Search Engine Optimization for Libraries

"We cannot call a digital-library or electronic publishing system a success if we cannot measure and interpret its use."

- Peterson Bishop 1998

Montana State University Research Team

- **Scott Young**
  Digital Initiatives Librarian
- **Jason Clark**
  Head of Library Informatics & Computing
- **Patrick OBrien**
  Semantic Web Research Director
- **Kenning Arlitsch**
  Dean of the Library

Agenda - Day 1

- Overview
  - What is SEO and why do it?
  - Our experience
  - Common themes discovered
- Library Organization & Strategy
  - Driving SEO from the strategic plan
  - Establishing accountability
  - Scalable tools and repeatable processes
  - Reporting and assessment
  - New knowledge work = new services

Overview

What is SEO?

The act of creating data that commercial search engines can find and index…

... to optimize measurable access, visibility and use of library/university content

SEO Major Areas

- Institutional SEO
  - Strategic Plan
  - Measurement Tools
- Traditional SEO
  - Get Indexed
  - Get Visible
- Semantic Web SEO
  - Get Relevant

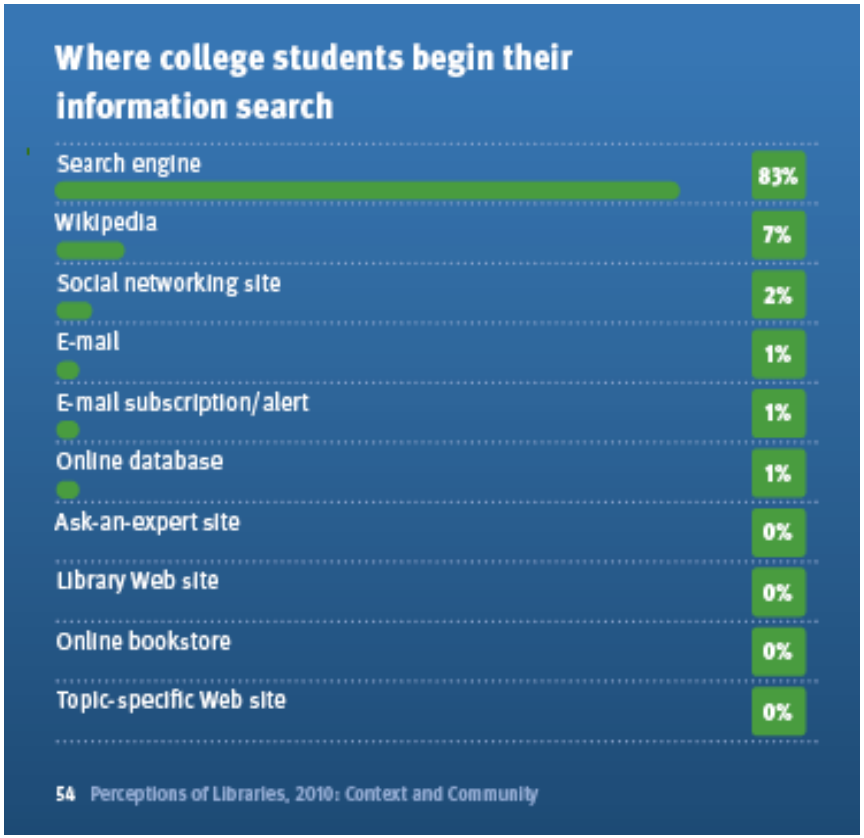
Why do SEO?

- ~200 million U.S. people use the Internet*
  - 81% of U.S. adults
  - 95% of U.S. teens
- Americans submit 19+ billion queries per month to commercial SE**
- Google owns 67% of these queries

* Pew Research Center. “What Internet users do online: Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project,” 2012. http://pewinternet.org/Trend-Data-(Adults)/Online-Activites-Total.aspx

** comScore. “comScore Releases February 2014 U.S. Search Engine Rankings,” February 18, 2014. http://www.comscore.com/Insights/Press_Releases/2014/2/comScore_Releases_January_2014_US_Search_Engine_Rankings

College Students Begin Research - 2010



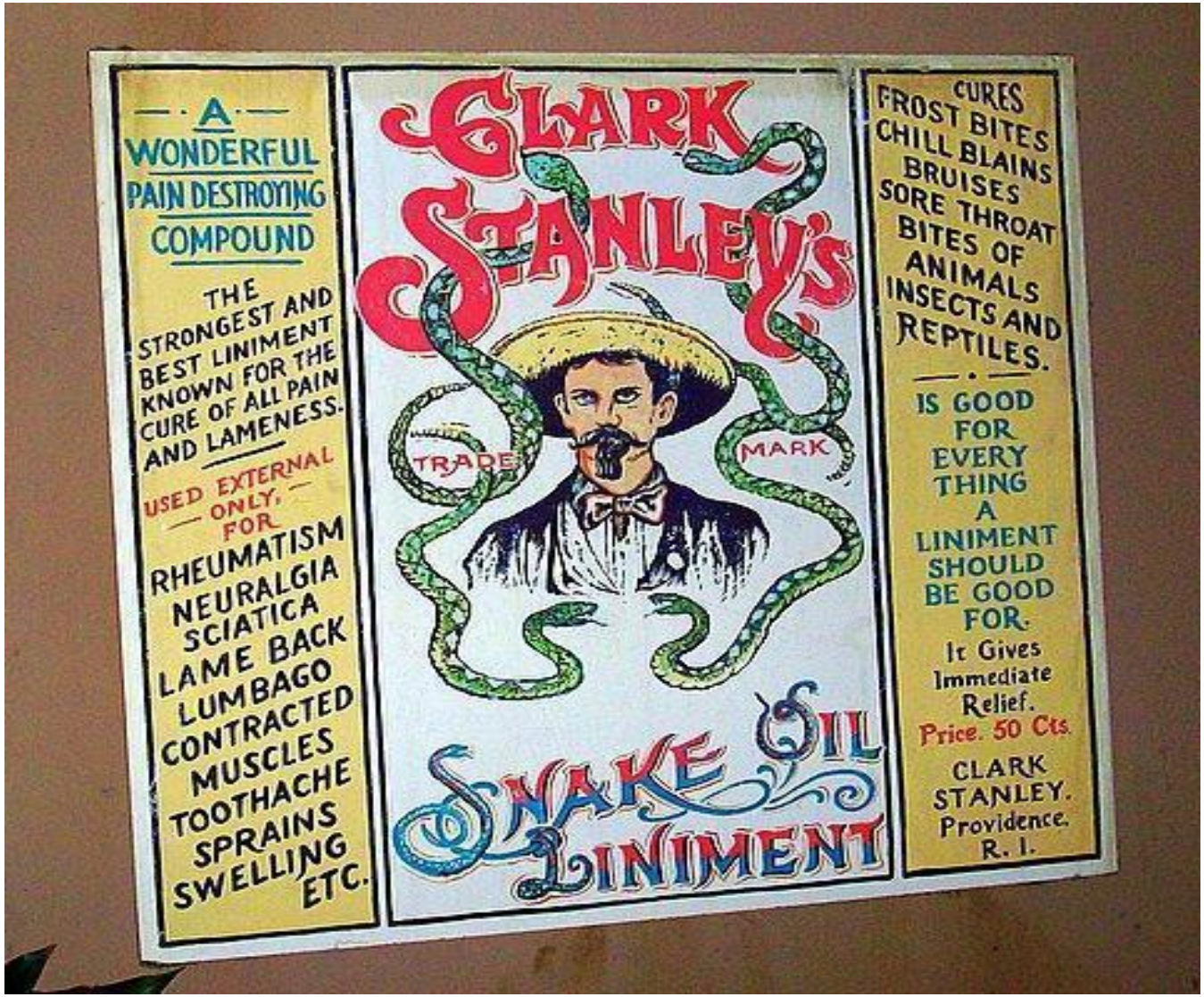
DeRosa, Cathy, et al. “Perceptions of Libraries, 2010: Context and Community: A Report to the OCLC Membership”, OCLC, 2010.

More Reasons for SEO

- ACRL
  - Funding providers want more accountability and demonstrated value*
- IMLS
  - Identify effective museum and library services through performance monitoring**
- State legislatures and local taxpayers
- University administrators and donors

* *ACRL Research Planning and Review Committee, "2010 top ten trends in academic libraries," June 2010*

**Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2011. "Creating a Nation of Learners; IMLS Five-Year Strategic Plan 2012–2016"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ETC.
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CHILL BLAINS
BRUISES
SORE THROAT
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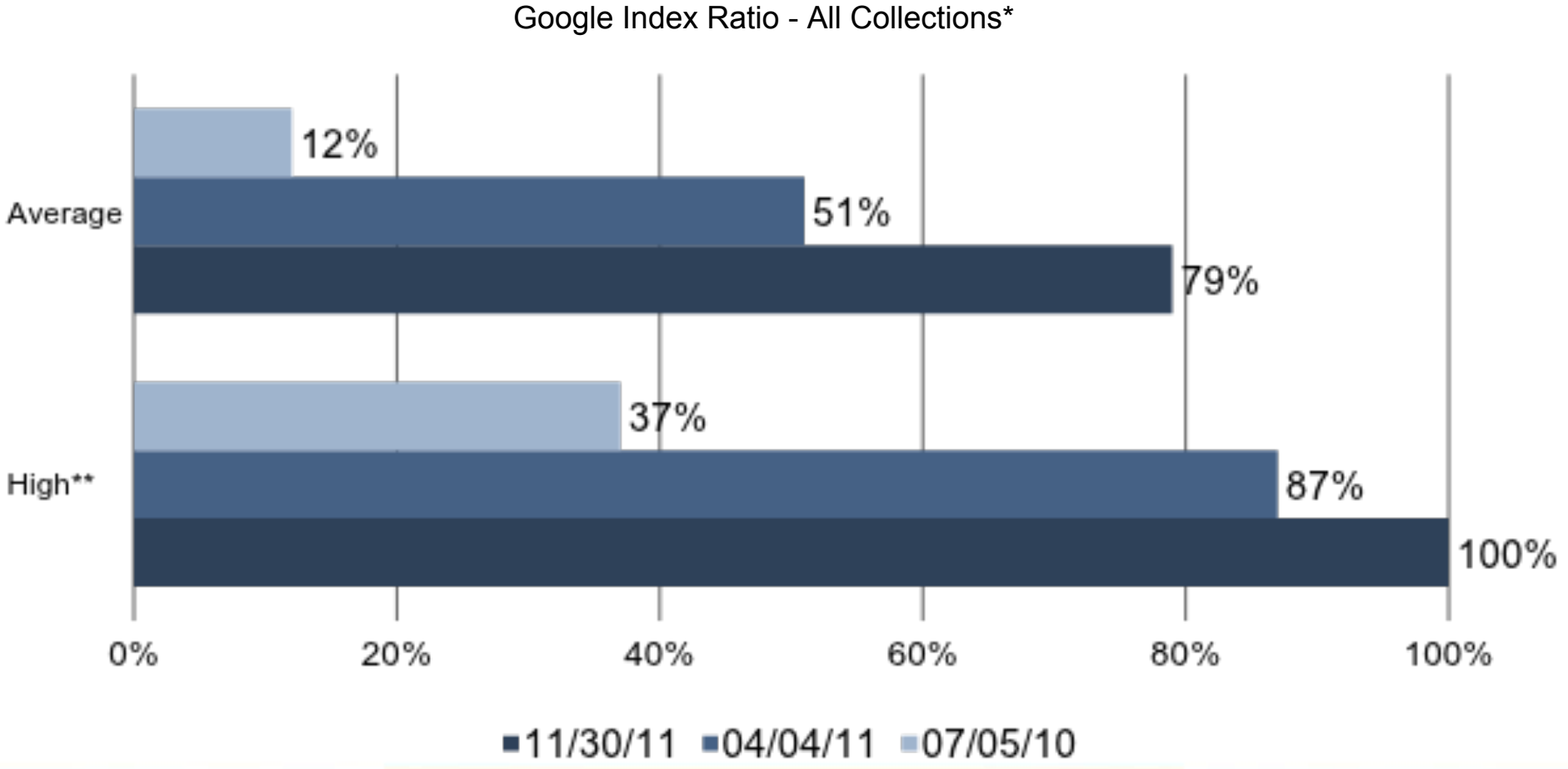
R. I.

