Can prospective new patients find you easily on the Internet?

By Mary Kay Miller

Just because you have a dental Web site on the Internet doesn’t mean prospective new patients can find you online when searching for dental treatment providers in your demographic. Using correct keywords in the HTML source code and written content on your Web site makes it easier for prospective patients to find your Web site on Google. Unfortunately, less than 5 percent of dental Web sites can be found on Google Maps and page one of a Google search when tested with the most common words patients use to find dental treatment providers.

It’s a fact: your Web site ranking can make or break your online presence and Internet marketing initiatives. The better your page ranking (the position your Web site appears in the search engines when someone is searching for a dentist in your area) the more clicks you will receive, which translates into more new patient opportunities to build your practice. If you are not on page one of a Google search you might as well be invisible online. Whether we like it or not, the Internet is here to stay. The Internet is the most valuable and inexpensive PR marketing tool available today to promote your practice.

Google is “king” and “rules” the Internet. It dictates the parameters of online search and Internet marketing. It is also considered the only search engine that counts. Google attracts over 80 percent of all consumers researching online for products and information. Structuring your Web site with correct keyword placement, title tags, written content, HTML design and URLs according to Google guidelines will assure better positioning of your Web site’s page ranking.

Unfortunately, as a consumer, most dentists have no idea if their Web site has correct search engine optimization (SEO) by their Webmaster to meet Google guidelines. The time has come, especially in today’s tough economic environment, to be proactive and benefitting from Search Engine Optimization (SEO) by your Internet marketing program.

No business owner can afford to haphazardly lose new patients to their Internet competition. Google does not care about Web site esthetics, your experience level or the size of your practice. It only understands arithmetic coding based on its own rules. The first step to building your online presence is understanding Google’s rules and determining if your Web site is performing correctly on the Internet. “You don’t know what you don’t know ‘til you know it!”

Archived Webinars from successful DTSC launch now available!

On March 14, the Dental Tribune Study Club was officially launched through a full-day online C.E. festival, featuring five Webinars in succession. Some 290 participants joined in the festivities, representing 57 different nations, proving that the DT Study Club truly is a global concept.

Each Webinar included a one-hour presentation, followed by a 20-minute live Q&A session between the online audience and the speaker. Participants not only had the opportunity to interact directly with the opinion leader, but they also received C.E. credits for their participation.

In case you could not attend the live event, you will be pleased to know that the archived lectures are now available online under www.dtstudyclub.com. Please log into the Web site and complete the easy and free membership registration. You can find the archived courses under “Online Courses” or use the links below and click REGISTER > LAUNCH NOW.


Dr. Garry Bey, Safer, Smarter Endo: Tips, Tricks and Solutions for Endodontic Success: www.dtstudyclub.com/event/Safer-Smarter-Endo-Tips-Tricks-Solutions-for-Endodontic-Success/22.html


(Dr. David Clark’s Webinar, World Class Obturation for General Dentists, will be posted online shortly. We apologize for any inconvenience.)

These five Webinars were made available through educational grants provided by VOCO, PreXion, Obtura, Discus Dental and Astra Tech.

Please don’t miss out on our upcoming live and interactive Webinars, which can be found under: www.dtstudyclub.com/events/Online-Courses/all/
Social networking for dentists made easy!

By Dan Marut, DMD

What is a social network? For as long as humans have walked the Earth we have been social creatures. We pride ourselves on family and form groups in order to survive. These groups not only allow us to survive but also thrive, leading to new ideas and innovations. The Internet and some other factors have led to the diminishment of local groups and group activities.

People became free to roam the world from their own house whenever they wanted to, but they still yearned for connection. We need it. It has become hotwired into our development as humans. The Internet fragmented us. However, human needs will not be denied. As the Internet diminished human grouping, it is now bringing us together like never before.

Components of online social networking

Profiles: Profiles serve as your identity on the network. In short, they are your online C.V. I would encourage you to fill in what you are comfortable with. Social networks are all about sharing and your experience will be enhanced by completing your profile.

