



Search Engine Optimization and Marketing

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PREFACE

Internet connectivity is ruling the globe in current scenario, and it is virtually unfeasible to find anything on the web without utilizing a search engine. But the question is what this search engine is? A search engine is complex software which may be compared to be a finder visiting to the various websites and their pages which help the searcher to find significant data. Today's world revolves around information that is the driving force behind any economic value chain. The thirst for information has led to the evolution of online "Search Engines" over last few years and are the most widely used instruments currently. Gradually marketers also started using this platform for marketing their products. SEO is a fundamental part of digital marketing because people conduct trillions of searches every year, often with commercial intent to find information about products and services. Search is often the primary source of digital traffic for brands and complements other marketing channels. Search engines such as Google and Bing use bots to crawl pages on the web, going from site to site, collecting information about those pages and putting them in an index. Next, algorithms analyze pages in the index, taking into account hundreds of ranking factors or signals, to determine the order pages should appear in the search results for a given query. Today's world revolves around information that is the driving force behind any economic value chain.

Students will learn search engine optimization with smart internet marketing strategies. The book explains the inner workings of Google's algorithm, and reveals the latest and greatest industry resources so you can always stay ahead of Google's updates. The thirst for information has led to the evolution of online "Search Engines" over last few years and are the most widely used instruments currently. Gradually marketers also started using this platform for marketing their products. The book focuses on the impact of search engine optimization as a marketing tool and its influence on various marketing variables like market share, brand equity and others. This book highlights many marketing variables getting affected by search engine optimization. The book also focuses on the impact of search engine optimization as a marketing tool and its influence on various marketing variables like market share, brand equity and others. Information contained in this book highlights many marketing variables getting affected by search engine optimization.

This book will serve as an invaluable resource for social media analytics researchers and digital marketing students.



CHAPTER 1

BASICS FOR SEO

INTRODUCTION

SEO stands for “search engine optimization.” In simple terms, it means the process of improving your site to increase its visibility for relevant searches. The better visibility your pages have in search results, the more likely you are to garner attention and attract prospective and existing customers to your business.

Search engines such as Google and Bing use bots to crawl pages on the web, going from site to site, collecting information about those pages and putting them in an index. Next, algorithms analyze pages in the index, taking into account hundreds of ranking factors or signals, to determine the order pages should appear in the search results for a given query.

Search ranking factors can be considered proxies for aspects of the user experience. The search algorithms are designed to surface

relevant, authoritative pages and provide users with an efficient search experience. Optimizing your site and content with these factors in mind can help your pages rank higher in the search results.

Unlike paid search ads, you can't pay search engines to get higher organic search rankings.

SEO is a fundamental part of digital marketing because people conduct trillions of searches every year, often with commercial intent to find information about products and services. Search is often the primary source of digital traffic for brands and complements other marketing channels. Greater visibility and ranking higher in search results than your competition can have a material impact on your bottom line.

However, the search results have been evolving over the past few years to give users more direct answers and information that is more likely to keep users on the results page instead of driving them to other websites.

Also note, features like rich results and Knowledge Panels in the search results can increase visibility and provide users more information about your company directly in the results.

1.1 UNDERSTANDING DOMAIN

Domain name is the address of your website that people type in the browser URL bar to visit your website.

In simple terms, if your website was a house, then your domain name will be its address.

A more detailed explanation:

The Internet is a giant network of computers connected to each other through a global network of cables. Each computer on this network can communicate with other computers.

To identify them, each computer is assigned an IP address. It is a series of numbers that identify a particular computer on the internet. A typical IP address looks like this:

66.249.66.1

Now an IP address like this is quite difficult to remember. Imagine if you had to use such numbers to visit your favorite websites.

Domain names were invented to solve this problem.

Now if you want to visit a website, then you don't need to enter a long string of numbers. Instead, you can visit it by typing an easy to remember domain name in your browser's address bar. For example, wpbeginner.com.

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) manages the domain names system. It is a non-profit organization that creates and implements the policies for domain names.

ICANN gives permission to companies called Domain Name Registrars for selling domain names. These domain registrars are allowed to make changes to domain names registry on your behalf.

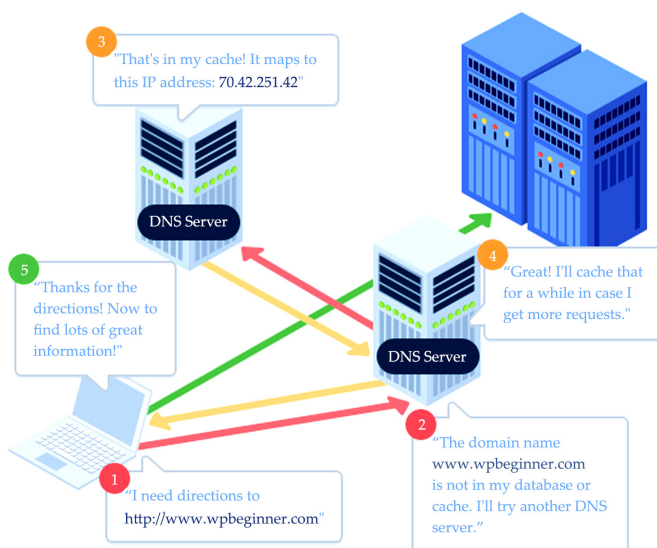
Domain name registrars can sell domain names, manage its records, renewals, and transfers to other registrars.

As a domain name owner, you are responsible for telling the registrar where to send requests. You are also responsible for renewing your domain registration.

1.1.1 How Domain Names Actually Work?

To understand how domain names actually work, we will take a look at what happens when you enter it in your browser.

How Domain Name Works



When you enter a domain name in your web browser, it first sends a request to a global network of servers that form the Domain Name System (DNS).

These servers then look up for the name servers associated with the domain and forward the request to those name servers.

For example, if your website is hosted on Bluehost, then its name server information will be like this:

`ns1.bluehost.com`

`ns2.bluehost.com`

These name servers are computers managed by your hosting company. Your hosting company will forward your request to the computer where your website is stored.

This computer is called a web server. It has special software installed (Apache, Nginx are two popular web server software). The web server now fetches the web page and pieces of information associated with it.

Finally, it then sends this data back to the browser.

1.1.2 Domain Name is Different from a Website and Web Hosting

A website is made up of files like HTML pages, website builder software, images, and more.

If the domain name is the web address of your website, then web hosting is the home where your website lives.

This is the actual computer where your website's files are stored. Such computers are called servers and they are offered as a service by hosting companies.

To create your website, you need both domain name and web hosting.



However, it's important to remember that they are two separate services, and you can buy them from two different companies.

Now you may be wondering, how would it work if you bought them from two separate companies?

You just need to edit your domain name settings and enter the Name Server information provided by your hosting company. Name Server information defines where to send user requests for your domain name.

We recommend getting both your domain name and hosting from the same company. This allows you to easily manage them under the same account.

1.1.3 Different Types of Domain Names

Domain names are available in many different extensions. The most popular one is **.com**. There are many other options like **.org**, **.net**, **.tv**, **.info**, **.io**, and more. However we always recommend using **.com** domain extension.

Let's take a more detailed look at different types of domain names available.

Top Level Domain – TLD

Top level domain or TLD are generic domain extensions that are listed at the highest level in the domain name system.

There are hundreds of TLDs, but the most popular ones are **.com**, **.org**, and **.net**. Other TLDs are lesser known and we don't recommend using them. For example, **.biz**, **.club**, **.info**, **.agency**, and many more.

Country Code Top Level Domain – ccTLD

Country code top-level domain or ccTLD are country specific domain names which end with country code extension like **.uk** for the United Kingdom, **.de** for Germany, **.in** for India.

They are used by websites that want to target audiences in a specific country.

Sponsored Top Level Domain – sTLD

Sponsored top-level domain or sTLD is a category of TLDs that has a sponsor representing a specific community served by the

- Do not use numbers or hyphens
- Use domain name generators to come up with clever domain name ideas

1.1.5 How to Buy a Domain Name

You can buy domain names from one of the many domain name registrars. A domain name typically costs 14.99 per year. Some popular domain name companies are:

- Domain.com
- GoDaddy

However, buying domain does not automatically give you hosting service. For that, you will need a website hosting account as well.

Many WordPress hosting companies offer domain registration services as well. This allows you to manage both services under one account, and you also don't need to worry about changing name server settings for your domain.

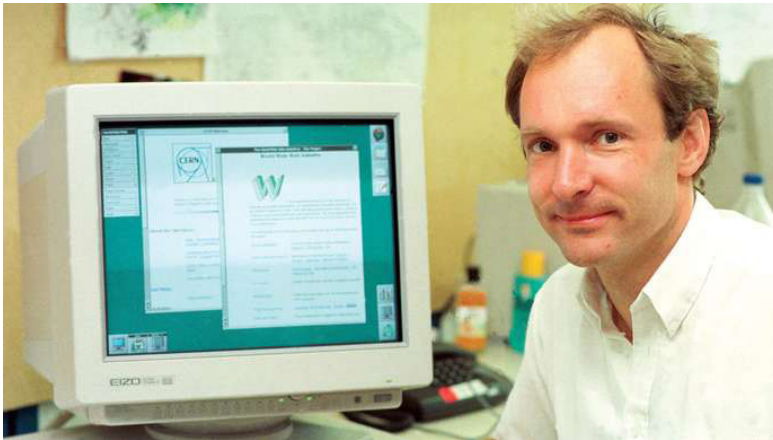
1.2 BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF WORLD WIDE WEB

World Wide Web (WWW), byname the Web, the leading information retrieval service of the Internet (the worldwide computer network). The Web gives users access to a vast array of documents that are connected to each other by means of hypertext or hypermedia links—i.e., hyperlinks, electronic connections that link related pieces of information in order to allow a user easy access to them. Hypertext allows the user to select a word or phrase from text and thereby access other documents that contain additional information pertaining to that word or phrase. Hypermedia documents feature links to images, sounds, animations, and movies. The Web operates within the Internet's basic client-server format; servers are computer programs that store and transmit documents to other computers on the network when asked to, while clients are programs that request documents

from a server as the user asks for them. Browser software allows users to view the retrieved documents.

A hypertext document with its corresponding text and hyperlinks is written in HyperText Markup Language (HTML) and is assigned an online address called a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

The development of the World Wide Web was begun in 1989 by Tim Berners-Lee and his colleagues at CERN, an international scientific organization based in Geneva, Switzerland. They created a protocol, HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP), which standardized communication between servers and clients. Their text-based Web browser was made available for general release in January 1992.



The World Wide Web gained rapid acceptance with the creation of a Web browser called Mosaic, which was developed in the United States by Marc Andreessen and others at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois and was released in September 1993. Mosaic allowed people using the Web to use the same sort of “point-and-click” graphical manipulations that had been available in personal computers for some years. In April 1994 Andreessen cofounded Netscape Communications Corporation, whose Netscape Navigator became the dominant Web browser soon after its release in December 1994. BookLink Technologies’ InternetWorks, the first browser with tabs, in which a user could visit another Web site without opening an entirely

new window, debuted that same year. By the mid-1990s the World Wide Web had millions of active users.

The software giant Microsoft Corporation became interested in supporting Internet applications on personal computers and developed its own Web browser (based initially on Mosaic), Internet Explorer (IE), in 1995 as an add-on to the Windows 95 operating system. IE was integrated into the Windows operating system in 1996 (that is, it came “bundled” ready-to-use within the operating system of personal computers), which had the effect of reducing competition from other Internet browser manufacturers, such as Netscape. IE soon became the most popular Web browser.

Apple’s Safari was released in 2003 as the default browser on Macintosh personal computers and later on iPhones (2007) and iPads (2010). Safari 2.0 (2005) was the first browser with a privacy mode, Private Browsing, in which the application would not save Web sites in its history, downloaded files in its cache, or personal information entered on Web pages.

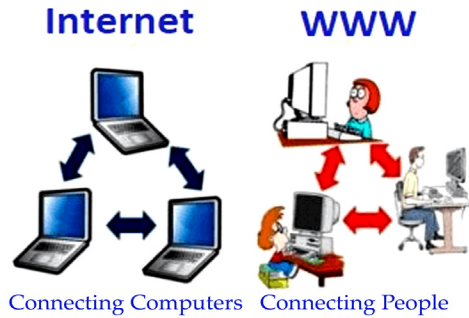
The first serious challenger to IE’s dominance was Mozilla’s Firefox, released in 2004 and designed to address issues with speed and security that had plagued IE. In 2008 Google launched Chrome, the first browser with isolated tabs, which meant that when one tab crashed, other tabs and the whole browser would still function. By 2013 Chrome had become the dominant browser, surpassing IE and Firefox in popularity. Microsoft discontinued IE and replaced it with Edge in 2015.

In the early 21st century, smartphones became more computer-like, and more-advanced services, such as Internet access, became possible. Web usage on smartphones steadily increased, and in 2016 it accounted for more than half of Web browsing.

1.2.1 Difference between World Wide Web and Internet

Some people use the terms ‘internet’ and ‘World Wide Web’ interchangeably. They think they are the same thing, but it is not so. Internet is entirely different from WWW. It is a worldwide

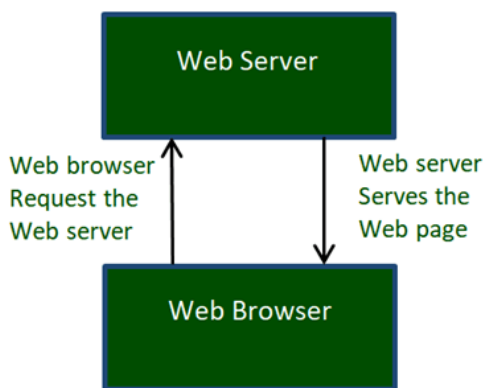
network of devices like computers, laptops, tablets, etc. It enables users to send emails to other users and chat with them online. For example, when you send an email or chatting with someone online, you are using the internet.



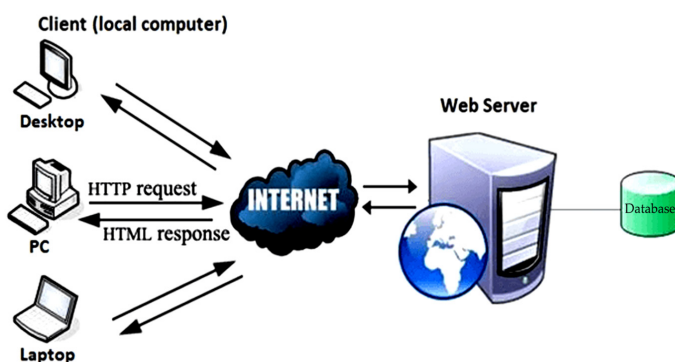
But, when you have opened a website like google.com for information, you are using the World Wide Web; a network of servers over the internet. You request a webpage from your computer using a browser, and the server renders that page to your browser. Your computer is called a client who runs a program (web browser), and asks the other computer (server) for the information it needs.

1.2.2 How the World Wide Web Works

Now, we have understood that WWW is a collection of websites connected to the internet so that people can search and share information. Now, let us understand how it works!



The Web works as per the internet's basic client-server format as shown in the following image. The servers store and transfer web pages or information to user's computers on the network when requested by the users. A web server is a software program which serves the web pages requested by web users using a browser. The computer of a user who requests documents from a server is known as a client. Browser, which is installed on the user's computer, allows users to view the retrieved documents.



All the websites are stored in web servers. Just as someone lives on rent in a house, a website occupies a space in a server and remains stored in it. The server hosts the website whenever a user requests its WebPages, and the website owner has to pay the hosting price

for the same.

The moment you open the browser and type a URL in the address bar or search something on Google, the WWW starts working. There are three main technologies involved in transferring information (web pages) from servers to clients (computers of users). These technologies include Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and Web browsers.

Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)



HTML is a standard markup language which is used for creating web pages. It describes the structure of web pages through HTML elements or tags. These tags are used to organize the pieces of content such as 'heading,' 'paragraph,' 'table,' 'Image,' and more. You don't see HTML tags when you open a webpage as browsers don't display the tags and use them only to render the content of a web page. In simple words, HTML is used to display text, images, and other resources through a Web browser.

Web Browser



Chrome



Safari



UC Browser



Firefox



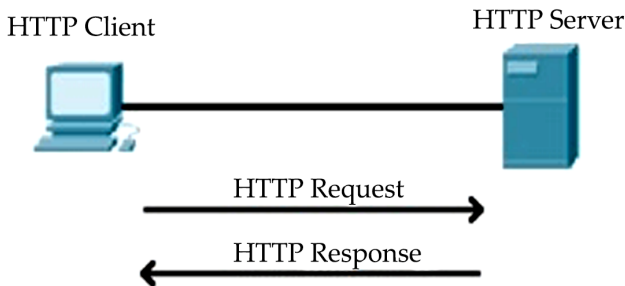
IE

A web browser, which is commonly known as a browser, is a program that displays text, data, pictures, videos, animation, and more. It provides a software interface that allows you to click hyperlinked resources on the World Wide Web. When you double click the Browser icon installed on your computer to launch it, you get connected to the World Wide Web and can search Google or type a URL into the address bar.

