately lifted and soon Google started to index the website. Despite solving this problem early on, the main goal of generating more traffic and increase course sales has not lost priority.

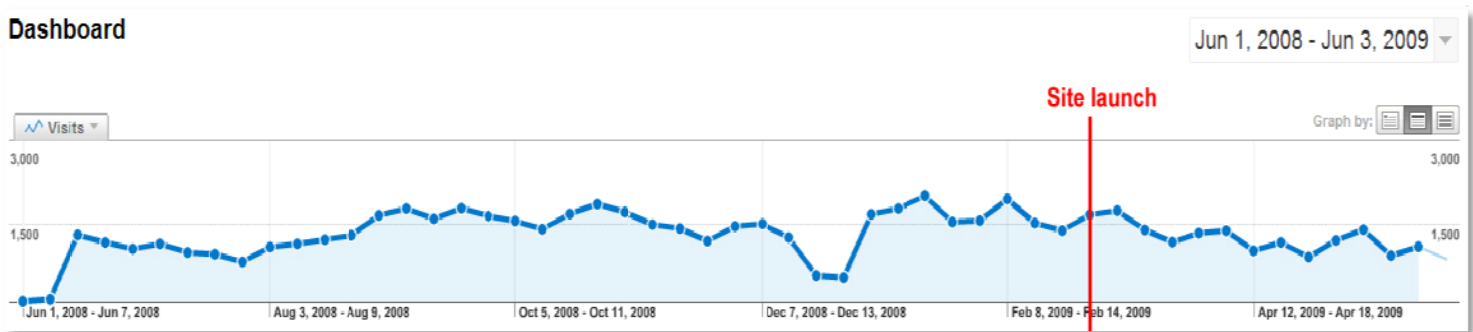


Figure 30 – Year overview of traffic to www.osr.nl – retrieved from Analytics

In figure 30 we can see that there is a decline in traffic that started in January 2008. The launch of the new website triggered a small increase in traffic but soon after the decline continued. OSR started using Google Analytics beginning of June 2008 so a direct comparison between the months of June in 2008 and 2009 is not possible at this moment. However, the graph clearly shows that from launch date there has not been an increase in traffic.

5.2.1 Current search engine marketing status

Search Engine Marketing has never been an important issue for OSR. From the start of building their website, being ‘findable’ had not been incorporated into any plan, let alone the building process of the website itself. As it became apparent that www.osr.nl was poorly found by means of important keywords in Google, it became more of an issue. In the following chapters I will analyse the current situation along the theories presented in the theoretical framework. For clarity and consistency I will follow as much as possible the structure of the theoretical framework, addressing each discussed theory and comparing the current situation of OSR to those theories.

5.3 Online activities of OSR analysed by means of Search Engine Optimisation theories.

When Mrs Ellen van’t Hof and I were discussing the current situation with the web design bureau Yellowmind (which built the current website) it became clear that good performance in search engines was never high on the agenda. Mr Linnenbank of Yellowmind clearly stated that optimisation was never part of the project of building the website for OSR and because of that, features that would enhance the performance in search engines were not implemented or fully taken advantage of. We can use the three components of Thurow (Thurow, 2007) to analyse the current situation.

5.3.1 How is the website of OSR performing regarding the Text Component?

When we consider the text component in relation to the website of OSR, there are some things that could be communicated better, see figure 31 (p. 75).

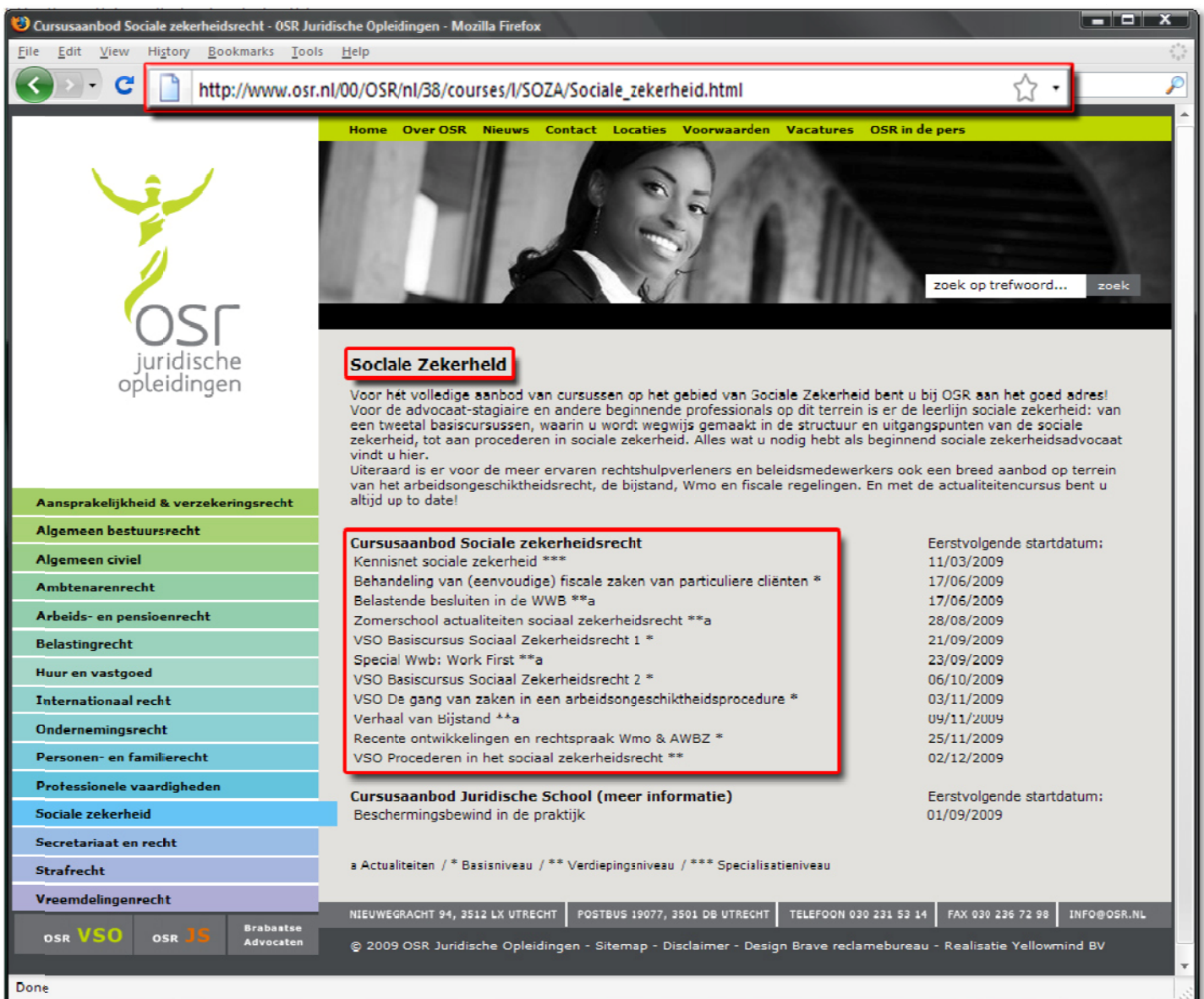


Figure 31 – Website analysis using the Text Component

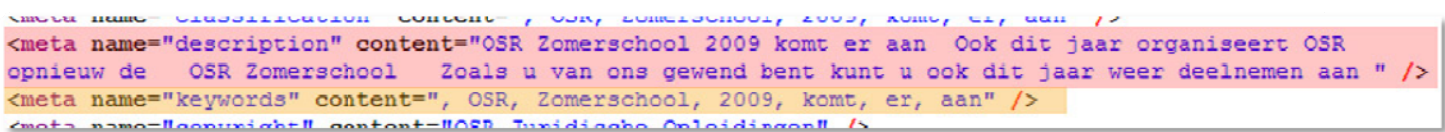
Starting with the red box at the top of figure 30, we can see the URL of the website (which is magnified for clarity purposes). This URL is somewhere in between the ‘right’ and the ‘wrong’ examples on page 27 of the theoretical framework. The URL does say what the page is about (Sociale zekerheid, which means Social security) but in all, this URL could be much clearer. URL rewriting could definitely help improve this part (Shannon, 2009). The second point of attention is the H1 header (title) Sociale Zekerheid. This line is important for search engines and could be made much more descriptive. For example: ‘Legal courses about Social Security.’

The third box is a list of all the courses available in the social security group offered by OSR. Though it does not appear that every line of text is a clickable link, they actually are. A user would only find out by moving his mouse over them (then an underline appears). This could be made clearer for the not-web-savvy users and furthermore it would help users to identify - and search engines to value - the links if they were made in different colours.

Meta Data

Another issue I discovered concerns the homepage of OSR. The homepage of OSR is important to communicate news items and special offers (such as the Zomerschool, Summer school currently). It also allows a visitor to quickly search for a course. This homepage presents the overall proposition of OSR and it allows a visitor to browse to all kinds of interesting information. It functions as a portal to all relevant information of OSR. This page should describe the core business and propositions of OSR.