Our Experience with Traditional SEO

- University of Utah digital collections in 2010
  - Less than 12% of collection content was accessible through Google
  - 1% of USpace IR content was accessible through Google Scholar

SEO improved collection accessibility in Google across the board…



…resulting in more referrals and visitors…

12 week comparison 2010 vs. 2012

Visitor Summary

	Custom View: 2/1/10 - 5/1/10	Custom View: 2/1/12 - 4/30/12	% Change
Visitors	52,140	119,956	130.07% ▲
Visitors Who Visited Once	46,496	110,889	138.49% ▲
Visitors Who Visited More Than Once	5,644	9,067	60.65% ▲
Average Visits per Visitor	1.27	1.16	-8.66% ▼

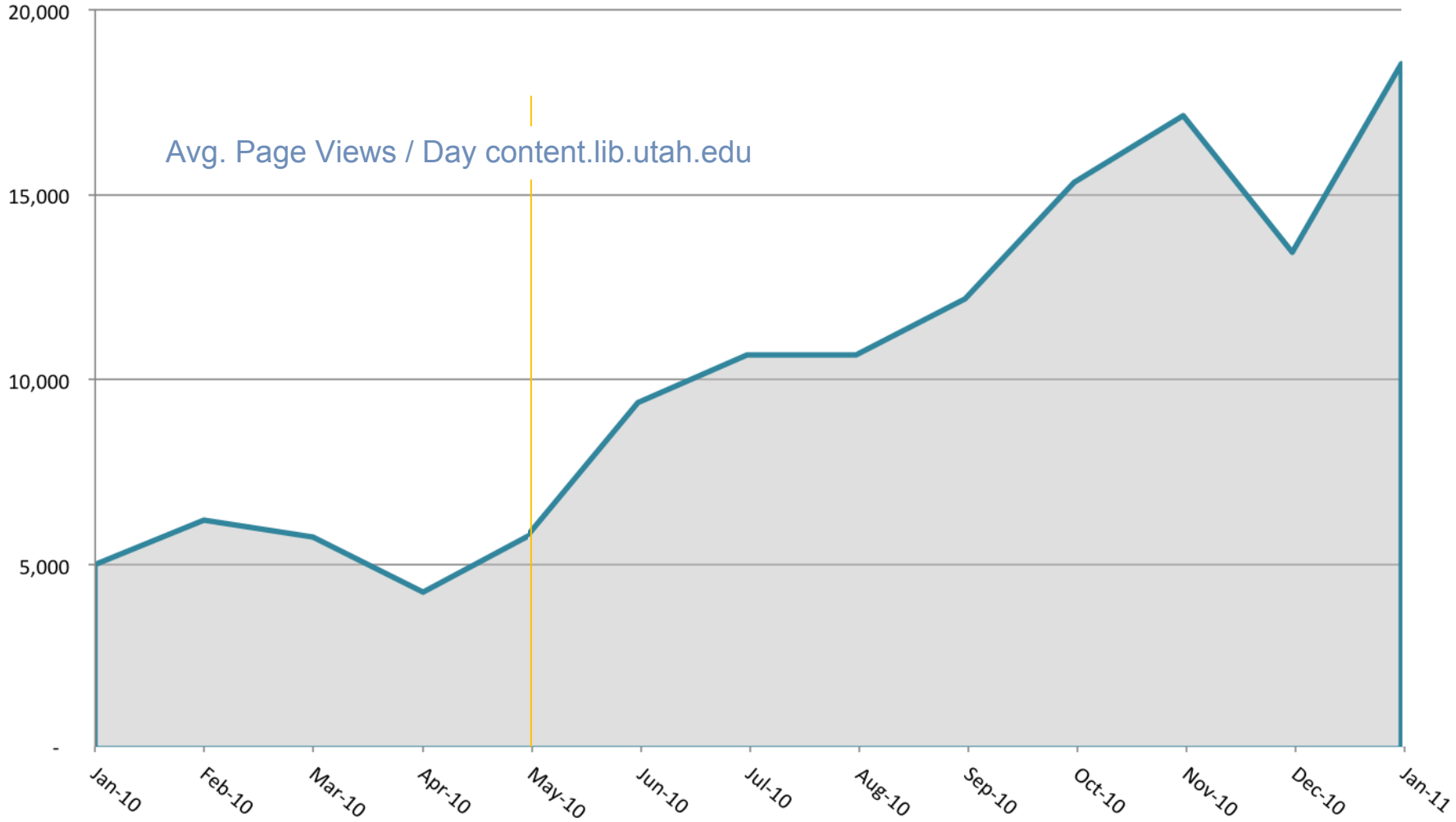
Referring Domain: Search Results For google

Items Per Page: 10

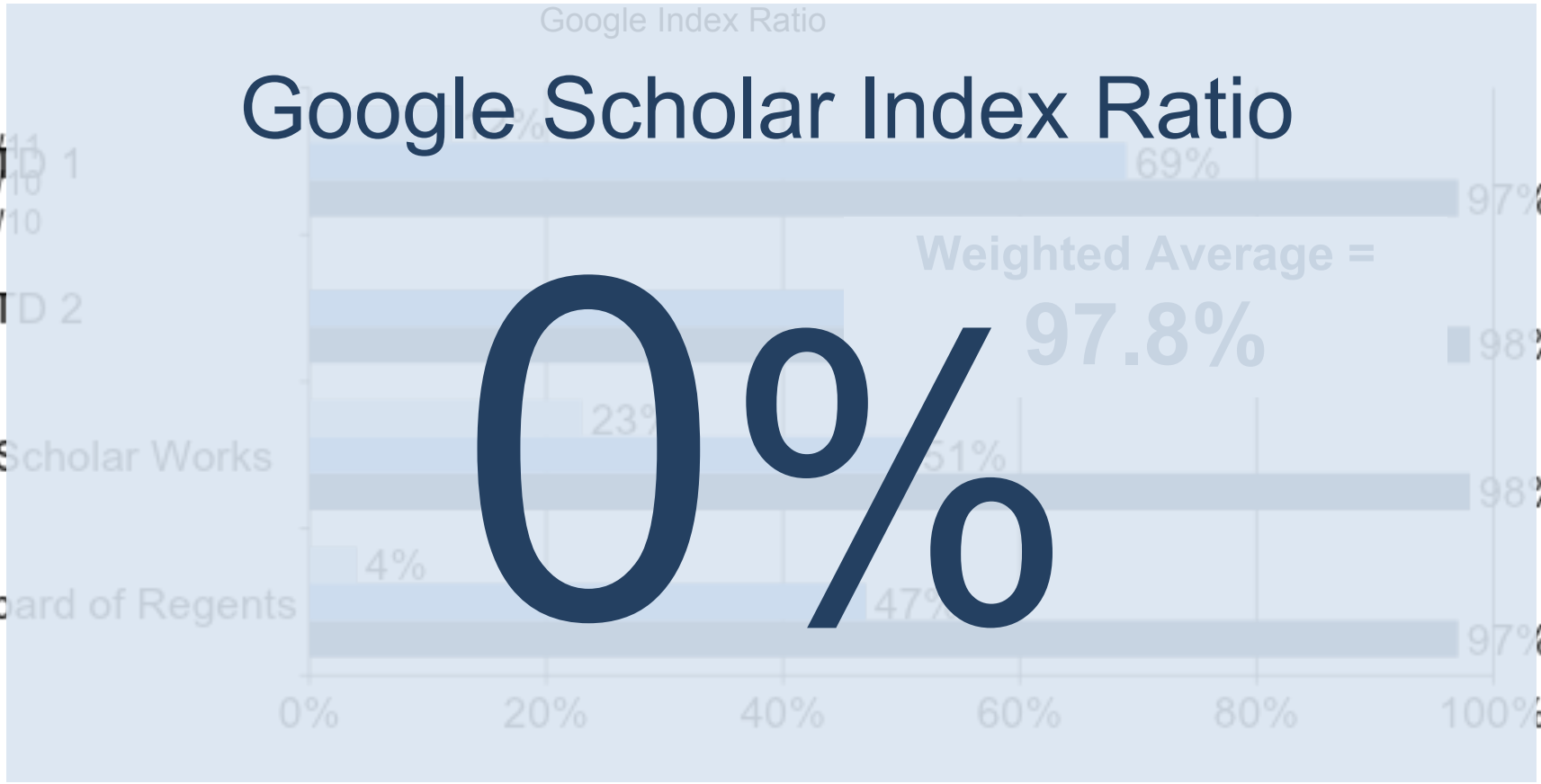
Domain	Custom View: 2/6/12 - 4/29/12 Visits	Custom View: 2/1/10 - 4/25/10 Visits	% Change Visits
1. google.com	51,694	8,959	477.01% ▲
2. google.co.uk	1,284	182	605.49% ▲
3. google.ca	1,203	415	189.88% ▲
4. google.it	670	38	1,663.16% ▲
5. google.co.in	602	68	785.29% ▲
6. google.fr	475	35	1,257.14% ▲
7. google.es	466	26	1,692.31% ▲
8. google.com.au	463	95	387.37% ▲
9. google.de	441	88	401.14% ▲
10. [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] ▲
Total	**63,637**	**10,559**	**502.68%** ▲

Increase

. . .producing significant increases in page views per day



Almost 100% of USpace IR content is accessible to patrons using Google



*October 16, 2011 Weighted Average Google Index Ratio = 97.82% (10,306/10,536).