In the beginning, browsers were used only for browsing due to their limited potential. Today, they are more advanced; along with browsing you can use them for e-mailing, transferring multimedia files, using social media sites, and participating in online discussion groups and more. Some of the commonly used browsers include Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari, and more.

Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP)

Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP) is an application layer protocol which enables WWW to work smoothly and effectively. It is based on a client-server model. The client is a web browser which communicates with the web server which hosts the website. This protocol defines how messages are formatted and transmitted and what actions the Web Server and browser should take in response to different commands. When you enter a URL in the browser, an HTTP command is sent to the Web server, and it transmits the requested Web Page.



When we open a website using a browser, a connection to the web server is opened, and the browser communicates with the server through HTTP and sends a request. HTTP is carried over TCP/IP to communicate with the server. The server processes the browser's request and sends a response, and then the connection is closed. Thus, the browser retrieves content from the server for the user.

1.3 UNDERSTANDING SEO

Most people who run websites have a limited understanding of SEO, so you often only need to get the basics right to succeed.

1.3.1 Step 1: Learn what your customers are *actually* searching for

You can't optimize your website without knowing what your customers are searching for—that much is obvious.

How do you figure this out? The best starting point is to use common sense.

Imagine that you run a hotel in Dublin, Ireland. It doesn't take an SEO genius to guess that your customers are probably searching for things like:

- 'hotels in Dublin'
- 'place to stay in Dublin'
- 'accommodation in Dublin'

Before you do anything else, think about what your customers might be searching for and jot your ideas down in a notepad. You could even ask them directly.

No need to go overboard here—a handful of ideas will do.

Done? Good. Let's do some more research.

- a) Figure out the most popular way people search for your business

It's likely that *some* of your customers are searching for your business using the words and phrases you jotted down. Whether the majority of people are is another story.

So the first step is to figure out the most common way people search for what you do.

You can use the ideas you've already jotted down to do that. Start by doing a Google search for one of the words or phrases on your list. It doesn't matter how ridiculous or long-winded this phrase is. Use a purposely silly one to prove it.



i'm looking for a hotel located in dublin in ireland please

Here are the top few search results for that query:

[30 Best Dublin Hotels, Ireland \(From \\$27\) - Booking.com](https://www.booking.com)

<https://www.booking.com> › Ireland › Dublin County › Visit Dublin ▼

Great savings on [hotels in Dublin](#), Ireland online. ... Looking for deals in Dublin? ... Holiday Inn Express Dublin City Center is located in Dublin on O'Connell ...

[Dublin Hotels from £24 | Cheap Hotels | lastminute.com](https://www.lastminute.com)

<https://www.lastminute.com> › Hotels › Europe › Ireland › Leinster › Dublin City ▼

This contemporary hotel is close to the centre of Dublin and the River Liffey. ... You can get the day off to a great start with a full Irish breakfast in the restaurant, ...
Missing: £m | Must include: £m

[Dublin Hotels | Find & compare great deals on trivago](https://www.trivago.co.uk)

<https://www.trivago.co.uk> › Ireland › Eire ▼

Compare the prices of 2548 hotels in Dublin, Ireland. ... Many guests choose cheap hotels that are located around Dublin Airport and use the money they've ...
Missing: £m | Must include: £m

[Dublin Hotels 2019 - Book Top Hotels in Dublin | Expedia](https://www.expedia.co.uk)

<https://www.expedia.co.uk> › Hotels › Ireland › Dublin ▼

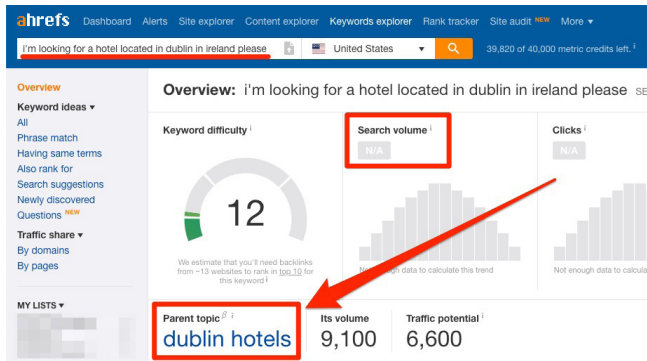
Dublin is known for its museums, live music scene and art galleries. Stay in [hotels](#) and other accommodation options near National Gallery of Ireland at Merrion Square, Bord Gáis Energy Theatre and Guinness ... [Search Hotels in Dublin](#) Please ask us to confirm what financial protection may apply to your booking.

This matters because websites tend to optimize their title tags for SEO, so it's likely that these particular ones have already done some research and found that "Dublin hotels" is the most popular way people search for places to stay in Dublin.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

There's no guarantee that these folks know what they're doing.

Let's make sure this is a good main keyword to target by checking out our original search term in Ahrefs Keywords Explorer.



Bingo. When we search for the same phrase in Keywords Explorer, it tells us that the Parent topic is “Dublin hotels” with a monthly US search volume of 9,900. It also has good traffic potential.

This confirms our initial suspicions that this is a good main keyword to target.

- b) Understand other ways people may be searching for the same thing

Let’s take a look at the **SERP overview** for “Dublin hotels” in Keywords Explorer.

| Search results | AR | DR | UR | Backlinks | Domains | Traffic | Kw. |
|--|------|----|----|-----------|---------|---------|-----|
| 1 > 4 related questions | | | | | | | |
| 2 30 Best Dublin Hotels, Ireland (From \$27) - Booking.com https://www.booking.com/city/ie/dublin.html | 167 | 92 | 30 | 292 | 62 | 3,218 | 264 |
| 3 THE 10 BEST Hotels in Dublin for 2019 (from \$27) - TripAdvisor https://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotels-g186605-Dublin_County_-Dublin-Hotels.html | 89 | 93 | 32 | 236 | 73 | 6,566 | 198 |
| 4 The 10 Best Hotels in Dublin for 2019 Expedia https://www.expedia.com/Dublin-Hotels.d178256.Travel-Guide-Hotels | 2.2K | 87 | 19 | 44 | 11 | 2,569 | 238 |
| 5 Top 10 Cheap Hotels in Dublin from \$14/night Hotels.com https://www.hotels.com/de691513-qu0/cheap-hotels-dublin-ireland/ | 2.0K | 88 | 16 | 48 | 5 | 711 | 116 |

Take note of the “Kw.” column, which shows how many keywords for which each of the top 10 web pages rank.

The average here is around 150–200 keywords.

In other words, each of these web pages gets traffic from hundreds of other long-tail and related keywords. That means not everyone types “Dublin hotels” into Google when searching for a place to stay in Dublin. Other people search for the same thing in different ways.

You can start to get a sense of what these other keywords are by analyzing more Google search results.

[Cheap Hotels in Dublin | Compare with TravelSupermarket](https://www.travelsupermarket.com)

<https://www.travelsupermarket.com> > Hotels > Ireland hotels ▼

Compare prices for hundreds of Dublin hotels with TravelSupermarket and save money by booking online today...

[Top 10 Best Value Hotels in Dublin – HotelsCombined.ie](https://www.hotelscombined.co.uk)

<https://www.hotelscombined.co.uk> > Ireland > County Dublin ▼

Compare deals for 2389 hotels in Dublin and find the best value hotels at HotelsCombined.ie. View Dublin hotel reviews, photos, maps and hot deals.

[Dublin Hotels, Dublin City Hotels, 4 star hotels Dublin, Dublin Zoo](https://www.ashlinghotel.ie/)

<https://www.ashlinghotel.ie/> ▼

Ashling Hotel Dublin official site, 4 star luxury hotel in Dublin City, on Luas tram line, family rooms, Dublin Hotels near Phoenix Park & Dublin Zoo.

[Hotels in Dublin | Search and compare Dublin hotels - Skyscanner](https://www.skyscanner.net/hotels/ireland/dublin-hotels/ci-27540823)

<https://www.skyscanner.net/hotels/ireland/dublin-hotels/ci-27540823> ▼

Looking for hotels in Dublin? Skyscanner compares the best travel sites to bring you the cheapest price on your Dublin hotels - Skyscanner Hotels.

Look for more similar and related phrases that pop up over and over again.

In this instance, we see such phrases as “hotels in Dublin,” “Dublin city hotels,” and “cheap hotels in Dublin.”

These businesses have likely identified these keywords and phrases already, hence the reason they include them in their title tags.

If you want even more suggestions, try the **Also rank for** report in Keywords Explorer.

Also rank for¹

KD

Volume

SERP features

CPC

Clicks

CPS

Return rate

Word count

1,155 keywords

| <input type="checkbox"/> | Keyword | KD ¹ | CPC ¹ | Volume ¹ | Clicks ¹ | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | dublin | 4 | 80 | 1.1 | 90,000 | 23,390 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | cheap hotels near me | 5 | 58 | 2.5 | 74,000 | 43,590 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | expedia hotel | 4 | 55 | — | 61,000 | 57,773 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | dublin ireland | 5 | 62 | 1.4 | 51,000 | 15,709 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | dublin hotels | 4 | 16 | 5.0 | 9,100 | 6,292 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | hotels in dublin ireland | 4 | 14 | 4.0 | 5,700 | 5,796 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | hotels in dublin | 5 | 14 | 4.0 | 5,200 | 4,233 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | hotels dublin ireland | 3 | 13 | 5.0 | 3,500 | 2,374 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | dublin, ireland | 5 | 62 | — | 3,300 | 1,043 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | dublin ireland hotels | 2 | 14 | 4.0 | 3,000 | 2,286 |

This report shows the keywords for which the top 10 ranking pages also rank.

However, this report tends to surface *a lot* of keywords, which can be overwhelming.

One way to narrow things down to only super relevant results is to take the 2–3 most relevant top ranking pages and paste them into Ahrefs Content Gap tool. That will unveil the common keywords for which all of those pages rank.

| Keyword | Volume ↓ ⁱ | KD ⁱ | CPC ⁱ | SERP ⁱ | Highest position | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | | | | https://www.t | https://www.t | https://www.e |
| hotels in dublin ireland | 5,700 | 14 | 4.00 | SERP ▼ | 1 ▼ | 7 ▼ | 42 ▼ |
| hotels in dublin | 5,200 | 14 | 4.00 | SERP ▼ | 1 ▼ | 8 ▼ | — |
| hotels dublin ireland | 3,500 | 13 | 5.00 | SERP ▼ | 1 ▼ | 7 ▼ | 27 ▼ |
| dublin ireland hotels | 3,000 | 14 | 4.00 | SERP ▼ | 1 ▼ | 7 ▼ | 27 ▼ |
| places to stay in dublin ireland | 500 | 4 | 3.00 | SERP ▼ | 1 ▼ | 32 ▼ | 41 ▼ |
| hotel dublin ireland | 350 | 13 | 4.50 | SERP ▼ | 1 ▼ | 7 ▼ | 60 ▼ |
| best hotel in dublin ireland | 350 | 2 | 3.00 | SERP ▼ | 1 ▼ | — | 66 ▼ |
| hotel in dublin ireland | 300 | 13 | 5.00 | SERP ▼ | 1 ▼ | 7 ▼ | 27 ▼ |
| dublin hotels ireland | 250 | 22 | 4.50 | SERP ▼ | 1 ▼ | 6 ▼ | 49 ▼ |
| top hotels in dublin | 200 | 2 | 1.60 | SERP ▼ | 2 ▼ | — | 27 ▼ |
| hotels in dublin, ireland | 200 | 14 | — | SERP ▼ | 1 ▼ | 7 ▼ | 31 ▼ |

- c) Delve deeper into the more granular searches your customers are making

Now that you know how people search for your business, it's time to delve deeper into the more granular searches people make in relation to what you do.

A simple way to start is to look at Google autocomplete results.

Go to Google and begin typing a query in the search box, but don't hit Enter. Google will immediately suggest some additional search terms that people have used:

dublin hotels |

dublin hotels **cheap**
 dublin hotels **temple bar**
 dublin hotels **near airport**
 dublin hotels **5 star**
 dublin hotels **tripadvisor**
 dublin hotels **booking**
 dublin hotels **with pool**
 dublin hotels **with parking**
 dublin hotels **near 3 arena**
 dublin hotels **deals**

You can repeat this step and get more results by adding each letter of the alphabet:

dublin hotels a

dublin hotels **airport**
 dublin hotels **and flights**
 dublin hotels **airbnb**
 dublin hotels **afternoon tea**
 dublin hotels **airport shuttle**
 dublin hotels **and b&bs**
 dublin hotels **and suites asaba**
 dublin hotels **alphabetically**
 dublin hotels **and apartments**
 dublin hotels **and spa**

If you're interested in learning the questions people ask (and search for), check if there's a "People also ask" box in the Google results...

People also ask

What hotel does Bono own in Dublin?

What do with kids in Dublin?

What is there to do in Dublin?

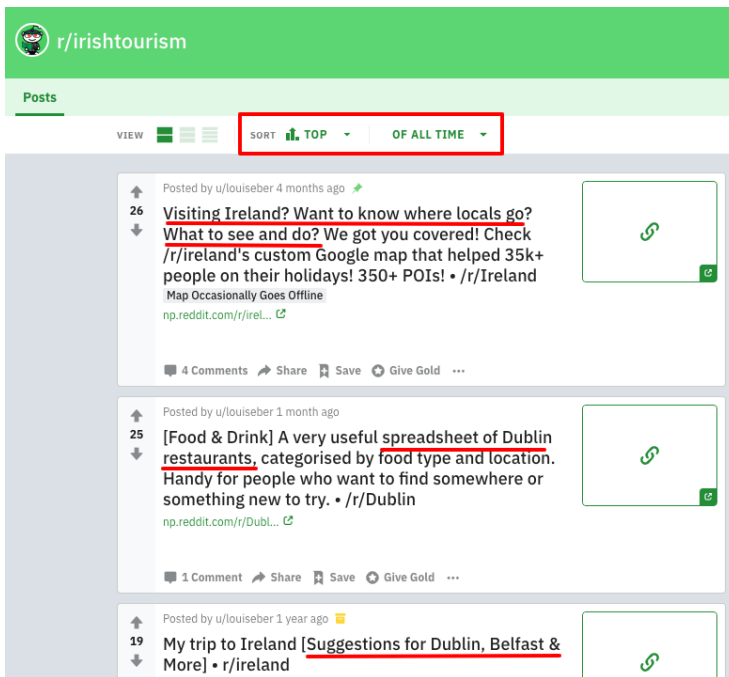
Do you need a passport for Dublin?

d) Find popular and engaging topics in your field

Content marketing is the art of creating useful and valuable content to attract your target customers or clients. But don't just start a blog and hope for the best—figure out what topics are popular and engaging in your field and create content related to said topics.

For this, recommend starting with Reddit.

Find a subreddit related to your industry (e.g., *r/irishtourism*). Look at what people are talking about and which threads are the most popular. You can even filter and sort by the top threads of all time.



On *r/irishtourism*, guides and resources about things to do and places to eat and drink are very popular with folks interested in traveling to Dublin.

Content Explorer provides one of the quickest and most reliable methods to understand the most popular and engaging in a given field.

Here's what we got when we searched for 'Ireland travel':

Most Popular Content for Ireland travel

Filters: Publish date, Language, Shares, Domain Rating, Referring domains: Min-5, Organic traffic: 500-Max, Number of words. One article per domain.

49 results | Who tweeted selected articles | Highlight unlinked domains | Sorted by Relevance | Export

9 Awesome Things To Do In Howth, Ireland - NOMAD...
www.nomadstatus.com/things-to-do-in-howth-ireland/
 There's a reason this tiny fishing village just outside of Dublin is actually one of the most popular tourist destinations... airport. It makes a great stop at the beginning or end of your Ireland travel. Here's how to get to Howth. Train Accessing Howth from Dublin
 2,125 words | Alesha And Janyd | 14 Jan '18

Total: 672 | Median: 214
 Domain Rating: 59 | Referring domains: 214 | Organic traffic: 454
 Who tweeted | Details

How to spend New Year in Dublin
www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/ireland/dublin/articles/how-to-spend-New-Year-in-Dublin/
 Sign up for an Irish Hogmanay-on-Liffey this year, at venues across Dublin's compact city centre, says Neil Hegarty best places in town for wine, beer and smart food, East Coast Ireland travel guide Teeling's (teelingwhiskey.com) is a new kid on the block
 1,230 words | 12 Feb '16

Total: 200 | Median: 9
 Domain Rating: 92 | Referring domains: 189 | Organic traffic: 610
 Who tweeted | Details

10 Best Places to Visit in Ireland
www.bourne.com/best-places-to-visit-in-ireland/
 culture to the breathtaking beauty of its varied landscapes, Ireland is a travel destination that lives up to its nearly mythic reputation
 1,293 words | Edgar | 23 Oct '14

Total: 242 | Median: 96
 Domain Rating: 68 | Referring domains: 5 | Organic traffic: 1,1K
 Who tweeted | Details

Notice how here used the filters to find pages that get a substantial amount of search traffic even though they only have a handful of links? This allows me to quickly identify relevant popular topics that *should* be easy to rank for.