Because it is the homepage it does not describe every course specifically but presents the overall picture of OSR. This page should also be able to be found by means of overall or more general keywords. Keywords such as, for example, *social law*, *legal course social law*, *training for lawyer*, et cetera should result in OSR being mentioned. However, when we look at the meta data of OSR which should describe exactly the before mentioned overall picture of the core business of OSR, we see something remarkable:



```
<meta name="description" content="OSR Zomerschool 2009 komt er aan Ook dit jaar organiseert OSR opnieuw de OSR Zomerschool Zoals u van ons gewend bent kunt u ook dit jaar weer deelnemen aan " />
<meta name="keywords" content=", OSR, Zomerschool, 2009, komt, er, aan" />
```

Figure 32 – Meta data of homepage

In the meta description there is nothing about the core business of OSR, nor is there in the meta keywords. The latest news item (about the summer school) has been used for meta data purposes. Because apparently these data change every time a new news item is posted, this is not beneficial for the performance in search engines. Also, mostly a news item only covers a small part of the entire offering of OSR which

would mean that only those people interested in the topic which the news item concerns are possibly reached (provided that they search for that topic). All other members of the target groups might no longer be reached. Below is a picture of the homepage to clarify this process (figure 33).

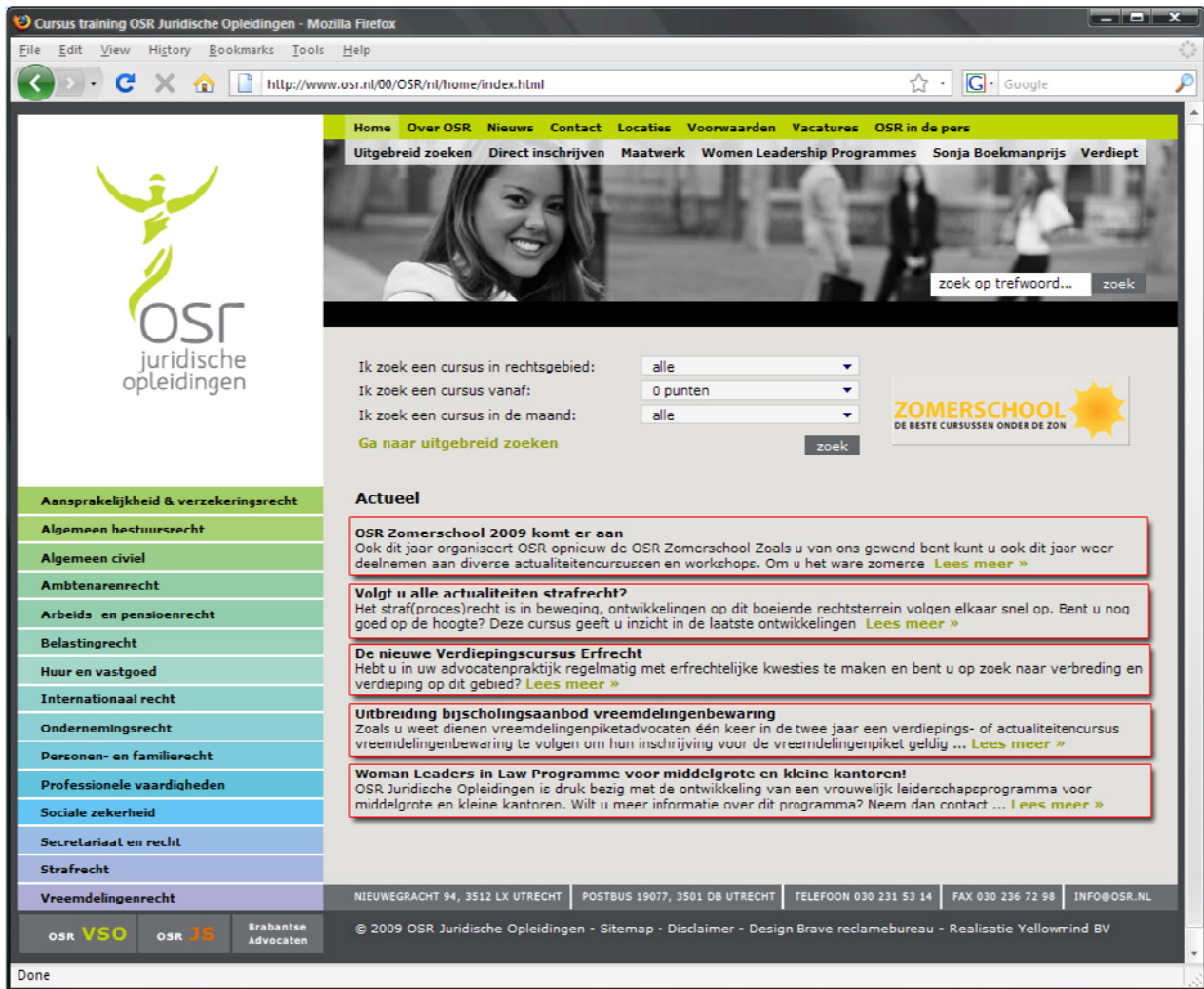


Figure 33 – Homepage of OSR with news items highlighted

If we take a closer look at a webpage deeper inside the website of OSR, for example the page about the summer school, we can see more or the less the same thing happening as with the homepage. (See figure 34, page 78)

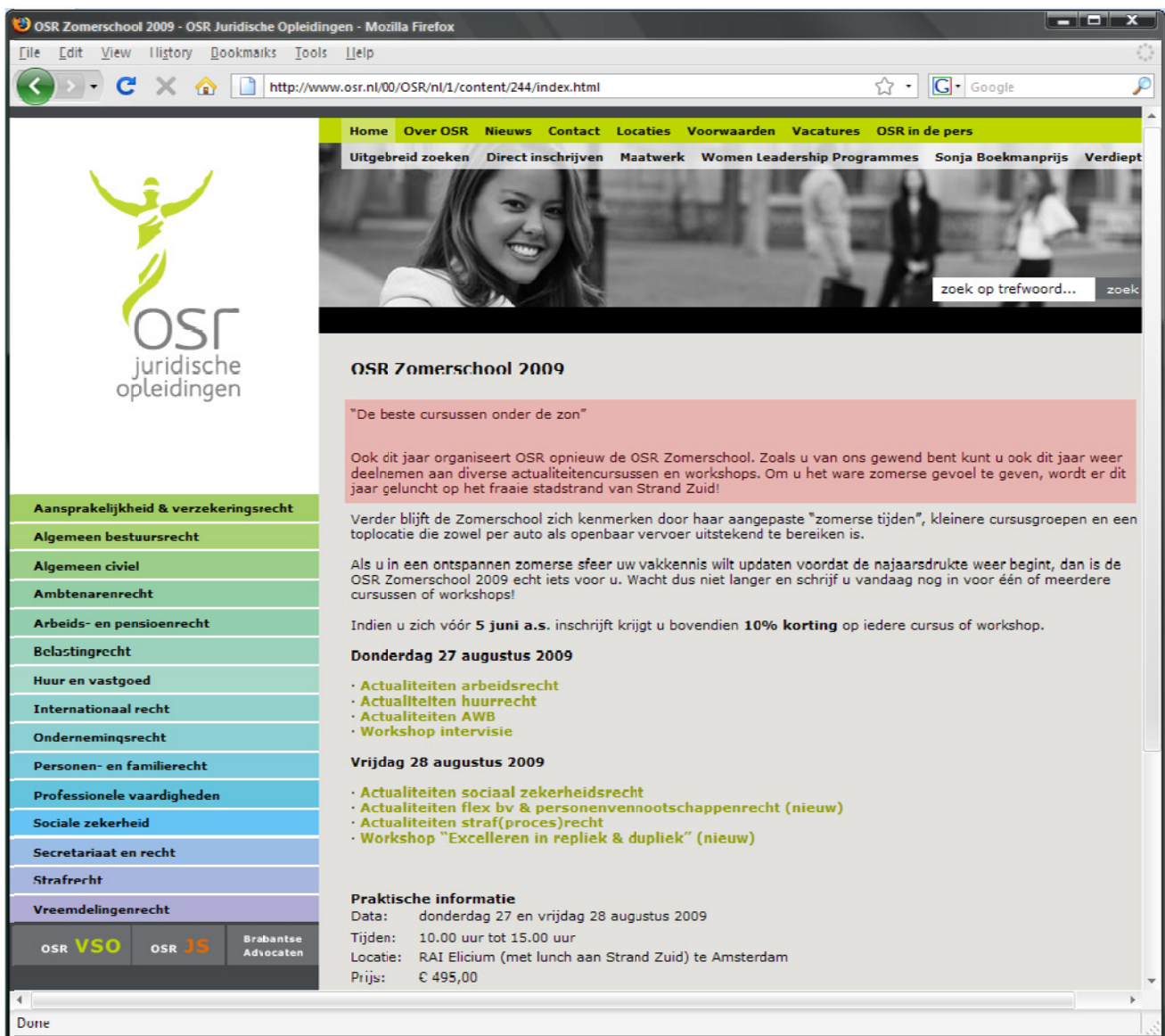


Figure 34 – Zomerschool webpage with the introduction text highlighted

```
<meta name="description" content="OSR Zomerschool 2009 "De beste cursussen onder de zon" Ook dit
jaar organiseert OSR opnieuw de OSR Zomerschool. Zoals u van ons gewend bent kunt u ook dit j" />
<meta name="keywords" content=", OSR, Zomerschool, 2009" />
```

Figure 35 – Zomerschool webpage meta data

It is clear to see that the meta description consists of the first few sentences of the text on this page. Also, some keywords have been extracted from this text for the meta keywords. The meta data are not describing the data on the page, they are the same as the data (text) on this page.

