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**FROM MIKE GREHAN & CHRISTINE CHURCHILL TO 14,000+
DISCERNING MARKETERS WORLDWIDE**

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InsightExec sponsors global web conference with search engine marketing thought leader Mike Grehan.
Thursday March 25 (11a.m. New York / 4p.m. London)
For more details and bookings:
< <http://www.comark.co.uk/mgwebinar.htm> >
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+ EDITOR'S WELCOME:

[But first this: For security purposes, it's essential to be vigilant in airports and report any suspicious looking items which are left unattended. However... should you happen to see what looks like a bag of dirty washing on the seat next to you... don't panic...it's likely to be Mike Grehan trying to make his way back home. Please don't have him disposed of... just give him a shove and make sure he gets his next connection. Thank you!]

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Here come the apologies - and then a special "featurette" for this edition. The first apology is for not having the new format ready as we mentioned last issue. You'll see further into this issue, that both Mike and I have been on the road for two of the busiest conferences in the industry to date, which occurred back-to-back.

Personally, I managed to get back to my desk here in Texas to start to deal with the mountain which appeared while I was on the road. But poor old Mikey had to schlep up to Boston immediately after both shows had finished, and then on to London, before he was whisked off to Amsterdam just yesterday.

So, the second apology is for the absence of Mike in this issue. (Did I hear the faint sound of cheering in the

background there?) Anyway, Mike is checking in from airport-to-airport from time-to-time. And we are sending him a fresh supply of underwear on a regular basis.

That being the case, I decided it was my duty to ensure that we got something mailed out just to confirm that we hadn't both been kidnapped by aliens or something. And we WILL be moving to our new format for the next issue. (Right Mike???)

At the conferences, Mike picked up another two exclusives with both Yahoo! and Google. So, the next issue is packed with in-depth background to the new Yahoo! with Jon Glick, Senior Manager, Search - plus a Google update with Director of Technology, Craig Silverstein.

Mike did want me to pass on a couple of "tiny-tips" which he picked up and will help some people sleep better at nights. On the burning issue of keywords in the URL (file name) separated by hyphens or underscores... Craig Silverstein confirms that Google sees underscores as a character - whereas hyphens are seen as spaces. Should you include hyphenated keywords in your file names? "That's quite useful to the end user" says Craig. However, here's a quick word of warning from Mike and myself: Two hyphens is likely to be the safest in your URLs. So don't be TOO enthusiastic with your naming convention!

And, believe it or not... it would appear that rumours of the death of the meta keyword tag have been "greatly exaggerated" (to coin a phrase from Mark Twain). Yep, the little critters are alive and well and living over at the new Yahoo! search. Jon Glick confirms that Yahoo! is looking at meta keyword tags. BUT... hold on a minute... they have no bearing whatsoever on your actual rank at Yahoo! So, it's more a case of good housekeeping than anything else.

How many keywords should you include? Just be sensible. Your page can't be about a zillion topics, so only use the words and synonyms which describe what it's about.

And the eternal "should I use commas to separate" question? Yes, says Jon Glick. Commas act as separators to phrases and help avoid keyword repetition i.e. desktop computers, laptop computers, palm computers,... would be seen as three individual key-phrases.

I promise Mike will be back with us next issue. As tempting as it was, I didn't knock him off and take over, at least not yet. He really did have to run off to Amsterdam to play, oops, I mean work. But coming up next, here's a fun comparison review and roundup, with audience and speakers at PubCon V1 and Search Engine Strategies, New York.

Christine (and Mike - if mostly in spirit)

PS - Just one more quick thing. Mike wanted me to mention the brand new search engine marketing buyers guide compiled by our friends over at E-Consultancy in the UK. You'll find a link to it here:

< <http://www.e-consultancy.com> >

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A Tale of Two Cities: Webmaster World Publishers Conference - Orlando Vs Search Engine Strategies - NYC

You know search is big when search conferences start backing up to each other. And that's exactly what happened recently with PubCon and SES.

First there was the famous Webmaster World's Publishers Conference in Orlando which ran from 26 -28 Feb. Planned or not, Webmaster World owner Brett Tabke managed to host his conference at the same hotel where a swinger's conference was concurrently being hosted. Geeks and swingers make an interesting juxtaposition. I've never seen so many bleary eyes peeking up from behind laptops lining the halls and entry ways of the hotel. I know at our table at the bar all the chairs were angled for the best viewing of the latest in swinger attire as the swingers paraded in for their evening activities. Brett, I know you told me you didn't plan it, but you've got to admit, it made for an interesting and memorable PubCon.

The Orlando PubCon was the biggest so far with over 700 in attendance and for the first time offered multiple session tracks that covered the spectrum from European marketing and affiliate marketing to aggressive link building.

The larger Search Engine Strategies Conference in NYC had a more upscale feel and the sessions were focused higher on the marketing food chain. According to Greg Jarboe's informal poll, about 20% of SES attendees wore suits compared to only 2% at PubCon.

Since the two conferences were held back to back and there was an overlap in attendees, we decided to have a little fun and ask duel attendees their thoughts on the conferences. Particularly we wanted to know who would benefit from attending one conference or the other and their general impression of the two conferences.

Here's a few of the comments.