It can even see the keywords for which each of these pages ranks by hitting "Details" dropdown.

25 Best Places to Visit in Ireland | Road Affair
www.roadaffair.com/best-places-to-visit-in-ireland/
 Coming up with a shortlist of the best places to visit in Ireland isn't as easy as you might think. It may surprise you too... 25 Best Places to Visit in Ireland Twitter Pinterest Facebook Flipboard Email Disclosure: This page contains affiliate links, and
 5,768 words | 15 Dec '17

Total: 17K | Median: 857
 Domain Rating: 32 | Referring domains: 857 | Organic traffic: 16K
 Who tweeted | Details

Charts | Backlinks | Referring domains | Anchors | Organic keywords: 223

| Keyword | Volume | KD | CPC | Traffic | Position | Update |
|---------------------------------|--------|----|------|---------|----------|--------|
| best places to visit in Ireland | 2,700 | 6 | 2.50 | 55 | 12 1.1 | 22 Jan |
| places to see in Ireland | 1,100 | 10 | 1.00 | 50 | 10 1.1 | 19 Jan |
| places to visit in Ireland | 2,300 | 11 | 2.00 | 38 | 11 1.1 | 23 Jan |
| best place in Ireland | 300 | 6 | 1.20 | 15 | 7 1.8 | 4 Jan |
| top places to visit in Ireland | 500 | 9 | 2.50 | 10 | 13 1.1 | 11 Jan |
| best places to visit Ireland | 200 | 5 | 3.50 | 7 | 8 1.2 | 5 Jan |
| Ireland places to visit | 500 | 9 | 2.50 | 6 | 13 1.4 | 11 Jan |
| best places to see in Ireland | 400 | 8 | 2.00 | 6 | 11 1.1 | 30 Dec |
| best places in Ireland | 450 | 6 | 1.80 | 4.9 | 15 1.3 | 13 Jan |
| best place to visit in Ireland | 300 | 5 | 2.50 | 4.4 | 12 1.1 | 11 Jan |

View all 223 keywords

- e) Expand your keyword list by looking literally *anywhere* else

Google search results and professional keyword tools can give you a lot to get started with, but it's in no way enough. To be successful with SEO, you need to understand how people are talking about the niche you're operating in, what problems they have, and so on. Use every opportunity to speak to customers and take notice of the language they're using.

Doing this in person is great, but also very time-consuming. So here are a few places where you can find the words people use while talking about your topic of interest:

- **Forums:** There are quite a few communities where people discuss traveling. For example, a simple search led me to the TripAdvisor Dublin Travel Forum.
- **Quora/Reddit:** Quora is probably not the first place that comes to mind when you're looking for travel advice, but you'd be surprised by the amount of information you can find there even on this topic. Where it comes to Reddit, the adage that there's a subreddit for everything is generally true.
- **Facebook/LinkedIn Groups:** LinkedIn is more geared towards B2B markets, but when it comes to Facebook, there are groups for almost everything.

Any website or social network with a large number of visitors and user-generated content can serve as a source of inspiration and keyword ideas.

Podcasts can also be a good source of inspiration...

Podcasts > Society & Culture > Places & Travel > Jason Moore: Travel Podcast Host | Location Independent Publisher | Dig



Subscribe

★★★★★ (187)

Audio

Places & Travel

© Copyright 2017 Zero To Travel LLC

CLEAN

LINKS

Website

Report a Concern

Zero To Travel Podcast : National Geographic Type Inspiration Like TED

Jason Moore: Travel Podcast Host | Location Independent Publisher | Digital No

[Details](#) [Ratings and Reviews](#) [Related](#)

From the Provider

Do you want to learn how to travel the world for as long as you desire, on your terms while working, an occasional traveler longing to make your holiday everyday, or an experienced gic Jason Moore from ZeroToTravel.com chats with adventurous people living life on the road advice and key resources, getting down and dirty on topics like, starting and running an surprising ways to earn free travel, the digital nomad life, unconventional travel based lives

| ▲ | NAME | TIME |
|---|---|-------------|
| 1 | How To Take Cheap Alaska Cruises | 34 min |
| 2 | Hidden Paths and Sacred Rides with Mike Brice | 56 min |
| 3 | The World's Longest Honeymoon with Mike and Anne from Ho... | 1 hr 9 min |
| 4 | Getting Free Through Travel with Mike Clarity | 1 hr 18 min |
| 5 | Travel Passion Machine! | 1 hr 3 min |
| 6 | Top 20 Most Beautiful Places We've Been In The World: Part O... | 1 hr 1 min |
| 7 | How To See The Northern Lights In Norway | 1 hr |
| 8 | The Current State Of Digital Nomadism + DNX Global Roundup | 41 min |
| 9 | Settling With The Nomad Spirit + The Beauty in Ugly | 55 min |

... as can the *contents* pages of popular niche-related books on Amazon:

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| ► Dublin | 4 | Glendalough and | |
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| Sights in Dublin | 23 | Money | 115 |
| Shopping in Dublin | 60 | Staying Connected | 116 |
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| Sleeping in Dublin | 63 | Eating | 118 |
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| ► Near Dublin | 88 | Resources from | |
| Boyne Valley | 88 | Rick Steves | 120 |
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Don't be afraid to get creative here. Inspiration and keyword ideas are all around you.

- f) Understand the metrics behind the keywords you're targeting

Most people focus entirely on the following two metrics when doing keyword research:

- search volume (the number of monthly searches, on average), and
- keyword difficulty (an estimate as to how easy or hard it will be to appear on the first page of search results for that term).

These are important as they provide useful insights into the potential of the keyword and how difficult ranking for it is likely to be.

However, instead of looking solely at search volume, you should try to figure out the true search traffic potential for each keyword. That way, you can focus your efforts on ranking for the ones that are likely to send the most targeted traffic your way.

In Ahrefs, you can do that by looking at the traffic stats for the current top-ranking pages in the SERP overview in Keywords Explorer:

SERP overview ¹

99 organic results ² Ad ³ 14 site links ⁴ Image pack ⁵ Related questions ⁶ 1 video ⁷

| Search results ¹ | AR ² | DR ³ | UR ⁴ | Backlinks ⁵ | Domains ⁶ | Traffic ⁷ | Kw. ⁸ | Top keyword ⁹ |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 4 adwords top | | | | | | | | |
| 1 THE 10 BEST Hotels in Dublin for 2018 (from \$24) - TripAdvisor https://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotels-g186605-Dublin_County_Dublin-Hotels-s.html | 93 | 93 | 34 | 293 | 84 | 6,675 | 192 | dublin hotels |
| 3 site links | | | | | | | | |
| 2 Top 10 Hotels in Dublin, Ireland Hotels.com https://www.hotels.com/de691513/hotels-dublin-ireland/ | 1.9K | 88 | 30 | 204 | 54 | 3,264 | 94 | hotels in dublin ireland |
| 3 The 10 Best Hotels in Dublin for 2018 Expedia https://www.expedia.com/Dublin-Hotels.d178256.Travel-Guide-Hotels | 2.2K | 88 | 20 | 60 | 15 | 2,739 | 209 | hotels in dublin ireland |
| 4 30 Best Dublin Hotels, Ireland (From \$50) - Booking.com https://www.booking.com/city/ie/dublin.html | 174 | 92 | 33 | 379 | 78 | 3,440 | 297 | hotels in dublin |
| 5 Dublin - Ireland Hotels https://www.irelandhotels.com/dublin.html | 1.3M | 41 | 17 | 13 | 8 | 1,611 | 235 | hotels in dublin ireland |
| 4 related questions | | | | | | | | |
| 6 Top 10 Best Value Hotels in Dublin - HotelsCombined.ie https://www.hotelscombined.com/Place/Dublin.htm | 4.1K | 85 | 21 | 237 | 13 | 914 | 146 | hotels in dublin ireland |
| 7 15 Best Hotels in Dublin. Hotels from \$30/night - KAYAK https://www.kayak.com/Dublin-Hotels.7362.hotel.ksp | 7.0K | 82 | 20 | 52 | 38 | 1,973 | 367 | hotels in dublin ireland |
| 8 Best hotels in Dublin Telegraph Travel - The Telegraph https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/ireland/dublin/hotels/ | 222 | 92 | 16 | 5 | 4 | 1,129 | 82 | hotels in dublin ireland |
| 9 Hoteles en Dublin Busca y compara ofertas increibles en trivago https://www.trivago.com/dublin-42454/hotel | 11.9K | 80 | 18 | 13 | 7 | 1,350 | 226 | hotels in dublin |

This tells you the estimated total monthly search traffic to each of the top-ranking pages.

You can also see that these pages (which rank for *Dublin hotels*) also rank for many other related keywords. Looking at these stats gives you an idea of the kind of traffic you can expect to get to your page if you manage to rank.

Note that true traffic potential can significantly exceed the search volume of the keyword you're researching.

1.3.2 Step 2: Create pages optimized for search

Keyword research is only the first step towards attracting more organic search traffic.

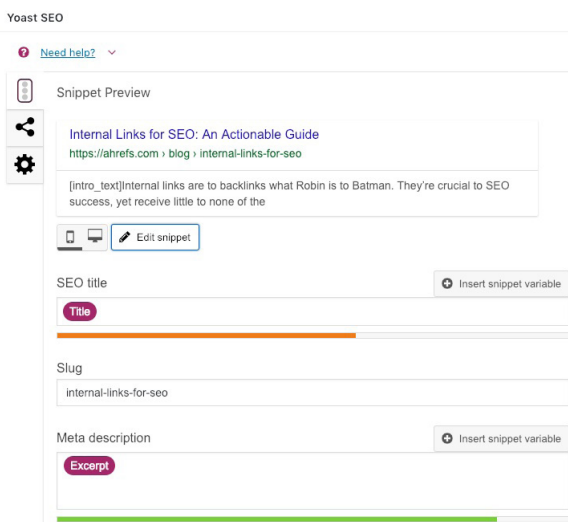
You also need to make sure your pages are structured well and satisfy the person behind the search to rank for the keywords you selected.

Your optimization efforts should start with making sure that your visitors are enjoying the user experience (UX) your website provides. Use design and typography that makes it easy to consume the content, and remove any unnecessary elements such as pop-ups, opt-in boxes, etc. that can annoy your readers.

On-page optimization is the next step in your SEO strategy.

Even targeting the most profitable keywords with the “best” content won’t help you if your pages are not optimized for search engines.

There are many ways to implement the features discussed in the following sections, but if you’re using WordPress for your website, it first recommend installing an SEO plugin like Yoast SEO. It’s free and simple to use, and it’s perfect for those who are new to on-page SEO.



Setting up your pages for success in the search engine involves the following:

- a) Create content that aligns with ‘search intent’

Wanting to rank for a keyword doesn’t mean you deserve to, even if your traditional on-page SEO elements are on-point. That’s because of something called *search intent*.

In short, there are three main ‘types’ of searches people make:

1. **Navigational:** They’re looking for a specific website, e.g., ‘Dublin airport’
2. **Informational:** They’re looking to learn more about a specific topic, e.g., ‘things to do in Dublin’
3. **Transactional:** They’re looking to purchase a specific product/service, e.g., ‘book hotel in Dublin’

Naturally, searches with a high level of commercial interest are more valuable from a business point of view since the people doing them are closer to purchasing (i.e., further down the marketing funnel) and thus more likely to spend money if they land on your site.

But search intent isn’t always crystal clear from the search query itself.

For example, take the query “best hotel in Dublin.”

Now, you might be thinking “*my hotel is the best hotel in Dublin, so this is probably a transactional term for which I can rank my homepage,*” right? Not so fast.

The best way to understand the intent behind any search term is to see what pages rank for it.

So let’s do that:

| Search results ¹ | AR ² | DR ³ | UR ⁴ | Backlinks ⁵ | Domains ⁶ | Traffic ⁷ |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 THE 10 BEST Hotels in Dublin for 2019 (from \$27) - TripAdvisor https://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotels-g186605-Dublin-County_Dublin-Hotels.html ▼ | 89 | 93 | 32 | 232 | 71 | 6,353 |
| 2 15 Best Hotels in Dublin U.S. News https://travel.usnews.com/Hotels/Dublin_Ireland/ ▼ | 486 | 91 | 17 | 13 | 10 | 1,445 |
| 3 Best hotels in Dublin Telegraph Travel - The Telegraph https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/ireland/dublin-hotels/ ▼ | 224 | 92 | 17 | 8 | 8 | 1,226 |
| 4 15 Best Hotels in Dublin - Condé Nast Traveler https://www.cntraveler.com/gallery/best-hotels-in-dublin ▼ | 3.4K | 86 | 21 | 35 | 16 | 400 |
| 5 The 22 Best Luxury Dublin Hotels Five Star Alliance https://www.fivestaralliance.com/luxury-hotels/554/europe/ireland/dublin ▼ | 332K | 56 | 15 | 6 | 4 | 724 |
| 6 Best places to stay in Dublin, Ireland The Hotel Guru https://www.thehotelguru.com/en-us/best-hotels-in/ireland/dublin ▼ | 461K | 53 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 584 |
| 7 The 11 Best Luxury Hotels in Dublin Oyster.com https://www.oyster.com/dublin/hotels/roundups/best-luxury-hotels-in-dublin/ ▼ | 35.2K | 74 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 166 |
| 8 ▶ 4 related questions | | | | | | |
| 9 11 Best Hotels in Dublin, From Budget Spots to Luxury Stays - Time Out https://www.timeout.com/dublin/hotels/best-hotels-in-dublin ▼ | 1.3K | 90 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 98 |
| 10 The 10 Best Hotels To Stay At In Dublin - Culture Trip https://theculturetrip.com/europe/ireland/articles/the-10-best-hotels-in-dublin-ireland/ ▼ | 5.5K | 83 | 13 | 1 | 1 | 97 |

Top 10 ranking pages for “best hotel in Dublin” via Ahrefs Keywords Explorer

Here you can see that almost all of the top-ranking results are blog posts and listicles—i.e., *informational* results.

The logic here is that because Google’s primary goal is to satisfy its users, their algorithm keeps a close eye on the behavior of people searching for a particular term and tries to offer results that will meet the intent of their search. Thus, you can infer search intent by looking at the commonalities between the current top-ranking pages.

Never create content without first understanding the search intent behind the query you’re targeting.

b) Use short, descriptive URLs

The web address of your page sends a signal to search engines about its topic. Getting this right the first time is recommended because you should avoid changing it, if possible.

Here’s Google’s advice about URLs:

A site’s URL structure should be as simple as possible. Consider organizing your content so that URLs are constructed logically and in a manner that is most intelligible to humans (when possible, readable words rather than long ID numbers).

In other words, don’t go for...

domain.com/56945602_86587356.asp

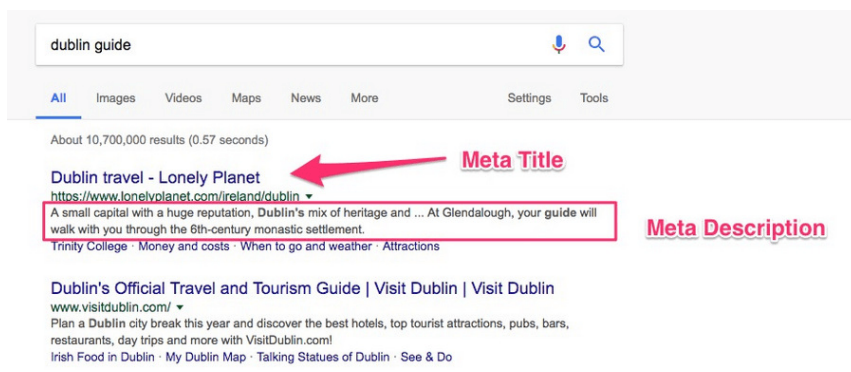
...when you could go for something descriptive like:

domain.com/dublin-guide

The other benefit of descriptive URLs is that they often include your target keyword (or at least words and phrases from it). That said, don’t shoehorn keywords into URLs if they look unnatural.

c) Create compelling meta titles and descriptions

Web pages have two specific features that search engines use when building up search results:



Contrary to what the name suggests, the meta title tag does not appear anywhere on your page. It merely sets the name of the browser tab, and Google and other search engines use it when showing the page in search results.