This method of handling meta data is not helping the performance of this website in search engines. The meta description and data offer a way for the website owner to enter synonyms and descriptive text that helps search engine performance but which is preferably not visible to the user. This opportunity is currently not taken advantage of.

Another important reason why having proper meta descriptions and keywords set up can be seen in the following picture:

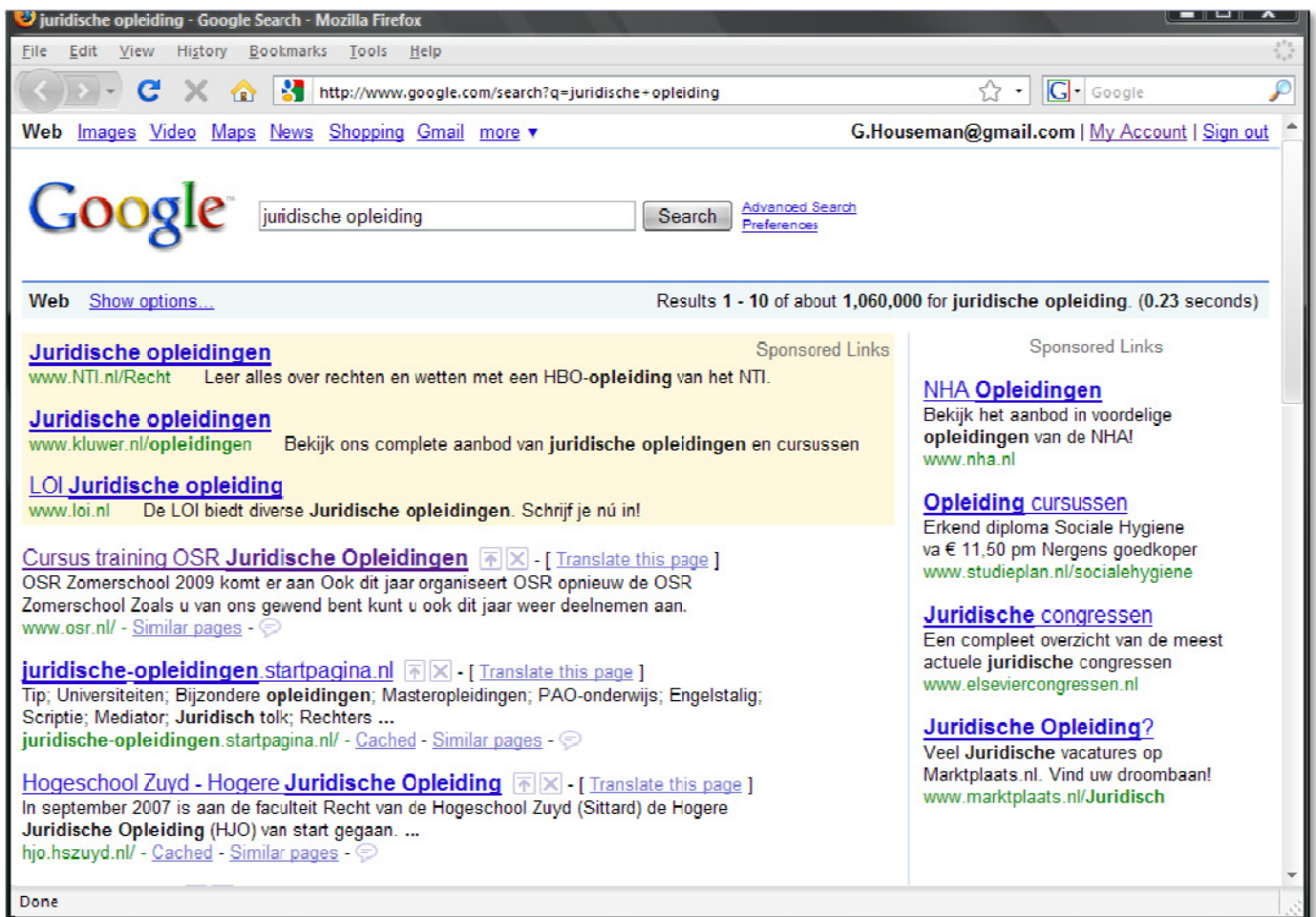


Figure 36 – Bad Google description is wasting awesome position in results

In figure 36 we can see that for the keyword *Juridische Opleidingen* (legal training), OSR.nl is ranked first in the organic search results. This is the best position possible and therefore it's a shame that there is not a better description of the core business of OSR. Now there's an unfinished description of the summer school course.

During a meeting with Yellowmind I discussed this behaviour of the meta data with Alan Linnenbank, an expert of Yellowmind. He was able to tell me that this behaviour is caused by an out-dated version of the content management system (CMS) that OSR is currently using. This CMS does not offer the possibility to specify meta data per web page and because every web page needs some meta data, the CMS uses the titles and first pieces of body text on a web page as meta data. This also explains why the meta data on the homepage change every time there is a new news item posted. Linnenbank confirmed that Yellowmind has an updated version of the CMS ready which solves this problem.

Structural lay-out

The summer school webpage is nicely using anchor text links in the day schedules for 27th and 28th of August (see figure 34, page 78). Throughout the website course overviews and descriptions are displayed. Especially larger course overviews can be structured in a better way. For an example, see figure 37 below.

Personen- en familierecht	
Een echtscheiding hakt diep in op een mensenleven. U kunt als advocaat een rol van betekenis spelen in het leven van uw cliënt. Het is dan wel zaak dat u goed bent voorbereid. OSR heeft daarom een ruim aanbod aan cursussen op het gebied van het echtscheidingsrecht, huwelijksvermogensrecht en alimentatierekenen. Uiteraard kunt u ook bij ons terecht voor actualiteitscursussen personen- en familierecht of bijzondere cursussen, zoals erfrecht.	
Cursusaanbod Personen- en familierecht	Eerstvolgende startdatum:
Behandeling van (eenvoudige) fiscale zaken van particuliere cliënten *	17/06/2009
Actualiteiten Familie- en Jeugdrecht **a	24/06/2009
Praktijkspecial: Alimentatierekenen DGA en de zelfstandig ondernemer ****	25/06/2009
Verdiepingscursus Erfrecht NIEUW 2009 **	26/06/2009
Basiscursus Jeugdrecht *	30/06/2009
Alimentatierekenen: hoeveel verdienen, hoeveel krijgen? *	05/10/2009
Praktijkspecial: Het nieuw scheidingsrecht, een feit? NIEUW 2009 **	15/10/2009
Basiscursus Huwelijksvermogensrecht en scheiding: hebben en krijgen *	02/11/2009
Echtscheidingszaak: een goed begin is het hele werk *	06/11/2009
Verhaal van Bijstand **a	09/11/2009
Piketcursus Psychiatrisch Patiëntenrecht *	17/11/2009
Rechten en plichten in het onderwijs Nieuw 2009 **	24/11/2009
Huwelijksvermogensrecht en echtscheiding **	26/11/2009
Erfrecht in de advocatenpraktijk *	30/11/2009
Echtscheiding en Pensioen **	08/12/2009
Verdiepingscursus Familieprocesrecht ***	15/12/2009
Praktijkspecial: Jaarrekeninglezers in de echtscheidingspraktijk ***	16/12/2009
De advocaat en internationale echtscheidingen *	17/12/2009
Internationale Kinderontvoering VERNIEUW 2009	Aankondiging
Actualiteiten IPR in de familierechtpraktijk a	Aankondiging
Cursusaanbod Juridische School (meer informatie)	Eerstvolgende startdatum:
Beschermingsbewind in de praktijk	01/09/2009

