

# An architect's website:

Designing and building your own website - discussion notes / BANG.

## First ask yourself 2 questions

- \* Is the website to get new business enquiries via online search?
- \* Is the website an online portfolio that you can direct new enquiries to?

The first option requires a lot of work, time and money to achieve. The second is comparatively very simple and will allow you to almost ignore the world of search engine optimisation (SEO) and other forms of optimisation.

## Architect Northern Beaches

To get new business on the web you need to rank well for search terms (commonly called keywords or key phrases). i.e. If someone types in **architect northern beaches**, will you appear on the first page of the search results? See my example - next page.

## 3 listings

There are basically 3 ways to appear on search results pages - also called SERPs. Note the 3 areas in which AAA comes up on page 1.

Top - Paid search

Next - Local search with map

Last - Organic results

## Google Adwords

At the top I appear in paid search results. This is set up in Google Adwords. You set a daily spend limit and an individual bid amount, i.e. \$2/click. You can then have a preferred location for the ad to appear and create multiple campaigns.

## Cost per click

In the last 6 months the average cost of my clicks has risen from about \$1.38 to \$1.90. It is a competitive business model. When I first started advertising it was just \$0.05 per click.

If you can't get found on Google for the most searched phrases (in your area of expertise) then you won't get much traffic to your site. Almost everyone is trying to rank well in Google so the competition is fierce.

About 582,000 results (0.45 seconds)

Architect Nth Beaches - aaarchitect.com.au

www.aaarchitect.com.au/ Sydney Residential Architects New homes, renovations, interiors All Australian Architecture has 156 followers on Google+

Architectural Services - 1 form, 3 quotes - Fast, Easy, Free

www.homeimprovementpages.com.au/ Top 10 in Northern Beaches. hipages.com.au has 1,324 followers on Google+ Get Quotes - Residential Architects - New Home Architects - Architects

CplusC Architects - cplusc.com.au

www.cplusc.com.au/ Award Winners in Design Excellence. Practical. Innovative. Experienced.

Archisoul Architects | Northern Beaches Sydney Architectur...

www.archisoul.com.au/ Archisoul Architects and Consultants are experts in creating places of wellness. Design solutions are created which are sensitive to both the integrity of the ...

Jansen Design| Architect home building design| Sydney ...

www.jansendesign.com.au/ Sydney residential architect designing creative energy efficient buildings, new homes ... Jansen Design, Sydney residential Architect, Northern Beaches.

WATERSHED DESIGN - architecture for a better built ...

www.watersheddesign.com.au/ Located in Manly on the Northern Beaches of Sydney, Watershed Design specialises in high quality, contemporary architecture with a focus on environmental ...

All Australian Architecture

www.aaarchitect.com.au Google+ page

MR Ray Fitzgibbon T-a Ray Fitzgi

rfarch.com.au 1 Google review · Google+ page

Hobbs Jamieson Architecture

www.hobbsjamieson.com.au Google+ page

Rapid Plans Architectural Building De...

rapidplans.com.au 1 Google review · Google+ page

Northern Beaches Consulting Engine...

www.nbconsulting.com.au Google+ page

Priestleys Architects

www.architects.net.au Google+ page

Architecture

www.archi-itecture.com.au Google+ page

Map results for architects northern beaches

- A 206/20 Dale St Brookvale NSW (02) 9938 5180
B 26/90 Mona Vale Rd Mona Vale NSW (02) 9979 7311
C 67 Wanganella St Balgowlah NSW (02) 9948 3807
D Allambie Heights NSW 0414 945 024
E 207/30 Fisher Rd Dee Why NSW (02) 9984 7000
F 31 Kywong Rd Elanora Heights NSW (02) 9970 6795
G 1/65 Carawa Rd Cromer NSW 0414 744 874

Manfredini McCrae Architects Fairlight

www.mmarchitects.com.au/ Manly | Architects | Sydney | Houses | Fairlight | Northern Beaches | renovation | additions | heritage | Seaforth | Freshwater | Queenscliff | Avalon |

de Soyres Malone Architects

www.dsmarchitects.com/ de Soyres Malone Architects are a Pittwater based practice specialising in ... We are a friendly architectural practice based on Sydney's Northern Beaches, ...

RICHARD COLE ARCHITECTURE Sydney Architects ...

www.richardcolearchitecture.com.au/ Richard Cole Architecture is a small design focused architectural firm on the Northern Beaches of Sydney specialising in high quality residential, commercial.