SIDENOTE.

Google doesn't always respect the title tags you set. They sometimes choose to display something slightly different.

The title tag is a great opportunity to write a headline which:

1. includes the keyword you want the page to rank for, and
2. is compelling enough to make searchers click and visit your site.

Conventional wisdom also suggests keeping yours under 60 characters to avoid truncation in full in search results. However, it's not so much about the number of characters but rather pixels. Therefore, it's a good idea to use a SERP pixel tool to make sure your titles don't get cut.

Meta descriptions are also important, mainly because they too can affect the click-through rate.

SIDENOTE.

Click-through rate is not thought to be a direct ranking factor, but it does directly affect how much traffic you get from search.

If you want to avoid the risk of truncation, your meta descriptions should not exceed ~155 characters. Use the pixel tool mentioned above to keep them within limits.

- d) Use headers and subheaders to create a logical structure

Use the standard HTML format for headers (H1 to H6) to make it easy for search engines to understand the structure of your page and the importance of each section.

Header 1 should be reserved for the on-page title of your content and should ideally include the main keyword (or something closely related to the main keyword) that you're targeting. You can have more than one H1 tag per page, but we recommend sticking to one.

Header 2 should be used for the titles of the main sections on your page. They should also include the main keyword you're targeting (whenever possible and natural—don't shoehorn!) and are a good place to add additional (longer-tail) keywords for which you want to rank.

Every time you go a step deeper in your content, use the next type of header, e.g., Header 3 for subheadings within an H2 section, and so on.

Here's what a well-structured piece of content looks like:

- H1: The Complete First-Time Traveller's Guide to Dublin
 - H2: Sights & Attractions
 - H3: Trinity College
 - H4: The Book of Kells Exhibition & Old Library
 - H3: The Guinness Storehouse
 - H4: The Gravity Bar
 - H3: The Temple Bar Area
 - H2: Accommodation

- H3: Hotel 1
- H3: Hotel 2
- H3: Hotel 3
- H2: Restaurants
 - H3: Upscale restaurant
 - H3: Gastropub
 - H3: Another hip place
- H2: Bars
 - H3: Bar with live music
 - H3: Bar with great cocktails
 - H3: Very touristy bar
- H2: Conclusion

Following a clear and exhaustive structure makes it easy for search engines to categorize your content and also helps human readers.

e) Optimize your images

Images are great for humans, but search engines can struggle to make sense of them.

To illustrate that point, here's what happens when you upload a photo of butter to Google's Cloud Vision API—their machine-learning image identification tool:



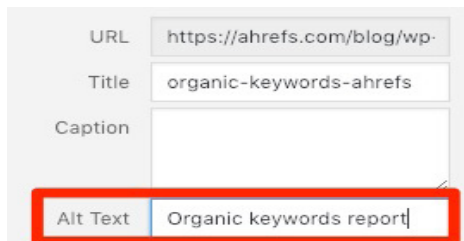
| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Cheese | 91% |
| Processed Cheese | 81% |
| Food | 81% |
| Dairy Product | 80% |
| Gruyère Cheese | 77% |
| Limburger Cheese | 72% |
| Montasio | 69% |
| Beyaz Peynir | 69% |
| Brie | 63% |

Google is 91% sure that this is a photo of cheese, which is wrong.

To help Google (and other search engines) understand your images, you should use the alt tag to describe and explain them.

In this case, a good alt tag would be alt="Butter".

In WordPress, editing the alt tag is done by using the *Alternative Text* field in the image editor:



If you're not using WordPress, you can also add the tag manually:

```
<h3>Campaign Monitor</h3>
<p></p>
```

f) Set up Schema

Schema has become a popular way to improve how your website looks in search results. For example, you can use it to add ratings to your search results entry, thus making it more noticeable:

Leonardo is one of the most fascinating people ever | Bill Gates

<https://www.gatesnotes.com/Books/Leonardo-da-Vinci>

May 21, 2018 - Bill Gates reviews "Leonardo da Vinci" by author Walter Isaacson. ... More than any other Leonardo book I've read, this one helps you see him ...

Leonardo da Vinci by Walter Isaacson - Goodreads

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/34684622-leonardo-da-vinci> ▼

★★★★★ Rating: 4.2 - 18,155 votes

Leonardo da Vinci has 18155 ratings and 1989 reviews. ... See all 9 questions about Leonardo da Vinci... ... Bill Gates's "5 books worth reading this summer".

Leonardo da Vinci: The Biography by Walter Isaacson review ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/.../leonardo-da-vinci-the-biography-walter-isaacson...>

Dec 16, 2017 - The subjects of his previous books – Albert Einstein, Benjamin ... Leonardo da Vinci: The Biography is published by Simon and Schuster.

To get started with using Schema, you should check out the official documentation and these tools that allow you to generate and test structured data.

1.3.3 Step 3: Make sure your website is accessible to both search engines and humans

When doing SEO, it's important to remember that you're working for two separate customers—your human readers, and the bots search engines use to index your website.

While bots are becoming more intelligent and human-like, many differences still exist between the two. Therefore, your goal should be to create a positive experience for both humans and bots.

Understanding how to create pages optimized for bots can be challenging. That's why, while it's important to have a strong understanding of the features we discuss in the following paragraphs, It encourage you to delegate them to a professional (preferably a developer).

Still, here are a few tips to get you off on the right foot.

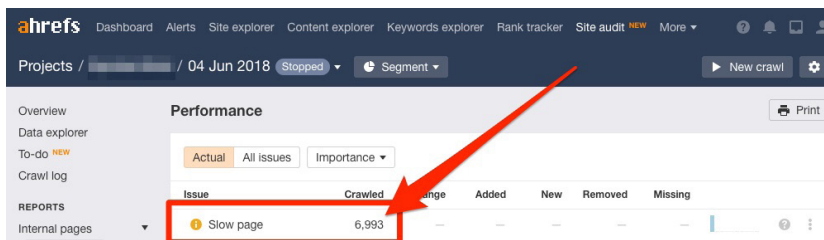
- a) Make sure your website loads fast

Both humans and search engines prioritize the loading speed of websites. Studies suggest that up to 40% of people leave sites that take longer than 3 seconds to load.

Using Google's PageSpeed Insights tool or GTMetrix can help you find out how quickly your pages load and give you actionable advice on how to further improve their speed.

| PageSpeed Insights | | HOME | GUIDES | REFERENCE |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--------|-----------|
| Opportunity | | Estimated Savings | | |
| 1 | Eliminate render-blocking resources | 0.34 s | | |
| 2 | Defer unused CSS | 0.16 s | | |

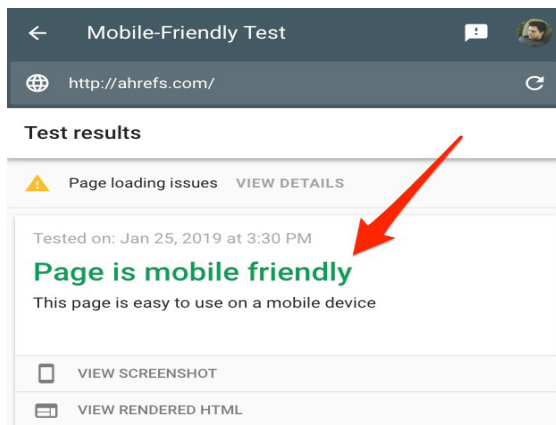
If you want to analyze all pages on your site at once, run a crawl in Ahrefs Site Audit and check the **Performance** report to see which of your pages need further optimization for speed.



b) Make sure your website is mobile-friendly

According to one study, more than 60% of searches are now from mobile devices.

Use Google's Mobile-Friendly Test tool to make sure your website is mobile-friendly. Here's what you want to see:



c) Install an SSL certificate

HTTPS is officially one of the ranking signals Google uses.

You can tell when a site uses SSL because there'll be a padlock in the URL bar:



Not using an SSL certificate can also be a security issue—especially if you're running an ecommerce site or accepting form submissions.

Free options like Let's Encrypt allow you to secure your website without breaking the piggy bank.

d) Create a sitemap

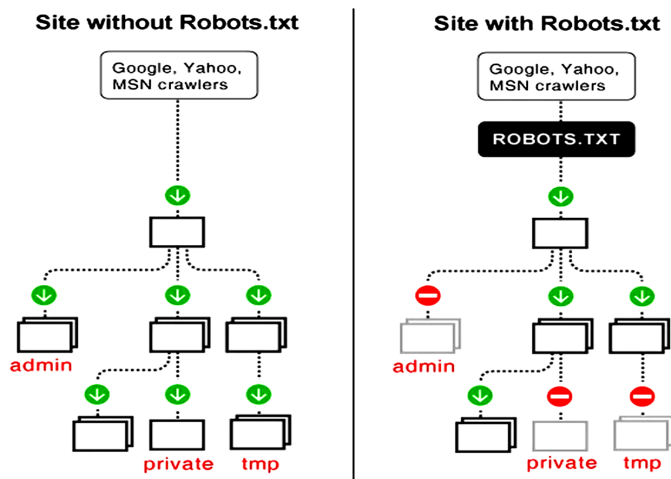
A sitemap is an XML file which lists all the pages on your site. Search engines use it to find your content and understand how your pages are connected (i.e., see the overall structure of your website).

If you're using Yoast SEO, the plugin will generate a sitemap for you. You can then follow Google's guidelines on how to test and submit it. (There are also multiple other free tools you can use to generate a sitemap for your site.)

Sitemaps do not affect rankings directly, but they allow search engines to find and index new pages on your website faster.

e) Upload a robots.txt file

While the sitemap lays out the full structure of your website, the robots.txt file gives specific instructions to search engine crawlers on which parts of the site they should and shouldn't index.



Having a robots.txt file is recommended because search engines allocate a crawl budget—the number of pages they're allowed to crawl with each visit—to their bots.

All major search engine crawlers and other “good” bots recognize and obey the robots.txt format, including AhrefsBot.

f) Internally link between relevant posts and pages

The strategic linking of various pages on your website is a great way to increase the speed at which search engines crawl your site, and point them to your most important pages.

There are various strategies for doing this, such as the hub-and-spoke strategy, cornerstone content, etc. These work but they can get complicated. For now, focus on creating a strong structure with plenty of links between relevant pages.

In our example, we can create a page that targets *'Dublin guide'* and have it link to separate pages that cover *'Dublin sights,' 'Dublin restaurants'*, and so on.

To quickly find linking opportunities use the following query on Google:

site:yourdomain.com + "topic of the post you want to link to"

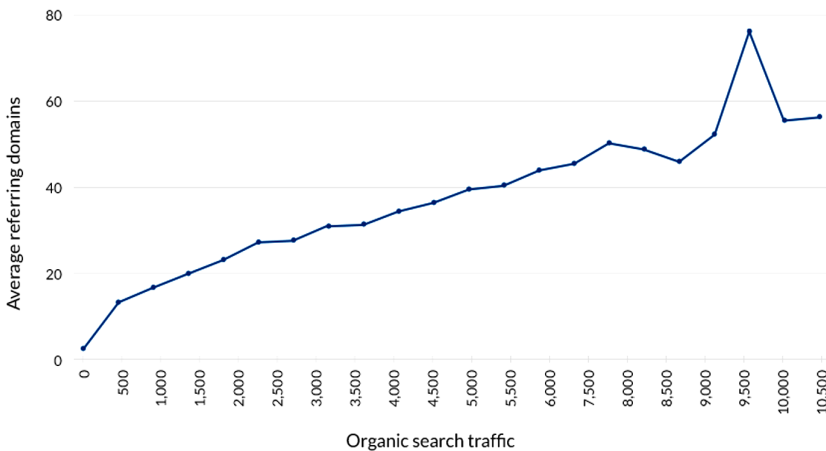
For example, if you're looking to link to your Dublin guide, you can type site:yourdomain.com + "Dublin guide" (or "Dublin tips" or even just "Dublin"), and you'll see all pages on your site from which you can add links.

1.3.4 Step 4: Build backlinks from other websites

Link building is critical for the success of your SEO strategy, so if you're prepared to spend resources (time, money, etc.) on producing content, you should also be prepared to commit at least as much time to promoting and generating links to your content.

Why? Because there's clear evidence showing that backlinks are one of the factors with a strong influence on Google's ranking algorithm.

Referring domains VS search traffic



Even Google admits that backlinks are one of the top 3 ‘ranking factors.’

There are many tactics you can use to get other websites to link back to your web pages. Some are more legitimate than others. However, before you start cherry picking “link building hacks” to try, take the time to review and analyze how your competitors are building links.

It’s important to use **your** competitors because each niche is different and tactics that work great in one niche might not be so effective in yours.

When done with this, consider some of the following tactics.

- a) Swipe links from inferior content

Let’s say that we’ve just published an excellent Dublin travel guide.

We put our heart and soul into this guide. It’s extremely thorough, the user-experience is on-point, and the information and recommendations are as up-to-date as it gets. It’s *probably* the best Dublin travel guide on the web.

In other words, our Dublin travel guide is more deserving of links than any other one.

However, if we search for “Dublin travel” in Content Explorer and filter for pages with links from 20+ referring domains, these are some of the results:

The screenshot shows the 'Most Popular Content for Dublin travel' section in Ahrefs. The filter 'Referring domains: 20+Max' is highlighted with a red box. Two results are shown:

- Dublin travel | Ireland - Lonely Planet**: 415 words, 10 Sep '16. Metrics: 44 tweets, 232 Facebook shares, 47 Pinterest pins. Total 323, Median 172. Domain Rating 90, Referring domains 184, Organic traffic 8.6K.
- The Best Dublin Travel Tips From Our Readers**: 2,295 words, 19 Apr '18. Metrics: 12 tweets, 243 Facebook shares, 108 Pinterest pins. Total 363, Median 108. Domain Rating 90, Referring domains 27, Organic traffic 242.

Red arrows point to the 'Referring domains' metric for each result.

Those two pages combined have links from over 200 referring domains (unique websites).

Neither of those two pages is bad. They're just not as good as the guide we've put together. So it may be worth reaching out to the folks linking to those pages and seeing if there's scope for them to link to us too.

To find out who links to a page, we can paste the URL into Ahrefs Site Explorer and check the **Backlinks** report.

The screenshot shows the Ahrefs Site Explorer interface. The URL 'https://www.lonelyplanet.com/ireland/dublin' is entered in the search bar. The 'Backlinks' report is displayed, showing 201 groups of similar dofollow links. The 'Overview' sidebar on the left includes 'Backlink profile' and 'Referring domains'.

Backlinks report details:

- Group similar: One link per domain, All, Dofollow, PI
- Word or phrase: Include, Any target
- Live: Recent, Historical
- 201 groups of similar dofollow links

Not every link will be worth pursuing, but even after skimming the backlinks report for just a minute or two, It can already see a few good candidates from whom it love to get a backlink.

Here's one of them:



All that's left to do is find the email address of the person responsible for the site and let them know about our content.

b) Broken link building

Broken link building is where you find relevant broken pages (with backlinks pointing to them) on other sites. You then reach out to the people linking to the dead resource to suggest that they swap out the dead link for a suitable replacement on your site.

Sound confusing? Let me show you how to do it.