IR indexing problem lay in metadata that GS couldn't identify, parse and digest

Human Readable

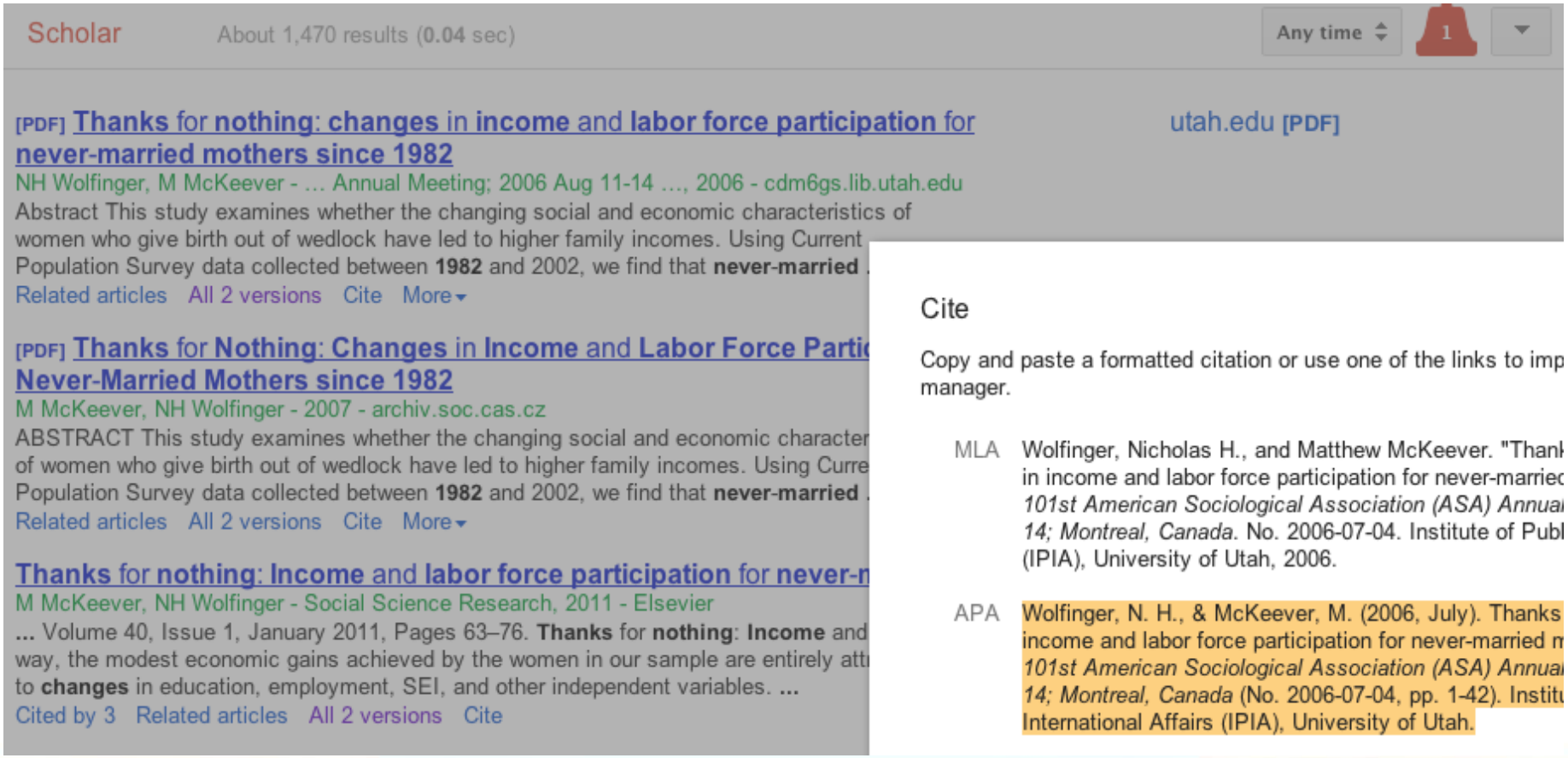
Wolfinger, N. H., & McKeever, M. (2006, July). Thanks for nothing: changes in income and labor force participation for never-married mothers since 1982. In *101st American Sociological Association (ASA) Annual Meeting; 2006 Aug 11-14; Montreal, Canada* (No. 2006-07-04, pp. 1-42). Institute of Public & International Affairs (IPIA), University of Utah.

Google Scholar Understandable

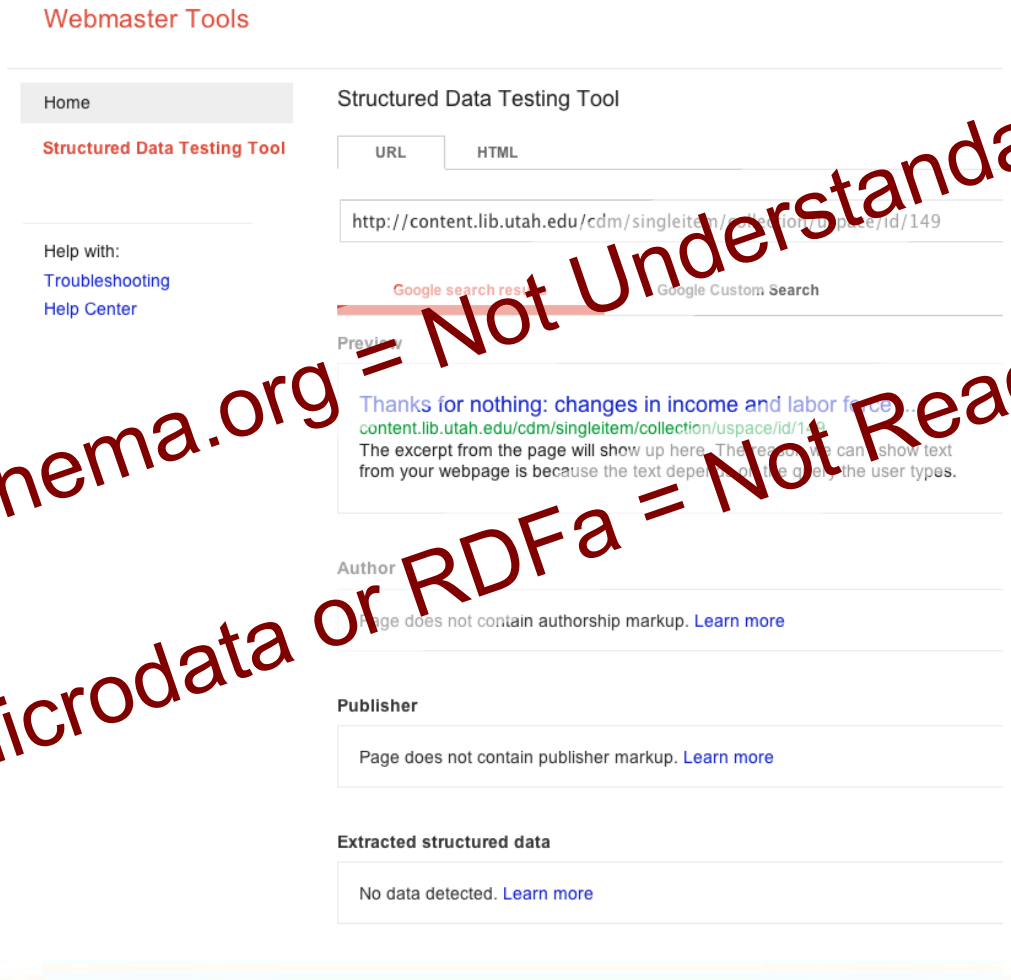
```
1  <meta name="citation_title" content="Thanks for nothing: changes in income and lab
2  <meta name="citation_author" content="Wolfinger, Nicholas H." />
3  <meta name="citation_author" content="McKeever, Matthew" />
4  <meta name="citation_date" content="2006-07-26" />
5  <meta name="citation_firstpage" content="1" />
6  <meta name="citation_lastpage" content="42" />
7  <meta name="citation_keywords" content="Motherhood; Single Mothers; Income; Popula
8  <meta name="citation_technical_report_institution" content="Institute of Public &
9  <meta name="citation_technical_report_number" content="2006-07-04" />
10 <meta name="citation_language" content="en" />
11 <meta name="citation_conference_title" content="101st American Sociological Associ
12 <meta name="citation_pdf_url" content="http://cdm6gs.lib.utah.edu/utils/getfile/co
```

Google Scholar can read and understand!

Google Scholar



However, Google could not understand USpace structured data



No Schema.org = Not Understandable

No Microdata or RDFa = Not Readable

- New Knowledge Work

Semantic Web SEO

Google's Perception of MSU Lib - 2012

Google | montana state university library | SIGN IN

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About 13,200,000 results (0.16 seconds)

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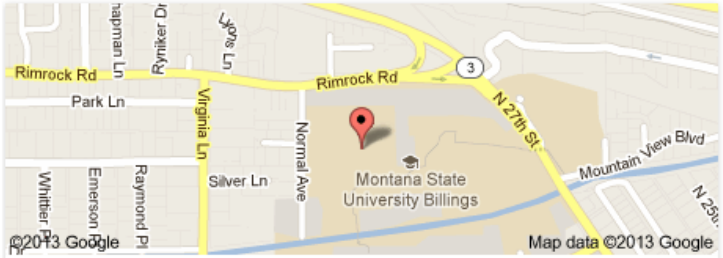