Architects Northern Beaches | Playoust Churcher

www.playoustchurcher.com.au/residential-architects/.../northern-beaches/ Playoust Churcher are the leading architects for Northern Beaches residential designs. Visit our site to preview our single residential architecture designs.

Atelier Haefeli Architects Avalon - Home

www.atelierhaefeli.com.au/ Ltd. is a small architectural practice in Avalon on Sydney's Northern Beaches. Maintaining this scale of practice ensures that our Clients always receive the ...

Michelle Walker Architects Sydney, Northern Beaches + ...

mwalkers.net.au/ Residential Architecture | Interiors | Outdoor Spaces - Architects Sydney, Northern Beaches + North Shore contact us 0422 393 600.

Sydney Residential Architect: Northern Beaches + Eastern ...

www.aaarchitect.com.au/ by Adam Pressley - in 21 Google+ circles Sydney's Residential Architects. Northern Beaches | Eastern Suburbs | North Shore. At All Australian Architecture, we design high quality new homes, additions, ...



Map for architects northern beaches

Ads

Crosier Scott Architects

www.croscott.com.au/ Architecture, Interior Design & Project Management.

Architectural Services

www.adrianopupilli.com.au/ Homes, Renovations, Garden Studios. Delivering Quality Design on Budget 2 Wattle Rd, North Manly NSW 0415 302 520

Architect Design

www.mjddesigndrafting.com.au/architects Architectural Drafting & Expert Building Designs. Free Quotes!

Slater Architects

www.slaterarchitects.com.au/ Award winning - sustainable designs Residential + Commercial Architects

Architect + Builder

www.gerber.net.au/ Architecture and Construction with 32 years of experience in building

Sydney Architect

www.roth.com.au/ Experienced Residential Architects. Design, Planning and Documentation

Architects in Sydney

www.thesiteforeman.com.au/ Specialising in Custom Home Designs Renovations & more. Contact us Now!

\$35/Hour for Architects

www.serviceseeking.com.au/Architect Find Reliable Local Architecture! Enter Your Job, Get Free Quotes.

See your ad here >

Searches related to architects northern beaches

- building designers northern beaches
heritage home northern beaches
ray fitz gibbon architects
rf architects
jo gillies architect collaroy
northern beaches style architecture
house designers northern beaches
builders northern beaches

## Keywords / search phrases

Keyword research is important, but before you can guess what your potential clients might search on the web - you need to have a good picture of who your clients are and what **they think** they want.

## Googles Keyword Planner

Google's current tool for keyword research requires you to have a Google Adwords account (for pay per click advertising) - it is called Keyword Planner, and is quite complex. You might find simpler tool on the web under the heading - keyword research.

## Let Google do its Job

Rather than focussing too much on google or keywords you are better served to clearly define what you do, find out who your clients are and learn how to speak to them - then write good content and Google will do the rest. The better the content the better your 'organic / free' listing in Google. This is especially important because Googles algorithms change over time so you can't really optimise for it.

## Forget what you do

When you are writing content and thinking about key words or key phrases, keep in mind that you might understand your job too well. i.e. Don't expect too many people to search for **contract administration architect** - when most people don't have a clue about this stage of a project and think architects supervise the construction and might search accordingly.

## The holy grail

To find keywords and phrases that are searched by a large number of people, and these people are the most likely to become your clients. These phrases would then ideally have little competition so you could just rank well on google straight away.

## Long tail keywords

You can achieve this goal with 'long tail keywords' like - How much does it cost to build a house. But the longer the term the fewer the searches.

## Options for building your website;

- \* Using a template site with content management system (CMS)
- \* Creating a fully custom designed website to your own design

## Using a CMS

(Content Management System)

The first option is by far the easiest to create and keep up to date. It is also likely to be slower to use and harder to customise. This sort of site has a tendency to look like other similar cookie cutter sites, in the same way project homes tend to look alike.

## Wordpress & Joomla

> <http://wordpress.com/website/>

> <http://www.joomla.org>

These are two of the biggest CMS site providers, and you buy designs that come in all sorts of different flavours. Most of them have good blogging features and other social networking abilities. Some also are what can be called responsive websites.

## Responsive Website

This was all the rage - having a site that adjusted its layout to suit a computer or tablet or a phone. I think of it more as a possibility and option for people. I personally find only the mobile phone interface could be improved, and I don't expect serious clients to hire me off their phone.