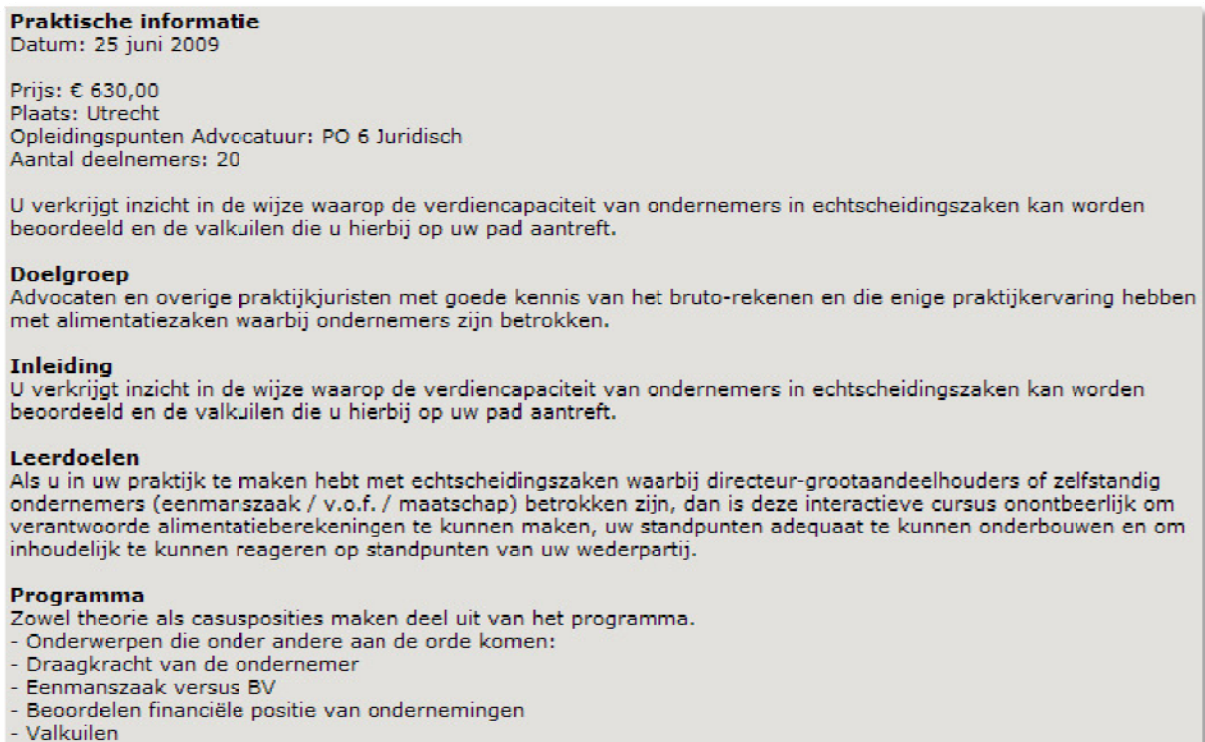
Figure 37 – Course overview

This large course overview is unattractive for people browsing a website. Quickly scanning the page is difficult because the texts do not stand out.

This ‘problem’ occurs anywhere on the website where there is a large list of courses. In such cases, lack of distinguishing textual elements make it more difficult for a user to quickly grasp the information presented. A good thing however is that all the course names link to a page deeper in the website. The course names are of course very descriptive and as such make excellent anchor text links.

Writing for web

It seems there are some differences in the way courses are described on the website. In the summer school example (figure 34, page 78) are some elements of web writing that are well used. The anchor links for example. The following is an example of a course description that could be written better.



Praktische informatie
Datum: 25 juni 2009

Prijs: € 630,00
Plaats: Utrecht
Opleidingspunten Advocatuur: PO 6 Juridisch
Aantal deelnemers: 20

U verkrijgt inzicht in de wijze waarop de verdien capaciteit van ondernemers in echtscheidingszaken kan worden beoordeeld en de valkuilen die u hierbij op uw pad aantreft.

Doelgroep
Advocaten en overige praktijkjuristen met goede kennis van het bruto-rekenen en die enige praktijkervaring hebben met alimentatiezaken waarbij ondernemers zijn betrokken.

Inleiding
U verkrijgt inzicht in de wijze waarop de verdien capaciteit van ondernemers in echtscheidingszaken kan worden beoordeeld en de valkuilen die u hierbij op uw pad aantreft.

Leerdoelen
Als u in uw praktijk te maken hebt met echtscheidingszaken waarbij directeur-grotaandeelhouders of zelfstandig ondernemers (eenmanszaak / v.o.f. / maatschap) betrokken zijn, dan is deze interactieve cursus onontbeerlijk om verantwoorde alimentatieberekeningen te kunnen maken, uw standpunten adequaat te kunnen onderbouwen en om inhoudelijk te kunnen reageren op standpunten van uw wederpartij.

Programma
Zowel theorie als casusposities maken deel uit van het programma.

- Onderwerpen die onder andere aan de orde komen:
- Draagkracht van de ondernemer
- Eenmanszaak versus BV
- Beoordelen financiële positie van ondernemingen
- Valkuilen

Figure 38 – example of ‘bad’ web writing

Terms such as target group (*doelgroep*), introduction (*inleiding*), learning objectives (*leerdoelen*), and Programme (*programma*) are so general that they do not add much

to the text. Of course they indicate where what information can be found but this can be done in a more descriptive way.

5.3.2 Indexing www.osr.nl (Link component)

Google does encounter many problems indexing the website of OSR since the robots.txt file has been reconfigured. When we draw information from Google's Webmaster tools we can see the following analysis:

Web crawl errors		Last updated Jun 3, 2009
Errors for URLs in Sitemaps	✓ 0 --	
HTTP errors	⚠ 3 Details »	
Not found	⚠ 23 Details »	
URLs not followed	✓ 0 --	
URLs restricted by robots.txt	✓ 0 --	
URLs timed out	✓ 0 --	
Unreachable URLs	✓ 0 --	
Total:	26	

Figure 39 – Web crawl errors in Google's webmaster tools

The number of unreachable URLs, and URLs restricted by Robots.txt is both 0. This means that Google has no problem at all indexing the website. All pages can be found by means of Google's search engine.

5.3.3 Analysing the popularity of www.osr.nl

As explained in the theoretical framework, the popularity component gives an insight into how popular a website is. Popular in this sense means how many websites are linking to the website in question. The more websites linking to osr.nl the better and more relevant websites linking to it would be even better than that. I have used

Google's search engine to provide me with this amount on two different days. The first day was on 24th of May 2009, the second day was on 3rd of June 2009. On the following page are the results.

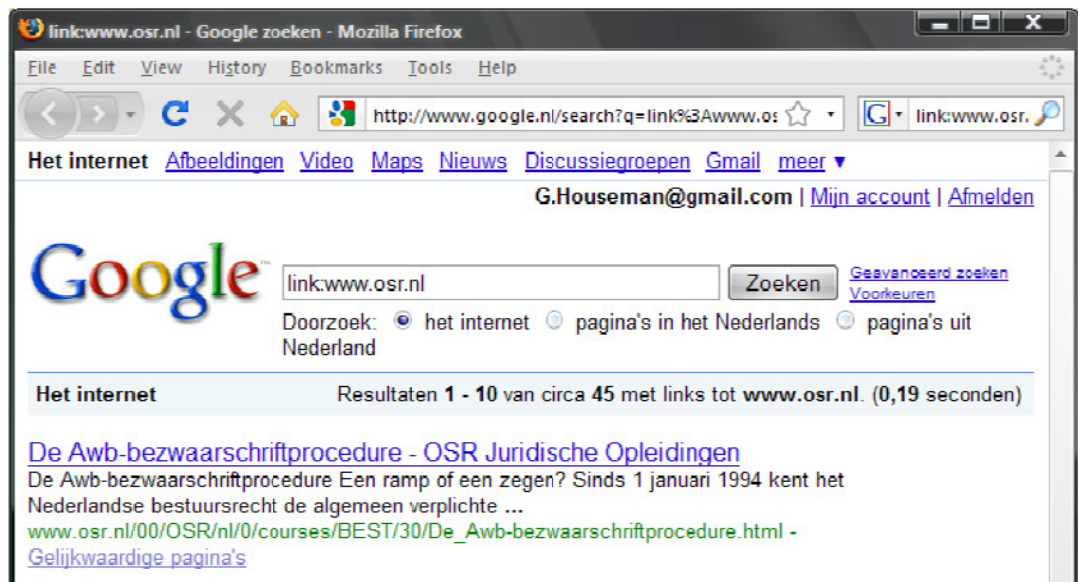


Figure 40 – Link popularity of OSR.nl on the 24th of May 2009



Figure 41 – Link popularity of OSR.nl on the 3rd of June 2009

In the period of the 24th of May until the 3rd of June, 11 more websites started to link to OSR.nl. It is quite possible that additional external parties added OSR to their website. It is also possible that extra links of OSR itself are added to this list. Of course OSR adds new pages to its website. According to Google's webmaster tools, OSR has currently 774 incoming links.

Paid partnership

OSR has a paid subscription to www.recht.nl where new courses of OSR are published automatically. Recht.nl is a website on which news is published about everything about law and regulations in the Netherlands. Amongst others it provides an agenda relevant for lawyers and solicitors and on this agenda the courses of OSR are published. Basically OSR has partnered with Recht.nl to draw more visitors to its website. The links on Recht.nl direct straight to the corresponding webpage about the specific course mentioned. This set up is of course meant to directly drive sales but indirectly it also helps the overall link popularity of OSR.nl

Spreading the news

Other than the partnership with Recht.nl, OSR has not purposefully structured activities to boost link popularity. Means such as press releases and/or white papers, even though they have a large group of highly educated employees, have not been deployed. For example, a white paper about a piece of legislation which is about to be passed, would be a good way to spread news, information, and (commercially tailored) knowledge through the Internet. When embedding a relevant URL in such digital documents, those documents turn into traffic drivers themselves. By spreading such high quality content, chances are that the content is again spread by the public. And, according to Jeff Jarvis (Jarvis, 2009 p. 38) "distribution by the public can be more effective and certainly a lot cheaper than marketing to attract an audience." After all, if a document is sent to a person by someone that person knows, the document is more interesting than when it is sent by a commercial organisation. Somehow the document is worth the read, because it is so good, the person totally agrees or disagrees, or any other reason. Fact is that the work is 'recommended' by a peer.

Legal “Linkbuilding 2.0”

Not many firms are already familiar with the possibilities that social media offer. Actively using Facebook, Twitter, Hyves, LinkedIN, et cetera to spread knowledge and gain attention is not an activity many companies undertake. A lot of people use it privately but for business, many do not yet see its potential. OSR is no exception to this rule. Perhaps also because of the sensitivity around social media concerning privacy or competition sensitivity this has not been picked up. It is of course still a very new way of spreading information and gaining link popularity.