Friends: "Friends" are the foundation of any social network. Just like in real life, your online friends become part of your social fabric. Online friends are able to keep up to date on your actions on the social network.

Groups: Online groups represent like-minded individuals coming together for collaboration, connections, sharing and learning about a specific topic. Dentistry has been called a cottage profession because the predominant model of practice is solo practice.

Online groups or online study clubs provide a way to share knowledge, meet other dentists with similar interests, access a calendar of events, share files and upload pictures and videos. For dentists, this means we can now practice solo but have the benefit of knowledge sharing and connectivity to a specific group that is of interest to us.

Online social networks are powerful tools. They have taken the Web from static Web pages and Q&A forums to a dynamic, ever-developing connected network of individuals who willingly share knowledge, interests and professional goals.

Examples of online social networks

LinkedIn: Mostly for the corporate and business-minded crowd, LinkedIn has a mature user type who is interested in business networking.

Facebook: I enjoy using Facebook to keep in contact with my personal friends. However, I find it difficult to sift through all of the non-dental chatter to find what I am looking for professionally.

MySpace: If you’ve used MySpace, perhaps you might think it is geared toward a younger crowd. There are many bells and whistles to choose from.

Professional social networks: Professional social networks are focused on a particular profession and only a particular profession. You won’t find anything but dental professionals here. Momentum once reserved for large social networks without a focus is now moving into niche social networks focused on specific interests.

Examples of professional social networks

Sermo: This is the professional social network for medicine.

LawLink: This is for lawyers.

NewDocs: NewDocs is the professional social network for dentistry. You won’t find (or be found by) high school classmates here. You can join professional “groups” or online study clubs on NewDocs. You also have the opportunity to create your own group. Think of it as your own “mini social network.”

Share files, use the calendar of events, collaborate and discuss the topics of your choice. If you have certain information about a particular subject matter, you are able to post a blog. The download section on NewDocs has many useful tools, forms, sample contracts, business plans, etc.

How to get started?

Getting started in professional social networking is easy, and NewDocs is the premier site. NewDocs was created by a dentist and is exclusively about dentistry and the dental profession. Visit www.NewDocs.com, register (it’s free) and choose a profile image. Once registered, be sure to fill in your profile. Your profile is your online identity and will allow others on the site to connect with you and find common interests.

Once you’ve explored the site, join a group/study club or two or three. Groups/study clubs allow you to connect, collaborate and share with others over a common subject or cause. If you don’t see a group/study club you are interested in, feel free to create your own.

The tools on NewDocs make it very easy to create and manage your own group or study club. Manage a local study club or society by keeping all of your members up to date on happenings, events, discussions, etc. The best part is you don’t even need to know how to create a Web page to do this!

After you’ve accomplished the above, you’re ready to move to the next level and invite other professional friends and colleagues to join NewDocs. The power of professional social networking lies in the users and the activity of those on the site. The more people you can connect with the more you will get out of NewDocs.

In short:

1) Register on NewDocs.com and choose an “avatar” (profile picture).
2) Fill in your profile.
3) Explore the site by “clicking around.” Be sure to click on other users’ avatars.
4) Make “Friends.”
5) Join a group/study club or create one yourself.
6) Invite your professional friends and colleagues to join NewDocs. This will widen your network.

Social networking is here to stay and professional social networking is the natural progression of this powerful Web-based tool. Take the first step: become part of a network and reap the rewards of professional collaboration on a social network. For those dentists looking to manage a study club or a dental association, the tools on NewDocs make it not only easy but fun for all of its members. Start today and find out why professional social networking is changing our professional world.

Dan Marut, DMD, maintains a private practice in Ashland, Ore. He is the founder of NewDocs, the professional social network for dentistry. Marut is available to answer any questions about the social networking phenomenon. He can be reached at Dan@newdocs.com or just find him on NewDocs, he becomes your first friend when you join!