## Custom coded

The second option can be expensive to create and maintain / update, if you don't develop the skills yourself. It gives you complete design freedom and is fully expandable / customisable etc..

## What is a good website

I believe a good website has the following characteristics;

- \* Fast to load
- \* Very easy to navigate
- \* Clear and easy to read
- \* Distinctive, memorable, impressive
- \* Relevant to the needs of your visitors
- \* Has contact information on every page
- \* Has a call to action on every page
- \* Has an enquiry form
- \* Offers useful information / advice on offer
- \* Sets you up as an expert in your field
- \* Features examples of your work
- \* Is up to date & updated regularly (weekly or monthly)

- \* Is error free - not just spelling & punctuation but also in the HTML and CSS code

## All you need

The minimum that you need to build your own website is;

- \* A plain text editor to write the HTML code and CSS (style sheet)
- \* A web browser to see the pages you have written
- \* An FTP program to upload the files to your web server
- \* An image editor for photos and graphics
- \* A domain name & somewhere to host it

## What we use at AAA

There are some programs, websites and resources that can really improve the process of designing, building and optimising your website. Especially if you want to make a great site that ranks well in Google. This is what we use.

## Layout program

> Sketch (mac only)

> Not sure what best equivalent is for PC - might be Adobe Illustrator /

Photoshop. Good for setting up initial designs really quickly and then used for set-out.

## Code writer

> Sublime text

> Coda (which also does FTP for uploading)

Needed for writing custom code (HTML and CSS) and making corrections

## HTML5 Reference

> <http://www.w3schools.com/tags/> - free

## CSS3 Resource

> [http://www.w3schools.com/css/css3\\_intro.asp](http://www.w3schools.com/css/css3_intro.asp) - free

An internet search is also a really good way to get help with CSS.

## FTP upload

> Coda, which is also a good code editor and is needed to put your site on the web

## Code validator

> <http://validator.w3.org> - cost free

HTML and CSS validator check available on the web - error free code should be a goal. Very easy to use.

## Website auditing software

> <http://www.link-assistant.com/website-auditor/> - software package you buy that costs about \$300, so you can check all the pages of your site have been completed properly, error free, no broken links, that the titles & descriptions are unique & lots more.

## Woorank

> <http://woorank.com> - online reporting software, Free and \$50 / month, try it.

## Useability testing

> <https://usabilityhub.com> - free with Karma or paid.

This is a really interesting resource. They have different tests and real people tell you what they think. If you give feedback for other sites in return you get Karma, which you can spend on your own site testing. Worth checking out.

## Google Webmaster Tools

> <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/> - free

Sign up this and follow the verification process to get lots of extra support and information about your site and how it is performing.

## Cross browser checking

> <http://browserstack.com> - costs to have a subscription

When you build a site it might not work properly on different browsers or platforms - like Safari, Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox etc.. And to make it worse there are a lot of older versions of these browsers still working i.e. Westpac still uses IE8. From a web design perspective IE8 support is a pain.

## Code validation

> <http://validator.w3.org> - free

WC3 website checks html and css code

## Speed checking

> <https://developer.yahoo.com/yslow/> - speed checking tool that you add to your browser tool bar as an add-on, gives a detailed report and score for each page you check. A fast website is important.

## Google SERP snippet optimiser

> <http://www.seomof.com/snippet-optimizer.html> - free and easy to use

(A SERP - is a Search Engine Results Page)

A snippet is what a standard result looks like when it appears in the results - see my example page 2. A snippet is usually made up from the Title of the page, the Meta Description and the URL (address). The idea is that a well designed snippet will appeal to the person searching more than the average one - which means more you get a click instead of someone else.

## Google Analytics

> <http://www.google.com.au/analytics/> - free

Sign up for this and put the code on every page. The data it gives you is very helpful as you improve your site.

## Sitemap Generator

> <http://www.xml-sitemaps.com> - free and I use it all the time to tell google that

I have updated my site and which pages are new or have changed. I then tell Google via Google Webmaster Tools.

## Website form

All websites should have a form so people can easily provide you with the information you need to process their enquiry. It is a help to both parties.

I am currently using a version of the email form to create booking forms for;

> Pre-purchase home advice

> Architectural advice service

## Call to action

Every page of your website should have a call to action - if done well it will stop your visitors from just browsing, and probably leaving your site, and really encourages them to contact you - with your website form or by phone or email.

