

HIGH NOON ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

By Garry Grant

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The pundits have long predicted it. Bill Gates has hinted at it. And now the time has finally come.

Microsoft officially announced that it has entered the search engine wars with guns blazing. And the software giant plans to win by throwing its cadre of computer scientist PhD's into the fight.

Call it *High Noon* on the World Wide Web.

With billions of advertising dollars at stake from search engine revenues, expect the battle to be a particularly bloody one.

Microsoft has long offered search engine capabilities on www.msn.com. But Bill Gates admitted that its current capabilities are crude at best.

Now Microsoft will create a state-of-the-art search engine meant to make competitors obsolete.

The next wave of search engines, according to Gates, will encompass “personalization, understanding of local information, being able to parse in to the semantics of a document, being able to browse databases, and being able to attach domain knowledge.” He also noted that Microsoft had been conducting linguistic research for years “that actually lets us parse and understand documents.”

As Gates said, that's a far cry from someone looking for a restaurant and typing in “potato chips” and getting information on computer chips.

Gates seems to consider it a two-man fight between MSN and Google, as both companies are top-heavy with computer science Ph.D.'s.

But don't count Yahoo out: it has just invested billions in purchasing search engines and developing its own cutting-edge search capabilities. The popular portal knows that its survival depends on offering “Google-quality searches,” so it will have to keep pace with Google and MSN.

Companies that depend on search engine rankings also want to know what MSN's entry into the fight means to them. Will their rank rise or plummet on this “new-and-

improved search engine”?

The answer depends on the kind of algorithms MSN uses (the formulas for finding and ranking Web pages). But there also is another question that demands attention: how will the next-generation algorithms affect rankings – the ones that Gates said, “let us parse and understand documents”?

Will Web sites have to be re-written? Re-coded? Restructured?

Many questions, few answers, and one certainty: search engine optimization has never been more important.

Here’s the proof: the latest findings report that thirty-three percent of users think that if a company has a top ranking on a search engine, it is a leader in its field.

Search Engine Optimization, Inc. can help you get top rankings on the new MSN.com and other key search engines. Contact us at 1-877-736-0006 or 1-760-943-1914 to learn how you can hold your own at *High Noon*.