.eu identity
The magazine for Europeans on the web

TEDXBRUSSELS.EU

Ideas worth spreading

SEARCH ENGINE SUCCESS
Get your website found online

THE BIG IDEAS GUIDE
.eu websites for innovators

EXPERT ADVICE
Why business blooms on the web
WHAT DO AND HAVE IN COMMON?

The same ambitious pan-European last name

Both Orangina and Louis Vuitton promote their European identity with a .eu domain name. And they’re not the only ones – Panasonic, Dunlop, Gap and many others have also chosen .eu to grow their businesses. It allows them to embrace cultural diversity and express themselves in the official EU languages, in turn increasing their customers’ confidence. So what are you waiting for? If you too want to connect with 500 million Europeans in 27 countries, register your own .eu web address now. For more information, go to www.eurid.eu.
From the Editor in Chief

This edition of .eu Identity is all about innovation and creativity.

Digital strategist William Deckers explains the unique advantages that Internet businesses have over their brick-and-mortar counterparts, while content expert, Anna Borsboom, gives us invaluable advice on Search Engine Optimisation and how you can use it to your business’s advantage.

We also take a closer look at the hidden practicalities behind that next big idea. The TEDxBrussels team reveals what goes into organising this annual ideas-exchange event which brings together thought-leaders from different industries to share, inspire and innovate.

And we go beyond the printed page. This magazine’s free app is available in the iTunes and Google Play app stores, and includes videos and extra content.

Wishing you innovation and inspiration!

Megan Vosloo
Get your concept, invention or product to market with the help of some .eu websites that support innovators and entrepreneurs across Europe.

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**StartSmart**
Inspiring young people to start internationally competitive companies, this online hub offers advice, workshops, conferences and other resources.

[fineststartups.eu](http://fineststartups.eu)

**S’HERTOGENBOSCH, THE NETHERLANDS**

**How to Grow**
This virtual meeting point supports creative companies with knowledge, networking and finance via crowd funding, grants and competitions.

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Submit your great idea to improve an existing medical device or for a completely new product or therapy, through global player Medtronic’s idea website Eureka.

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To stay ahead, you need the best ideas. And to get the best ideas, you need to collaborate. The Innovation Factory provides idea management software that connects ideas, knowledge and people.

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**BERLIN, GERMANY**

**VentureVillage**
Keep up with the latest startup action through VentureVillage, an online news channel reporting on digital innovation across Europe.

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**StartTech Ventures**
Promising ideas and innovative people are what StartTech Ventures invests in through an angel network, seed funding and business incubation.

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This online vehicle for the startup of medical devices and healthcare companies is part of the global medtech giant Medtronic.

[medtroniceureka.eu](http://medtroniceureka.eu)

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IN LOVE WITH IDEAS

The Lovie Awards, sister to the world-famous Webby Awards, are the Internet’s highest honour for the European web. These awards applaud the unique and vibrant nature of Europe’s Internet community – from creative networks and content publishers to cultural and political organisations and bedroom bloggers.

These annual awards reflect the Internet’s growth as a tool for business and everyday lives. With four categories, covering websites, mobile apps, Internet video and online advertising, the judging academy of web experts, business figures, creative celebrities and other Internet professionals review entries for outstanding achievement. Work can be submitted in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.
Beyond brick-and-mortar

5 REASONS WHY THE INTERNET IS THE BEST PLACE FOR YOUR NEXT BIG IDEA
Amidst an uncertain economic climate where, almost daily, there is talk of austerity measures and rising unemployment, the idea of starting your own business might seem daunting. But according to William Deckers, a Belgium-based digital strategist, it is possible to be a successful entrepreneur even in these tough times, if you take your business online. “Like any business, an Internet-based operation has all the benefits of being your own boss, but it also has several advantages over its conventional offline counterparts,” he notes.

1. COST EFFECTIVE
Because you don’t need to consider things like the outfitting, rent, overheads and additional staffing costs that come with a physical store, it is possible to open and maintain an online store on a modest budget. E-commerce websites have relatively low startup costs because, if you choose to, you only have to pay for setting up your domain name and a hosting solution. There are also several affordable (and sometimes free) open source software solutions that you can use to build your actual website.

And even if you already have a brick-and-mortar store, you can still benefit from the Internet.

Deploying an effective online presence – think good Google ranking, added value content, inbound marketing strategy and online advertising – is less expensive than advertising in traditional media and allows you to address a more targeted demographic. You can also easily measure the success of your online marketing efforts and quickly adapt your strategy to improve your sales results.

With online access to the world’s markets, you are free to shop around and source the best quality products for your store, no matter where they are located. And you can do this without extensive travel, from the comfort of your armchair.

About William Deckers
William Deckers is a digital strategist with 15 years of Internet, web marketing and e-commerce experience. He has successful track records in online traffic building and conversion, social media, e-commerce and mobile banking strategies in the financial, travel and hospitality markets, where he has mentored startups on their digital vision and strategy.