A good call to action requires some handle on marketing spin.

## Adding a Favicon

> <http://fictivedesigns.com/designers-view/how-to-add-favicon-to-your-site/> -

free information guide on how to set up the little image icon that appears next to your web address in the browser.

## Robots.txt

> <http://tools.seobook.com/robots-txt/> - free

A robots file sits on the web server and tells the spiders and robots which pages they must ignore, as you may not want every page indexed.

## Google Pagerank

I still take notice of this but really it does not appear to be that important. I think it has become harder to get a page rank above 3/10. It is sort of a measure of a sites authority. Low authority site still rank well in google for less common search terms.

## Microdata

This is a form of meta tag. Those tags that were once important and then became not-so-important, are now important again and they have grown. Microdata is needed to get best results when sharing on social media - it helps you specify the information related to a post or a page.

There are are 2 main systems;

> <http://schema.org>

> <http://ogp.me> - called Open Graph

## Do you want to make it easy to share your site / content?

I'm talking about social networking. Most sites do it, some really well and others poorly. These are some of the options and their popularity generally.

## Top 15 Most Popular Social Networking Sites

Here are the 15 Most Popular Social Networking Sites as derived from our *eBizMBA Rank* which is a constantly updated average of each website's *Alexa* Global Traffic Rank, and U.S. Traffic Rank from both *Compete* and *Quantcast*. "\*"#" Denotes an estimate for sites with limited data.



### 1 | Facebook

3 - eBizMBA Rank | **900,000,000** - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 3 - Compete Rank | 3 - Quantcast Rank | 2 - Alexa Rank | Updated: May 1, 2014.



### 2 | Twitter

14 - eBizMBA Rank | **310,000,000** - Estimated Unique Monthly Visitors | 25 - Compete Rank | 5 -

Quantcast Rank | 11 - Alexa Rank | Updated: May 1, 2014.



### 3 | LinkedIn

23 - eBizMBA Rank | **250,000,000** - Estimated  
 Unique Monthly Visitors | 38 - Compete Rank | 19 -  
 Quantcast Rank | 13 - Alexa Rank | Updated: May  
 1, 2014.



### 4 | Pinterest

25 - eBizMBA Rank | **150,000,000** - Estimated  
 Unique Monthly Visitors | 32 - Compete Rank | 14 -  
 Quantcast Rank | 29 - Alexa Rank | Updated: May  
 1, 2014.



### 5 | Google Plus+

30 - eBizMBA Rank | **120,000,000** - Estimated  
 Unique Monthly Visitors | \*32\* - Compete Rank |  
 \*28\* - Quantcast Rank | NA - Alexa Rank |  
 Updated: May 1, 2014.



### 6 | Tumblr

35 - eBizMBA Rank | **110,000,000** - Estimated  
 Unique Monthly Visitors | 58 - Compete Rank | 13 -  
 Quantcast Rank | 35 - Alexa Rank | Updated: May  
 1, 2014.



### 7 | Instagram

72 - eBizMBA Rank | **85,000,000** - Estimated  
 Unique Monthly Visitors | 51 - Compete Rank | 126  
 - Quantcast Rank | 38 - Alexa Rank | Updated: May  
 1, 2014.

## So which social media do I need?

My advice - use what is relevant to you. For me this is Pinterest, Facebook and Google + (but that is only to keep google side - lists the number of google plus followers I have in the SERPs).

## Don't forget the "share by email"

For me this is one of the most useful sharing buttons. I've also heard of people getting share by SMS working too.

## **Summing it up - you need a lot of Guru's**

To build a website that really works as a resource, portfolio and lead generation requires the master the following skills / needs;

- \* Be a design guru - have an eye for design, even if you are just choosing from designs available on Wordpress etc..
- \* Be a marketing guru - good at selling yourself and your business
- \* Be a writer guru - great at writing content for your site that will get you links from other websites
- \* Be a coding guru - able to throw together HTML and link it to a sweet page of CSS. Better still make it support older browsers and be error free.
- \* Be a research guru - able to find information, resources and imagery to support and supplement your site, improve your guides and content.

## **How to be a guru?**

Look up everything you need to know on the web. Hopefully this guide will help you look stuff up. Google is your friend.

## **Good luck**

Prepared by Architect Adam Pressley for BANG (Beaches Architects North Group) Sydney 2014.