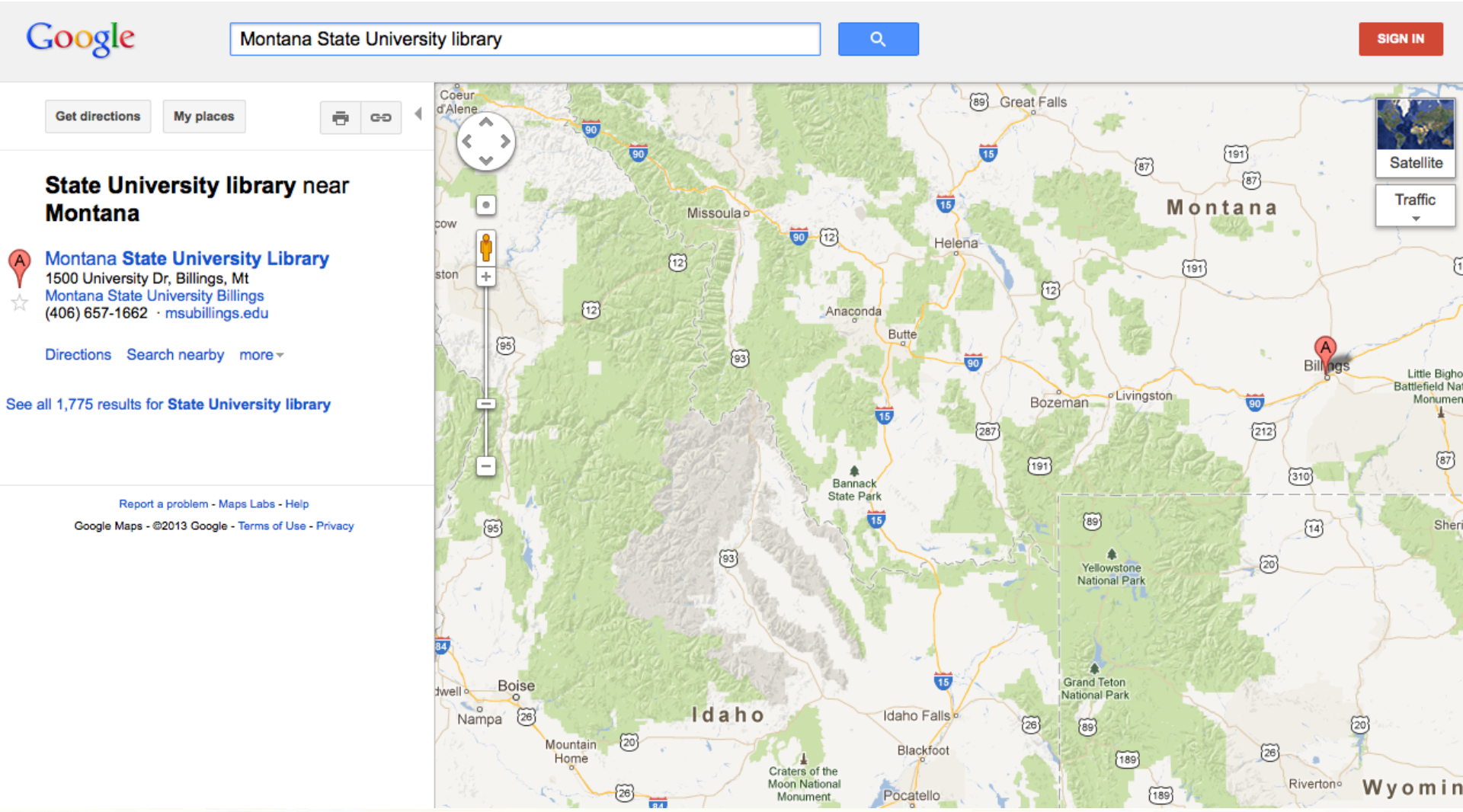
Montana State University Library

Directions | Be the first to review

Address: 1500 University Dr, Billings, Mt 59101
Phone: (406) 657-1662
Hours: Wednesday hours 7:30 am–10:00 pm - See all

Feedback

Google Maps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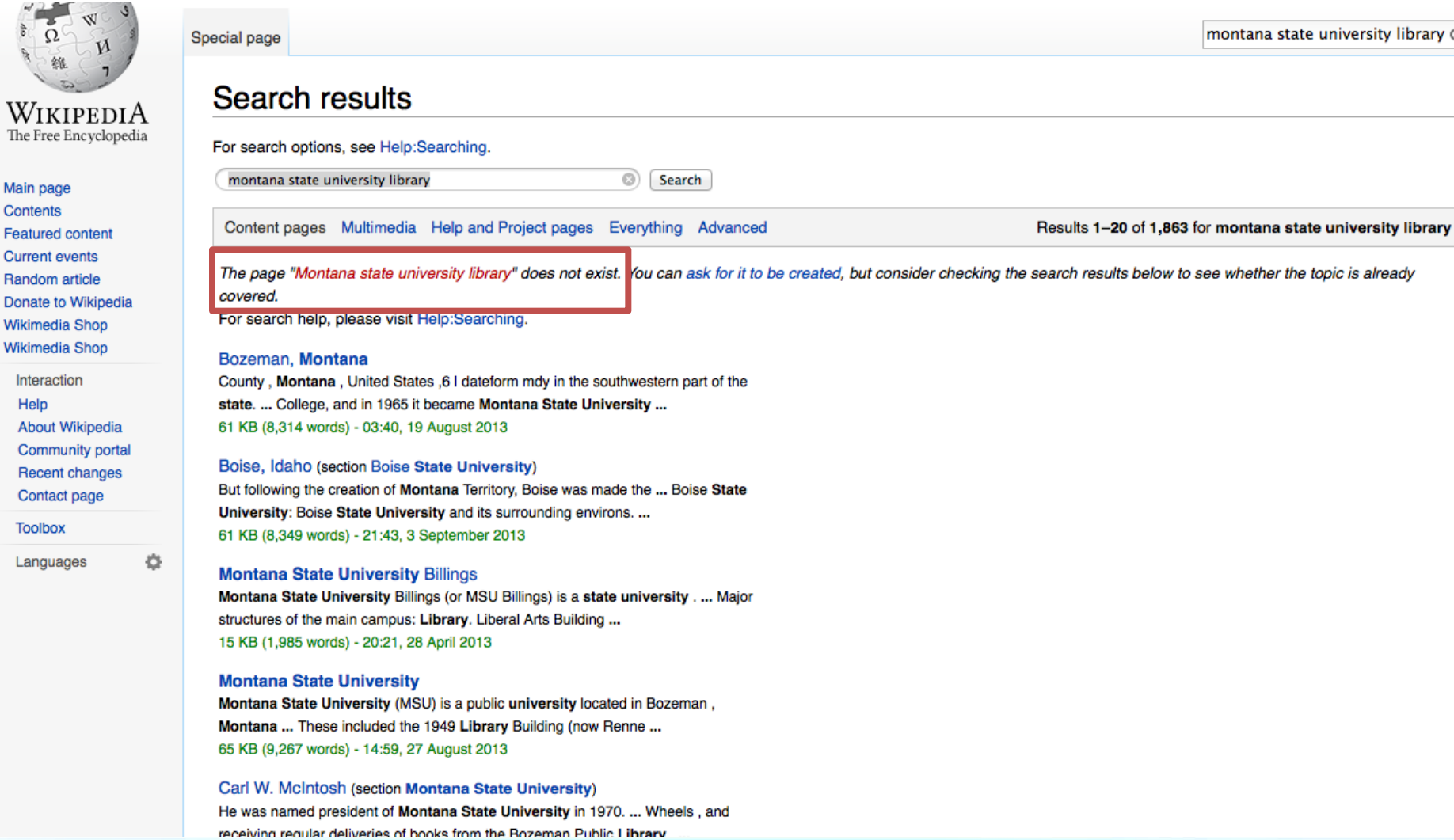
Bannack State Park
Yellowstone National Park
Grand Teton National Park
Boise
Nampa
Mountain Home
Craters of the Moon National Monument
Idaho Falls
Blackfoot
Pocatello
Riverton

Where does Google get its information?

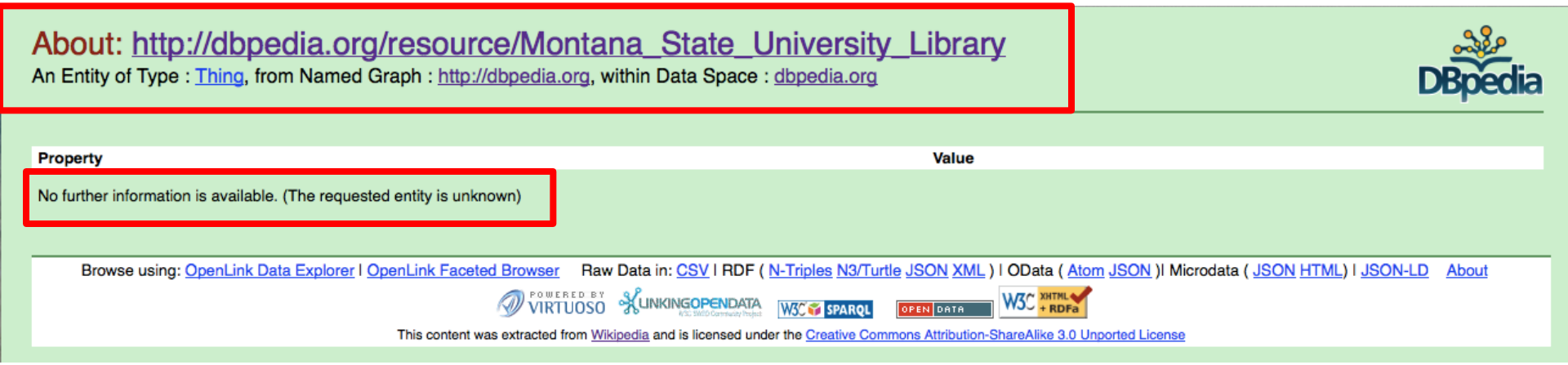
Trusted Sources for Search Engines

- Wikipedia/DBpedia
- No Wikipedia presence?
  - You don't exist to search engines
- Influences to Google's Knowledge Graph
  - Google Places/Google My Business
  - Google+
  - Freebase

Wikipedia - 2012



DBpedia entry - 2012



About: http://dbpedia.org/resource/Montana_State_University_Library
An Entity of Type : Thing, from Named Graph : http://dbpedia.org, within Data Space : dbpedia.org

DBpedia

Property	Value
No further information is available. (The requested entity is unknown)	

Browse using: OpenLink Data Explorer | OpenLink Faceted Browser Raw Data in: CSV | RDF (N-Triples N3/Turtle JSON XML) | OData (Atom JSON)| Microdata (JSON HTML) | JSON-LD About

POWERED BY VIRTUOSO LINKINGOPENDATA W3C SPARQL OPEN DATA W3C XHTML + RDFa

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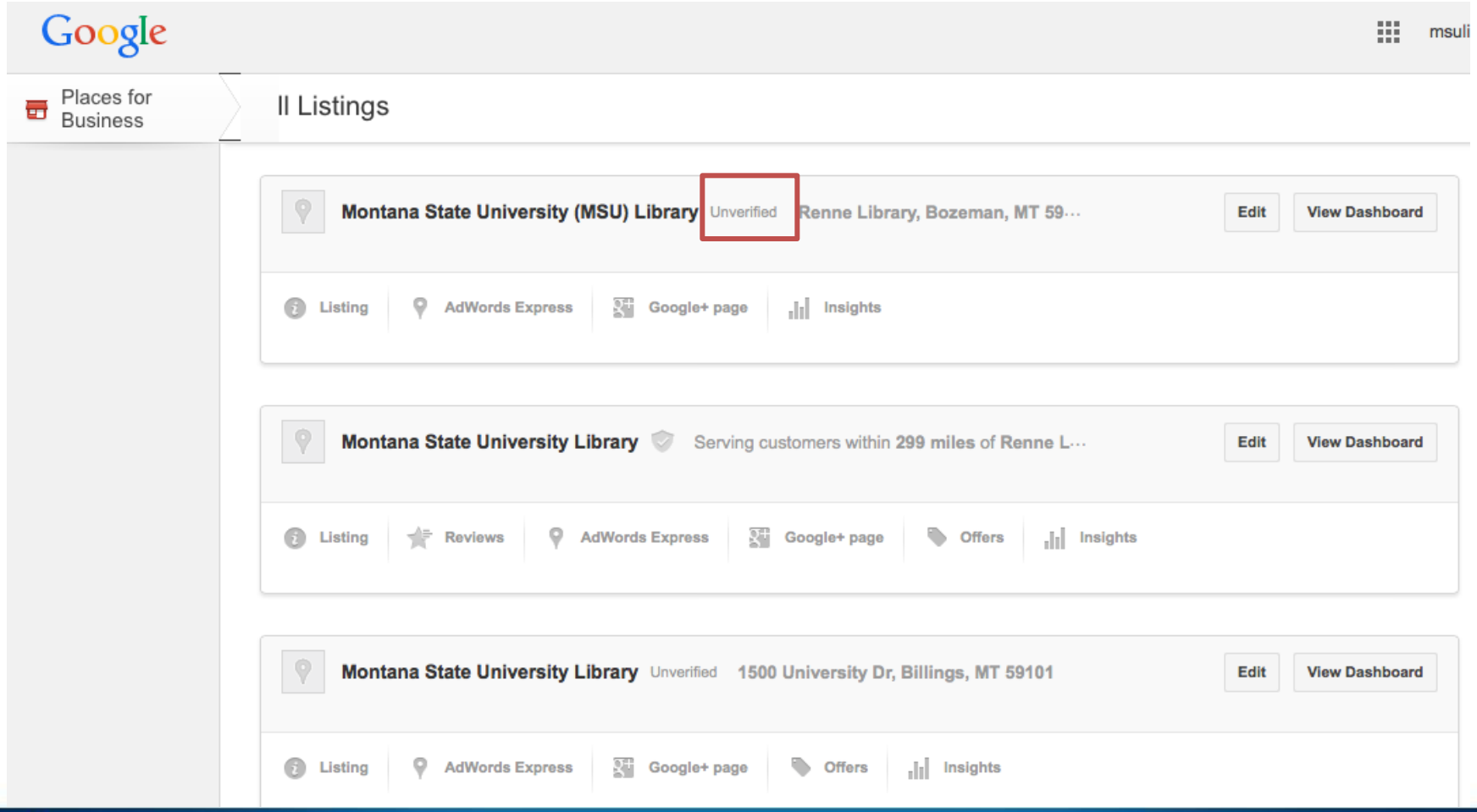
Google Places - 2012