2. LARGE POTENTIAL CUSTOMER BASE
In the past, to raise awareness for your business, you might have placed a few advertisements locally to build a name for yourself in the area.
Nowadays, an Internet presence gives your company a global as well as a local audience. Customers from around the world can learn about and purchase your products or services. A large, diverse customer base also has the effect of stabilising your company’s revenue streams. When shoppers in one country are tightening their belts, the others are still spending.

A .eu website in particular promotes the international aspect of online business as it tells prospects and customers that you are a European player operating beyond your national borders. This signal, that you are Europe-based, also reassures those customers worried about delivery costs. Shipping goods within Europe is usually cheaper than shipping from North America or Asia.

3. ALWAYS OPEN FOR BUSINESS
The World Wide Web operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With an Internet store, you have the ability to maintain a virtual shop that never closes and that literally makes money while you sleep.

4. MORE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES
Previously, if you wanted to network and learn from fellow entrepreneurs, your only option was to join the local chamber of commerce. Social media for professionals, like LinkedIn and Viadeo, has taken fellowship to a new level. A businesswoman in Lisbon, Portugal, can now easily swap ideas about marketing and promotional techniques with a businessman in Stockholm, Sweden.

5. INCREASED SALES
In the end, it’s all about, and always about, your bottom line. And, according to a recent Lab42 survey, the Internet is good for that too. Over 65% of consumers say they prefer shopping online to shopping in store.

But why is that? Due to the overwhelmingly large number of different brands all making the same product, consumers find it difficult to decide which is the best to buy. Increasingly they are turning to the Internet to do research and price comparisons before making an actual purchase. And due to the attractive (and often exclusive) online prices, they are purchasing the products online too.

“So if you think your business idea is a winner, don’t let the crisis stand in your way,” William emphasises. “Explore the advantages of building a presence online and your next big idea could become reality.”
In service to nature

EURid SPONSORS 500 RARE TREES IN GERMAN REFORESTATION PROJECT

Comprising less than 1% of forest coverage in Germany and with only isolated occurrences in Austria and France, it’s not surprising that the Wild Service Tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) is one of Europe’s rarest tree species.

Due to the popularity of its timber in years gone by, Service Trees were felled in their hundreds but never replaced, as forest managers preferred to reforest with faster growing varieties instead.

Recently, however, the ecological importance of the Service Tree has been recognised and firm plans are being made to reintroduce it to German forests. On 2 November, EURid participated in one such initiative with Nature-fund, sponsoring 500 Service Tree saplings which were planted on unused farmland in Calden, Germany.

ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

The Service Tree may have a mundane-sounding name, but conservationists widely recognise that it has an important role to play in the local environment. A distinctive root system gives it stability, allowing it to flourish even in periods of drought and, crucially, cope with climate change. The tree also provides food and habitat for a multitude of insects and mammals throughout the year, sprouting blossoms in May and June and berries in autumn. Similarly, it is an important host for butterfly larvae, such as those of the Yellow Pale Eggar.

These valuable contributions to bio-diversity make the Service Tree an ideal candidate for a reforestation project and EURid is pleased to contribute towards preserving this valuable species.

"EURid is proud to be the first European registry to have obtained the EMAS registration, which is based on nine objectives and 41 actions over a three-year plan. The reintroduction of the Service Tree to German forests is a small gesture to celebrate the EMAS achievement."

Giovanni Seppia (crouching left), .eu’s environmental champion

EURid planted Service Trees to celebrate its EMAS accreditation. To find out more about our environmental commitment, visit eurid.eu/green.
"Ideas worth spreading" is what the TED organisation is all about. But to spread an idea from one person to another you need more than a slogan. Inspiring ideas also need to be communicated if they are to effect change. In Belgium, this challenge has been undertaken by TEDxBrussels.
Everything begins with an idea. But how do you spread ideas and encourage dialogue that will inspire change and innovation? If you think the answer is Twitter and Facebook, you’re only halfway there. Social media can only take ideas so far. Cue TED, the organisation specifically founded to not only support ideas worth spreading and foster dialogue between people from different industries, with different views, but also to share their ideas with the world.

One of the driving forces behind bringing this concept to Belgium is Samia Lounis, Event Director for TEDxBrussels. For the last four years, the event has brought together thought-leaders and pioneers from diverse fields, including big names such as digital pioneer Steve Wozniak (2012), politician Paddy Ashdown (2011) and music artist Stromae (2010).

During the one-day event, each contributor gets 18 minutes to share their ideas on stage with a seated audience in the form of a talk. For many TED attendees it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to hear the thoughts of an expert they would otherwise never meet. This can give a new, eye-opening perspective on a number of subjects, ranging from politics and technology to philosophy and culture, presented in a way that is digestible and easy to grasp.