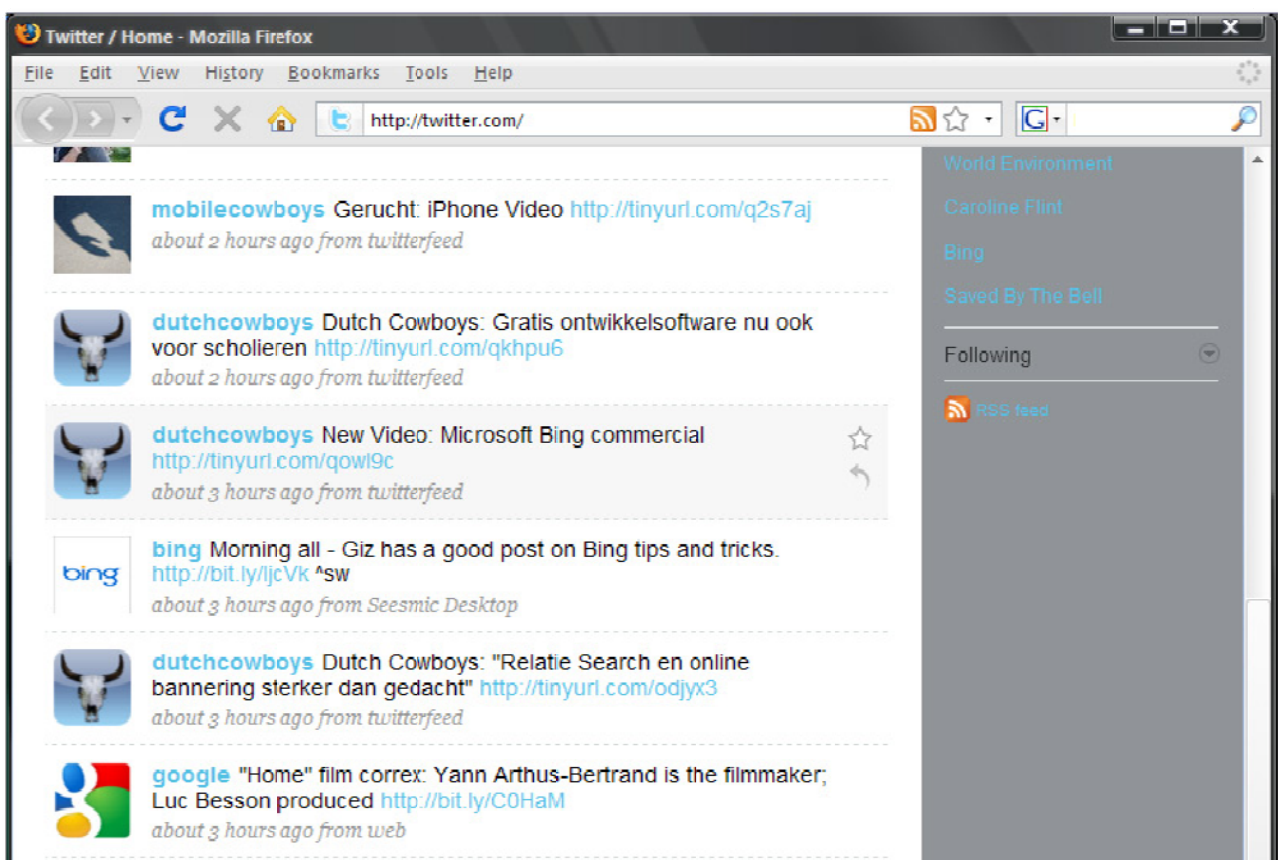


Figure 42 – How organisations spread news through Twitter.

In figure 42 is a screenshot of my personal Twitter webpage. I am following organisations like Mobile Cowboys (www.mobilecowboys.nl), Dutch Cowboys (www.dutchcowboys), Google, and since recently the new search engine of Microsoft called Bing (www.bing.com) also has a Twitter account. I can see their every message and often such messages contain some kind of relevant information.

A company such as OSR could decide to open a Twitter account as a company and use that account to spread relevant news. The trick with Twitter is not to send out too obvious commercial messages in the sense that you want to sell something directly. People do not like that. However, if, as OSR, you find some relevant information about new legislation or an interesting article which could be nice to read for your target group, it could be a good idea to share this knowledge. The more knowledge shared this way, the more people will follow your Twitter updates. This means you are gaining credibility and therefore might just be able to send the occasional message about a new available course. Courses could of course also be combined with a relevant news item.

5.4 Analysis by means of Search Engine Advertising

OSR is currently not performing any form of search engine advertising and therefore I will make an analysis of the possibilities which SEA can offer OSR.

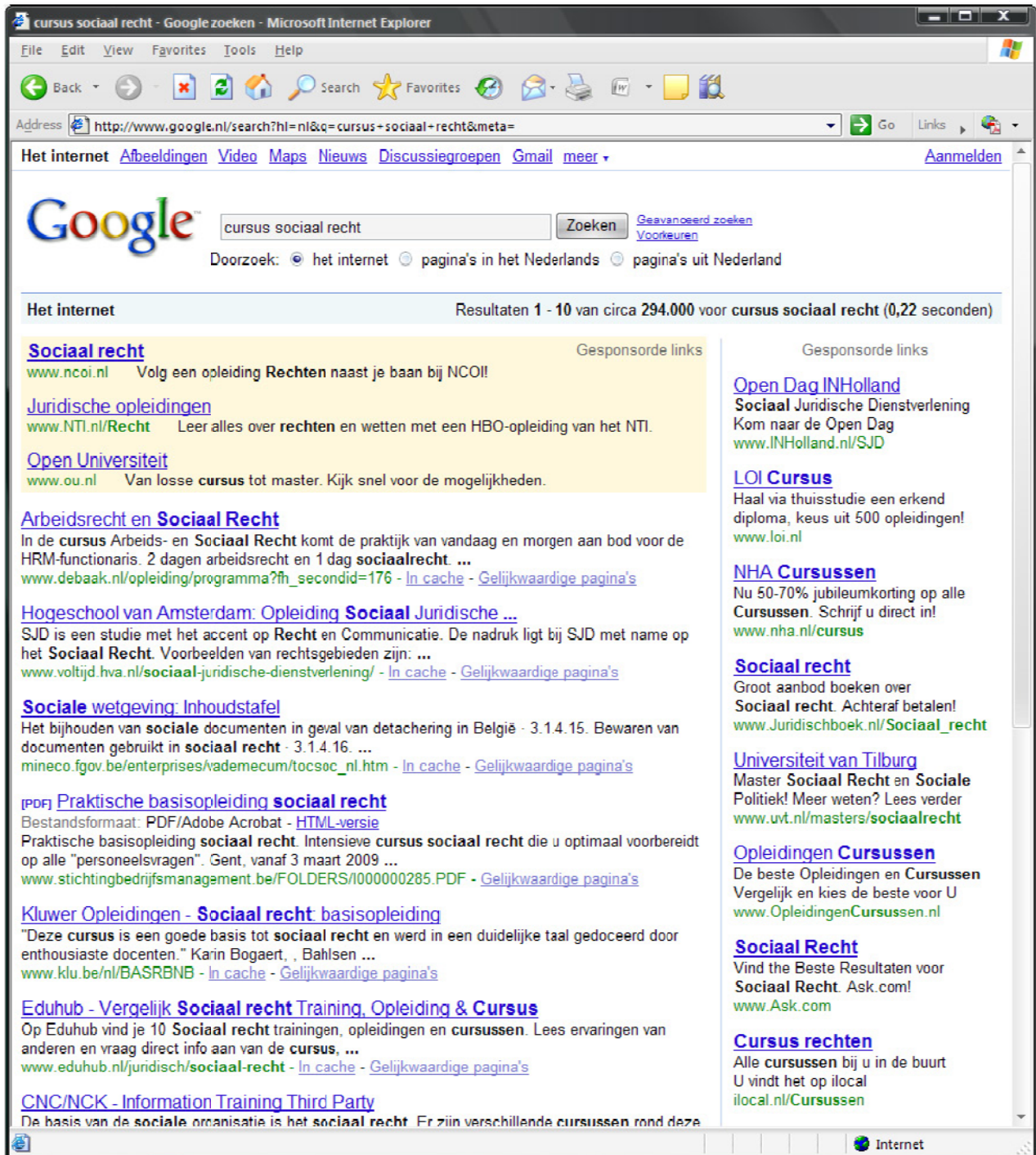


Figure 43 – Sponsored links in Google

In figure 43 (p. 87) we can see that there are many companies advertising on the keyword *cursus sociaal recht*. All 11 advertising spaces have been occupied. Advertising with this keyword will mean that OSR will have to compete with many other companies and this could mean that the CPC (cost per click) will rise. I have already explained that mere CPC is not the only factor determining the final advertising price but competition will definitely impact it. However, there is an opportunity here in the fact that none of the advertisers in this list are specifically advertising to lawyers and solicitors. All advertisers are either universities or large training providers who are targeting people that are looking to further educate themselves in order to achieve a certain degree. The target group of OSR consists of people who have, at a minimum, already obtained their law degree from university. OSR targets people from freshly graduated law students to highly educated, experienced professionals. Because OSR is offering services in this niche market, I see possibilities to prevent competing with more generic educational providers (such as NTI, LOI, and to a lesser extent universities). From a SEA perspective, niche marketing is easier than mass marketing. Because SEA is more effective when it is more relevant, a niche market providing a smaller but more specific set of target groups is more suitable than a mass market.

