INTRODUCTION

The Internet has brought many unique benefits to marketing, one of which being lower costs for the distribution of information and media to a global audience. The interactive nature of Internet marketing, both in terms of providing instant response and eliciting responses, is a unique quality of the medium. Internet Marketing is sometimes considered to have a broader scope because it not only refers to digital media such as the Internet, e-mail, and wireless media; however, Internet marketing also includes management of digital customer data and electronic customer relationship management systems.

Internet marketing also known as “Online marketing”, is the most contemporary tool for Marketers across the globe. Although technical knowledge and quality content are absolutely necessary, traffic is king and the key to making or breaking a website. No website can become successful without users and the only way to find them is by online marketing. But, while one person has his own way of promoting a website, there are methods that are more popular and are used regularly by thousands of internet marketers.

Online marketing also refers to the placement of media along different stages of the customer engagement cycle through Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Banner Ads on specific Websites, and e-mail Marketing.

In recent times, Online Marketing has secured its place as the preferred marketing method. For an industry that emerged only within the past decade or so, Online Marketing has gained popularity quickly. Online Marketing now attracts a greater portion of marketing and advertising dollar than any other media type, including TV, Radio, Print and others.

Below mentioned are the 6 types of Online Marketing.

- Display Advertising
- Text Advertising
- SEO (Search Engine Optimisation)
- Affiliate Marketing
- Email Marketing
Below is the overall trend in advertising spend and breakdown between traditional and on-line (TV, radio, print, outdoor, online), and how this is expected to evolve in the next few years.

**Current and projected advertising/marketing spend in social media.**

Unlike spending on all other major media, online advertising spending increased, growing 2% to $55.2 billion. This year brought a return to double-digit growth, with online ad spending set to reach $61.8 billion worldwide in 2012.

By 2014 eMarketer forecasts that figure will leap to $96.8 billion, growing at an 11.9% compound annual rate, despite the slow, uneven and fragile global economic recovery. These rates will be unmatched by other media.

*Forrester Research* has released research results projecting that social network marketing spending will increase to about $55 billion by 2014. The interactive portion of total marketing spending is projected to grow from today’s 12% to 21% of all advertising spending in the same period.

According to *MarketingVox*, the report shows that interactive social network marketing will continue to grow and is projected to grow by 34% growth rate by 2014. Search marketing will maintain its lead in terms of total dollars spent, but will grow at a slower rate of 15%.

Out of the above mentioned types of Online Marketing, Search Engine Optimisation has been very active and effective in promoting businesses and also individuals. The objective of search engine optimization (SEO) is to increase a Web site's traffic counts, and ultimately conversions, by ranking very high in the results of searches for the keywords in the search query. It is the mission of SEO to make the site's content worthy of higher search engine ranking by being more relevant and competent than the competition's.

The study will focus on SEO and will try to increase awareness about SEO and its importance amongst business houses. The research will also put light on understanding the working of SEO as a tool in Online Marketing. This research shall benefit those Business Houses who are not very keen on spending a colossal sum on traditional advertising. This research will also help the Business Houses to know the benefits of SEO and detriments of the other tools of advertising and marketing.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Almost every business no matter how big or small needs an online presence. It has been noticed that internet connections are becoming as common as phone lines. Web based business services are constantly growing and more and more traditional businesses are finally "starting to wake up" to how effective marketing on the internet can be. They also are realizing that online advertising is very cheap, trackable, and extremely profitable.

A consistent internet marketing strategy needs to be created that will make the internet work for you. When it comes to internet marketing, a functional website should include a content management system that lets you do routine updating automatically. Nothing cements your relationships with your customers or motivates them to make new purchases like an informative, frequently updated, well designed website. There are tons of effective marketing programs on the internet but you first have to identify your target audience. Mostly all consumers will use "keyword searches" to find what they are looking for and interested in. This is very important to keep in mind when doing your keyword research.

The biggest difference between traditional marketing versus internet marketing is, you not only have access to a massive audience you can reach in a relatively short period of time, but you will keep your overhead expenses reasonably low. As a result it will automatically create an endless online cash flow.

According to a study by the authors Hamill, J. et al (2010) in their article in Journal of Marketing Management “the Web, represented a fundamentally different environment compared to offline marketing, and new marketing paradigms would need to be developed for the emerging electronic age.”

Many companies have yet to get involved with search engine marketing. Geddes, B. (2007), in one of his articles, i.e., “Putting Search Into the Marketing Mix”, mentioned that with search marketing, there’s a lot of data which can be gathered. However, data is useless unless you’re willing to act upon the results. Companies need to be willing to provide what the market is demanding and be willing to change to fit those needs. The author says that if you are involved in both online and offline advertising, understanding how they influence each other is critical. It’s important to
take advantage of search marketing to ensure you have captured the entire audience demand for your product.