Samia is passionate about innovation and new ideas, so she was very pleased when TEDxBrussels was awarded a TED licence in 2009. “It is quite an experience to organise a TEDx event in your own city. I wanted to experience TED in Brussels, at the heart of Europe,” she recalls.
TED, a non-profit organisation, began in 1984 as a conference which brought people together from three worlds - Technology, Entertainment and Design (TED) - to share and spread inspirational ideas.

Since then, its scope has broadened and its reach has grown. Along with annual conferences around the globe, TED now includes the TED Talks video website, the Open Translation Project and TED Conversations, the TED Fellows and TEDx programmes, and the annual TED Prize, which awards one million dollars to a single creative idea that can inspire widespread support.

TEDx events, like TEDxBrussels, are planned and coordinated independently, but strictly adhere to the TED brand and follow the TED model for a local experience.

"Each TEDx event brings different nuances which I personally find very inspiring."

Lara Stein, TED Licencing Director, Founder and Director of TEDx
CONNECTING THE DOTS
Getting the license is one thing, but successfully hosting a day-long event that brings together 2,200 audience members, more than 7,000 remote attendees and 25 speakers from all over the world is another thing altogether.

Assisting Samia in this challenge is an enthusiastic team of event coordinators who work year-round to organise the TEDxBrussels agenda, venue, speakers, sponsors, publicity and a multitude of other tasks.

Samia maintains that the secret to a successful event is communicating clearly to everyone and being able to connect the right dots at the right moment with the right team. “What happens behind the scenes should remain hidden,” she says. “No-one should see the hard work that goes on. It’s our job to make everything look effortless.”

VISUAL, VIDEO, VIRAL
While the logistics of the event itself take up a lot of Samia’s time, her team focuses on creating a buzz about TEDxBrussels online, via publicity centred around their website tedxbrussels.eu. “The website is key to all our communication activities throughout the year – we use it for everything,” Samia explains. By “everything” she means publishing speaker profiles and videos, agenda information, ticket sales, blog posts, social media updates, news snippets, free live streaming and an archive of previous talks.

“With .eu, we can show the importance of the European Union in a simple URL. It contributes to the conversation by showing our angle on Europe,” she observes.

"Connect the right dots at the right moment with the right team."

Samia Lounis, Event Director for TEDxBrussels, tedxbrussels.eu
".eu is the brand for us."

Nicholas Brooke, CEO of ZN and Co-founder of TEDxBrussels

Playing a key role in TEDxBrussels since 2009 is Nicholas Brooke from ZN, a Belgian Internet communications agency. Together with the TEDxBrussels team, ZN manages the event’s online outreach which includes the tedxbrussels.eu website. “At TEDxBrussels we aim to put Brussels on the global map. I consider Brussels to be the capital of Europe, so .eu is really the brand for us,” he says.

Nicholas, who is passionate about engaging people, believes that listening to or watching a TEDx session should be more than a one-way experience. So, for the 2012 event, the team launched the REMIXit competition to encourage active participation from the TEDxBrussels audience.

“We wanted the attendees to use the talks as catalysts to stimulate their imagination. By ‘remixing’ the ideas shared at the 2012 event, they could submit new ideas to the competition website, remixit.eu. We were really impressed at the level of creativity. Making TEDxBrussels even more interactive is something we would like to explore in the future.”

Visit remixit.eu

The competition website, remixit.eu, now serves as a central repository for all the ideas that were sparked by talks. Under the motto “Your idea is worth sharing”, visitors are encouraged to share the ideas through their own social networks on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.
As the big day approaches, a social media team of ten people ramps up the online action using Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. And 48 hours before curtain up, a pool of 50 volunteers takes care of practical tasks ranging from unpacking cardboard boxes to checking technical equipment and coordinating catering staff.

In addition to the attendees seated in the auditorium, TEDxBrussels 2012 could be enjoyed beyond the four walls of the venue via tedxbrussels.eu. Live streaming of the day’s talks generated more than 20,000 views, with a peak of 7,384 simultaneous views.

The live web stream was used by 13 universities across Belgium and three research institutions, namely CERN in Switzerland, the International Space University in France and the Fontys Academy for Creative Industries in the Netherlands. Each campus held their own webcast event showing the live talks. The student associations organised these events themselves and took the initiative to add their own speakers during the coffee and lunch breaks.

Samia’s team also continued their social media outreach during the day – live – generating tens of thousands of followers. Attendees were encouraged to get online using touchscreens located throughout the venue to update their Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts with the ideas they found inspiring.

“Giving people the opportunity to share their ideas is what TEDxBrussels is all about,” Samia enthuses. “And just as ideas never stop, neither do we. We’re already organising TEDxBrussels for next year, to inspire the public and give them something new to think about in 2013.”

TEDxBrussels 2012 was hosted on 12 November. Visit tedxbrussels.eu for more information on the 2013 event.

“My secret to organising an event on the scale of TEDxBrussels is simple: stay calm and check, and re-check, everything.”