What's a librarian to do?

- Establish a semantic identity

How?

- Define libraries and library concepts in Wikipedia
  - Beware of *pedia culture and process
- Engage with other trusted data sources
  - Google Places/Google My Business
  - Google+
  - Freebase
- Mark-up metadata with schema.org

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Montana State University Library

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Coordinates: 45°40′0.1302″N 111°2′54.5756″W

Montana State University Library (MSU Library) is the academic library of Montana State University, Montana's land-grant university, in Bozeman, Montana, United States. It is the flagship library for all of Montana State University System's campuses. In 1978, the library was named the Roland R. Renne Library to honor the sixth president of the university. The library supports the research and information needs of Montana's students, faculty, and the Montana Extension Service.

Contents [hide]

1 History
2 Collections
  2.1 Digital collections
  2.2 ScholarWorks
  2.3 Special Collections and University Archives
3 Budget
4 Special events
5 Awards
6 Memberships
7 See also
8 References

Montana State University Library

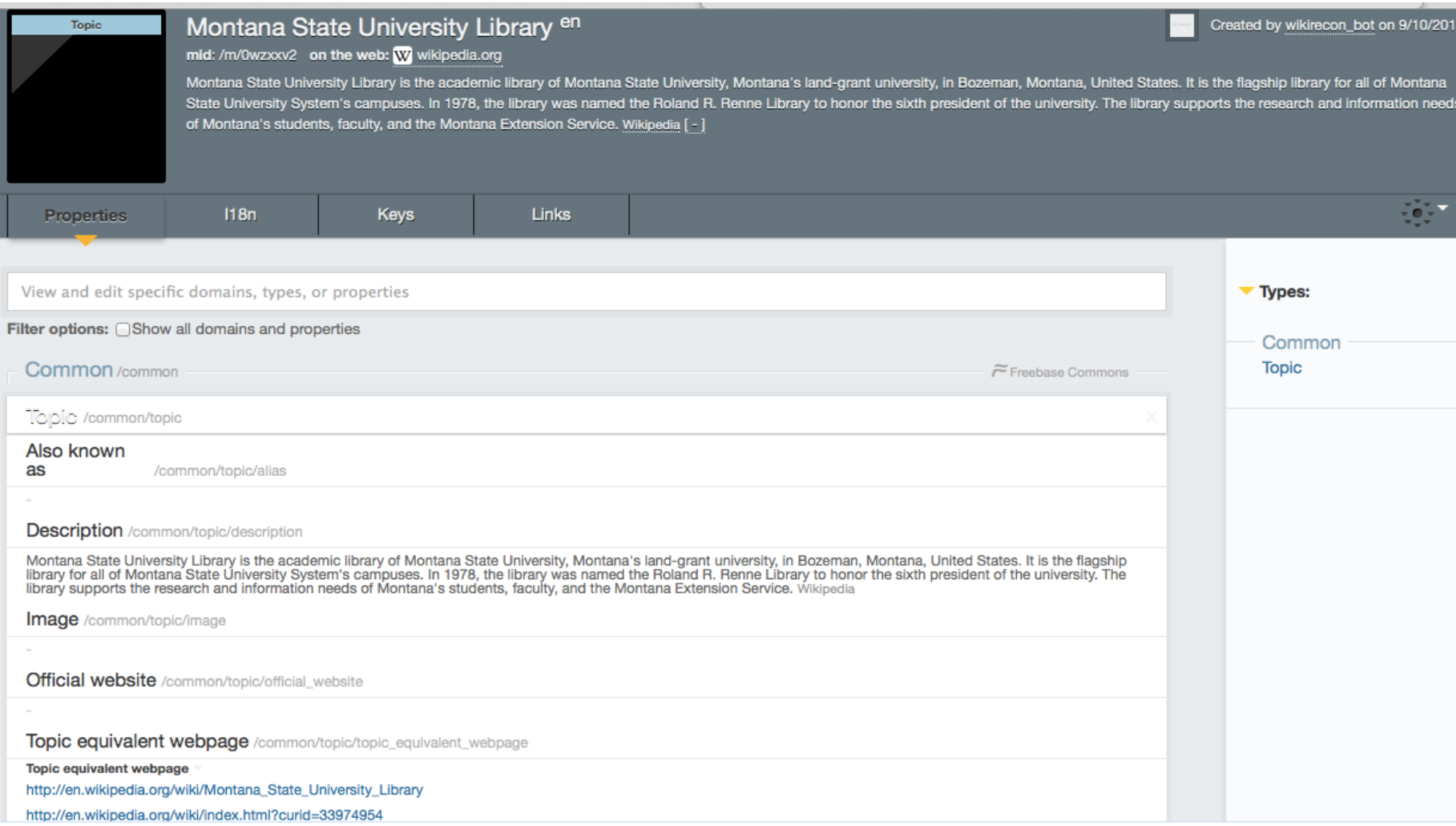
Type	Academic library
Established	January 1894
Location	Bozeman, Montana, US
Coordinates	45°40′0.1302″N 111°2′54.5756″W
Collection	
Items collected	Books 523,937; E-Books 230,104; Gov Docs 114,000; Microforms-Audio-Video 2,210,828; Serial Subscription 15,615; Archives 3,651 feet (1,113 m) linear
Other information	
Budget	$7,735,592[1]
Director	Kenning Arlitsch
Staff	52
Website	www.lib.montana.edu
Phone number	(406) 994-3139

History [edit]

In January 1894, about seven months after Montana College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts was founded, the college began acquiring and housing a formal library collection for its students and faculty research use. For the first two years of the library's existence, students or instructors served part-time to provide library services. In 1896, Mabel Ruth Owens became the first full-time professional librarian to oversee the library's operations and collection development. In 1927, the library was moved to the second floor of Montana Hall.[2]

In 1949, the library, its collection and research services were moved to a newly constructed 8,894 square feet (826.3 m^2) library facility.[3] After the transfer of nearly 100,000 volumes from various locations around campus the library officially opened its doors on January 9, 1950.[4]

2014 Freebase entry



Google+

Google+ Search for restaurants, hotels, and more Bozeman, Mt

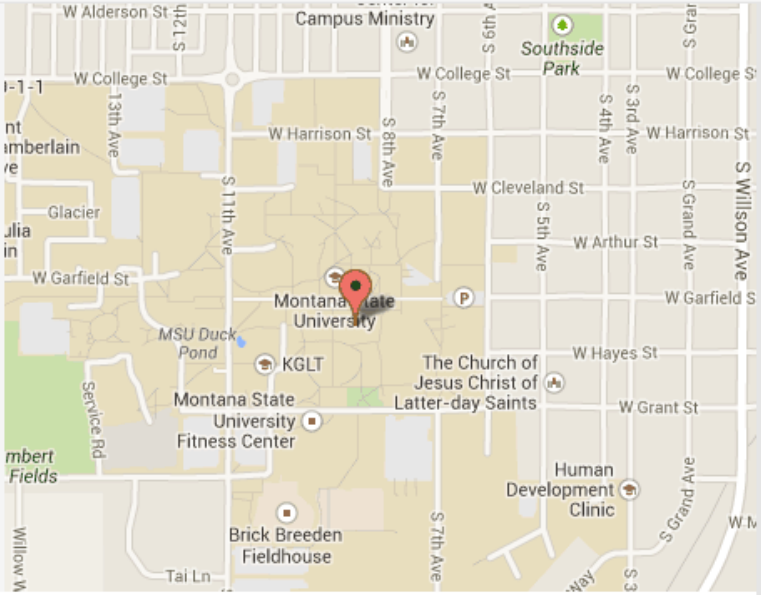
Local

Montana State University Library

Renne Library Bozeman, Mt 59717
(406) 994-3139
lib.montana.edu

Library
Today 7:00 am – 12:00 am

1



About Photos

Contact Information

Renne Library Bozeman, Mt 59717
(406) 994-3139 ��lib.montana.edu

Library, Archive ��Today 7:00 am – 12:00 am

MSU Library supports the research and information needs of students, faculty and the community of Montana.

Review Summary

Write a review

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Google's Perception of MSU Lib - 2012

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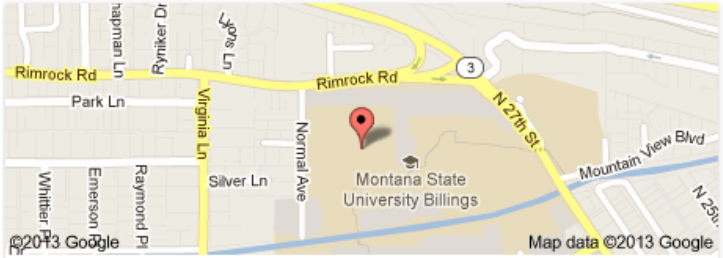

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Feedback

Google's Perception of MSU Lib - 2014

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Web Images Shopping News Maps More Search tools

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Montana State University MSU Library
www.lib.montana.edu/ Montana State University Library
Montana State University (**MSU**) **Library** is here to help students, faculty, and the people of Montana with their quest for information and research.
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About Us. MSU Library's building, Renne Library, was named ...