In another article Malaga, R. A. (2008), in “Worst Practices in Search Engine Optimisation”, discusses about Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), examining the efforts of business enterprises to appear on the first page of search engine results pages (SERPs). With the help of the survey the author found out that 62% of search engine users click only on the results that appear on the first page of the SERP.

Abraham, M. M. (2008) in his article “The Off-Line Impact of Online Ads” and Deighton, J. & Kornfeld, L. (2010) in their article “Balancing Online and Offline Marketing” highlighted some common points. They tried to draw attention to the relation between the offline and online impacts of advertisements towards consumer behavior for some brand or a product. According to the trio advertising on the internet increases sales in brick-and-mortar stores even more than it does online. Individually, search ads and display ads have the power to drive purchases, but they get the best results when used together in a single campaign.

An article published by Joachimsthaler, E. & Aaker, D. A. (1997) speaks about costs, market fragmentation, and new media channels that let customers bypass advertisements which seem to be in league against the old ways of marketing. Relying on mass media campaigns to build strong brands may be a thing of the past.

According to Armelini, G. et al (2011), social media have rapidly gained share and attention among all kinds of consumers and companies, and at the expense of traditional media. With advertising and online word of mouth competing with traditional marketing techniques, many companies regard having an active presence in social media as a viable alternative to traditional advertising. Yet as per the authors this would be a mistake, because the two strategies are complementary rather than substitutive.

Barwise, P. & Meehan, S. (2010), in their article have put their thoughts on as to how people are thinking that we're entering a world in which traditional marketing activities will become irrelevant. But they forget that the scale and speed of social media make it urgent to get the branding basics right.

Winger, A. R. (2005) in his article said that many predictions regarding the extinction of face-to-face communication have themselves begun to disappear. While emerging
information technologies are substantially altering the face of business communication, close-quarter discussion and debate remain important, as evidenced in the productivity of the medium and what we have recently learned about social behavior. Still, the possibility of dramatic change cannot be completely discounted.

Talking of profit, author **Hoffman, D. L. & Fodor, M. (2010)** in their article mentioned of Return on Investment in Social Media. They emphasised on calculating the returns in terms of customer response instead on marketing investments. Apart from it the managers should begin considering consumer motivations to use social media and then measure the social investments.

There is incessant demand for proof of return on investment (ROI) for social media spending, and a significant degree of uncertainty among marketers with respect to allocating effort and budget to social media. **Weinberg, D. B. & Pehlivan, E. (2011)** in their article, addressed issues by identifying different ways that organizations use social media, highlighting important distinctions in these approaches and describing how to frame the spending decision for social media. They also highlighted the different nature of social objectives, the backward process for meeting them, and the importance of establishing a social media mission control as part of that process.

**Agarwal, A. et al (2011)**, evaluate the impact of ad placement on revenues and profits generated from sponsored search. Their approach uses data generated through a field experiment for several keywords from an online retailer's ad campaign.

Because of different online social applications like blogs, social networking sites, user-generated content sites and countless communities across the Web, people are finding it ease to connect to each other. People are now beginning to define their own perspective on companies and brands. **Bernoff, J. & Li, C. (2008)**, in their article with the help of a survey developed a strategic framework that businesses can use to implement social applications in a number of departments, including research and development, marketing, sales, customer support and operations.

Speaking about the ecommerce, **Rigby, D. (2011)** in his article, speaks the dot-com bubble burst a decade ago, which lead to the ensuing collapse wiped out half of all online retailers. Today, e-commerce is well established and much digital retailing is now highly profitable.
**Bernoff, J. & Schadler, T. (2010)** in their report mention that within social networks, consumers create 256 billion impressions on one another every year, just by talking about products and services. The authors have laid out a four-step game plan called IDEA for energising customers: Identify mass influencers, deliver groundswell, social-media-based customer service, empower customers with mobile information, and amplify fan activity.

**Anderson, S. (2009),** in his article has listed out some points to avoid while performing an SEO. Choosing a title that has no relation to the content on the page using default or vague titles like "Untitled" or "New Page 1" using extremely lengthy titles that are unhelpful to users using a single title tag across all of your site's pages or a large group of pages stuffing unneeded keywords in your title tags writing a description meta tag that has no relation to the content on the page using generic descriptions like "This is a web page" or "Page about baseball cards" filling the description with only keywords using a single description meta tag across all of your site's pages or a large group of pages.

Speaking about **Dou, W., et al (2010)**, he focused on areas as to whether and how firms can employ relative rankings in search engine results pages (SERPs) to differentiate their brands from competitors in cyberspace remains a critical, puzzling issue in e-commerce research.