Yvette Mukenge, Organiser of TEDxBrussels

“It takes a core team of four people an entire year to make TEDxBrussels happen,” Yvette explains. “We start organising next year’s event the very next day. We need to. It takes a year to sort out all the logistics. We had already picked the date for the 2013 event, 28 October, before TEDxBrussels 2012 was over and we announced it at the end of the show.”
Co-founder and CEO of the social media curator Storify, Xavier Damman, experienced TEDxBrussels 2012 as one of the 25 speakers to talk for precisely 18 minutes.

“My goal was to hopefully change someone’s mind about how they look at the world. The hardest thing was to decide what to say – I had too many ideas!”

Xavier’s inspiration was that in today’s world everyone is connected beyond boundaries, so talking about global ideas at a local TEDx event came naturally to him.

“I am a Belgian living in California – but the beauty is that you can keep your culture while also participating in this global system. Increasingly, we need to think global but act local.”
Get started online: as easy as 123

For the last two years, Donald has been crafting handmade wooden children’s toys. Mothers with young children especially like his work. Donald knows that he can make a good living if he can grow his business. He also knows that the Internet is the perfect place for him to expand, because he can reach many more customers while keeping his costs down. He even knows the domain name he wants for his website – woodfest.eu. The only thing he doesn’t know is how to get started.

Like Donald, many entrepreneurs are experts in their fields but know little about creating an online presence for their business. The truth is that, whether Donald sets up his website by getting his geeky brother Daniel to build it for him or whether he decides to pay an agency to design it from scratch, all websites start the same way – with the registration of a domain name. And this can be done by anyone. Three steps are all it takes:

1. CHECK IF THE DOMAIN NAME IS AVAILABLE
   For .eu, type your chosen domain name into the search box on the whois.eu website to see if it is available. If it is, you’re ready for step two. If it isn’t, you might want to have some alternative names up your sleeve.

2. PICK A REGISTRAR
   No matter which name you’ve decided on or extension you want – .be, .eu, .com or .org – only a registrar can register it for you. Registrars are accredited agents that register domain names on behalf of their customers. To see the list of registrars accredited for .eu domain names, visit link.eurid.eu/list.

Registrars usually offer a variety of services, so they can help you get a website up and running as well as register your domain name. Service package prices vary from registrar to registrar, depending on which registrar you use and what, if any, extra services you choose, like webhosting or additional email addresses.
3. REGISTER YOUR NAME
Once you’ve chosen a registrar, fill in your contact – and credit card – details and click the register button. That’s it. You are now the proud owner of the seed of your company’s online presence.

Tips for choosing a registrar

Customer service
Choose a registrar that offers the kind of customer service you need. Do you want to be able to reach them 24/7 or only during business hours? Consider where the registrar is located, as time zones and national holidays might make it difficult to get problems solved. Can you reach them by phone or by email? You want to know that someone will answer your questions in a timely manner.

Data recovery
Check that the registrar company has a good backup system and procedures for data recovery in case of failure. The last thing you need is for your website to disappear.

Privacy
Your registrar should protect your privacy. They will keep your name and address in their records, but not necessarily in the searchable public WHOIS database. This way, you will avoid spam email.

Next time
Now that he’s the owner of woodfest.eu, what will Donald do next? The five things you need to consider before building a website.
At .eu, we work in the 23 official languages of the European Union and across 27 countries, so we understand the importance of being able to express yourself online in your mother tongue.

In a recent study, we worked with UNESCO to evaluate how multilingual the Internet is and, in particular, how the use of domain names made up of characters from non-Latin scripts such as Arabic, Cyrillic and Korean – called Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs) – is progressing.

The results, compiled in a report titled the “EURid-UNESCO World report on IDN deployment”, reveal that IDNs have a vital role to play in growing the use of local languages online.

Location influences character choice

When it comes to .eu Internationalised Domain Names, there is a strong link between where domain name holders are located in Europe and the characters they use in their IDN registrations.

The most recent statistics show that, for example, 46% of registrations are from Germany and the two most popular IDN characters are ü (in 13 341 domains) and ä (in 12 655 domains), both of which are frequently found in German words.

For 75% of Greek .eu IDNs, the domain name holder is located in Greece, and Bulgaria’s share of Cyrillic script .eu IDNs is more than double that of the next most popular, Germany.*

.eu launched Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs) in December 2009.

because there is a strong correlation between the use of IDNs and local content.

**HOW DO WE KNOW THIS?**

Using data drawn from 90% of the world’s top-level domains (TLDs) and case studies from Egypt, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the report assesses the current level of IDN use in these countries. It also addresses deployment experiences and reviews the links between local languages and IDN uptake. In addition to establishing a link between online multilingualism and IDNs, we found that there are practical reasons inhibiting the better use of IDNs including:

- The handling of IDNs in browsers, email packages and popular websites, which leads to an unsatisfactory or inconsistent user experience.
- Local registrar bases which are not large enough to promote the use of local IDN TLDs.
- Different cultural and regional factors such as local-language web content, broadband penetration, digital literacy and market size.