5.4.1 Keyword Analysis

In order to give an insight into the possibilities that search engine advertising might have to offer OSR, it is possible to use various tools to gain some understanding about how competitive the advertising market for legal services is at the moment. I have already shown that a more general keyword is used a lot by many advertisers (figure 43, p. 87).

Below is a list of keywords retrieved from the OSR.nl website by a keyword Tool of Google's (<http://www.google.com/sktool/#keywords?start=20&site=osr.nl&q=>).

<input type="checkbox"/> Keyword		Monthly searches ↓	Competition	Sugg. bid	Ad/Search share	Extracted from webpage
Keywords related to osr.nl (100)						
<input type="checkbox"/> ontslag		6,600		USD2.48	--	Ontslag op staande voet - OSR Juridisc
<input type="checkbox"/> arbeidsrecht		5,400		USD1.98	--	Outsourcing in het arbeidsrecht - OSR J
<input type="checkbox"/> erfrecht		5,400		USD0.73	--	Verdiepingscursus Erfrecht NIEUW 200
<input type="checkbox"/> ressort		3,500		USD0.46	--	Piketcursus strafrecht (ressort Arnhem)
<input type="checkbox"/> concurrentiebeding		3,500		USD1.19	--	Het Concurrentiebeding - OSR Juridisc
<input type="checkbox"/> arbeidsovereenkomst		3,500		USD0.82	--	De arbeidsovereenkomst: Civiel en Fisc
<input type="checkbox"/> bijstand		2,800		USD0.13	--	Verhaal van Bijstand - OSR Juridische C
<input type="checkbox"/> ontslagrecht		2,300		USD1.81	--	Special: Arbeidsrecht en ontslagrecht in
<input type="checkbox"/> advocatenkantoor		1,800		USD2.31	--	Werken op een advocatenkantoor Introd
<input type="checkbox"/> persoonlijke effectiviteit		1,500		USD5.10	--	Persoonlijke effectiviteit voor juristen - O
<input type="checkbox"/> huurrecht		1,200		USD1.17	--	Huurrecht - OSR Juridische School
<input type="checkbox"/> ondernemer		1,200		USD2.63	--	Praktijkspecial: Alimentatierekenen DG/
<input type="checkbox"/> snellezen		1,000		USD1.28	--	Snellezen voor juristen - OSR Juridische
<input type="checkbox"/> onderhandelen		1,000		USD2.90	--	Mastertraining Harvard Onderhandelen -
<input type="checkbox"/> ontslag op staande voet		1,000		USD2.01	--	Ontslag op staande voet - OSR Juridisc
<input type="checkbox"/> bestuursrecht		1,000		USD1.69	--	Praktisch procederen in het bestuursrec
<input type="checkbox"/> wet ruimtelijke ordening		820		USD0.72	--	Nieuwe Wet Ruimtelijke Ordening - OSF
<input type="checkbox"/> schadevergoeding		660		USD3.57	--	Schadevergoeding in het bestuursrecht
<input type="checkbox"/> telefoneren		660		USD1.06	--	Professioneel telefoneren - OSR Juridis
<input type="checkbox"/> ambtenarenrecht		540		USD2.09	--	Cursusaanbod Ambtenarenrecht - OSR

Figure 44 – List of keywords

This list provides a few keyword suggestions based on the content of the website (see extracted from webpage). This tool also provides the expected number of competitors that are bidding on the keywords. The tool also gives a suggested bid in dollars. It is possible that this tool has not yet been fully optimised for the Dutch market. The most interesting metric in this overview is the number of monthly searches. This gives a good indication whether it would be a good idea to add the keyword to a search engine advertising programme. Of course, the relevance of the keyword to the content of the website is still the most important but this amount of searches gives a good idea about how well the keyword is doing.

When using the Webmaster tools again, we see what the top20 keywords are with which people have visited the OSR website. When I then enter these keywords into Google's Keyword tool (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>), I can expect to get suggestions for alternative keywords, traffic estimates, and cost estimates.

Traffic			
The top 20 queries from which users reached your site, and the percentage of the top 20 queries represented by each click.			
#	%	Query	Position
1	54%	osr	1
2	10%	osr juridische opleidingen	1
3	4%	osr opleidingen	2
4	2%	juridische opleidingen	2
5	2%	osr cursussen	2
6	2%	osr utrecht	2
7	2%	onrechtmatige daad	6
8	2%	artikel 6 18 awb	10
9	1%	juridische opleiding	2
10	1%	cursus burendrecht advocatuur	5
11	1%	aanbestedingsrecht	9
12	1%	osr cursus	2
13	1%	insolventierecht	3
14	1%	finale geschilbeslechting	8
15	1%	penitentiair recht	8
16	1%	cursus awbz	11
17	1%	burendrecht	13
18	<1%	intervisie osr	2
19	<1%	cursus intervisie vso osr	3
20	<1%	cursus alimentatierekenen	18

Last updated May 31, 2009

Figure 45 – Top 20 keywords resulting in a visit to OSR.nl

When entering the top 20 keywords from OSR.nl into the keyword tool of Google, I instantly get some interesting data. As was to be expected with a niche market, many keywords have not been used very often (though there are exceptions of course). Some keywords have a somewhat higher search volume but what perhaps the most interesting finding here is, is that the amount of expected competition is not very high for most keywords. See figure 46 on page 91.

The screenshot shows the Google AdWords Keyword Tool interface in a Mozilla Firefox browser. The search term is 'advocaat opleiding'. The results table lists 30 suggested keywords with their respective metrics and a 'Toevoegen' (Add) button for each.

Keyword	Competition	Search Volume	Cost Per Click (CPC)	Quality Score	Action
advocaat opleidingen	Niet genoeg gegevens	36			Toevoegen
opleidingen advocatuur	Niet genoeg gegevens	12			Toevoegen
cursus juridisch	320	390			Toevoegen
cursussen juridisch	73	58			Toevoegen
advocaten opleidingen	Niet genoeg gegevens	28			Toevoegen
advocatuur	12.100	9.900			Toevoegen
advocatuur opleiding	110	91			Toevoegen
belastingrecht	6.600	5.400			Toevoegen
coachopleiding	320	320			Toevoegen
juridische banen	1.600	1.300			Toevoegen
nederlands recht	4.400	4.400			Toevoegen
jurist	33.100	201.000			Toevoegen
juridische rechtshulp	Niet genoeg gegevens	36			Toevoegen
bureau voor rechtshulp	1.900	2.400			Toevoegen
modelcontracten	590	720			Toevoegen
voorbeeldcontracten	170	210			Toevoegen
juristen	14.800	49.500			Toevoegen
rechtshulp	33.100	33.100			Toevoegen
juridische mbo	720	590			Toevoegen
juridische vraag	170	210			Toevoegen
successierechten	27.100	27.100			Toevoegen
juridische hogeschool	590	720			Toevoegen
cursus	823.000	1.000.000			Toevoegen
fiscaal opleiding	390	390			Toevoegen
advocaten opleiding	210	170			Toevoegen
bestuursrecht	22.200	18.100			Toevoegen
advocaat opleiding	720	720			Toevoegen
huurrecht	8.100	8.100			Toevoegen
jurisprudentie	40.500	33.100			Toevoegen
cassatie advocaat	210	210			Toevoegen
vreemdelingenrecht	6.600	6.600			Toevoegen
onrechtmatige wetgeving	Niet genoeg gegevens	36			Toevoegen
advocatuur strafrecht	58	46			Toevoegen
privaatrecht	9.900	8.100			Toevoegen
juridische recht	Niet genoeg gegevens	110			Toevoegen
hoger beroep	14.800	9.900			Toevoegen

Figure 46 – Suggested keywords based on the top 20 of OSR.nl

In figure 46 is a list of suggested keywords, based on the initial top 20 keywords of OSR.nl. Though many are still quite general, for example, the keyword *cursus* (course) is of course not suitable. But the keyword *advocaat opleiding* (lawyer training) is a useful keyword and it also a keyword which does not have too much

competition yet according this tool. When we enter it into Google, the following results page is displayed:

