

google personalized search results

SEO pioneer and thought-leader Danny Sullivan, of Search Engine Land, announced on December 7, 2009 that on December 4th, "Google made the biggest change that has ever happened in search engines." *What is the change and what does it mean?*

what is it?

Beginning on Friday, December 4th, 2009, Google will "personalize" their search results, whether or not you have asked them to. Google's official announcement can be read here: <http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2009/12/personalized-search-for-everyone.html>

What this means is that different users of the Google search engine will see different results. For example, imagine a Google search for Sarah Palin. If you click on sympathetic news stories, Google will serve up right-tilting results while if you click on antagonistic stories, Google will serve up left-tilting results. In other words, Google will learn from your search history and "personalize" the search results based on individual users. A marine biologist who enters the search query "Dolphins" into Google will see a list of pages about the marine mammal while a football enthusiast will see pages about the Miami football team. Abundant additional details can be seen here:

<http://searchengineland.com/google-now-personalizes-everyones-search-results-31195>

We do not want to blindly speculate on the results and implications here without allowing several months to pass during which changes and news items are closely monitored. Believing as we do that Google is interested in handicapping SEO firms while making paid-placement campaigns more utilized, we feel confident making three immediate observations:

Builders and web marketing pros working with builders will not have a static benchmark against which to measure search engine rankings, and against which to set goals. You will not be able to say, "We rank #3 for 'homebuilder bay area'" because you may rank 33 for another person doing the same search. The position



of a builder website will vary depending on who is searching. In other words, the SEO game has just radically changed.

We have always believed a healthy paid placement campaign (aka "SEM", search engine marketing, pay-per-click, sponsored search) guarantees a builder appears in front of individuals searching homes for sale, and we believe this announcement solidifies the case for a robust SEM campaign.

Close consultation with search pros just became more important than ever.

what does this mean to clients?

Google has recently made two major shifts: personalized search and the introduction of the Google sidewiki. Now search results are tailored to the individual, and anyone can comment, positively or negatively, on any website, and their comments are visible to anyone.

Be sure to contact us for more information or to make a plan.