Putting these issues aside, it is encouraging to note that there is keen interest in being able to use local languages online. At least 3.5 million IDN registrations have been carried out within two years of IDNs becoming available worldwide. Countries showing this enthusiasm include the Russian Federation and the Republic of Korea, which together have ensured approximately 1 million IDN registrations so far.

For the full report, visit link.eurid.eu/insights.
Even though you take precautions to prevent disasters, sometimes they just cannot be avoided. In those cases, it’s critical to have a concrete plan that will get you back on your feet as quickly as possible.

That is why EURid has a detailed Business Continuity Plan (BCP) that outlines the steps we take in the event of an emergency that threatens the availability of – or the infrastructure behind – the more than 3.5 million registered .eu domain names.

In charge of maintaining and executing the plan – which covers eventualities from a plane crash into our headquarters to a simple office power cut – are EURid’s Operations and Systems Manager Dirk Jumpertz and his cross-departmental BCP team.

“Our Business Continuity Plan is a set of specific instructions, measures and procedures that are triggered when .eu’s availability on the Internet is jeopardised by certain predefined criteria,” Dirk explains. “These criteria typically translate into any potentially serious issue with our technical infrastructure that could result in total or partial service unavailability. Naturally, we design our architecture in such a way as to minimise the impact of technical failure but this does not rule out us facing major external threats.”

In order to be prepared for these calamities, Dirk regularly tests the resilience of EURid’s BCP plan by running comprehensive exercises. By simulating a disaster, a BCP exercise tests and trains the people who have to execute the plan and allows the team to evaluate its validity. A plan drawn up some time ago becomes outdated as the .eu infrastructure is upgraded, new developments are put in place or BCP team members move to new jobs.

Dirk further explains: “We want to simulate reality as much as possible during an exercise but, as with a fire drill, we don’t really want to set the house on fire. In other words, during our regular BCP exercises we make sure we do not lose any data or even increase the chance of doing so.”

An independent party audits all of EURid’s BCP exercises and checks that services are indeed restored within the schedules defined in the plans. After a successful exercise, the auditor will debrief all parties involved and validate EURid’s BCP readiness. Dirk and his team also perform internal audits to identify issues that may impact EURid’s busi-
ness continuity. Where needed, they recommend upgrades to procedures and technical solutions to ensure that the high standards of EURid’s business continuity plan are maintained.

**EURID’S 2012 BCP EXERCISE**

This past December, we tested the business continuity awareness of our .eu registrars to check whether they had properly implemented the disaster recovery guidelines we recommend.

We did this by halting abruptly the registrar-centric applications in our data centre in Amsterdam on 12 December 2012 at precisely 12:12 CET. After this simulated disaster, we started the registrar-centric applications in our data centre in Brussels and updated the DNS pointers for the Fully Qualified Domain Names (FQDN*) of these services. Within 15 minutes, the majority of registrars followed the switch and were connecting to the Belgian data centre. After approximately 90 minutes we repeated this procedure to return to the Amsterdam data centre.

While the exercise was in progress, we checked for connection attempts to our Dutch data centre to verify whether our registrars were using FQDNs for their critical systems as our best practices suggest.

The exercise was a success: the switch happened within the foreseen timing and the majority of registrars clearly followed the change in DNS – and so experienced a maximal interruption of only 15 minutes. The report of Pricewaterhouse Coopers, the external auditor for this exercise, also clearly showed a successful switchover.

We did notice, though, that more registrars need to be prepared for our Business Continuity Plan. As such, we will improve the documentation available to our registrar community so they can adapt their infrastructure as soon as possible.

* FQDN or Fully Qualified Domain Name is the name of a system as it is referred to on the Internet. FQDNs resolve into IP addresses. For example, EURid’s EPP server has epp.registry.eu as FQDN. When connecting to our EPP server, the DNS system will pinpoint the server’s exact location and look up the corresponding IP address to establish a connection.
Anna Borsboom, in front of ‘EYE’, the new film museum in Amsterdam
Getting your website found online

As a web entrepreneur, you want your website to rank high in search engines that drive hordes of potential clients your way. But the competition is brutal and there is no magic formula for success. What to do? The answer is SEO.

SEO, short for Search Engine Optimization, is the technique used to improve your website's position in search engine results. Getting your site to show among the top results for a search query is critical, considering that over 90% of people don't bother looking beyond the first SERP (Search Engine Results Page) and that one in two visitors end up on a website through a search engine.

Because a good ranking is key to online success, investing in SEO is vital. And invest is the right word, because it's not a quick fix. Technical SEO, the optimisation of your programming code, will definitely give your website a boost, but in the world of smart search engines, optimising your content is at least as important to ensure a good ranking and, ultimately, conversions.