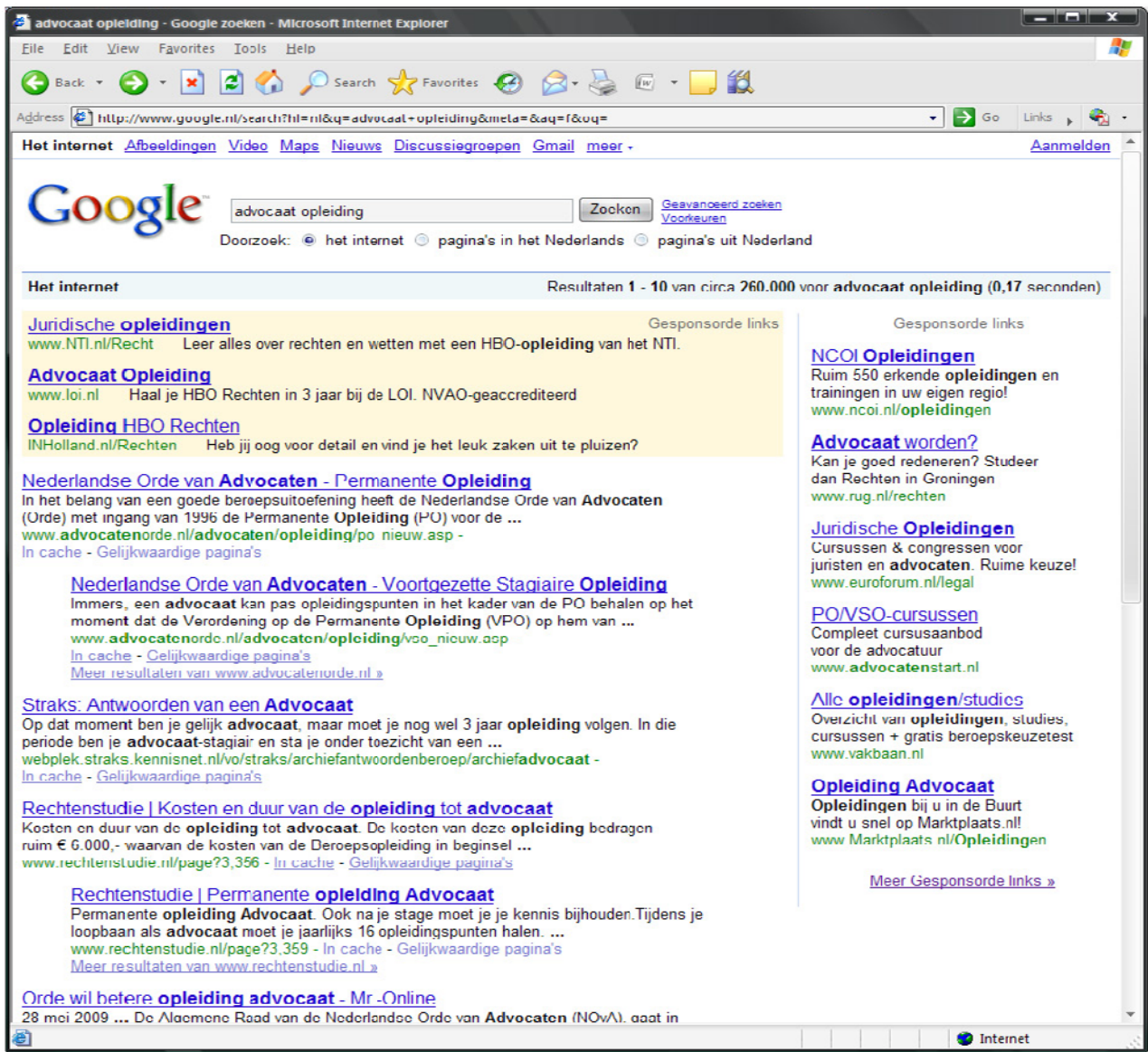


Figure 47 – Results page for *advocaat opleiding*

Looking carefully at this results page, it can be seen that not all advertising spaces have been occupied. Only nine out of eleven spaces have been filled. Remarkable to see here is that there are actually two companies advertising to the same market target group as OSR would. Euroforum and Advocatenstart both have ads targeted specifically at lawyers. This is definitely an opportunity for OSR to join the competition on a relatively small scale and try to outperform the advertisements of the competition.

Throughout the results of the keyword analysis (figure 46, p. 91) there are quite a few keywords of which Google was unable to give a proper estimation of the number of times those keywords were used in a search query. Of course this means that those are not popular keywords. However, if a keyword is not popular it does not mean that it is not effective keywords. Generally, keywords with a low search volume are either irrelevant or so specific that only a very small group of people uses them. Because this is a very specific group, the keyword is highly relevant to them and therefore it can be expected that people using that keyword know exactly what they are looking for. And, if someone knows exactly what he is looking for the chances that that person will perform a certain action once he found what he is looking for are higher than with more general keywords. For such purposes, many companies offering something specific are making use of the so-called *long tail keywords* (see page 53/54 in the Theoretical Framework).

5.4.2 Measuring results with Search Engine Advertising

Because advertising is not free, measuring results is of course very important. As I already explained in the theoretical framework, Adwords allows advertisers to precisely budget their monthly expenses. Refer back to page 50 for more information on that. Adwords allows advertisers also to tweak their campaigns, ad groups, and keyword lists (figure 14, p. 51) based on a number of factors (p. 48). For example, if the CPC of a keyword is becoming too high for the daily budget of an ad group (let's say the CPC is € 2,- and the daily budget is € 10,-, after 5 clicks only on that keyword the daily budget is exceeded and soon the advertisement will not be displayed anymore, denying the other keywords to perform) , the advertiser has several options. He could decide to lower the CPC but then the keyword will not be able to compete with competing companies advertising by means of the same keyword. He could decide to remove the keyword from the ad group and invest the remaining money in the other keywords. This way he risks to lose a keyword with good performance. He could also decide to put the keyword into a new ad group,

specifically designed around that keyword, together with synonyms of that keyword and assign the ad group additional budget. This way the advertiser is competing more strongly with the other advertisers, hoping he will get more clicks. This tactic of course costs the advertiser more money than the other options. Therefore, in any of the three possibilities (there are endless variations to this situation), the advertiser should not only focus on how many clicks a keywords gets, nor only on how much money the keywords cost him, but he should also focus on what kind of traffic the keyword is generating. Is the keyword driving clicks or is it driving sales? An expensive keyword with a lot of clicks and no ‘conversions’ is useless if you want to sell something. This is where the link between the Adwords programme and the Analytics programme becomes so valuable. Analytics, after all, enables and advertiser to measures conversions on his website. For every keyword it is possible to see how many conversions it has generated and Analytics automatically calculates how much this has cost the advertiser.

Aantal klikken	Vertoningen	CTR ?	Gem. CPC ?	Kosten	Gem. pos.	Conv. (veel-per-klik) ?	Kosten / conv. (veel-per-klik) ?	Conv. perc. (veel-per-klik) ?	Conv. (1-per-klik) ?	Kosten / conv. (1-per-klik) ?	Conv. perc. (1-per-klik) ?
364	984.267	0,04%	€ 1,74	€ 634,67	2,5	1	€ 634,67	0,27%	1	€ 634,67	0,27%
254	165.196	0,15%	€ 2,97	€ 753,35	3	2	€ 376,68	0,79%	2	€ 376,68	0,79%

Figure 48 – Adwords + Analytics of MostWare.

In figure 48 we can see statistics gathered by the Google Adwords programme and the conversion data gathered by Analytics. In this example, 364 clicks have led to 1 conversion, resulting in € 634,67 costs per conversion. For another keywords there were 254 clicks, resulting in two conversions which means an average of € 376,68 per conversion. These figures are for a period of one month and for a very generic market.

Another simple but huge benefit is the possibility of running multiple advertisements simultaneously. Google will display the advertisements in turns and measure which ad is performing better than the others. This is also briefly explained on p. 56 of the theoretical framework.

By writing several ads per ad group, an advertiser can easily find out what text works well and what text does not.

Advertentie	% weergegeven	Aantal klikken ↕	Vertoningen	CTR [?]	Kosten	Conv. (veel- per-klik) [?]	Kosten / conv. (veel- per-klik) [?]	Conv. perc. (veel- per-klik) [?]	Conv. (1-per-klik) [?]	Kosten / conv. (1-per-klik) [?]	Conv. perc. (1-per-klik) [?]
Reacties TGA, nieuw beheer! Nieuw periodiek en interactief beheer van al uw TGA, versien www.mostware.nl	85,76%	26	12.043	0,22%	€ 32,71	0	€ 0,00	0,00%	0	€ 0,00	0,00%
Reacties Database Administratie De bestaande database gereedschap als tool en groep af toe www.mostware.nl	14,24%	7	1.999	0,35%	€ 8,73	0	€ 0,00	0,00%	0	€ 0,00	0,00%

Figure 49 – Two advertisements in Google Adwords

Here are two different advertisements (blurred for competition sensitive reasons) of a Google Adwords ad group. The statistics clearly show that the first advertisement is performing much better than the other one in terms of amount of clicks (26 to 7). For this period, no conversions have been measured but this is however kept track of. This overview provides the search engine marketer with an instant idea of the status of the ads.

5.5 How can Affiliate Marketing help OSR?

I visited the Dialoog Marketing Vakbeurs (*Dialogue Marketing fair*) in Utrecht (www.tcd.nl) on the 22nd and 23rd of April 2009 and there I spoke to a representative of ZanoX, a large international affiliate marketer (<http://www.zanox.com/nl/>). After I explained the type of business of OSR and the way visitors of the website of OSR can book a legal course, the representative told me that B2B affiliate marketing is not yet developed and for a niche market such as that of OSR, a successful affiliate marketing programme would be really difficult to achieve. The representative told me that affiliate marketing is very much focused on web shops and websites where a direct transaction takes place. Booking a course might seem like a direct transaction but actually only a reservation is made. No money is transferred yet and so technically a sale has not taken place yet. This is only the case when the customer has paid the due amount.

