

[Search Engine Ethics Effect on Internet Marketing](#)

By: James A. Warholic

How the ethics of search engines affect Internet marketing.

Various [search engines](#) are cropping up all over the Internet. Quite a large number of these are referred to as meta search. In effect these companies do not actually search the web and catalog individual websites but they scarf the information from other search engines and then group and display that information together as if it is their own result. These same companies make money off the advertising that is displayed on their websites.

I find this extremely interesting from a legal as well as ethical standpoint. One of the main items that really is at the heart of the matter is the copying of information that is copyright protect from most websites. Even the search engines themselves have copyright protections in place from their own websites.

There are regulations to follow for individual websites for copyright protection but these same regulations are ignored when it comes to search. I have seen a number of articles over the years in relation to copyright protection for individuals but never any guidance for search engines. Why is this case? Are we as individual site owners supposed to follow one set of guidelines while the big guys get to follow another?

This is having a large impact on Internet marketing by niche search companies or individual sites copying the information from other search engines and feeding it into their own site pages. In fact this is going on in almost all categories of search terms. By copying the information and feeding it back into another website unethical companies are boosting their rankings in the SERP's.

If search is going to evolve to a better level, then the leading search companies are going to have to become more proactive in this area. My suggestion would be to have these search companies start enforcing their legal copyrights. According to the [Digital Millennium Copyright Act](#), websites can be asked to "remove material from users' web sites that appears to constitute copyright infringement."

I have seen this Internet marketing pattern over and over again for the last few years. When a page starts ranking high in the SERP's then other unethical marketing companies simply copy the results from a search engine and place it into their page. Since the information is in a highly optimized state, with the keyword frequency and placement in optimal positions the subsequent new copy starts ranking high in the SERP's.

If you are one of those companies that is operating in this mode I must warn you that you run the risk of being black listed in the large search engines. A search engine company can remove your website from its catalog and it will not show up in the results. See Google™ [information for webmasters](#).

As the number of pages on the Internet grows, the frequency of problems will continue to compound. The Internet is certainly a ripe place for marketing and advertising products and services but is also an easy place for abusive, unethical, and illegal situations to occur.

For more [Internet marketing](#) information and resources visit our website at <http://www.pwebs.net>

Contact us for a free [Internet marketing](#) consultation.

References

- [The UCLA Online Institute for Cyberspace Law and Policy, "The Digital Millennium Copyright Act"](#)