That's why .eu Identity spoke to Anna Borsboom, content strategist at Le Lab in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, to discuss SEO in today's Internet and how you can make it work for your business.

.eu Identity: How should you tackle SEO? Are the rules the same for everyone or does your approach depend on the size of your website?

Anna Borsboom: There was a time when websites with lots of pages used to rank higher, but that has changed considerably. Today, the ranking of a website, and of specific pages, depends much more on the relevance and trustworthiness of the content. As the focus has shifted more
Search Engine Optimisation — SEO — may seem like alchemy to the uninitiated. But there is a science to it. Search engines reward pages with the right combination of ranking factors, or “signals”. SEO is about ensuring your content generates the right type of signals. This chart summarises the major factors to focus on for search engine ranking success (and thanks to Column Five Media for the infographic design).

### The Periodic Table of SEO Ranking Factors

Search Engine Optimisation — SEO — may seem like alchemy to the uninitiated. But there is a science to it. Search engines reward pages with the right combination of ranking factors, or “signals”. SEO is about ensuring your content generates the right type of signals. This chart summarises the major factors to focus on for search engine ranking success (and thanks to Column Five Media for the infographic design).

#### ON THE PAGE SEO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>HTML</th>
<th>ARCHITECTURE</th>
<th>LINKS</th>
<th>SOCIAL</th>
<th>TRUST</th>
<th>PERSONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cq+3</td>
<td>Ht+3</td>
<td>Ac+3</td>
<td>Lq+3</td>
<td>Sr+2</td>
<td>Ta+3</td>
<td>Pc+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Titles</td>
<td>Crawl</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cr+3</td>
<td>Hd+2</td>
<td>As+1</td>
<td>Lt+3</td>
<td>Ss+1</td>
<td>Th+1</td>
<td>Pl+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Shares</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Locality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cw+2</td>
<td>Hh+1</td>
<td>Au+1</td>
<td>Ln+1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ph+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Headers</td>
<td>URLs</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ce+2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ps+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cf+2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### OFF THE PAGE SEO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>HTML</th>
<th>ARCHITECTURE</th>
<th>LINKS</th>
<th>SOCIAL</th>
<th>TRUST</th>
<th>PERSONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vt-2</td>
<td>Vs-1</td>
<td>Vc-3</td>
<td>Vp-3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Stuffing</td>
<td>Cloaking</td>
<td>Paid Links</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vh-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link Spam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FACTORS WORK TOGETHER

Some factors are more influential than others, so we’ve weighted them from 1 (weakest) to 3 (strongest). No single factor guarantees top rankings. Several favourable factors increase the odds of success. Negative “Violation” and “Blocking” factors harm your chances.
### ON THE PAGE SEO RANKING FACTORS
These elements are in the direct control of the publisher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cq</td>
<td>QUALITY Are pages well written &amp; have substantial quality content?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cr</td>
<td>RESEARCH Have you researched the keywords people may use to find your content?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cw</td>
<td>WORDS Do pages use the words and phrases you hope they'll be found with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ce</td>
<td>ENGAGE Do visitors spend time reading or &quot;bounce&quot; away quickly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cf</td>
<td>FRESH Are pages fresh &amp; about &quot;hot&quot; topics?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HTML</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ht</td>
<td>TITLES Do HTML title tags contain keywords relevant to page topics?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hd</td>
<td>DESCRIPTION Do meta description tags describe what pages are about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hh</td>
<td>HEADERS Do headlines and subheads use header tags with relevant keywords?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARCHITECTURE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ac</td>
<td>CRAWL Can search engines easily &quot;crawl&quot; pages on site?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As</td>
<td>SPEED Does the site load quickly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au</td>
<td>URLS Are URLs short &amp; contain meaningful keywords to page topics?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VIOLATIONS
Spam techniques may cause a ranking penalty or ban.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIOLATIONS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vt</td>
<td>THIN Is content &quot;thin&quot; or &quot;shallow&quot; &amp; lacking substance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vs</td>
<td>STUFFING Do you excessively use words you want pages to be found with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vh</td>
<td>HIDDEN Do colours or design &quot;hide&quot; words you want pages to be found with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vc</td>
<td>CLOAKING Do you show search engines different pages than humans?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vp</td>
<td>PAID LINKS Have you purchased links in hopes of better rankings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vi</td>
<td>LINK SPAM Have you created many links by spamming blogs, forums or other places?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### OFF THE PAGE SEO RANKING FACTORS
Elements influenced by readers, visitors & other publishers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LINKS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lq</td>
<td>QUALITY Are links from trusted, quality or respected web sites?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt</td>
<td>TEXT Do links pointing at pages use words you hope they'll be found with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ln</td>
<td>NUMBER Do many links point at your web pages?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sr</td>
<td>REPUTATION Do those respected on social networks share your content?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ss</td>
<td>SHARES Do many share your content on social networks?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRUST</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ta</td>
<td>AUTHORITY Do links, shares &amp; other factors make site a trusted authority?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th</td>
<td>HISTORY Has site or its domain been around a long time, operating in same way?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONAL</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pc</td>
<td>COUNTRY What country is someone located in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl</td>
<td>LOCALITY What city or local area is someone located in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph</td>
<td>HISTORY Does someone regularly visit the site? Or have they &quot;liked&quot; it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps</td>
<td>SOCIAL What do your friends think of the site?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BLOCKING
If searchers "block" the site, it hurts both trust and personalisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLOCKING</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bt</td>
<td>BLOCKING Have many people blocked your site from search results?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bp</td>
<td>BLOCKING Has someone blocked your site from their search results?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Search Engine Land Guide To SEO explains factors in more depth, with tips and a tutorial on implementing them. Learn more at http://SLEND.COM/SEOTABLE.
towards content, the ‘authority’ linked to that content has become a big factor.