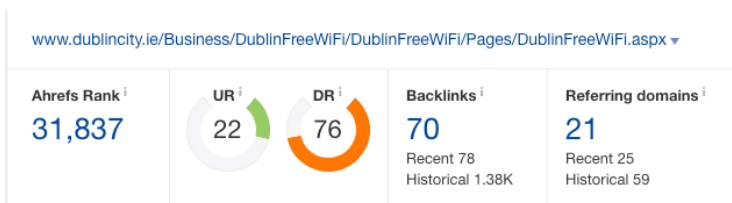
For this example, use the subreddit on Dublin, mainly because it contains multiple links and sure there would be at least a few broken ones. Run the page through Ahrefs and check out the **Broken links** report:

The image shows the Ahrefs Broken Links report for the website www.reddit.com/Dublin. The report lists 137 pages with broken links. The table below shows the first few entries.

| Referring page | UR | Int. | Ext. | Anchor and link | DP check / RP check |
|--|----|------|------|--|--------------------------|
| Anyone familiar with the Conrart Castle Hotel? Looking to stay there, will it be an inconvenience to stay out of Dublin's city center? : Dublin www.reddit.com/r/Dublin/comments/41mu70/anyone_familiar_with_the_conrart_castle_hotel/ | 14 | 145 | 21 | http://www.transportforireland.ie/leap-card/leap-visitor-card/ www.transportforireland.ie/leap-card/leap-visitor-card/ | 28 Sep '18 3 Aug '17 |
| Moving to Dublin next month : Dublin www.reddit.com/r/Dublin/comments/28b3d0/moving_to_dublin_next_month/ | 0 | 150 | 15 | Specific housing location aside - http://www.studenttravelcard.ie/index.aspx will give you details on how to get a student travel card, the www.studenttravelcard.ie/index.aspx | 11 Oct '18 27 May '15 |
| Dublin lifehacks/top tips... : Dublin www.reddit.com/r/Dublin/comments/208t8t/dublin_lifehack-stop_tips/ | 0 | 235 | 29 | www.dublincity.ie/Business/DublinFreeWiFi/DublinFreeWiFiPages/DublinFreeWiFiPages | 17 Oct '18 17 Dec '15 |
| I noticed that a lot of posts in this sub are asking for advice about moving here. I threw together a rough guide to moving to Dublin. Let me know what you think (Wall of text): Dublin www.reddit.com/r/Dublin/comments/28b3d0/notice_that_a_lot_of_posts_in_this_sub_are/ | 0 | 155 | 29 | www.dublincity.ie/Business/DublinFreeWiFi/DublinFreeWiFiPages/DublinFreeWiFiPages | 3 Nov '18 26 May '15 |
| online gift card for fashion store in Dublin needed : Dublin www.reddit.com/r/Dublin/comments/21ux1/online_gift_card_for_fashion_store_in_dublin/ | 0 | 137 | 28 | www.dublincity.ie/Business/DublinFreeWiFi/DublinFreeWiFiPages/DublinFreeWiFiPages | 17 Oct '18 13 Dec '15 |
| Dublin Freedom Bus Ticket - Worth it? : Dublin www.reddit.com/r/Dublin/comments/2m68r/dublin_freedom_bus_ticket_worth_it/ | 0 | 99 | 16 | going to do the bus tour thing, I'd say this would be better http://www.transportforireland.ie/leap-card/leap-visitor-card/ www.transportforireland.ie/leap-card/leap-visitor-card/ | 2 Nov '18 11 Dec '15 |

Find one that looks interesting. Based on the text on Reddit, this page contained a map of public WiFi areas in Dublin. You can also use the Wayback Machine to find out what the page used to be.

Then, plug the page URL in Site Explorer to check if any websites are linking to it:



Bingo! Twenty-one sites link to this guide. Ahrefs even makes it easy to find the exact location of the dead link:

| dbsilibrary.blogspot.com | 0 | 64,443,407 | 3 | 245 | 0.59 | 4 | 4 | 1 Feb '18 |
|---|----|------------|------------|------|---------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Referring page | DR | UR | Refdomains | Ext. | Traffic | Kw. | Anchor and backlink | First seen Last check Lost |
| DBS Library Blog - Keep up to date with the Library. January 2013 dbsilibrary.blogspot.com/2013/01/... | 0 | 7 | 2 | 40 | 0.00 | 0 | spots all over the city, you can see where here: http://www.dublincity.ie/Business/DublinFreeWiFi/DublinFreeWiFi/Pages/DublinFreeWiFi.aspx www.dublincity.ie/Business/DublinFreeWiFi/DublinFreeWiFi/Pages/DublinFreeWiFi.aspx | 10 Apr '17 7 d |
| DBS Library Blog - Keep up to date with the Library. January 2013 dbsilibrary.blogspot.com/2013/01/... | 0 | 6 | 1 | 111 | 0.00 | 0 | spots all over the city, you can see where here: http://www.dublincity.ie/Business/DublinFreeWiFi/DublinFreeWiFi/Pages/DublinFreeWiFi.aspx www.dublincity.ie/Business/DublinFreeWiFi/DublinFreeWiFi/Pages/DublinFreeWiFi.aspx | 6 Apr '17 11 d |
| DBS Library Blog - Keep up to date with the Library. Free WiFi spots in Dublin dbsilibrary.blogspot.com/2013/01/free-wifi-spots-in-dublin.html | 0 | 3 | 0 | 15 | 0.00 | 0 | spots all over the city, you can see where here: http://www.dublincity.ie/Business/DublinFreeWiFi/DublinFreeWiFi/Pages/DublinFreeWiFi.aspx www.dublincity.ie/Business/DublinFreeWiFi/DublinFreeWiFi/Pages/DublinFreeWiFi.aspx | 18 Apr '18 28 Aug '18 |

Now you can create a similar page on the website and reach out to the owner of this site (and other sites linking to this missing page) to suggest that they replace dead link with a link.

The power of this tactic lies in the fact that:

1. you *know* what these site owners want to link to, and
2. you're helping them improve their site (by fixing broken links)
- c) Guest blogging

Guest blogging is where you write for another website in your industry.

Many people think guest blogging is dead because a while ago Google published a “warning” about using guest posting for link building.

But read it carefully:

Google does not discourage these types of articles in the cases when they inform users, educate another site's audience or bring awareness to your cause or company. However, what does violate Google's guidelines on link schemes is when the main intent is to build links in a large-scale way back to the author's site.

And one of the violations is:

Using or hiring article writers that aren't knowledgeable about the topics they're writing on.

So as long as your guest posts are helpful, informative and quality, you don't have to worry.

Guest blogging works for link building when you follow three basic rules:

1. You publish on an authoritative website with a large relevant audience.
2. You create a high-quality piece of content, which is helpful to the audience of the website on which it is placed.
3. You link to relevant resources on your website that will further help the audience expand their knowledge on the topic.

1.3.5 Step 5: Tracking your SEO success

The final step in setting your SEO strategy is figuring out how you'll track your performance. There are many methods and metrics you can use, so it's easy to get confused.

The advice is this: focus on the basics.

The most important metrics when it comes to SEO are a) organic traffic, and b) the average ranking position for the keywords you're targeting.

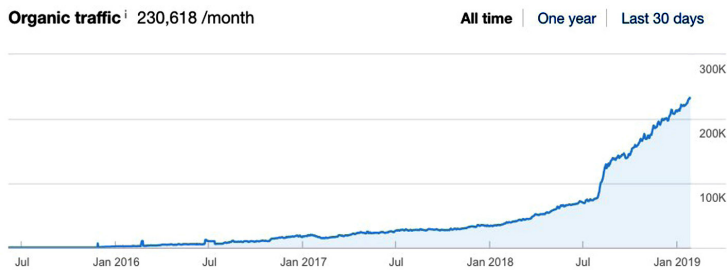
a) Measure organic traffic

If you're using Google Analytics, you can quickly view your organic traffic by going to:

Acquisition > All Traffic > Channels > Organic Search



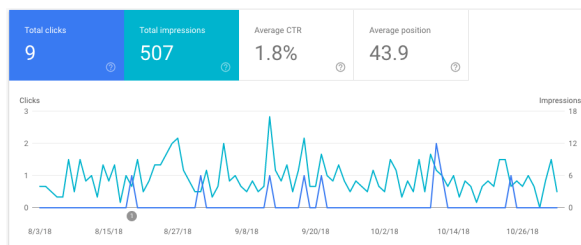
You can also use Ahrefs Site Explorer to keep an eye on your organic traffic along with the number of keywords your website ranks for, the organic positions it holds for various keywords and more.



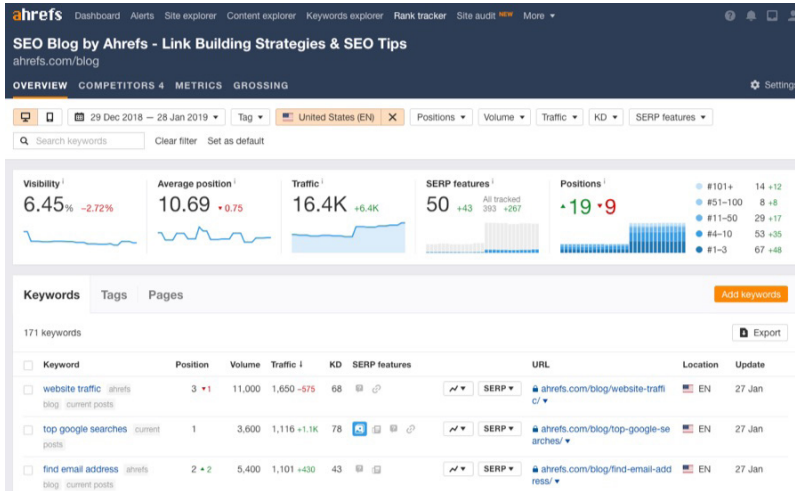
b) Track your rankings

Another important thing you should measure in your SEO strategy is how your content ranks on Google over time.

One way to do this is by using Google Search Console where you can find data about the average position, impressions, and clicks you get for various keywords.



You can also use Ahrefs Rank Tracker for this purpose—it lets you track up to 10,000 keywords, see how rankings are improving (or declining) over time, and compare to the competition.



There's also the option to schedule a weekly or monthly email update with all of the above.

1.4 TYPES OF SEO TECHNIQUES

Before you start optimizing your site, it's important to understand the various types of SEO available to your business. This includes the good and bad techniques. Understanding these different strategies and techniques will help you create a campaign that drives better organic results for your business.

When you're developing your SEO campaign, it's important to understand the different types of SEO your business can use — and ensure you choose the type of SEO that will drive the best possible results for your business.

Here are four main types of SEO techniques you will come across:

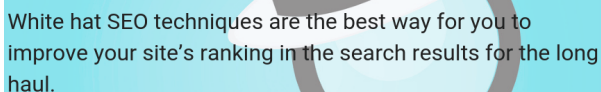
1.4.1 White hat SEO

White hat SEO techniques are the best way to improve your SEO ranking over time and optimize it. These are the tactics that Google recommends you use to help your site rank better in the results. They abide by Google's search engine guidelines and drive positive results for your business.

These techniques include:

- **Creating high-quality content:** High-quality content brings valuable leads to your page that are interested in your business. This helps improve your ranking to help you reach more interested traffic. You can create multiple types of industry-related content, including blogs, ebooks, videos, and infographics.
- **Optimizing HTML:** Cleaning up your site's code will help your site perform better. This includes practices like cleaning up messy code, eliminating white space, and reducing unnecessary text. This will help your site perform better.
- **Sharing on social media:** Social media helps you drive traffic to your site. You can boost your website's engagement and drive leads to your page. It helps you improve your ranking.
- **Making your site user-friendly:** If you want to keep leads on your site, it must be user-friendly. This means **creating an appealing design**, a well-structured navigation, and making your site engaging with photos and videos.

White hat SEO techniques take time to produce results. The results, however, are worth it. You will have lasting growth and continue to help your site perform better in the search results.



White hat SEO techniques are the best way for you to improve your site's ranking in the search results for the long haul.

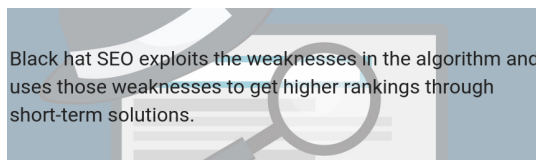
You will know if you're doing white hat SEO techniques correctly if your site's ranking is impacted every time Google updates their algorithm. When you properly practice white hat SEO techniques, you may see a drop in your rankings when the algorithm changes. This doesn't indicate you are using bad techniques, but rather, indicates you are using white hat techniques properly and will need to adjust.

It takes a little bit of time to adjust, but you can easily get your site right back on track. White hat SEO techniques are the best way for you to improve your site's ranking in the search results for the long haul.

1.4.2 Black hat SEO

Black hat SEO techniques exploit search algorithms to get higher rankings.

Some businesses use black hat SEO techniques because they drive fast results. People want the immediate gratification without putting in too much work. The downfall, however, is that black hat SEO ends up hurting businesses in the long run.



There are numerous tactics that fall under black hat:

- Link spamming
- Keyword stuffing
- Cloaking
- Hidden text/links
- Using irrelevant, popular keywords
- Over optimizing HTML headings
- Copying content
- Buying links

These are just a few tactics that companies will use to optimize their site. While these tactics do improve ranking, it does not last. Google catches on to these techniques and if you're caught, your site will suffer severely. Search engines will punish your business and even ban your site from appearing in relevant search results. Since Google only wants to produce relevant search results, it will ban people who take a short-cut to try and get to the top of the rankings.

1.4.3 Gray hat SEO

Gray hat SEO is the middle ground between white and black hat SEO. This technique isn't quite good for your site, but it isn't listed as bad. Hence why this is a "gray" hat SEO tactic because it falls into a gray area. These SEO techniques aren't banned by Google, but they aren't considered an acceptable way to obtain leads. Gray hat SEO techniques are risky, but marketed as the "affordable solution." Companies that offer gray SEO techniques reduce their costs because they are using questionable methods.

Here are some examples of gray SEO techniques:

- Clickbait articles
- Spun content
- Link exchanges
- Paid reviews

These are tactics businesses will use to improve their site's performance in the search results. Gray hat SEO techniques aren't quite banned by Google, but they aren't the best way to help your site grow. It can lead to negative effects that hurt your business rather than help it.

1.4.4 Negative SEO

Negative SEO is a unique situation for your business. It isn't perpetrated by your business, but rather, someone else. You will see negative SEO scenarios between businesses and their competitors.

When you see a business using negative SEO, they are trying to hurt their competitors' reputations. Companies use gray and black hat techniques to cause harm to competitors' businesses. They implement these techniques to decrease a business's rank so they can improve their own.

There are a few strategies companies will use with negative SEO:

- Building unnatural links to a competitor's site
- Posting negative reviews
- Hacking websites to modify content

The intent with negative SEO is to harm other sites for personal gain. It is hard to control this because other companies are damaging your site. When you're running your SEO campaign, you must constantly monitor it to ensure that there aren't any unusual or unexpected spikes/drops in activity or performance.

1.5 HOW DO SEARCH ENGINES WORK

Search engines work through three primary functions:

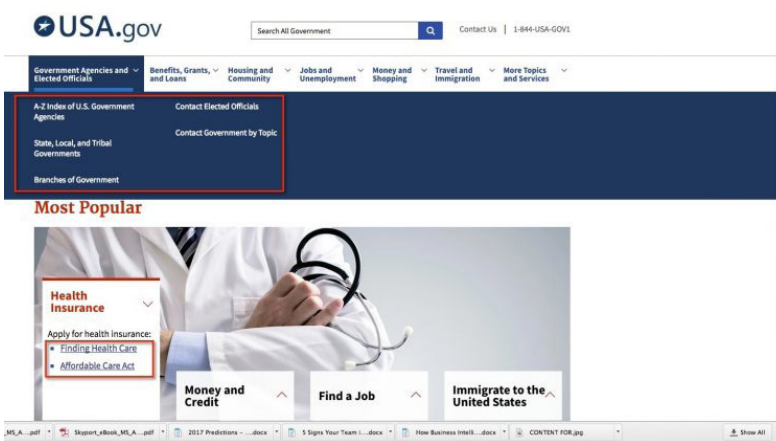
1. **Crawling:** Scour the Internet for content, looking over the code/content for each URL they find.
2. **Indexing:** Store and organize the content found during the crawling process. Once a page is in the index, it's in the running to be displayed as a result to relevant queries.
3. **Ranking:** Provide the pieces of content that will best answer a searcher's query, which means that results are ordered by most relevant to least relevant.

1.5.1 Crawling the Web

Search engines have crawlers (aka spiders) that "crawl" the World Wide Web to discover pages that exist in order to help identify the best web pages to be evaluated for a query. The method of travel by which the crawlers travel are website links.

These website links bind together pages in a website and websites across the web, and in doing so, create a pathway for the crawlers to reach the trillions of interconnected website pages that exist.

How about a visual example? In the figure below, you can see a screenshot of the home page of USA.gov:



Whenever crawlers look at a web page, they look through the “Document Object Model” (or “DOM”) of the page to see what’s on it. The DOM is the rendered HTML and Javascript code of the page that the crawlers look through to find links to other pages (samples shown above in red outlines). This allows the search engine to discover new pages on the web, and each of the new links they find are loaded in a queue which the crawler will visit at a later time.

Crawling the entire web each day would be too big of an undertaking, so Google typically spreads its crawl over a number of weeks. In addition, as mentioned earlier, search engines like Google don’t crawl each and every web page that exists.

Instead, they start with a trusted set of websites that serve as the basis for determining how other websites measure up, and by following the links they see on the pages they visit, they expand their crawl across the web.

1.5.2 Indexing the Data

Indexing is the act of adding information about a web page to a search engine's index. The index is a collection of web pages—a database—that includes information on the pages crawled by search engine spiders.

The index catalogs and organizes:

- Detailed data on the nature of the content and topical relevance of each web page
- A map of all the pages that each page links to
- The clickable (anchor) text of any links
- Other information about links, such as if they are ads or not, where they are located on the page, and other aspects of the context of the link and what that implies about the page receiving the link... and more.