In an article by **Harris, J., (2009)**, Google claimed that the search data from its millions of users was accessible only to its servers, but one could easily imagine someone discovering sensitive information about an Internet user, intentionally or not.

The potential of online shopping goes far beyond clothing stores’ opening their doors in existing virtual worlds. As per the author, **Hemp, P. (2006)**, developers could create stand alone online shopping malls comprising dozens of retailers of all kinds, including music sellers. For instance, iTunes could create virtual store in which people would hang out and listen to others’ playlists, dancing as they swapped opinions about the music.

**Iger, R. A. (2011),** in his article talks about executive compensation, the changing nature of stock ownership, Disney's use of social media, and the company's new theme park in Shanghai.
Kaplan, A. M. (2009), in one of his first articles on virtual social worlds, speaks as how virtual social worlds evolved historically, how they fit into the postmodern paradigm of our time, and how they differ from other social media, such as content communities (e.g., YouTube), social networking sites and blogs (e.g., Facebook), collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia), and virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft).

According to Kaplan, A. M. (2010), in another article, the concept of Social Media is top of the agenda for many business executives today. Decision makers, as well as consultants, try to identify ways in which firms can make profitable use of applications such as Wikipedia, YouTube, Facebook, Second Life, and Twitter. Yet despite this interest, there seems to be very limited understanding of what the term "Social Media" exactly means; this article intends to provide some clarification.

Again Kaplan, A. M. (2012), in another article speaks about Britney Spears, one of the most successful female recording artists in contemporary music, world-wide. Herein, the author analyses how Britney Spears and her team of employees rely on social media applications to communicate around this pop icon, and create and maintain her celebrity brand image.

Keane, M. T., (2008), in this article presents a discussion on Internet search engines. A particular focus is given to the question of whether Internet users are biased as it pertains to the type of search engines they choose to use. Google.com's technological efficiency is discussed.

The Ukrainian presidential elections of 2004 witnessed a massive uprising of the Ukrainian electorate against the incumbent government's tactics of vote rigging and ballot fraud. The author, Kyj, M.J. (2006), critically evaluates and compares 10 Ukrainian Web sites focusing on the election by analyzing their Web site activity data. Despite a lack of access to mass media, supporters of democratic change compensated through skillful use of the Internet to recruit volunteers, raise funds, organize campaigns, report breaking news, and garner the sympathy of the global democratic community.

Mohammed, R. & etc. (2002), in one of his articles presents a "road-tested" framework to help students and practitioners understand how to think about and implement effective Internet marketing programs. The focus is on using marketing
levers to vary the level of intensity that the consumer has with a Website to build a relationship with the customer through four stages: from Awareness, to Exploration/Expansion, to Commitment, and possibly through Dissolution.

As per Laffey, D. (2007), search engines are key to the operation of the World Wide Web. This centrality, however, presents challenges: search engine providers face the problem of revenue generation when users expect free content, whilst advertisers need to attract the interest of searchers. The innovation that effectively addresses these challenges is the use of text advertisements based upon search topic, known as paid search.

Ries, A. & Ries, L. (2003), speak of 22 immutable laws of internet marketing. According to the authors, twenty-first century asks the most important question for businesses everywhere: What are we going to do about the Internet?

Ross, A. M. (2008). The article discusses search engine optimization (SEO), examining the efforts of business enterprises to appear on the first page of search engine results pages (SERPs). 62% of search engine users click only on the results that appear on the first page of the SERP, the author states. Other topics include SEO techniques that violate search engine guidelines, bans placed on organizations by search engines, and SEO techniques, called black hat techniques, that can lead search engines to ban a Web site from showing in SERPs.

As per Grappone, J. & Couzin, G. (2006), search results are blended. They say that if you’ve spent much time searching, you have probably noticed that the search engines are not displaying one set of homogeneous results. Most search engines take the “chef’s salad” approach, displaying a mix of robot results, directory listings, and pay-per-click (PPC) ads. Your site is probably already represented by most of the types of results we’re about to discuss.