Does the content come from a credible source and is it written by someone with a proven track record on the subject matter? If so, a small organisation with a good online reputation will most likely get a good SEO score.

And what about physical location?
Location is extremely important, because often people are looking for a product or service nearby and search engines behave accordingly. For example, if I’m from Florence and I’m looking for an interior designer, I won’t get results from Rome or Venice, let alone Vienna. So even if I do a general search for an interior designer without specifying my location, I’ll likely get results from my surrounding area because the chances that I would shop at a designer that’s far away are small.

Search engines not only consider your location when displaying results, they also take into account other contextual information based on your browsing behavior. If I enter ‘Egypt’ as a search term and I’m someone who often looks for holiday destinations, then I’ll see more travel and tourist information websites among my search results, whereas the SERP of an archaeologist would look quite different.

People may think, “If everybody does SEO, does it still mean anything? Will my website still stand out?” Is that a legitimate concern?
To some extent, yes. You can look at SEO as an arms race where tactical differences decide the outcome. That’s why it’s important not to limit your efforts to technical SEO, because those tricks can be adopted by everyone with an online presence. Your online strategy should focus on serving your target audience with desired content and building a credible online identity for your brand.

Brand awareness goes beyond SEO really, because if people know your brand, they will search for it and end up on your website. That’s much more beneficial in the long run than investing in optimising your content on keywords, each of which has hundreds of competitors.

To what extent is specialisation a factor in getting found through Google?
Well, let’s say you’re a carpenter whose niche is refined oak tables. Chances are extremely small you’ll be among the top results shown when people are looking for ‘tables’. You’ll never win that fight anyway, because there’s too much competition out there and big players like Ikea will automatically nab the top spots.

But if you work on improving your brand awareness, people are much more likely to search for your company name, the name of a certain collection, maybe even your personal name. That
won’t happen overnight, but in the long run it will pay off, not in the least because you can promote products beyond those refined oak tables as your business grows.

The concept and scope of SEO have shifted considerably over the last few years. In the beginning, SEO was mainly about getting your code right and optimising your metadata - the data that tells a web browser or search engine how to handle your website and its contents - but now content and how it’s structured plays a prominent role.

That’s true. A nice anecdote to underscore your point is that webmasters used to sneak the word ‘sex’ in the meta tags of their website, even if they were selling pencils. They did that because ‘sex’ was the most sought word on the Internet, and they would ‘get found’ more easily via search. But ‘getting found’ only goes so far: if what you’re offering on your website isn’t what your visitors are looking for, they’ll be gone as swiftly as they came.

Luckily, today such code pollution practices are penalised. Google doesn’t take meta keywords into account anymore either. The meta description – the information that Google shows below the link in its search results – of your site or page has become much more important though: if it corresponds well to the search query, it improves the chances of people clicking on the link to your website. But in turn the content on your website must be what those visitors are after.

What makes for SEO-effective web copy?
Again, the key to success is corresponding to the search query. Even though you don’t always know what potential visitors are after, it’s essential to try and imagine what they want. If you run a web shop selling children’s clothing, it’s good to list if an item is washable or not, because that may be what a mother is looking for when she’s browsing for the winter jacket she wants to buy her daughter. It may also be useful to add

5 effective SEO tips

1. Keep an eye on your bounce rate
If you get lots of traffic through search engines but zero conversions, i.e. people instantly leave your site, don’t buy anything or retweet or subscribe to your newsletter, you’ll have to rethink how you present your content to your target audience.

2. Have a good meta description
Make sure your meta description is engaging or includes the answer to a specific search query. The test: Can your description be an advertisement in Google Adwords? If yes, then you’ve done a good job.

3. Write keyword-rich page headings
Clear headings help people and search engines easily scan the page for relevant content. Strong headings point them in the right direction of what they are after.

4. Make your content shareable
If your content invites people to share it on social media or link to it on their website or blog, you’ll gain online authority in your field.