Garrett French < <http://www.webpronews.com> >

"PubCon is a must for any affiliate marketers and small business owners - it's an event that's fertile for striking business deals and learning more about current search

products and services. I found the WebMasterWorld crowd to be a welcoming and experienced group of ebusiness professionals and search optimizers. If you go, be sure to hit the bars after the sessions - that's where you'll learn SEO from the inside."

"PubCon seemed most attended by small business owners and affiliate marketers, though with sessions on European Search Engines and Big Site SEO that will change."

"SES, at least the one in New York with its three - and on some days four - tracks, is a must-attend event for keeping current on the search industry. Both Yahoo! and AskJeeves made major announcements, and major companies launched new search products, especially in the local search vertical [market]. Both black hat and white hat search engine optimizers attend, along with marketers from the biggest names online. SES is a big event and has a corporate feel. If your competitors attend and you don't, you lose."

Greg Boser < <http://www.webguerrilla.com> >

"It's like black versus white. There are more women at SES I like that. And I like the dark demonic guys who hang out in Webmaster World - they're fun. It's a good blend."

Georgian Tweedie < <http://www.scientology.net> >

"PubCon [is] more for a slightly different public, in terms of its people are more involved in WMW, more into the technical side..."

"The SES is huge... very big and sprawling. Not quite as cozy as the earlier ones. It's been very good for the new people; it gives them basics and helps new people get into the industry."

David Warmuz < <http://www.trellian.com> >

"PubCon was for the organic marketers, the people that are after the rankings, the optimization, for people who want the tricks and hints, this is what is done, this is how it's done and this is what I can get away with as well. This is probably the biggest part of PubCon."

"The Webmasters aren't really into PFI [pay for inclusion]

programs, don't really do the Pay Per Click, they just find out how to get traffic to their sites without paying for it. If you're an optimiser and want to market your site without paying, PubCon is the show you want to go to."

"It's also far more open. You actually got a chance to ask a question you wanted answered, and yes, you got it answered. That's a partial difference between the shows. You can ask questions at SES, but you'll get a more roundabout answer full of NDAs and caveats."

"For SES, it's more for the advertising industry, the in-house SEO, people who want to know what the paid inclusion options are, people who want to know what the organic options are, and then they want to know how much to budget for and market for and what's it actually going to cost."

"Another benefit is they [companies looking for SEO] come here to appoint SEO companies, where as at PubCon they aren't going to appoint us because they are already doing it themselves. For us as a company [Trellian] we actually get a lot of business networking here and as being appointed as a technology provider."

Joseph Morin < <http://www.boostranking.com> >

"Between the two conferences I would say the WMW was a little more analytical, geared for those who are drilling down on the deep issues, while SES was more of a corporate networking event... but there are always a couple of gold nuggets to be gleamed from both areas."

Anne Kennedy < <http://www.beyondink.com> >

"Webmaster World PubCon is where you get to hear from the people who are actually doing the work on the front lines. It's very tactical, it's very good information. SES is more strategic, more sales oriented, a little bit higher level. There are a lot of sales people here, more CEOs here, that is not necessarily true of WebMaster World. I think they both have tremendous value and I'm glad I went."

Kevin Lee < <http://www.did-it.com> >

"I think that the Webmaster World Conference was more

focused on the people down in the trenches - getting their hands extremely dirty in the code - particularly at the technical level. And while they did cover strategic and tactical things at a higher level as well, their primary focus was hands on down and dirty in the code. So the people who should attend that conference are the people doing the code."

"Whereas SES I think they split it into tracks in an attempt to reach a broader audience, in particular they are trying to hit more and more of the upper level management from VP of Marketing and Director of Marketing on down. So there are going to be sessions for both, some tactical sessions and strategic sessions."

Greg Jarboe < <http://www.seo-pr.com> >

"In some respects this year's WMW was very reminiscent of where SES was two years ago. It was about the same size - there were about 600 people this year at WMW, there were about 600 people in SES in Boston two years ago."

"There are differences. I would say WMW is far more focused on what I'll call the "technical issues". Two years ago SES was more focused on "technical issues." It will be interesting to see how they evolve."

"In terms of which audience should go to one, my guess is it depends on what it is you are trying to learn. If you need to learn the basics and a lot of the basics are technical, WMW is the right place to go. If you're interested in what I'll call the marketing - both the advanced and intermediate lessons then you want to go to SES. Frankly what that means is for a lot of people that means you've got to go to both."

Conclusion:

Well, there you have it: if your time schedule (and your budget) permit, attend both conferences. If, on the other hand, you must choose, base your decision on the following: PubCon concentrates on hands-on, practical advice for the SEO professional who is doing it themselves. SES is more focused on corporate advertising and marketing. PubCon specializes in web site traffic from organic SEO to affiliate marketing for the cost-conscious webmaster. SES expands into other marketing areas including paid inclusion,

PPC, and even promoting your company to Venture Capitalists and potential acquirers.

Both venues are key if you want to hear the latest scoop from the Search Engine insiders. As is true of many conferences, the best information may be found outside of the actual sessions: either in the halls, in the bars, or over the dinner table. So go to the conferences and wear your schmoozing shoes.

Oh, and there's a few snapshots of the main proceedings (which mainly occur in the bars!) at:

< <http://www.keyrelevance.com/articles/pubcon2004.htm> >

See you next issue!

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