On the same fair, I also spoke to Paul Schoenmakers, CEO of LeadMedia BV. He gave a presentation about affiliate marketing (which can be found on this website: <http://www.leadmedia.nl/affiliate-marketing-succes/>). After the presentation I approached him with the same questions I asked to the Zanox representative. Mr Schoenmakers was as clear as the Zanox representative and said that affiliate marketing currently is probably not the right tool for OSR to increase sales.

5.5.1 Why should OSR still consider it?

Even though several experts in the field told me that, currently, the business of OSR is not suitable for affiliate marketing it is in the end a matter of time before B2B affiliate marketing gains more momentum. As (Guise, 2008) already pointed out, B2B affiliate marketing should go beyond spending budget only building awareness and focus on driving leads and sales. For a semi-transactional website such as that of OSR (no money is transferred but a course is definitely immediately booked) and with the average course price of € 500,-, affiliate marketing should for some specialised parties be interesting. Maybe the business potential is not big enough for a professional affiliate network (Daisycon, M4N, Zanox, et cetera) to consider but for OSR it could be interesting.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

There are several methods discussed in detail which OSR can deploy in order to operate more visibly online. I have made clear that to operate visibly online means to be able to be found online. Search engines are the portals to all the content on the Internet and Google is the biggest and best portal to do this. For any company it is important to attract visitors to its website and the best way to do this is to have visitors find your site. The most important and valuable concept that is mentioned several times in this document is *relevance*. In the enormity of the Internet, relevance is what determines what we find when we are looking for something, or someone. How relevant is a website to my search query? How satisfied am I with the search results I am presented with? Modern search technology has enabled such questions to be answered in less than seconds. For OSR it is very important as well to be findable. Internet usage will continue to increase in every way imaginable. Not anticipating on this would be a mistake. Especially because OSR is actually offering its visitors the possibility to book a course through its website, it is vital to continue to improve search engine performance. After all, the target groups of OSR will become more and more computer-savvy and more relevant visitors mean more sales. Also, in the international benchmark it can be seen that foreign comparable organisations to OSR are already moving towards more online content. Companies in England and Germany are already offering accredited online course material. They are doing this through video and audio which the customer can use as often as he pleases. This is a totally different way of providing courses compared to the classical method of OSR of gathering a group of people in a class room and giving a lecture by one or more specialists. If OSR wants to continue to grow its business through its online marketing channel then it has to operate more visibly. To be able to do this, I have written the following recommendations.

6.1 Recommendations for OSR to operate more visibly

How can OSR Juridische Opleidingen operate online more visibly to its target groups?

This is the foundational question to this thesis and there are several answers to this question. For each of the answers I will indicate whether I think it is a *must have* or a *nice to have* answer. Obviously, the best would be to follow all my recommendations but I believe it is a good idea to prioritise the answers because some are more vital to the ‘solving’ the research question than others.

6.1.1 Optimise!

A *must have* to answering the research question is definitely optimising the current website for search engines. There is much that can be done to make the website appear on more results pages in Google than currently is the case. At least someone at the Marketing & Communication department of OSR should be able to manipulate the meta data of every page through a simple interface in the CMS system. As course information is often provided by teachers and/or course managers of OSR it would be even better if they would already specify what the exact contents of the course are. After all, they are the real experts on the subject matter of a course and they should know best which words best describe the content of a course. Part of this recommendation is also that OSR will start using the various keyword tools that are available to come up with synonyms of important keywords. I believe that this will also give insight into the whole search engine process to employees of OSR. It will increase their understanding of the importance of search engines to the success of online operations.

6.1.2 Write for web, properly

Informing the people responsible for the content on the website of OSR, and the course contents specifically, of how to write texts specifically for website use could also benefit the optimisation purposes. Making people aware of how visitors of the website generally visit the website (through a search engine directly to the course content, not through the home page), and as such why well written course descriptions, well written meta data, and the incorporation of synonyms in the body text, along with proper use of titles and subtitles, will most definitely help. As the Marketing & Communication department is in the end responsible for the content of the website but does not have all the time in the world to check every piece of text being put online, a company-wide training session is definitely something I recommend. I consider it almost a *must have* to inform those people within the company about how their content is used by search engines and so make them aware that their efforts have a direct impact on the performance of the website and as such on sales. I would recommend the development of a web content policy in the form of a document which everyone can use to learn how best to produce an online text. This document should include a clear explanation of how visitors find OSR and why this is important.

6.1.3 Further research link building

Efforts such as the current paid subscription with Recht.nl are a good initiative and I think there should be more possibilities in this field. Many of the teachers of OSR work for law firms or are independent lawyers (or solicitors). As such, these people must have access to their company's website (or their own) and they should be able to link to the website of OSR or even to their specific course page. This will make their website more relevant because they have additional information to offer and it will also benefit OSR. For teachers, I can imagine it can also be a matter of prestige if they are able to say that they are lecturer at OSR. After all, we are talking about a highly educated target group and for a lawyer to be able to teach other lawyers he must really be a specialist. I would recommend that OSR would invest time in finding possible partners for this purpose, both internally (lecturers working for OSR) as

externally (parties such as Recht.nl). A link building strategy is almost a *must have* because it is very useful for anyone within the organisation of OSR to be aware of its importance. I think that if everyone of OSR would know why such links are important, there would be many people providing possible partner websites to share links with. Also I think that if the course managers of OSR would be aware of this, they would be able to provide a lot of websites of all their lecturers and their companies. Obtaining incoming links from those highly specialised websites (they are law firms after all) will not hurt the link popularity of OSR at all.

In the same context as link building I recommend considering the affiliate marketing possibilities as well. I expect it will be difficult for OSR to find an affiliate marketing network that can help find publishers willing to advertise for OSR but nonetheless OSR can contact parties independently and try to work out a deal. Despite the fact that I expect it to be difficult to find a network willing to help, I do recommend starting with trying to find such a network. Affiliate marketing has some intricacies which are difficult to manage for a company such as OSR. Mainly determining the payment model and then registering statistics in order to correctly pay the affiliates is quite difficult. Affiliate networks are specialised in this.

6.1.4 Try Adwords

As I explained in the analysis chapter, an Adwords programme can be started for only a small fee. Because OSR does not have any experience with advertising using such a programme I recommend starting with a very small budget and just seeing how it works. In the analysis chapter I also showed how the best performing keywords *currently* generating traffic to the website can be used to get more suggested keywords which in turn can be put into an Adwords campaign. OSR can slowly learn this technique and experiment with it. Important here is that the concept of finding highly relevant keywords with low competition is clear and that people within the organisation understand this. Adwords is a process that needs regular maintenance, especially with bigger accounts, and when it is new to an organisation it especially important to keep track of what is happening. I do not recommend that OSR

outsources the Adwords activities yet to a specialised bureau. This is often expensive and another disadvantage is that OSR does not gain any knowledge about the programme and how it works. Furthermore, because I recommend starting small, it would be a waste of money to immediately hire a bureau to this work for OSR. In this stage, not being active with Adwords, it is a *nice to have* method.

6.1.5 Look abroad

Though my international benchmark in this dissertation is a very small comparison between a few countries and cultures, it did provide for some interesting findings already. Developments such as in England and, to a lesser extent, in Germany should not be missed by OSR. Offering accredited legal courses through a video presentation or audio file (podcast) is something no other legal training provider in the Netherlands is currently doing! Though it is far, far from the way OSR is used to offer courses and it is perhaps even against the nature of the organisation, it can provide interesting new possibilities. Offering courses through the Internet saves time and costs for locations. It can save OSR time, for example by combining an online and an offline part in a course. I can imagine with two day courses that the first day the ‘students’ prepare at home or at work through the online material. This way they can prepare in their own pace, rehearse the material as often as they want and come to the second day fully prepared. This allows OSR to charge money for a two day course even though there is only one ‘real life’ course day at the OSR premises. This could save money for location rental, and save the lecturers a day which they can spend otherwise. It also allows OSR to leverage its course prices because of the money they save on the first (virtual) day. Another advantage is that the online course materials only have to be manufactured once and then can be reused indefinitely. After all, the lecturer only has to record his session once and upload the video to the website. There it can be played as much as its viewers want. Online course materials can be linked to a student’s account and as such remain available for future reference. I recommend OSR researches these possibilities in more depth. It could prove useful for medium to long term (commercial) strategies.

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Appendix A – Google’s webmaster rules

Google’s webmaster rules:

- *Make a site with a clear hierarchy and text links. Every page should be reachable from at least one static text link.*
- *Offer a site map to your users with links that point to the important parts of your site. If the site map is larger than 100 or so links, you may want to break the site map into separate pages.*
- *Create a useful, information-rich site, and write pages that clearly and accurately describe your content.*
- *Think about the words users would type to find your pages, and make sure that your site actually includes those words within it.*
- *Try to use text instead of images to display important names, content, or links. The Google crawler doesn't recognize text contained in images. If you must use images for textual content, consider using the "ALT" attribute to include a few words of descriptive text.*
- *Make sure that your <title> elements and ALT attributes are descriptive and accurate.*
- *Check for broken links and correct HTML.*
- *If you decide to use dynamic pages (i.e., the URL contains a "?" character), be aware that not every search engine spider crawls dynamic pages as well as static pages. It helps to keep the parameters short and the number of them few.*
- *Keep the links on a given page to a reasonable number (fewer than 100).*
- *Review our image guidelines for best practices on publishing images.*

(Google, 2009c)