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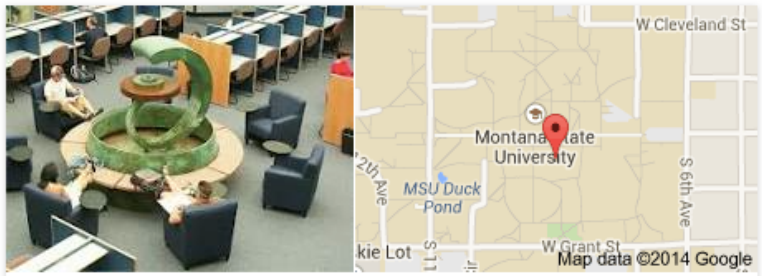
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/**Montana_State_University_Library** Wikipedia
Montana State University Library (**MSU Library**) is the academic library of Montana State University, Montana's land-grant university, in Bozeman, Montana, ...



Montana State University Library

Directions Follow

Montana State University Library is the academic library of Montana State University, Montana's land-grant university, in Bozeman, Montana, United States. It is the flagship library for all of Montana State University System's campuses. Wikipedia

Address: Renne Library, Bozeman, Mt 59717

Feedback

Themes discovered

Traditional SEO is an afterthought
Librarians think too small re potential traffic
Organizational communication is poor
Data in repositories often messy
Analytics usually poorly implemented
Vendors slow to catch on to SEO problems
Library software lacking for semantic web SEO
Libraries fail to establish semantic identities

Library Organization & Strategy

Recommendations and Priorities

1. Institutionalize SEO
   - Strategic Plan
   - Accurate Measurement Tools
2. Traditional SEO
   - Get Indexed = Index Ratio
   - Get Visible = Search Engine Results Page (SERP)
3. Semantic SEO
   - Get Relevant = Click Through Ratios (CTR)
     - Metadata
     - Linked Open Data (LOD)
     - Schema.org

Question: Which part of the library organization is responsible for SEO?

a. Public Services
b. Information Technology
c. Cataloging and metadata
d. Administration
e. Special Collections

Answer: All of the above

University of Utah 2011 Strategic Plan

Library Strategic Plan	SEO Program Activities

Exploit the Digital and Networked Environments	• Optimize Collections to Improve Visibility
	  • Descriptions
	  • Link Popularity
	  • Page Elements
	  • Metadata
	  • Calls to Action
	• Develop Metrics Dashboard to monitor and improve efforts

Elevate our position and impact on campus	•Improve IR Visibility and Citeability •Present program results at national and regional forums •Collaborate with the Library's Campus Stakeholders
Diversify and increase the financial base	•Apply for IMLS Grant •Improve Press website visibility and reach

Montana State University 2013 Strategic Plan

MSU Strategic Plan

Objective: Enhance infrastructure in support of research, discovery and creative activities

University Metric: MSU will increase grant-sponsored investment in centers, core facilities and resources to expand state of the art tools, expertise, and opportunities for research and creative activities

- Develop an institutional repository of intellectual output of campus

MSU Library Strategic Plan

Objective: Improve discovery layers and find-ability of library content

SEO Program Activities

Library Metric: increase indexing rates of MSU content to improve access for researchers worldwide

- Create dashboard for analytical reporting
- Establish a baseline for Google's indexing of library web content for search engine optimization
- Establish baseline for Google Scholar's indexing of ScholarWorks (IR)

Establishing accountability at the institutional level

- Avoid the free-for-all of silos
  - Think institution, not department/individual
  - Insist on cross-organizational communication
- Establish a consolidated master account
  - Everyone uses same baseline metrics and tools
    - Ex. Google Webmaster Tools, Google Analytics
- Enable stakeholders for buy-in
  - Collection Managers
  - IT Personnel
  - Administrators

Set up scalable tools and repeatable process for improvement

- Accessibility
  - SE-friendly sitemaps
  - Monitor via Google Webmaster Tools
  - Optimize server configurations
  - SE-friendly template viewer modifications
  - IR metadata transformation and reload
- Use
  - Full capture via Google Analytics

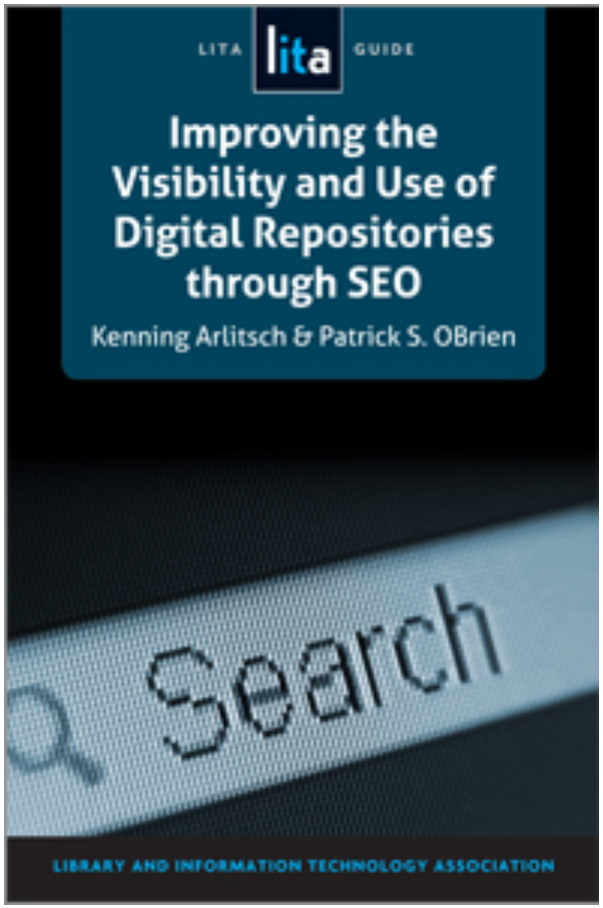
Reporting and Assessment

- Do you have goals?
  - How do you know you're meeting them?
  - Tools like WT and GA can help (and they're free!)
- Reporting
  - Have you established baselines?
  - Can't measure progress without
- Monitor and measure
  - Balanced Scorecard for strategic plan

New Knowledge Work = New Services

- Everyone struggles with these issues
  - University, colleges, departments, centers, etc.
  - Theory: SEO increases citations/university rankings
- Develop a team
  - SEO skills
  - Repeatable processes
  - Show value to potential customers

Further Reading



- Arlitsch, Kenning, and Patrick S. OBrien. (2013). Improving the visibility and use of digital repositories through SEO. Chicago: ALA TechSource. ISBN-13: 978-1-55570-906-8

Recommendations & Priorties

1. Institutionalize SEO
   - Strategic Plan
   - Accurate Measurement Tools
2. Traditional SEO
   - Get Indexed = Index Ratio
   - Get Visible = Search Engine Results Page (SERP)
3. Semantic SEO
   - Get Relevant = Click Through Ratios (CTR)
   - Metadata
   - Linked Open Data (LOD)
   - Schema.org

Agenda - Day 1

- Overview
  - What is SEO and why do it?
  - Our experience
  - Common Themes Discovered
- Library Organization & Strategy
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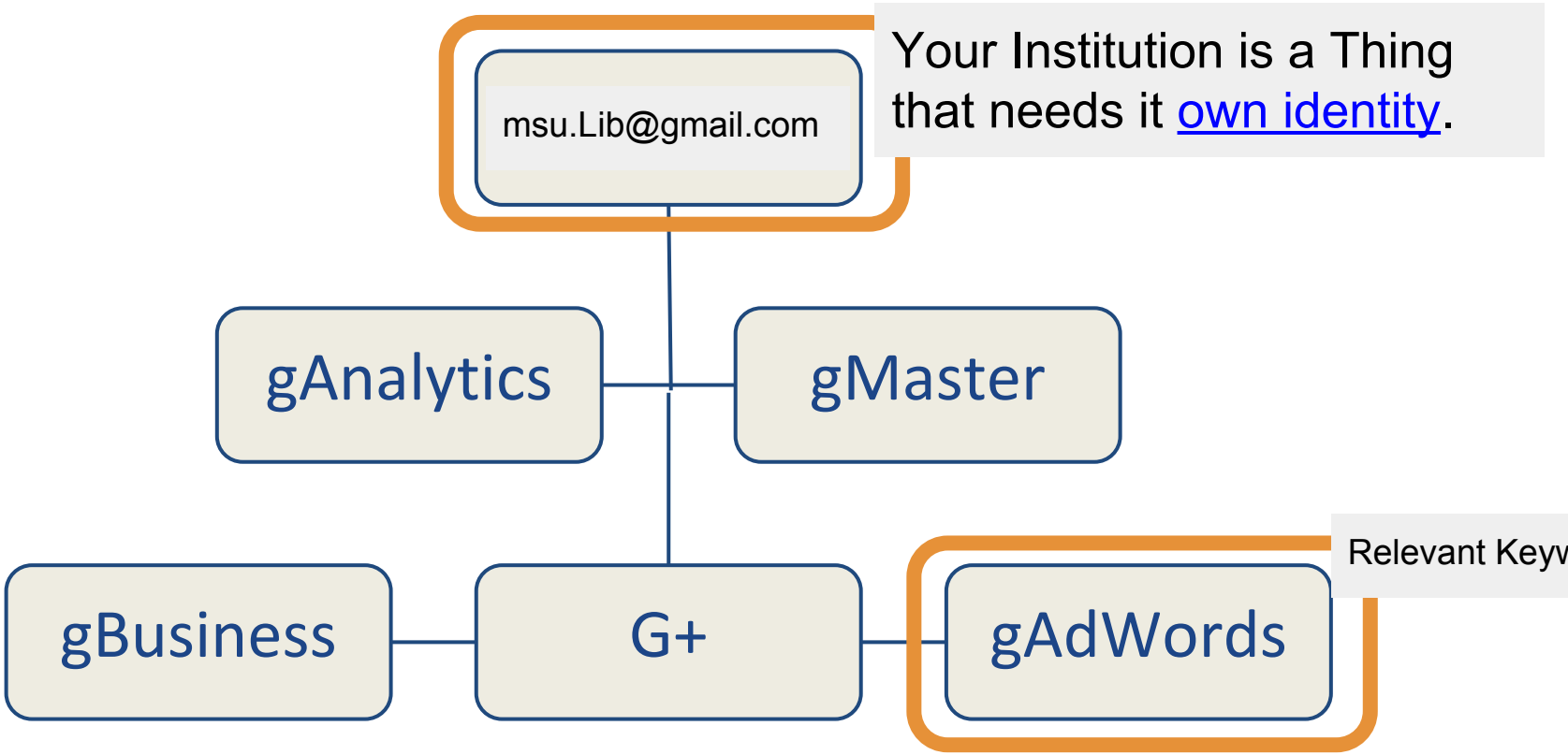
  - How to get Visibile?