Dutta, S. (2008) in his article listed some “Social Media Must-Do’s”. They are: Google yourself, Protect your identity, Create business profile, Use what you have at work, Post public content.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study and understand the acceptance levels of SEO amongst business houses

2. To understand factors that influence and restrict the use of SEO in Online Marketing

3. To understand the working of SEO as a tool in Online Marketing

4. To compare and contrast SEO with Contemporary Conventional tools of Marketing and Online Marketing

5. To determine the nature of business houses making use of SEO as a tool in Online Marketing

6. To understand the penetration levels of SEO and challenges faced by SEO in Online Marketing

7. To understand the levels of Brand Awareness and Brand Recall created due to the use of SEO

8. To develop and create a model that shall enhance Return on Marketing Investment (ROMI) on SEO
HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H01: There are no significant differences in awareness levels of SEO

H02: There are no significant differences in acceptance levels of SEO

H03: There are no significant differences in ROI between conventional tools of marketing and SEO

H04: There are no significant benefits due to the use of SEO
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sources of Data

- **Primary Data**
  - Survey using Structured Questionnaire (*Users of SEO, Potential Users of SEO, Service Providers of SEO*)
  - In depth Interviews (*Influencers*)

- **Secondary Data**
  - Literature from Business House using SEO
  - Literature from Companies offering SEO service
  - Books, Journals and Periodicals
  - Literature from related websites

- Contemporary Research on related topics

Research Design:

Quantitative Causal Cross-Sectional

The research intends to quantify the impact and effectiveness of Search Engine Optimisation in Online Marketing. It would be temporal in nature and would be conducted on a sub-section of the respondent population. Thus the design adopted for Research is Quantitative Causal Cross-Sectional.

Sampling Type

Stratified Random Sampling

The sampling will involve division of the participants of the Online Marketing (population) into smaller strata like Users of SEO, Non Users of SEO, Service Providers of SEO and Influencers formed on the basis of the common attributes within a stratum. A random sample from each stratum will be taken in a number proportional to the stratum's size when compared to the population. These subsets of the strata will then be pooled to form a random sample. Thus the sampling used will be Stratified Random Sampling. This Sampling type was adopted to reduce the potential for human bias in the selection of units of analysis to be included in the sample. Stratified random sample will provide us with an unbiased and diversified sample.
Sampling Plan: Brands that use Online Marketing for their brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Users of SEO (100)</th>
<th>Non Users of SEO</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Who are aware of SEO (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Who are not aware of SEO (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Providers of SEO</td>
<td>Influencers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Providers of all types of Online</td>
<td>- Marcom agencies and Media agencies (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing (100)</td>
<td>- Marketing Consultants (50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Size – 400

Research Area

Across India – Especially Metro cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, Gurgaon, Noida.

Hypothesis Test

The Hypothesis would be done using Statistical methods as below:

Parametric Test
- z – test
- ANOVA

Non Parametric Test
- Chi – Square
SCOPE OF THE STUDY

When a recession hits just about every company is going to feel the effect of it to an extent, although it can vary wildly depending on the industry. One thing that tends to remain constant in a credit crunch is that larger companies find it easier to weather the storm, while smaller businesses are put at a much greater risk.

One of the first things many businesses will do during a recession is to cut their advertising spend. It’s often a knee jerk reaction aimed at saving costs in the short term. During a standard recession, the first thing that’s usually affected is the offline advertising spend, and that has held true during the current credit crunch.

However, recent studies have shown that spending for online advertising increases. Why do people so quickly abandon print media and put their faith in online methods during a recession? This is one of the questions that shall be touched upon during this research project.

This research will cover only one type of Online Marketing, i.e. Search Engine Optimisation. The other types such as PPC, Banner Advertisings, Article Marketing, Affiliate Marketing, Email Marketing and Text Marketing will not be covered in this thesis. As the facts and figures show that the importance and usage of SEO is growing at an exponential rate, in countries like US, Europe and other advanced countries, this research will help in communicating to the Indian Business Houses and also individuals as to how this type of marketing and advertising will help grow business and build a strong brand name.

Some more Online Marketing sub divisions:

- SEM
- Display Advertising
- Emailers
- Backlinks
- Article Marketing
- Pay Per Click
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The research shall cover Search Engine Optimisation as an Online Marketing tool.

- The other Marketing Tools are beyond the scope of the study like:
  - Display Advertising
  - Text Advertising
  - Affiliate Marketing
  - Classifieds / Platforms
  - Email Marketing
  - PPC (Pay Per Click)
  - Banner Adverts
  - Backlinks
  - Article Marketing

- The research shall be a sample study across the country.
**UTILITY**

Globally, internet penetration is increasing at an exponential rate. Therefore, transformation of communication towards the web platform is inevitable. This study will prove to an asset for an organization moving its communication to its stakeholders externally and internally.

Reach: Upon identifying the key stakeholders, the key messaging can widely be disseminated to a diverse target audience.

Not bound by geographies: The messaging can be sent out globally without any restrictions.

Cost Effective: The study will enable the users to adopt cost effective SEO tools thereby reaching the designated target audience instantly.

Efficient: With a cost effective edifice in place, the cost effective SEO platform will prove to be efficient.

Effective: having identified the right medium the SEO engine can be designed to strike rightly at the prescribed target audience.