5. Ensure that people look for you, not a generic product
Pay attention to branding and make your SEO efforts part of your broader marketing strategy so you become top of mind with your customers.
a blog to your web shop where you discuss your products to show your clients that you care.

So, properly and clearly describe your products or services and get to know your audience. Once you’ve decided who you’re aiming at, the better you can optimise your content for them.

How important are links to your website from other websites? What can you do to boost the process? Links from other websites, called backlinks, underscore the authority of your site as a credible source. The higher the quality and authority of the site linking back to yours, the more your ranking will benefit. If your Lisbon-based web shop for car parts gets a link back from a pet food company from Detroit, it won’t matter, but getting a few good mentions from a car manufacturer will.

You can influence backlinking – and authority, because they’re quite connected – by promoting your brand and company on social media, offer meaningful content to third parties to try and spread awareness. When you do, keep your target audience in mind when deciding on tone of voice, images and story angle, etc.

What mistakes do companies commonly make when implementing SEO?
There’s still too much trust in the cowboys out there who promise you a number one ranking in Google. Sure, it’s not impossible, but it’s probably only on a very specific search query and it won’t last long.

Secondly, people tend to invest in things that aren’t effective in the long run. I’ve had a woman in one of my training courses who owned a web shop that sold high-end interior products for children’s rooms. The competition on the keywords she used in her Google Adwords advertisements was enormous, and she spent about 2 500 euros per month on them. Even though she usually broke even, it would’ve been much wiser for her to devote that budget to brand building.

And I can’t stress enough the importance of continuously investing in good content. SEO specialists can help you clean up your code and improve your existing content, but you’ve got to keep your brand and the desires and needs of your customers in mind as you produce new material for your website.

About Anna Borsboom
Anna Borsboom specialises in online branding and strategy, and mainly works for clients in the fashion and design worlds. She also gives courses about editing, content management, Internet strategy and, since the beginning of 2011, content strategy. She views content strategy not as a deliverable or a product, but as a process. A process that requires dedication but, at the same time, can also be started at any time and yield quick results.
Ask anyone to name their three favourite desserts. Chances are ice-cream will be on their list. If it isn’t, try presenting them with one of the wonderful creations of Octave, a home-grown company from Toulouse, France. You’ll melt their hearts in a beat.

Ice-cream is enjoyed by millions worldwide, made in hundreds of flavours and is as equally comforting on a hot summer day as at the end of a long winter meal. Today it is readily available to everyone, but it wasn’t always the case that ice-cream was a product for the masses.

Ice-cream first became popular in the upper echelons of society, initially in Italy, and soon
after in France, where notables such as Napoleon, Voltaire, Balzac and Chopin acquired the taste for what at the time was a very exclusive dessert. After conquering France, the rest of Europe succumbed to the sweet’s chilly charms and later the rest of the world followed.

HUMBLE ORIGINS
It’s this tradition of ice-cream as a luxury product that Octave has masterfully revived. In the late Eighties, a period when the creation of high-end artisanal ice-creams had fallen out of style, founder Francis Mendegris started out with nothing more than the burning ambition to create mouthwatering ice-creams using only natural and fresh products, omitting any artificial flavours, colours or preservatives.

A short while later, Mendegris bought an ice-cream maker and began experimenting in his basement at home. In 1991 he opened his first outlet near the centre of Toulouse, in what used to be a tobacco shop.

Fast forward from those modest beginnings to the present and there’s no doubt that Mendegris’ perseverance has paid off. Today, Octave is an international brand with its products sold across France, Belgium and Tunisia. In 2012, it even made Gault-Millau’s list of the 45 best ice-cream makers of France.

UNIQUE SELLING POINT
Matthieu Mendegris, Octave’s Commercial Director, attributes the company’s success to its

"The ingredients we use come from small, local family-owned companies and we work exclusively with fresh fruit."

Matthieu Mendegris, Commercial Director of Octave
"We're very proud of the way we work – we work together with everyone involved – but what satisfies us the most is receiving compliments from our customers."

Matthieu Mendegris, Commercial Director of Octave
Octave not only tempts their customers with delicious ice creations in their tea rooms, but also online at octave.eu

They use their website to communicate about their products and highlight their company standards. Octave’s Commercial Director, Matthieu Mendegris, feels that a strong web presence makes them more accessible to their customers and the aim is to present them with a site that offers something new every month.

Octave’s choice for .eu allows the company to underscore that its products are available beyond the French borders and opens the doors to international business opportunities.
Ambition has an address.

A domain name is very important to a transport company. With a .eu extension, you are clearly saying, “We go all over Europe”. You are showing that you are ambitious and open for business across the different Member States. And yet, at the same time, .eu has a familiar and reliable feel to it. So what are you waiting for? Choose a .eu domain name and go beyond national borders. For more information, go to ambitionhasanaddress.eu.
READING .EU
IDENTITY
THE TABLET WAY

Richer content is always at your fingertips

Look for our free app in the iTunes Store or Google Play.