Recommended Process Measurement & Evaluation

1. Single Google Account for your Institution
2. Establish baseline metrics
   - Google Analytics (gAnalytics)
   - Google Webmaster Tools (gMaster)
3. Activate Google Services
   - Google MyBusiness (gBusiness)
   - Google+ (G+)
   - Google AdWords (gAdWords)

Google Platform



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Change from Strings to Things

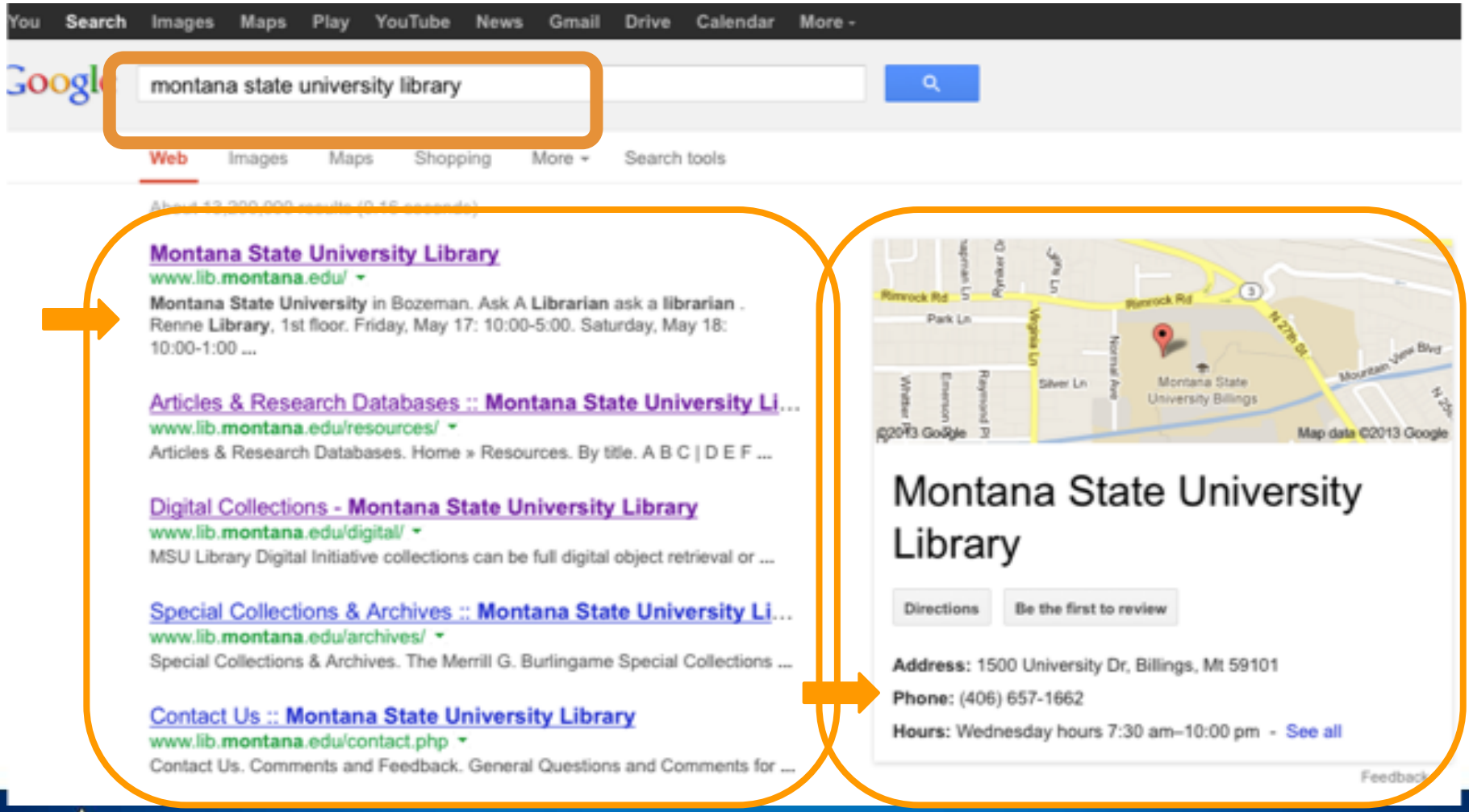
- **SEO Goals** are to increase access, visibility and use by patrons that value our content
- **Semantic Web** is a framework of standards and technologies to share, integrate and represent data as concepts across different content, information and system boundaries.
- **Semantic Search** incorporates the Semantic Web to understand the context and intent of users seeking information and the concepts contained within a document

Why semantic search is useful

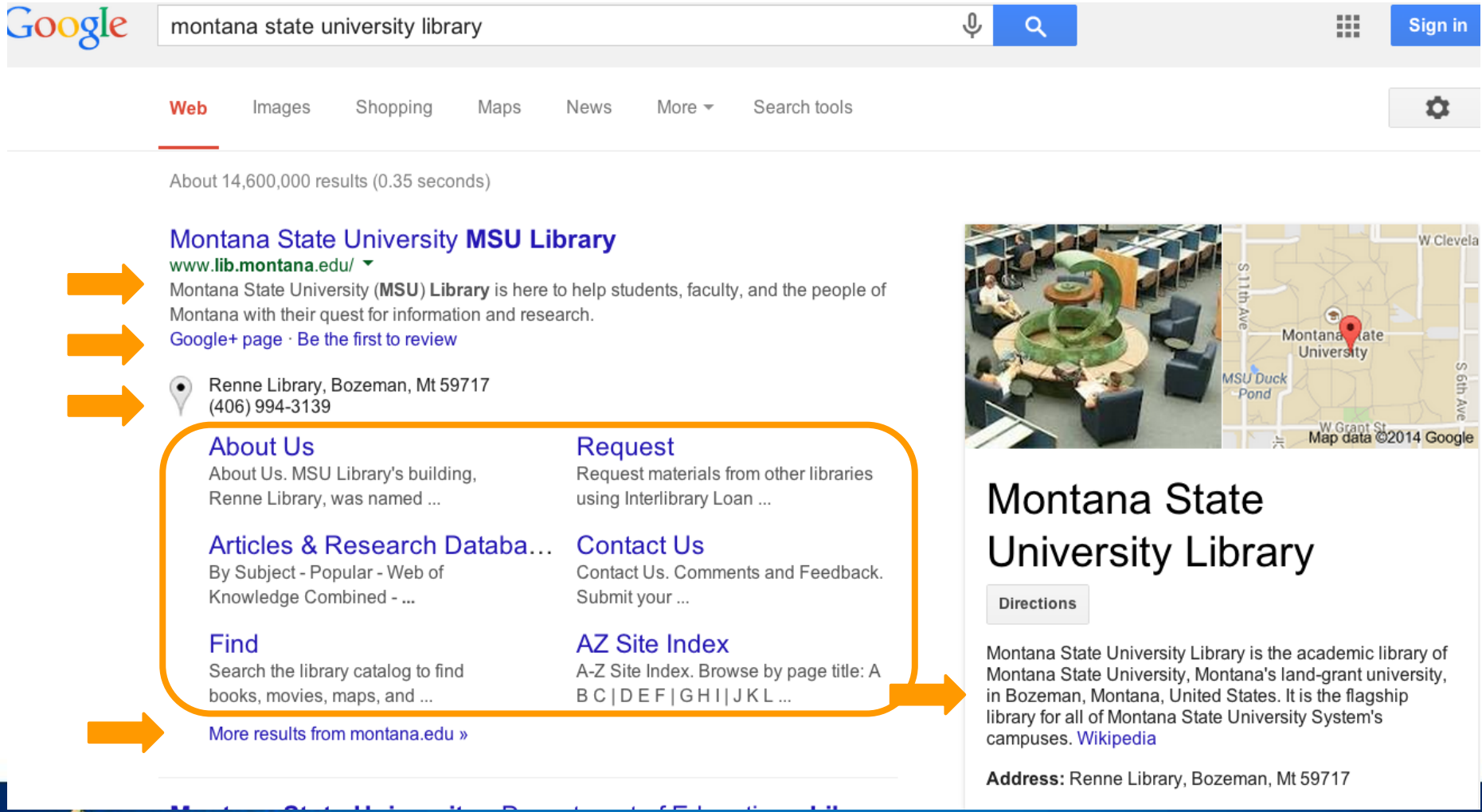
- Perfect application for research & discovery of concepts
  - Apple Siri
  - IBM Watson
  - Google Knowledge Graph
- Making content Search Engine Readable & semantically Understandable can increase
  - click through rates (CTR) by 15%*
  - organic traffic by 30%*

* http://searchengineland.com/how-to-get-a-30-increase-in-ctr-with-structured-markup-105830

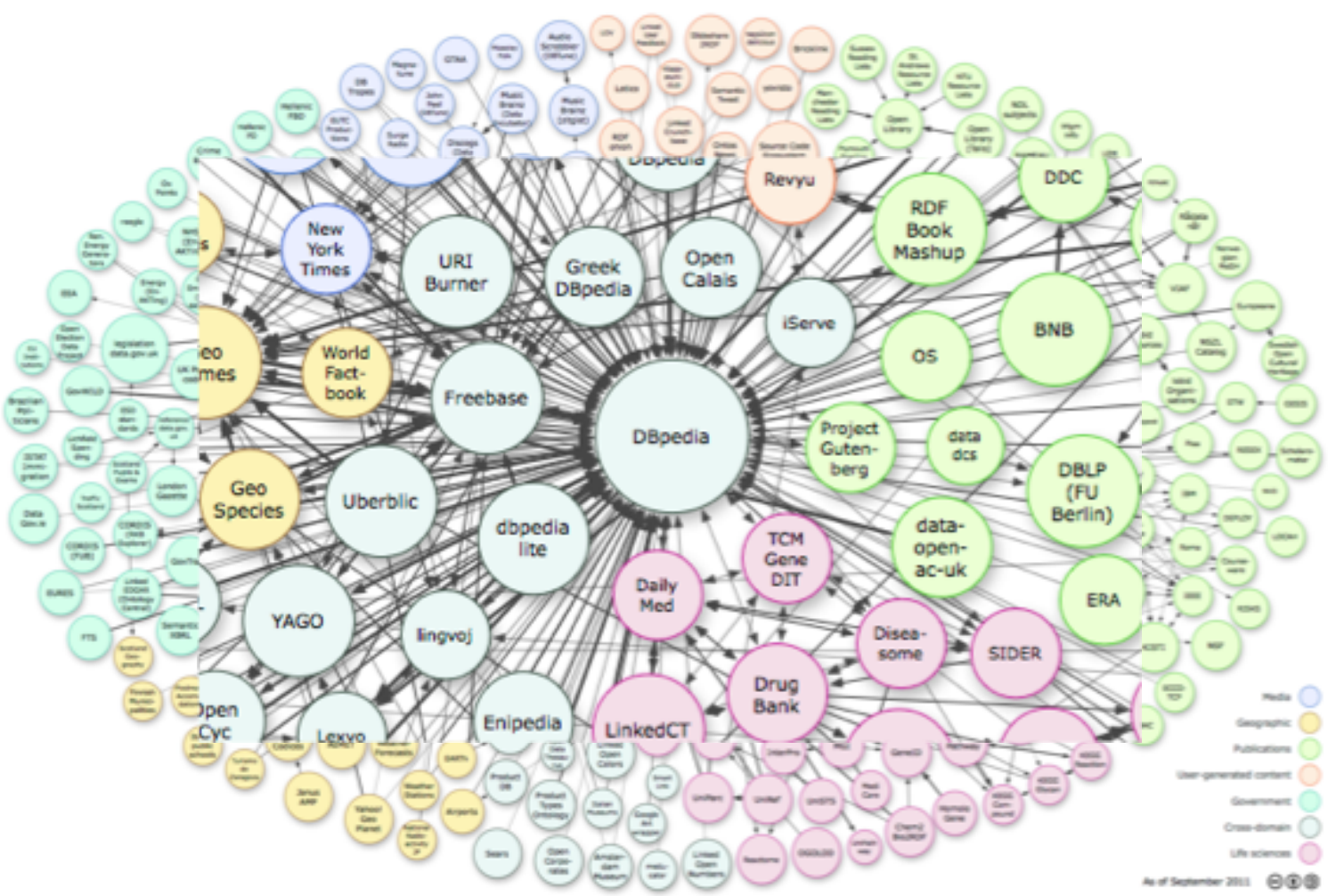
Semantic implies “meaning” or “understanding”



How do we help search engines get it right?



