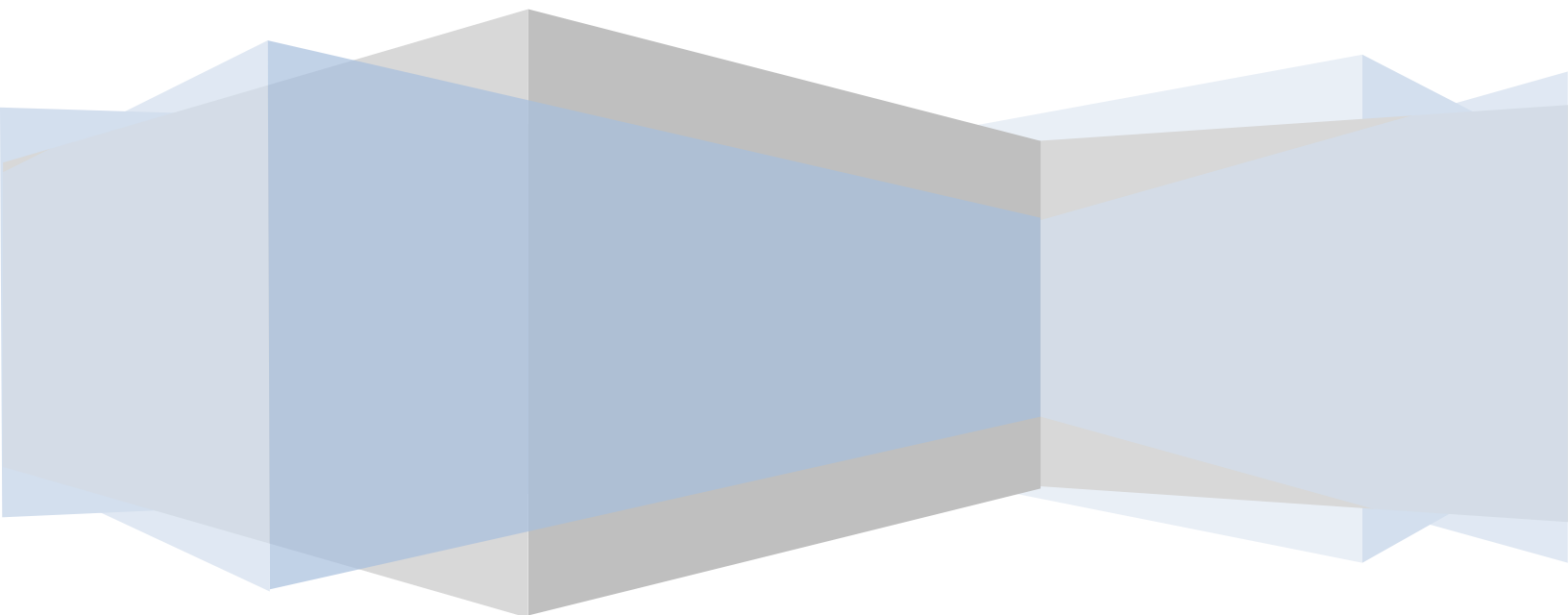


Written by Aji Issac when he was heading DA web warkting team

SEO for Shopping Carts

Aji Issac
Leader, Web Marketing
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What is SEO for shopping carts?

People ask us this question quite often that “is my shopping cart good for search engine optimization?” **Here is quick list to check the search engine optimization compatibility (Importance 10/10 means it is a must from search engine point of view):**

1. **Third party shopping carts (Importance 10/10):** Are the product pages under your domain? Some shopping carts may list the product pages on their domains. It can be a big disadvantage. E.g. the store for yourdomain.com is located at yourdomain.thirdparty.com (in this case all the pages are hosted in thridparty.com)
2. **Does it put all the content as plain html not JS (Importance 9/10)?** Some carts may hide the description of the product behind the JS. Only on a click those contents will be made visible. Pages (most of the time) need contents to show up in search engines and search engines find it difficult to read JS content.
3. **Does it render good urls (Importance 8/10)?** If the shopping cart has dynamic urls which keeps on adding more parameters then it becomes a little tough for search engines. Example: if the product pages come up like example.com/product/12st.html or example.com/product/12st.php then we can handle it well by proper robots.txt files. Urls that comes up like product.php?id=1232&referrer=34s&sess=kjhjh and sometimes as product/php?id=1232 and sometimes as product.php?id=1232&category=13 is a little more difficult to optimize.
4. **Does it allow you to have a customized good title (Importance 8/10), Meta Description (importance 5/10) and Meta Keywords (Importance 3/10)** (Keywords is not that important, but still helps you to make it unique)?
5. **Does it allow you to change its product template pages easily (Importance 5/10)?** It is good to have a H1 tag and an H2 tag on the page with proper keywords in it.
6. **Allowing Alt tags for images (Importance 3/10):** This can be an additional advantage.
7. **Sitemap generation (Importance 3/10):** This can be an advantage.
8. **Option for adding comments (Importance 4/10):** This can act as a huge advantage as it will allow the page to have a lot of relevant content.

Web marketing is more than SEO. Web marketing will require regular changes to test various web strategies. Most of the 3rd party apps will limit you for advance level of work.



6 Features a shopping cart must have:

1. People who bought this also bought (Related item recommendation)
2. Proper search
3. Proper categorization and product listing with option to list product details.
4. Detailed product comparison option.
5. Customization options to good level.
6. Integration with other stores.

Shopping Cart Comparison (Yahoo Shopping and In-House)

Example of a Yahoo Store: <http://www.conns.com/shop-by-category-appliances.html>

Example of an OS-commerce In-house: <http://shops.oscommerce.com/>

A comparison: <http://www.shopping-cart-review.toptenreviews.com/> (Need some good time to check it)

Features	Yahoo Shopping cart	In-House Os-commerce
Title, Meta Tags	Yes	Yes
Content in HTML	Yes	Yes
Render good URL	Yes	Yes
Product pages under the same domain	Yes	Yes
Change the template of product pages	Only to a limited way	Yes
Allowing alt tags	No	Yes
Site map generation	Not sure	Yes
Adding comments	May be, not sure	Yes
Monthly Fee	Yes	No – Free but development cost



Some advantages of using Yahoo shopping cart:

- 1) It covers the basics of shopping cart and can work within few hours.
- 2) People may trust Yahoo for deals more than our websites. They may feel more secure under Yahoo.
- 3) Less maintenance of code and internal stuffs.
- 4) Don't need technical knowledge to manage it. You will get more documentation on how to manage things.
- 5) People may be able to find your product through Yahoo shopping cart.

Disadvantages of using Yahoo shopping cart:

- 1) Every project needs some good customization in terms of reporting and sales. Yahoo will give the generalized widely accepted formats with few good options. In order to do advance level of analysis one will need advance reporting, which may not be available with third party like Yahoo. This has to be done in-house.
- 2) Access to all the product and database may not be available in full detail for further integration with other application.
- 3) Advance level of tracking may not be available with Yahoo carts.
- 4) Monthly fee.

What do we recommend?

If the website/business caters to small sales amount then we will suggest going for Yahoo shopping carts as it won't require much of investment and maintenance.

If the website is large with over 100 products under shopping then we will recommend:

- 1) In-House cart based on the target segment, fully in-coordination with the web marketing team.
- 2) Have access to a development team for maintenance and further development work.