The index is the database with which search engines like Google store and retrieves data when a user types a query into the search engine. Before it decides which web pages to show from the index and in what order, search engines apply algorithms to help rank those web pages.

[Tweet “A search engine’s index is actually a database with many data points about a web page. Learn more at”]

1.5.3 Ranking the Results

In order to serve up results to the search engine's end-user, search engines must perform some critical steps:

1. Interpreting the intent of the user query
2. Identifying web pages in the index related to the query
3. Ranking and returning those web pages in order of relevance and importance

This is one of the major areas where search engine optimization comes in. Effective SEO helps influence the relevance and importance of those web pages for related queries.

So, what does relevance and importance mean, anyway?

- **Relevance:** The degree to which the content on a web page matches the intent of the searcher (intent is what searchers are trying to accomplish with that search, which is no small undertaking for search engines—or SEOs—to figure out).
- **Importance:** Web pages are considered more important the more they are cited elsewhere (think of these citations as a vote of confidence for that web page). Traditionally, this comes in the form of links from other websites to that web page, but there could be other factors that come into play as well.

In order to accomplish the task of assigning relevance and importance, the search engines have complex algorithms designed to take into account hundreds of signals that help determine the relevance and importance of any given web page.

[Tweet “Search engines rank pages according to their relevance and importance. Learn more at”]

These algorithms often change as search engines work to improve their methods of serving up the best results to their users. And even though they are constantly being tweaked, some of the fundamentals of what the search engines are looking for are pretty well understood.

Though we’ll probably never know the complete list of signals that search engines like Google use in their algorithms (that’s a closely guarded secret and for good reason, lest spammers use that knowledge to game the system), the search engines have revealed some of the basics through knowledge sharing with the web publishing community, and we can use that knowledge to create lasting SEO strategies.

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CHAPTER 2

SEO RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

Keyword research is the process of finding and analyzing search terms that people enter into search engines with the goal of using that data for a specific purpose, often for search engine optimization (SEO) or general marketing.

Keyword research tells you what topics people care about and, assuming you use the right SEO tool, how popular those topics actually are among your audience. The operative term here is topics -- by researching keywords that are getting a high volume of searches per month, you can identify and sort your content into topics that you want to create content on. Then, you can use these topics to dictate which keywords you look for and target

2.1. MARKET RESEARCH

SEO is all about optimizing your website to better meet the needs of your customers, with improved rankings coming from doing so. Market research helps you to understand the exact needs of your customers so you're able to address them. If you are able to identify what your customers want from you then you can target the best keywords and write relevant content that genuinely helps your prospects.

2.1.1. Enhance SEO Using Market Research

Using market research and SEO (Search Engine Optimization) are critical components of any company's on-line presence. It is not just the art and science of getting your business in front of thousands of people but making sure those people are the ones who will buy your product. Utilizing market reports and market research methods are essential ways in which you can enhance your SEO Strategy.

If you do a search for your company's website, where do you show up? Or do you show up so far down the list that you may as well not show up at all? This is what your customers are seeing (or rather not seeing). Getting good results on a search engine means you are in the top 20. Most customers aren't going to take the time to look beyond this point whether they've found what they're looking for or not.

More Relevant Keywords

Every time your customers search for you, they are competing with millions of other web pages. Your site does not have an ice cube's chance in... (Well you get it) to rank top 20. Optimizing your content and website is a necessary SEO practice, but what if you're not using the right keywords and phrases? Too general and your site won't pop up. However, market research and SEO together

can provide an in-depth look at not only WHAT information your target audience is looking for, but also HOW they're looking for it. This will allow you to build a well-constructed website and have good search results so that when your customers search, they find YOU, not your competitor.

A leg up on the competition

The goal of course is to one up your competition. This can be done by attracting more customers to your website with more targeted search phrases, but also by knowing what your competitors are up to. Market research can help your company understand which keywords your direct competitors are ranking well for, and which phrases they are focusing on in their searches. You can also identify the relevant topics they are not focusing on. This low hanging fruit is an oversight your competitors have delivered to you in a lovely gift basket. This is something your business can take advantage of by casting a wider keyword-rich net than your competitors.

Higher quality content

The times they are a changin'! It used to be that search results were all about keywords. Now, however search engines are sort of like a popularity contest. They are placing more emphasis on content that is truly useful -- not just well-optimized. Because of this, search engines are now giving more influence to sites that are not only keyword-rich, but well-liked. In other words, the more inbound links from other sites you have, the more chances your website has of being ranked higher.

Market research provides valuable insight into the needs of your customers. This aids the creation of quality content that customers will find valuable and be more likely to share with others via social media, external links and email.

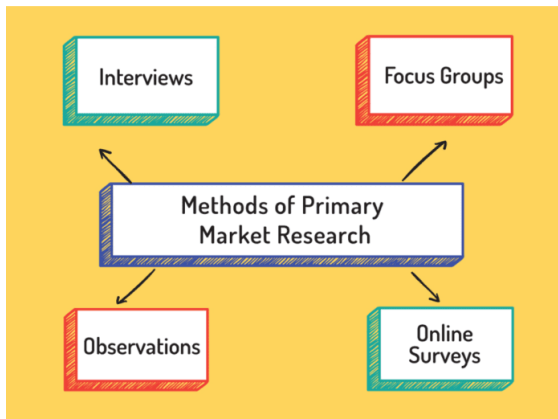
As you can see, a better understanding of your customers is critical to a successful SEO strategy. The knowledge gained from market

research will lead to more relevant keywords and higher-quality content. Not only will your search rankings go through the roof, but you'll also become a trusted source of helpful information. This builds strong relationships with your customers, and makes them more likely to not only find you online, but look for you as well.

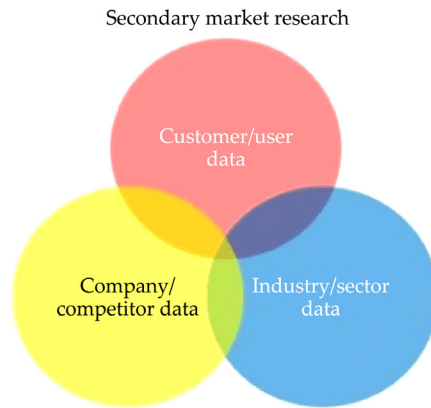
2.1.2. Demand for data scientists and types of market research for SEO

It's no wonder that the demand for data scientists is rising. As Maryville University outlines, there would be around 2.7 million jobs for the data scientists by 2020 in the US alone. This indicates the importance of market research for every industry and SEO is no exception. There are two types of market research that you can use to empower your SEO campaign:

- **Primary:** Under this research, data is obtained directly from a source and is fresh, timely and unique. Data is collected by conducting customer surveys or taking expert interviews.



- **Secondary:** Under this research, data is compiled from a previously published source. The data obtained is not absolutely fresh and is used by a number of companies. Broad industry reports published by survey companies are examples of primary market research.



2.2. KEYWORD RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Keyword research is the process of understanding the language your target customers use when searching for your products, services, and content. It then involves analyzing, comparing, and prioritizing the best keyword opportunities for your website.

2.2.1. Find Keyword Ideas

Keyword research starts with thinking about how potential customers might be searching for your business or website. You can then use keyword research tools to expand on those ideas and find even more keywords.

It's a simple process, but two things need to be true to do it well:

1. You need to have good knowledge of your industry.
2. You need to understand how keyword research tools work and how to get the most out of them.

We'll run through a few actionable ways to improve your knowledge in both those areas and discover potentially winning keywords for your website in the process.

1. Brainstorm 'seed' keywords
2. See what keywords your competitors rank for

3. Use keyword research tools
4. Study your niche

Brainstorm 'seed' keywords

Seed keywords are the foundation of the keyword research process. They define your niche and help you identify your competitors. Every keyword research tool asks for a seed keyword, which it then uses to generate a huge list of keyword ideas (more on that shortly).

If you already have a product or business that you want to promote online, coming up with seed keywords is easy. Just think about what people type into Google to find what you offer.

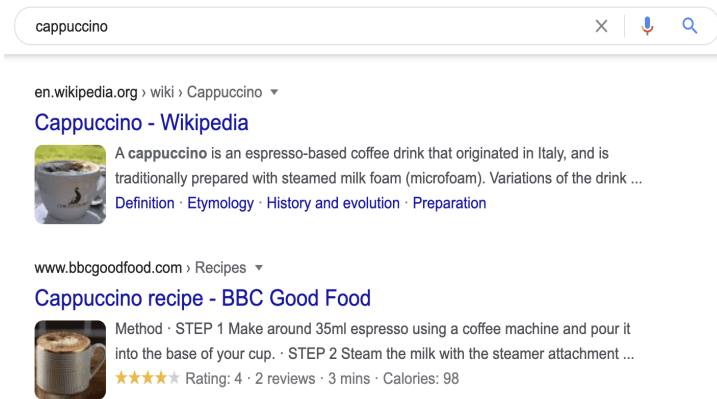
For example, if you sell coffee machines and equipment, then seed keywords might be:

- Coffee
- Espresso
- Cappuccino
- French press

Note that seed keywords themselves won't necessarily be worth targeting with pages on your website. As the name suggests, you'll use them as 'seeds' for the next steps in this process. So don't obsess too much over your seed keywords. It should only take a few minutes to find them. As soon as you have a handful of broad ideas related to your website's topic, move on to the next step.

See what keywords your competitors rank for

Looking at which keywords already send traffic to your competitors is usually the best way to start keyword research. But first, you need to identify those competitors. That's where your brainstormed list of keywords comes in handy. Just search Google for one of your seed keywords and see who ranks on the front page.



If none of the top-ranking websites for your seed keywords are like your site (or where you're trying to take it), try searching for relevant 'autosuggest' queries instead.



For example, if you sell coffee equipment, you might find more actual competitors in the search results for "cappuccino maker" than "cappuccino." That's because it's mostly ecommerce stores like yours ranking for the former, and blogs ranking for the latter.

Either way, you still need to use your best judgment when determining competing websites. If you see huge brands like Amazon or The New York Times ranking for your seed keyword, you shouldn't necessarily treat them as competitors. Always look for websites that resemble your own—or where you're trying to take it.

Once you find a few websites that fit the bill, you can plug these websites into a competitive intelligence tool like Ahrefs' Site Explorer one by one, then check the Top Pages report. You'll then see their popular pages by estimated monthly search traffic. The report also shows each page's "Top keyword." That's the one sending it the most organic traffic.

Top Pages How to use

Position Volume KD CPC Traffic from keyword Words in keyword Include Any Exclude Any target

United States 856 results Total traffic: 76,203 Export

| # | Traffic % | Value | Keywords | RD | Page URL | Top keyword | Its volume | Pos. |
|---|------------|-----------|----------|-------|--|---------------------------|------------|------|
| 1 | 34,840 46% | \$108,362 | 2,200 | 108 | www.illy.com/en-us/coffee/coffee-preparation/how-to-use-a-french-press | how to use a french press | 22,000 | 1 |
| 2 | 6,757 9% | \$11,403 | 842 | 93 | www.illy.com/en-us/coffee/coffee-preparation/how-to-make-cappuccino | cappuccino | 89,000 | 1 |
| 3 | 6,255 8% | \$8,325 | 326 | 30 | www.illy.com/en-us/coffee/coffee-preparation/how-to-make-turkish-coffee | turkish coffee | 29,000 | 1 |
| 4 | 5,269 7% | \$5,162 | 5,032 | 1,924 | www.illy.com/en-us/home | illy coffee | 14,000 | 1 |
| 5 | 3,986 5% | \$2,874 | 442 | 787 | www.illy.com/ | illy | 12,000 | 1 |
| 6 | 1,774 2% | \$2,268 | 632 | 102 | www.illy.com/en-us/shop/coffee-machines | illy espresso machine | 2,700 | 1 |
| 7 | 1,386 2% | \$638 | 256 | 10 | www.illy.com/en-us/shop/coffee-machines/moka-pots/ | moka pot | 40,000 | 7 |

Here are a few interesting keywords we discovered for our hypothetical coffee store, just by analyzing one competing website with Site Explorer:

- how to use a french press
- turkish coffee
- moka pot
- how to make coffee
- neapolitan coffee maker

As you can see, even if you're quite familiar with your industry, you can still find plenty of unique keyword ideas by studying your competitors that you probably wouldn't have found from brainstorming alone.

If you checked all the competitors in the search results but still want more keywords, you can find more competitors in the Competing Domains report in Site Explorer. Just plug in one of your known competitors, and it'll suggest other similar sites based on the number of the overlapping keywords that they rank for Google.

Competing Domains ⁱ [How to use](#)

Volume ▼ KD ▼ CPC ▼ Word count ▼

United States ▼ 47 domains

| Keywords unique to target ⁱ | Common keywords ⁱ | Common keywords, % ⁱ | Keywords unique to competitor ⁱ | Intersection graph ⁱ | Competing domains |
|--|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| 12,219 | 4,823 | 11 | 26,621 | | wholelattelove.com ▼ |
| 13,635 | 3,407 | 10 | 17,071 | | bluebottlecoffee.com ▼ |
| 14,276 | 2,766 | 10 | 12,015 | | drinktrade.com ▼ |
| 12,663 | 4,379 | 10 | 26,455 | | javapresse.com ▼ |
| 10,076 | 6,966 | 9 | 59,376 | | homegrounds.co ▼ |
| 15,174 | 1,868 | 9 | 4,698 | | realgoodcoffee.co ▼ |
| 8,740 | 8,302 | 9 | 74,406 | | roastycoffee.com ▼ |
| 15,445 | 1,597 | 8 | 3,643 | | espressozone.com ▼ |

You can repeat the process over and over for near-unlimited keyword ideas.

Use keyword research tools

Competitors can be a great source of keyword ideas. But there are still tons of keywords your competitors aren't targeting, and you can find these using keyword research tools.

Keyword research tools all work the same way. You plug in a seed keyword, and they pull keyword ideas from their database based on that keyword.

Google Keyword Planner is perhaps the most well-known keyword tool. It's free to use, and although it's mainly for advertisers, you can also use it to find keywords for SEO.

Let’s enter a few of our seed keywords and see what it kicks back:

Q

coffee, espresso, cappuccino, french press, moka pot

Broaden your search:

+ caffeine

+ beverages

+ hot beverage

+ caffair

▼

Exclude adult ideas

ADD FILTER

Showing 5,198 of 5,205 keyword ideas

| <input type="checkbox"/> Keyword (by relevance) ↓ | Avg. monthly searches | Competition |
|---|-----------------------|-------------|
| Keyword ideas | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> coffee near me | 100K – 1M | Low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> best coffee near me | 10K – 100K | Low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cafe near me | 100K – 1M | Low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> coffee shops near me | 100K – 1M | Low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> barista | 10K – 100K | Low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> latte | 10K – 100K | Low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bulletproof coffee | 100K – 1M | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> macchiato | 10K – 100K | Low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> irish coffee | 10K – 100K | Low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> americano | 10K – 100K | Low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> flat white | 10K – 100K | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> black coffee | 10K – 100K | Low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> green coffee | 1K – 10K | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> nespresso pods | 100K – 1M | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> aeropress | 10K – 100K | High |

- barista
- macchiato
- irish coffee
- americano
- flat white
- cold brew
- percolator
- turkish coffee
- arabica
- k cups
- frappuccino

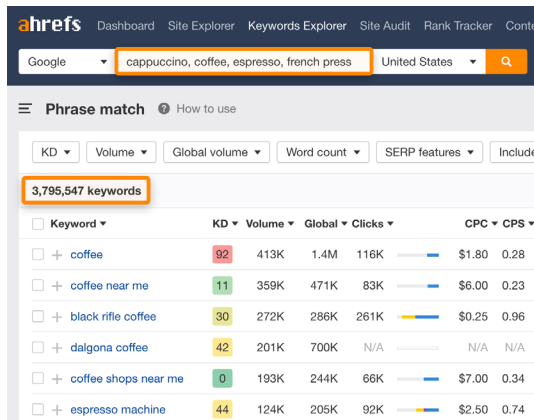
You'll notice that Google Keyword Planner is smart enough to show you relevant keyword ideas, even if they don't contain your seed keywords. Take "k cups," for example. Unless you're a hardcore coffee connoisseur, you probably wouldn't know this relates to coffee.

SIDENOTE. The "Competition" metric in Google Keyword Planner has nothing to do with SEO. It shows how many advertisers are willing to pay money to show ads in the search results for that keyword. You should pay no attention to it if you want to rank organically.

Beyond Keyword Planner, there are quite a few other free keyword research tools. These are great if you're on a budget, but you'll quickly realize that they're all very limited in their data and functionality since their goal is to convert you to a paying customer.

If you're serious about keyword research, you may as well skip the free tier and use a 'professional' tool like Ahrefs' Keywords Explorer right off the bat.