Understand where information comes



Know the SEO Guidelines

- SE approved "Webmaster Guidelines"
- Focus on improving user experience
  - Unique & accurate content
  - User relevant vocabulary & keywords
  - Intuitive site architecture
- Build Stability & Trust
  - URLs
  - Custom 404 Pages
  - No Broken Links

Know SPAM = Banned

- Using deceptive redirects
  - "Cloaking"
  - "Shadow" domains
- Multiple "Doorway Pages" with poor content optimized for different keywords
- "Link Schemes" trying to game the SE
- "Hidden" text or links
- Anything "sneaky" or untrustworthy

Above All: Focus on user experience

- Descriptive Page Titles, anchor text, descriptions, etc.
- External linking
- Easy & Intuitive Site Navigation
- Submit sitemaps/configure robots.txt file
- Monitor & address errors
- Inform staff & assign ownership
- Upgrade repository software
- Optimize webserver performance

Improve On-Page Optimization

- Keyword phrase analysis
  - Patron relevant
  - Low to Moderate competition
  - High volume
- Write / rewrite Web page
  - HTML <title>
  - <description> metatag
- Ensure
  - all links contain descriptive "Anchor Text"
  - Use <H1>, <H2> HTML tags to "outline" the page around the topic (i.e. <title>)
  - Text is natural, easy-to-read,descriptive and relevant to the page outline (i.e., H1, H2)

Keyword Phrase Analysis

- Focus on your audience
  - Broad or Specific?
    - High School Students
    - Pre-Ottoman Egypt Scholars
  - Can you group them by a common theme?
    - Person
    - Place
    - Thing
    - Timeperiod
  - What words and phrases are your target patrons using?

Keyword Phrase Selection

- Which keyword phrase?
  a. institutional repository
  b. academic research
  c. research papers
  d. open access repository

Use Google Keyword Planner Tool

Search terms	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Suggested bid
research papers	3,600	High	$3.53
academic research	880	Low	$1.40
institutional repository	210	Low	$0.00
open access library	110	Low	$0.00

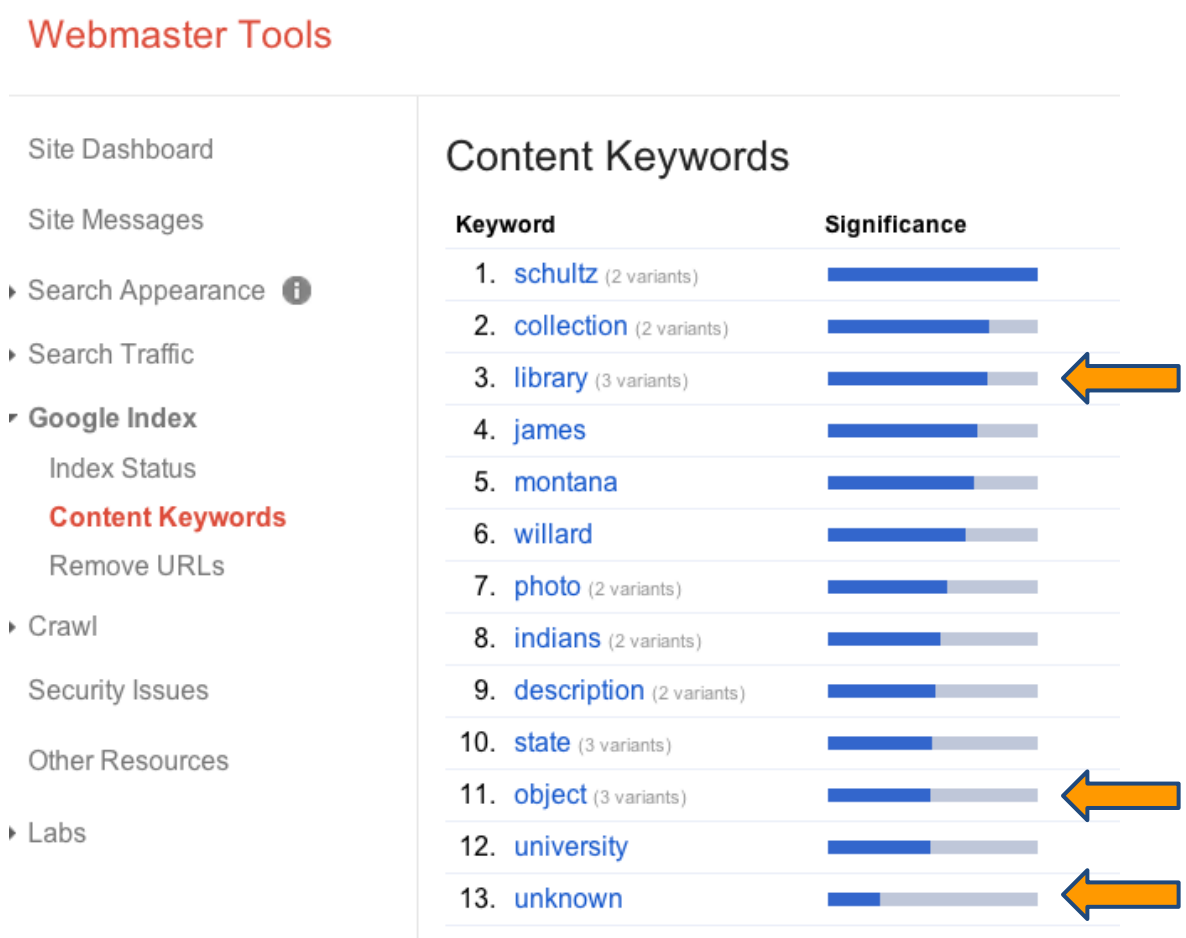
Check Singular vs Plural

Search terms	Avg. monthly searches	Competition	Suggested bid
research paper	14,800	Medium	$3.13
research papers	3,600	High	$3.53

Digital Collection Demonstration

- James Willard Schultz
- Any Related Wikipedia Page(s)?
  - Use Google Keyword Planner for ideas
  - Look at linked words for specific ideas
- Do we have a Collection Page?
  - Run Keyword Planner
  - Check Webmaster tools
- What about an Item Page?

James Willard Schultz Collection



Things to Remember

- Settings
  - Geographic
  - Negative Keywords - hotels, lodging, etc.
  - Broad Match = ideas
  - Phrase Match = 2 to 3 word natural language
  - Exact Match = specific competition & traffic
- Dangers
  - Avoid "high" competition phrases / words
  - Too much time thinking about it
  - Unnatural use (i.e., keyword stuffing)

Writing an Item Page Title

<title>

"Specific Keyword Phrase - Context"

Example:

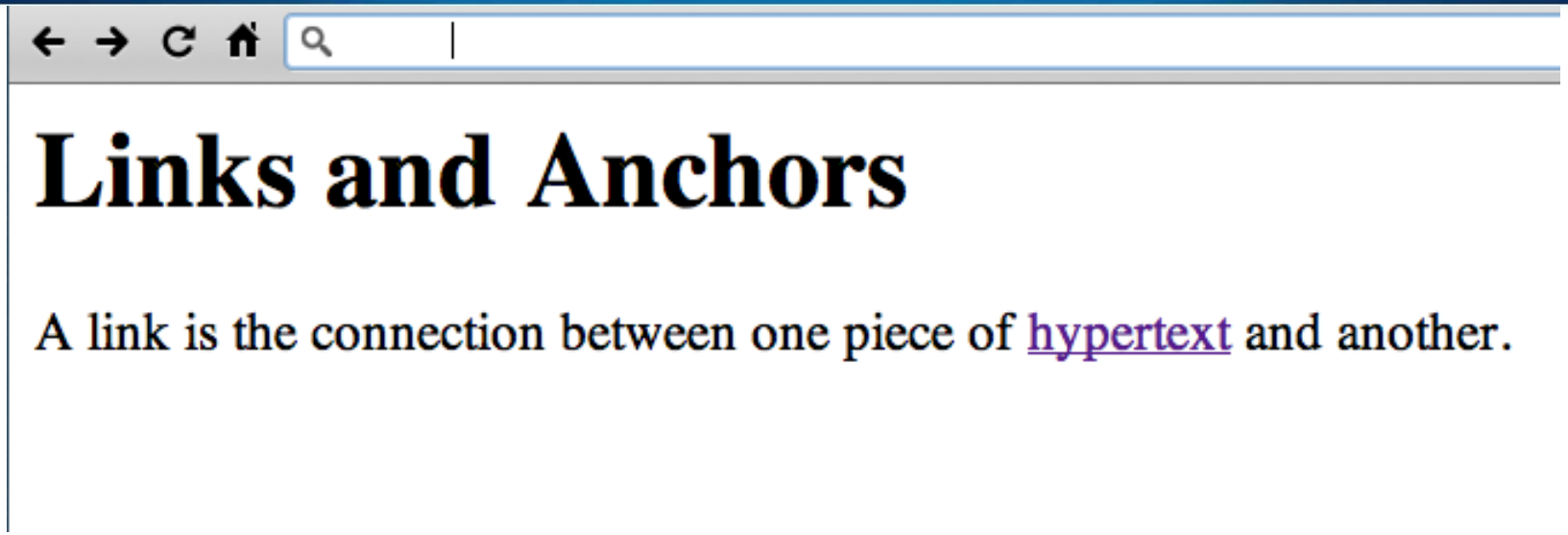
“James Willard Schultz in Buffalo Coat going home to Boonville, New York”

<description>

a short, declarative sentence that incorporates a page's <title> keyword phrase and context

Example:

"Photo of James Willard Schultz in Buffalo Coat returning home to Boonville, New York from Montana State University (MSU) Library Special Collections"




```
1 <title>Hypertext Links</title>
2 <h1>Links and Anchors</h1>
3 A link is the connection between one piece of
4 <a href=WhatIs.html>hypertext</a> and another.
```

Creating Indexable Content

- User intuitive hierarchy & site architecture
- Short URLs containing keywords
- Simple directory structure
- Incorporate "Breadcrumbs"
- Single URL to each page
- Easy navigation between homepage and any webpage, and back

"Every page should be reachable from at least one static text link."

https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/35769

Homework

Traditional SEO

SEO Course Moodle instance

http://www.classes.ala.org/course/view.php?id=537