Staging the changes to your website—then keeping it updated

> *"The simple days of gaming the [Google] algorithm are gone."*
>
> Eric Enge
> *Stop Oversimplifying Everything!*
> searchengineland.com

Creating a great website is not an item you get to do once and check off your list. (I'm sorry to bring you that bad news.)

As alluded to in the quote at the top, Google's algorithm for ranking search results (how high in the list your site is when someone searches for schools in your area) is now multi-faceted, complex and opaque. Google is not sharing a single "magic bullet" for getting a site to the top of the list. But they are sharing general tips. (To understand why Google wants to be opaque read "Stop Oversimplifying Everything.")

Here's why...

Search engines (read: Google) reward new content

A site that is frequently added to and updated is seen as more likely to be relevant to users. Therefore, Google's algorithm assumes it will be more interesting to people searching on that topic.

A caveat: For whatever reason, uploaded pdfs (e.g. your weekly school newsletter) don't count in this category, according to what I've read.

Search engines (read: Google) reward unique content

If a site has content copied from elsewhere on the web, it is seen as less helpful to users since it's information can be gotten elsewhere.

It is for this reason that I am not planning to research and write helpful articles you could each add to your websites. The result would be detrimental to each of your sites.

Search engines (read: Google) reward convenient navigation

The recommendation is to think through what would be easy and useful to your site users. Google says that what is easy for users to navigate will also be better for optimization.

Remember, you have two primary categories of users: parents and prospective parents. For this reason, I would focus your home page and main tabs on issues to grab the attention of prospective parents and cluster the information that your current parents want under one convenient tab (Parent Portal or Parents' Place or similar).

...and the bottom line is...

If your website needs help, take heart and tackle it a little bit at a time. By making changes over time you can improve your search ranking.

Then create a system for adding photos and updating content on a regular basis—so your parents find your website helpful and prospective parents have a better chance of finding it.

To read all 31 pages of Google's suggestions, go to Google Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide.

Delegating:
　　Everything today
Binder tab: June
School size: All
Marketing process step:
　　1) Who are we?
　　2) What do families want?
　　3) What needs to change?
　　4) How do we tell our community?
　　5) How do we track results?