Let's enter a few of our seed keywords and see how many ideas it generates.



3.7 million ideas. And that's just from the "Phrase match" report. Other keyword ideas reports match keywords ideas in different ways.

Here's how the reports in Keywords Explorer match keyword ideas:

- **Phrase match:** Keyword ideas that contain the 'seed' keyword as is. For example, if your seed keyword is *"computer chair,"* then *"black computer chair"* would be a match. However, *"black chair for computer"* wouldn't, even though it also contains both words.
- **Having same terms:** Keyword ideas that contain all the individual terms from the 'seed' keyword in any order. For example, if your seed keyword is *"computer chair,"* then *"black chair for computer"* would appear in this report.
- **Questions:** Keyword ideas that contain each term from the 'seed' keyword in any order, plus a "question word" like "how," "what," "where," "when," or "why." For example, if your 'seed' keyword is *"computer chair,"* then *"what is the best chair for computer work"* would appear here.

Study your niche

Everything we've discussed so far is enough to generate an almost unlimited amount of keyword ideas. But at the same time, the process kind of keeps you "in the box." It's limited by your seed keywords and by the size and freshness of your chosen keyword tool's database. Because of this, you'll almost certainly miss some good ideas.

You can solve this by studying your niche in more detail. And a good starting point is to browse industry forums, groups, and Q&A sites. This will help you find more things that your prospective customers are struggling with that didn't show up in keyword tools and that none of your competitors bothered to cover.

For example, here's just one popular thread from the */r/coffee* subreddit:

↑ Posted by u/VladimirPoutinesky 8 days ago
180 ↓

when to stop the Aeropress plunge?

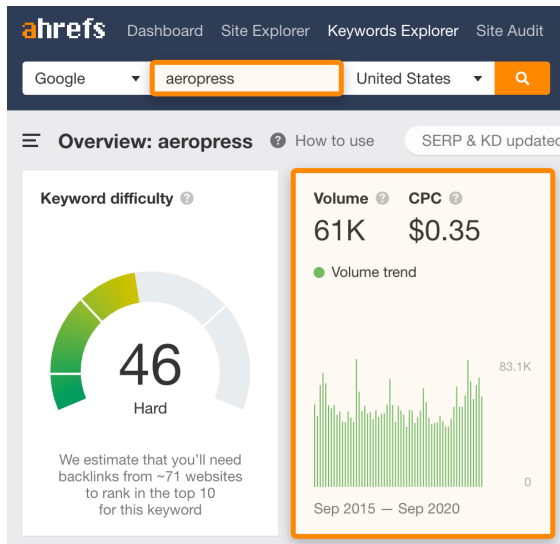
do you stop when it starts hissing, or do you push through the hiss?

edit: ok so it seems i've been doing this wrong.

edit2: or maybe not

edit3: so i just stopped at the beginning of the hiss. didn't change much in terms of taste and it was more of a PITA to clean. so im just going to keep plunging all the way down.

This person is asking a question about a coffee maker called Aeropress. If we plug that topic into Keywords Explorer, we see that it gets 61,000 monthly searches in the US, on average.



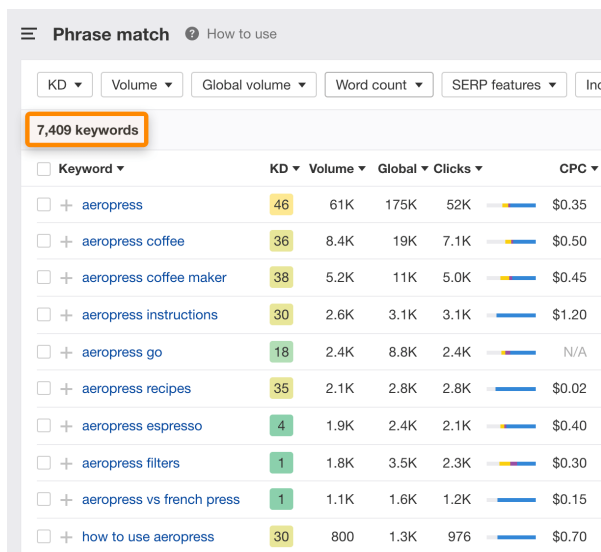
We might not have found this using tools because it doesn't include any of our seed keywords.

Here are a few other interesting topics from that subreddit that which might be worth covering:

- pour over without a hario filter
- how to make a carajillo
- growing coffee at home
- ethiopian coffee

- coffee subscriptions

If you notice any trends among these keyword ideas, you can use those as new seed keywords in Keywords Explorer to find more ideas. For example, if we use “aeropress” as a seed keyword and check the “Phrase match” report, we see thousands of keyword ideas.



| Phrase match | | | | | | |
|--|--------|---------------|------------|---------------|-----|--------|
| How to use | | | | | | |
| KD | Volume | Global volume | Word count | SERP features | Inc | |
| 7,409 keywords | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keyword | KD | Volume | Global | Clicks | | CPC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + aeropress | 46 | 61K | 175K | 52K | | \$0.35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + aeropress coffee | 36 | 8.4K | 19K | 7.1K | | \$0.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + aeropress coffee maker | 38 | 5.2K | 11K | 5.0K | | \$0.45 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + aeropress instructions | 30 | 2.6K | 3.1K | 3.1K | | \$1.20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + aeropress go | 18 | 2.4K | 8.8K | 2.4K | | N/A |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + aeropress recipes | 35 | 2.1K | 2.8K | 2.8K | | \$0.02 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + aeropress espresso | 4 | 1.9K | 2.4K | 2.1K | | \$0.40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + aeropress filters | 1 | 1.8K | 3.5K | 2.3K | | \$0.30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + aeropress vs french press | 1 | 1.1K | 1.6K | 1.2K | | \$0.15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + how to use aeropress | 30 | 800 | 1.3K | 976 | | \$0.70 |

Beyond browsing forums, your customers can also be a fantastic source of keyword ideas. Remember, these are the people you’re already doing business with. You want to attract more people like them to your site.

Here are a few ways to extract insights from clients or customers:

- Chat with them face to face
- Look through past emails
- Look through customer support requests
- Try to recall common questions that came up in past conversations

Make sure to pay attention to the language they use when doing this. It will often differ from the language you might use. For example, if you sell coffee machines online, maybe your customers search for comparisons of specific machines.

2.2.2. Analyze Keywords

Having tons of keyword ideas is all well and good. But how do you know which ones are best? After all, going through them all by hand would be a near-impossible task.

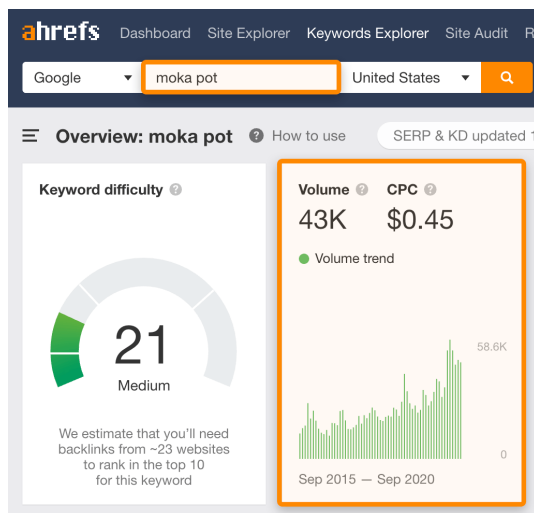
The solution is simple: Use SEO metrics to narrow things down and separate the wheat from the chaff before adding them to your content calendar.

Let's explore five keyword metrics you can use to do this.

- Search volume
- Clicks
- Traffic potential
- Keyword Difficulty
- Cost Per Click (CPC)

Search volume

Search volume tells you the average number of times a keyword gets searched per month. For example, “moka pot” has a monthly search volume of 40,000 in the US alone.



There are three important things to note about this number:

1. **It's the number of searches, not the number of people who searched.** There are cases where someone might search for a keyword multiple times a month (e.g., “weather in singapore”). These searches contribute to the search volume, even though it's the same person doing them.
2. **It doesn't tell you how much traffic you'll get by ranking.** Even if you manage to rank number one, your traffic from a keyword will rarely exceed 30% of this number. And that's if you're lucky.
3. **It's an annual average.** If there are 120k searches for a keyword in December and none for the remaining eleven months of the year, it's monthly search volume will be 10k (120k / 12 months).

In Keywords Explorer, you'll see a search volume filter in every keyword ideas report.

The screenshot shows the 'Phrase match' section of the Keywords Explorer tool. At the top, there are filters for 'KD', 'Volume', 'Global volume', 'Word count', and 'SERI'. Below these, a search volume filter is active, showing a text input with '1000' and a 'Max' button. An 'Apply' button is also visible. Below the filter, a table of keyword suggestions is displayed with columns for 'Keyword', 'KD', 'Volume', 'Global volume', and 'Clicks'.

| Keyword | KD | Volume | Global volume | Clicks |
|---|----|--------|---------------|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> + coffee | 93 | 412K | 1.4M | 111K |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + coffee near me | 4 | 360K | 472K | 83K |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + black rifle coffee | 26 | 305K | 319K | 293K |

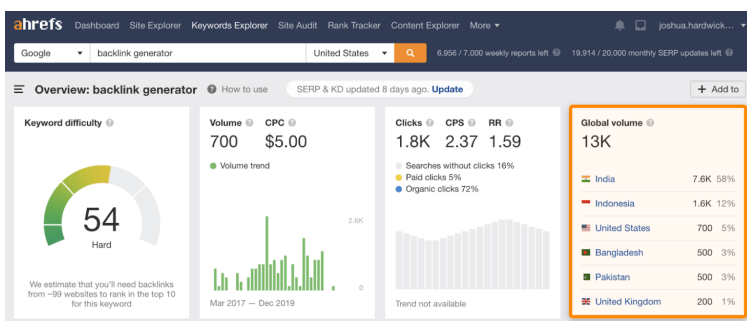
This filter is useful for two main things:

1. **Filtering out super high-volume keywords.** If your site is new, then you probably don't want to sift through pages of keywords with 100k+ monthly searches because they're likely to be competitive.
2. **Filtering specifically for lower-volume keywords.** Perhaps you want to find uncompetitive, low-volume keywords where you can easily suck up additional traffic with short articles. These are known as long-tail keywords.

If you need to see search volumes for a country other than the US, there are 171 countries in Keywords Explorer to choose from. You can also see global search volumes (the sum of search volumes from all countries). Both of these options are useful if you do business internationally for two reasons:

1. **You shouldn't limit yourself to one country.** If you sell products worldwide, then the US might only be a small segment of your market. If people are searching for what you offer elsewhere, you need to know about it.
2. **You should consider the “buying power” of countries with search volume.** Perhaps you see a promising keyword with 100k monthly searches, but 90% of them come from a country with low GDP. In this case, the keyword might not be a great target as the “buying power” of searchers is probably quite low.

For example, take a look at the keyword, “backlink generator.” It has a global search volume of 13,000, but over 70% of those searches come from countries with a low GDP per capita like India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. So even though you could probably get a lot of traffic by ranking for this keyword, the ‘business value’ of that traffic would probably be quite low compared to a keyword that gets 70%+ of its searches from the US.

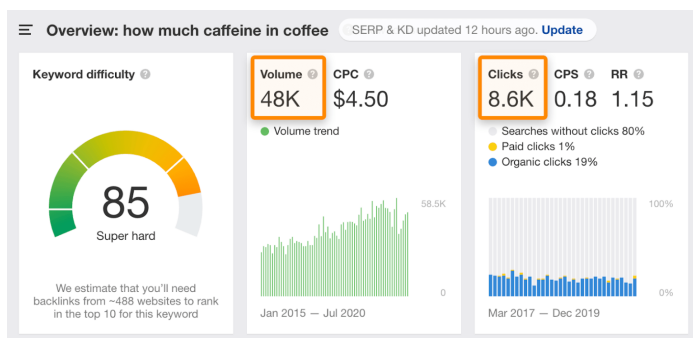


Another important thing to remember about search volumes is that they vary from tool to tool. That's because each tool calculates and updates this metric in different ways. You can read more about the intricacies of search volume estimations and why even Google's data isn't truly “accurate” here and here.

Clicks

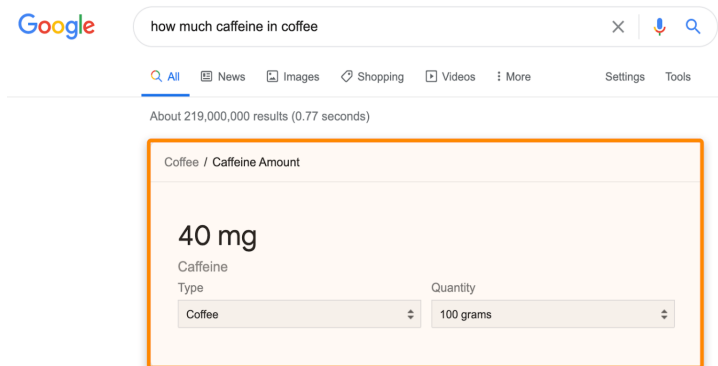
Many people might search Google for something, but that doesn't mean they all click on search results and visit the top-ranking pages. That's where the Clicks metric in Keywords Explorer comes in handy. It tells you the average number of monthly clicks on the search results for a keyword.

Just take a look at a query like "how much caffeine in coffee."



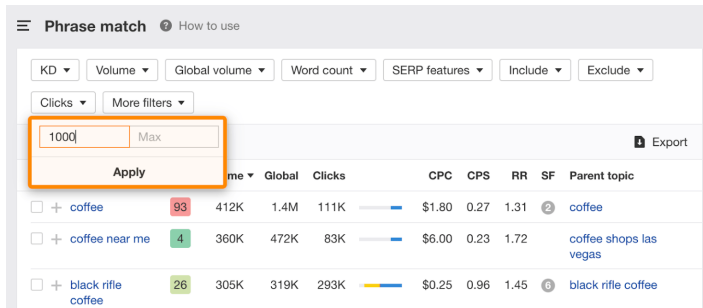
Despite having a monthly search volume of 48,000, it only gets 8,600 clicks.

That happens because Google answers the question right in the search results. There's no need for people to click to find the information they're looking for.

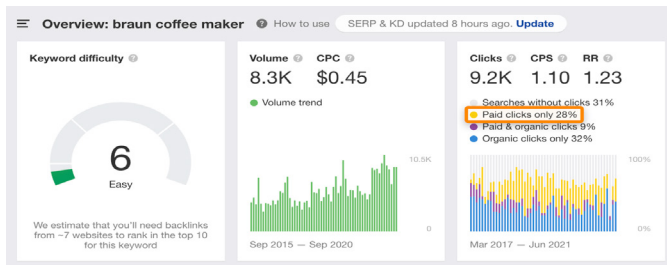


Google is providing answers in the search results for more and more queries. That's why the Clicks filter in Keywords Explorer

is so invaluable. You can use it to weed out keyword ideas with miserable search traffic potential.

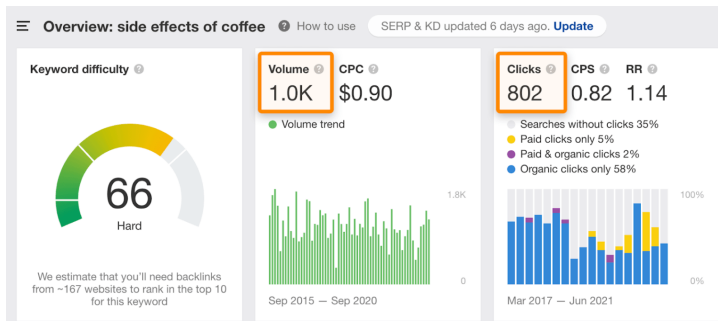


You should also be wary of keywords where paid ads “steal” lots of clicks. For example, 28% of clicks for “braun coffee maker” go to paid ads, so that keyword might be a better target for PPC.



Traffic potential

Let's say that you're considering a keyword like “side effects of coffee.” According to Keywords Explorer, this gets an estimated 1,000 searches and ~800 clicks per month.



However, keep in mind that if you rank for this keyword, your page will probably also rank for all kinds of related keywords and synonyms, like:

- what happens if you drink too much coffee — 450 monthly searches
- effects of drinking too much coffee — 200 monthly searches
- too much coffee side effects — 200 monthly searches
- side effects of drinking too much coffee — 100 monthly searches

Since all these search queries mean roughly the same thing, estimating your potential search traffic from just a single search query is a mistake. It's better to look at how much traffic the current top-ranking pages currently get, which is super easy to do in Keywords Explorer.

