

# SEO more challenging in 2011

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11 Jan 2011

2010 has come and gone and what a year it was. 2011 is upon us now, and I think it is time I prognosticate the digital marketing trends for this year. Here are my top 11 predictions.



## 1. Bigger marketing budgets will be thrown towards digital marketing

Consumers and potential customers are increasingly going online early in the buying cycle to gather information, forming relationships and making decisions about how they are going to buy. As a result businesses will surely move their marketing budgets to where consumers and potential customers are.

## 2. Social media marketing will mature

2010 was the year social media burst onto the marketing scene. In 2011, it will evolve from experimental campaigns to social tactics that are fully integrated into the overall marketing strategy. Research, planning, engagement, and measurement will definitely become a never-ending cycle of the social media marketing process.

## 3. SEO will become more challenging

With Google facing strong competition from Bing, and social sites like Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, the task of getting your business on the first page of search results will become much more challenging. Be assured that Google will constantly modify its search algorithms in efforts to keep competitors at bay - so more 'calculated guess work' for SEO's.

## 4. Mobile marketing accelerates

Quite a few things happened in 2010 that set the stage for an explosion of mobile marketing in 2011. Apple's iPhone, Google's introduction of Android, and Apple's launch of the iPad mean that smartphone adoption has escalated. Mobile marketing can now move beyond mobile messaging; mobile email, mobile websites and mobile applications will become viable channels for marketers.

## 5. The 'marketing mix' will play a decisive role in 2011

The 4 P's of marketing (marketing mix) - product, price, place (distribution), and promotion will be the focal point of interest. The change in brands and advertisers' marketing mixes has already begun happening, but it will accelerate in 2011. Ad spending in TV has held fairly strong, with print (newspapers, magazines, direct mail) and radio in decline. The web (and digital as a whole) has been a significant growth area and will continue that way. In fact, brands that previously did not embrace digital marketing will be forced to in 2011.

## 6. Social media advertising to soar

Facebook offers a diverse audience that shouldn't be ignored, especially after achieving over 500 million registered users.

We will see social networks like Facebook as a hunting ground for online marketers providing targeted advertising opportunities that can tap into new customer niches and also serve as a complement to other paid search programs. More and more businesses realise that the opportunity to reach customers extends beyond traditional paid search into the booming social media space.

## **7. More advanced marketing analytics**

There are many digital marketing channels where data is collected from, and it can be challenging to consolidate all that data to develop insights. Marketers desperately need advanced analytical capabilities to identify, analyse and describe patterns amidst all the digital garbage. I'm sure in 2011 there would be a central place/applications that can integrate all the data from all marketing sources (web, mobile, social conversations, search, and video).

## **8. Content still remains king**

Let's use social media (Facebook) as an example - the appeal of Facebook (at its hub), is that we are all content writers / producers. People, especially fans and like-minded groups - all like reading content. As the social web continues to emerge, successful brands or individuals will be the ones with value-added (or fun) content that entices people and gives them a reason to click and read. If you are a corporation or B2B, you at least need to be blogging and communicating with your clients, and if you are not thinking about your own content strategy, you will be left behind.

## **9. Multi-channel marketing at a steady rise**

Why is this important? Well, for one thing, we've all heard the statistics that multichannel customers are more profitable than single channel customers. At least 70% of online consumers research products online and purchase them offline. The objective is to make it easy for a consumer to buy from you in whatever way is most appropriate, so it is a no brainer that one has to market using many different marketing channels to reach a customer.

## **10. Online privacy wars heats up**

Online marketing relies on cookies to track and target behaviour, but consumers are rising up and demanding change. Privacy concerns arising from Facebook and Google were ongoing in 2010 and privacy experts don't believe it will pass in 2011. Facebook and Google are continually adjusting their business models as a result. As marketing becomes more social and more people use transactional sites, privacy issues won't be going away anytime soon.

## **11. Personalised marketing to become more prominent**

Currently in SA, email marketing uses the personalisation capability rather well by using your name in their greeting, or subject line. In 2011, expect more personalisation capability to be embedded in websites, for example, regular visitors to a website will see a page based on all the information collected from their previous visits. We can also expect that personalised marketing will be extended beyond the website to other marketing channels such as social media, mobile etc.

I'm pretty confident that businesses and marketers that capitalise on these trends shall gain a competitive advantage. I personally will be watching these trends closely, and with so much that has happened in the digital space in 2010, we are surely in for something exciting in 2011.

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## ABOUT YORAY NARAINPERSAD

Yoray Narainpersad is one of SA's most experienced online marketers with over 15 years online marketing experience under his belt. He specializes in SEO, PPC, SEM and lead generation, and has marketed globally in very competitive industries. He is now the Managing Director and Co-Founder of a specialist online marketing agency called Fast Forward Marketing.

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