Here, we see that the top-ranking page for “side effects of coffee” gets an estimated ~3,500 visits per month and ranks for over 930 keywords:

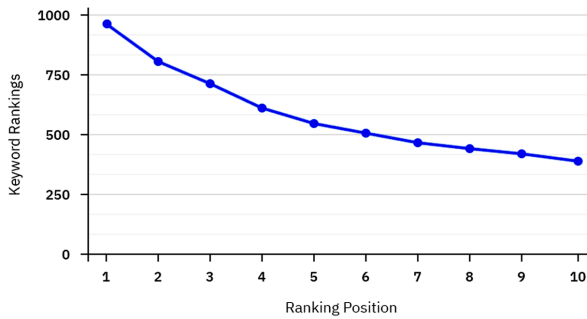
SERP overview for "side effects of coffee" ⓘ

📄 Top stories 69 Featured snippet 🖼️ Thumbnails

| Search result | AR | DR | UR | Backlinks | Domains | Traffic | Keywords |
|--|-----|----|----|-----------|---------|---------|----------|
| 1 Featured Snippet Coffee: Uses, Side Effects, Interactions, Dosage, and Warning https://www.webmd.com/vitamins/ai/ingredientmono-980/coffee#:~:text=When taken by mouth: Coffee,rate, and other side effects. ▼ | 286 | 92 | 43 | 576 | 249 | 3,553 | 932 |
| 2 9 Side Effects of Too Much Caffeine - Healthline https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/caffeine-side-effects ▼ | 433 | 91 | 50 | 1,239 | 625 | 9,819 | 863 |

Ranking for more than one keyword like this is quite the norm. We studied three million search queries and found that the average top-ranking page ranks in the top 10 for almost 1,000 other keywords.

The Average Number of Top 10 Keyword Rankings for First-Page Results



| Position in Google | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Keywords | 957 | 790 | 694 | 629 | 569 | 511 | 473 | 439 | 402 | 379 |

The moral of the story? Don't judge keywords on their Search volume (or Clicks) alone. Look at the top-ranking results to estimate the total search traffic potential of the topic. In most cases, the search volume of a keyword will indeed correlate with the topic's overall 'traffic potential'. However, being attentive to this detail will help you prioritize your keywords and find keyword opportunities that your competitors have overlooked.

Keyword Difficulty

SEO professionals typically gauge the ranking difficulty of a keyword manually. That is, by looking at the top-ranking pages for their target keyword. They account for many different factors to judge how hard or easy it'll be to rank:

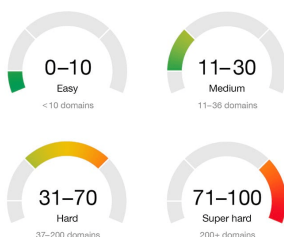
- Number (and quality) of backlinks;
- Domain Rating (DR);
- Content length, relevance, freshness;
- Use of the target keyword, synonyms, entities;
- Search intent;
- Branding;
- etc.

This process varies from person to person, as there's no consensus on precisely what is and isn't important here. One person might believe that DR is important, and another might think that relevance plays more of a role. This lack of consensus makes life a little difficult for keyword research tool creators, as they each try to distill the ranking difficulty of keywords down to a single actionable score.

After talking to many professional SEOs about the signals that a reliable Keyword Difficulty score should factor in, we realized that everyone agreed on at least one thing: backlinks are crucial for ranking. So, in the end, we decided to base our Keyword Difficulty (KD) score on the number of unique websites linking to the top 10 ranking pages.

Ahrefs' Keyword Difficulty Scale

How many referring domains you'll need
to rank in Top10 for a keyword



As you can see in the image each KD score relates to an approximate number of websites that should link to your page for it to get to the top 10 search results.

SIDENOTE. Please don't miss the "top 10" reference in the explanation. Ahrefs' KD score does not tell you what it'll take to rank #1 for a given keyword. It merely advises you on what it should take to get into the top 10.

Knowing how KD works, many people misuse the score by setting the filter from 0 to 30 and focusing solely on the "low-hanging" opportunities. They never bother to cover high-KD keywords on their websites, and that's a big mistake for two reasons:

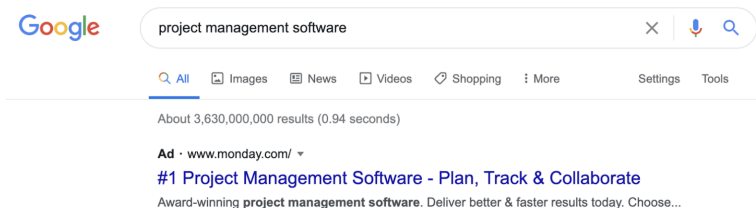
1. **You should go after high-KD keywords sooner, not later.** As you'll need lots of backlinks to rank, it pays to create your page and begin promoting it as soon as possible. The longer you delay, the bigger headstart you give your competitors—making it harder to outrank them in the future.
2. **You should see high-KD keywords as link opportunities.** The fact that the top-ranking pages have lots of backlinks is a sign of a 'link-worthy' topic. In other words, if you nail this topic, it might attract a lot of backlinks for you.

The bottom line is this: KD is not there to deter you from targeting specific keywords. It's there to help you understand what it'll take to rank for a given query and the 'link-worthiness' of the topic.

Just know that you should always manually assess keywords before going after them and not rely solely on any tools' keyword difficulty score to make your final decision. No keyword difficulty score can distill the complexity of Google's ranking algorithm into a single number. Be wary of tool creators that suggest otherwise.

Cost Per Click (CPC)

Cost Per Click (CPC) shows how much advertisers are willing to pay for each ad click from a keyword. It's more a metric for advertisers than SEOs, but it can serve as a useful proxy for a keyword's value.



For example, the keyword "office coffee" has a relatively high CPC of \$12. That's because most searchers are looking to buy coffee machines for their office, which can cost hundreds or

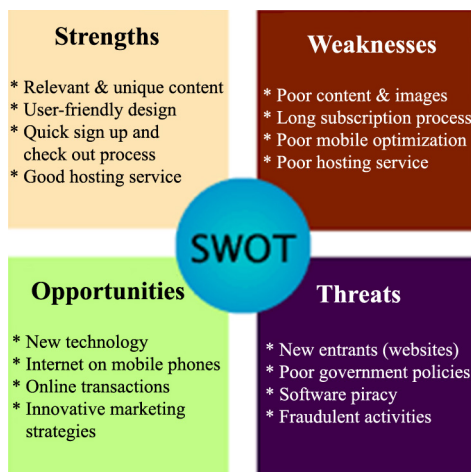
thousands of dollars. But it's the opposite story for "how to make good espresso." That's because most searchers aren't looking to buy anything. They're looking for information on how to brew espresso.

| <input type="checkbox"/> Keyword | KD | Volume ▾ | Global | Clicks | CPC |
|--|----|----------|--------|--------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> + office coffee | 4 | 250 | 1.2K | 112 | \$12.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> + how to make good espresso | 15 | 100 | 150 | N/A | \$0.00 |

However, one important thing to know about CPC is that it's much more volatile than Search volume. While search demand for most keywords stays roughly the same from month to month, its CPC can change any minute. That means that the CPC values you see in third-party keyword tools are snapshots in time. If you want real-time data, you'll have to use AdWords.

2.3. SWOT ANALYSIS OF WEBSITE

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. These are the four factors used by organizations to evaluate their business and viability as an enterprise. In a similar way, these factors can be used to evaluate the current and future growth of a website.



Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors which are under the control of an organization. Opportunities and threats are the external factors which are beyond the control of an organization. After the SWOT analysis, you can find the strengths and weaknesses of your website as well as the opportunities and threats to your website.

The SWOT analysis starts with setting specific goals and objectives for your website. These objectives or goals should be measurable and realistic, i.e. increasing profit by 10% in the coming year, increasing click-through rate by 15%, decreasing shopping cart dropping rate by 5%, etc. After you identify your objectives and goals you can start with the following steps of SWOT analysis.

2.3.1. Strengths

It refers to the advantages that are not present in the sites of your competitors. These are competitive advantages that help your website gain a competitive edge over other similar sites, e.g. relevant and unique content, user-friendly design and quick sign up and check out process, etc. can be the strengths of your website.

2.3.2. Weaknesses

It refers to the features of your website that slow down your progress or prevent you from achieving your objectives and goals. To identify your website weaknesses you can compare a feature of your website with the same feature of competitor website. If your competitor executes this feature better than you then consider this feature as your weakness which should be improved.

2.3.3. Opportunities

It refers to the external elements which can help you improve your website performance and popularity. These elements are beyond your control and if exploited wisely can help you achieve your

objectives and goals. Some of the common opportunities for the websites are new technology to improve visitor experience, web 2.0 trend focused on social networking, internet on mobile phones, online transactions, innovative marketing strategies, etc.

2.3.4. Threats

It refers to external factors that may prevent a site from achieving its objectives and goals. These factors are beyond your control and if you ignore these threats your website can't make progress. Some of the common threats to a website include new entrants (websites), software piracy, unfavorable government regulations, changing customer needs, competitors imitating your ideas and features, fraudulent activities, etc.

2.4. TOOLS AVAILABLE FOR KEYWORD RESEARCH

Keyword research is a crucial element of modern SEO. Whether you're kick-starting an old blog or developing your content strategy for a new one; good quality keywords are one of the most efficient ways to attract consistent, quality traffic to your site. We've compiled a list of some of the best keyword research tools to help you conquer your content.

2.4.1. Keyword Research Tools

SEMrush

SEMrush is not just a keyword tool, it is like the Swiss Army Knife of SEO. Instead of producing a list of keywords, SEMrush suggests 5-10 very specific keywords that your competitors are already using.

Standout features

- Uncover long-tail keywords and ad group ideas
- Get yearly keyword trends
- Worldwide CPC distribution statistics
- Access to the complete keyword research toolkit
- Keyword difficulty analysis and organic traffic insights

KWFinder

KWFinder is a tool designed by Mangools – a developer known for delivering the best keyword research tools across categories. You can use their beginner guide to get started.

The KWFinder platform makes it easy to find keywords with low SEO difficulty, along with a whole host of other useful features.

Standout features

- A unique and easy to navigate user interface
- Find keywords in any language target, anywhere
- Choose options from the list of powerful keywords
- Get precise statistics for keyword competition
- In-depth SERP overview alongside a list of suggestions
- Use filters to refine the list of keyword suggestions

Ahrefs Keyword Explorer

Ahrefs is one of the best keyword research tools available for content creators today. The platform provides a broad keyword report to the user and relies on clickstream data to provide unique click metrics.

Standout features

- Accurate keyword difficulty score
- 1,000+ keyword suggestions
- Supported in over 171 countries
- Click metrics for improving CTR
- Extensive SERP overview

Google Keyword Planner

Google Keyword Planner is a simple keyword tool option serving up a few basic features. Despite the lack of functionality, however, it's one of the most accurate sources of keyword data on the market. The data comes directly from Google and the results integrate well with AdSense monetization.

Standout features

- Locate commercial keywords using "top of page" bid range
- Accurate search volume directly from Google's search engine
- Best choice for business websites

Growth Bar

Growth Bar is great for those who are in a hurry, and want ranking difficulty and keyword suggestions to appear along with their search results. All you have to do is type in the keyword you want to target, and Growth Bar will show you specifics about your future competitors.

Standout features

- Keyword rank tracking
- Accurate ranking difficulty
- Long tail keyword suggestions
- Exportable keyword data
- On-page word count

Long Tail Pro

It's no secret that long-tail keywords are the new standard of SEO. Long Tail Pro keyword tool generates long-tail keywords for niche sites and has even found a cult following with content producers for micro-niche sites.

Standout features

- Powerful, detailed keyword metrics
- Easily find long-tail keywords
- Provides recommendations for attracting highly convertible organic traffic
- 2,500+ SERP lookups every 24 hours

Majestic

Majestic is an all-in-one SEO tool to keep a track of your site's health. It's an ideal tool for new blogs and small businesses that don't have the resources to invest a lot of complicated support for search engine optimization.

Standout features

- All SEO features are available in a single toolkit
- Find easy-to-target phrases
- Research competition on each keyword
- Trustworthiness vs. authority graph for website analysis

Keyword Tool

If you're obsessed with keyword data mining, try Keyword Tool. The platform is regarded as one of the top keyword research tools on the market and offers analysis for multiple search engines including Google, YouTube, Bing, Amazon, and the App Store.

Standout features

- Find great keywords using Google Autocomplete
- Supplement your social media marketing with Instagram and Twitter keyword analysis
- Export results to CSV
- Simple UX for beginners

Serpstat

If you're searching for a full SEO suite, Serpstat is an excellent option which combines website analytics, keyword research tool, SERP analysis, backlink analysis, a rank tracker, and website audit features. It's an all-in-one solution meant to streamline the entire category of SEO.

Standout features

- Know your competition using the competitor graph feature
- Find keyword difficulty and keyword trends
- The most budget-friendly option on our list

Moz Keyword Explorer

The Moz Keyword Explorer serves up easy to use, out-of-the-box keyword recommendations. Moz's SEO tool boasts all the features you'd expect from the very best keyword research tools, plus two very unique data points.

Organic CTR score – This click-through rate demonstrates the number of clicks you're expected to attract on page 1 of Google.

Priority score – The priority score is a mixture of all the individual factors a typical tool uses to suggest keyword options. It combines data on CTR, search volume, and keyword difficulty to help you select the best terms for your project.

Standout features

- Get related keyword suggestions
- Organic CTR and Priority score for smart targeting
- Moz offers a one month trial period

SpyFu

SpyFu is the #1 choice for analyzing your competitors' SEO strategies. Their keyword tool uncovers valuable, virtually untapped keywords and makes a huge difference if you're working in a highly saturated niche.

Standout features

- Compare different websites competing for a single search term
- Discover ranking difficulty and historical rank changes
- Additional modules for in-depth domain analysis

2.5. SEARCH ENGINE ALGORITHMS

SEO is a marketing discipline focused on growing visibility in organic (non-paid) search engine results. SEO encompasses both the technical and creative elements required to improve rankings, drive traffic, and increase awareness in search engines. There are many aspects to SEO, from the words on your page to the way other sites link to you on the web. Sometimes SEO is simply a matter of making sure your site is structured in a way that search engines understand. SEO isn't just about building search engine-friendly websites. It's about making your site better for people too. The main objective for creating a website by any company is to make aware of about the company and its products / services. For this, Internet marketing plays an important role in driving the visitors to site using SEO techniques. Now, it becomes essential that the site should be listed in the top pages of the search engines and upbeat the competitor's site.

The process of getting search engines to pay attention to your web site requires specific, personalized service. To achieve this, proper SEO tools and techniques are applied to the site to achieve higher rankings and make site search engine friendly. Although the basic principle of operation of all search engines is the same, the minor differences between them lead to major changes in results relevancy. For different search engines different factors are important. There were times, when SEO experts joked that the algorithms of Bing are intentionally made just the opposite of those of Google. While this might have a grain of truth, it is a matter a fact that the major search engines like different stuff and if you plan to conquer more than one of them, you need to optimize carefully. There are many examples of the differences between search engines. For instance, for Yahoo! and Bing, on-page keyword factors are of primary importance, while for Google links are very, very important. Also, for Google sites are like wine – the older, the better, while Yahoo! generally has no expressed preference towards sites and domains with tradition (i.e. older ones). Thus you might need more time till your site gets mature to be admitted to the top in Google, than in Yahoo!

2.5.1. Search Engine Works

The first basic truth you need to know to learn SEO is that search engines are not humans. While this might be obvious for everybody, the differences between how humans and search engines view web pages aren't. Unlike humans, search engines are text-driven. Although technology advances rapidly, search engines are far from intelligent creatures that can feel the beauty of a cool design or enjoy the sounds and movement in movies. Instead, search engines crawl the Web, looking at particular site items (mainly text) to get an idea what a site is about. This brief explanation is not the most precise because as we will see next, search engines perform several activities in order to deliver search results – crawling, indexing, processing, calculating relevancy, and retrieving.

First, search engines crawl the Web to see what is there. This task is performed by a piece of software, called a crawler or a spider (or Google bot, as is the case with Google). Spiders follow links from one page to another and index everything they find on their way. Having in mind the number of pages on the Web (over 20 billion), it is impossible for a spider to visit a site daily just to see if a new page has appeared or if an existing page has been modified, sometimes crawlers may not end up visiting your site for a month or two. What we can do is to check what a crawler sees from our site. As already mentioned, crawlers are not humans and they do not see images, Flash movies, JavaScript, frames, password-protected pages and directories, so if you have tons of these on your site, you'd better run the Spider Simulator below to see if these goodies are viewable by the spider. If they are not viewable, they will not be spidered, not indexed, not processed, etc. - in a word they will be non-existent for search engines. After a page is crawled, the next step is to index its content. The indexed page is stored in a giant database, from where it can later be retrieved. Essentially, the process of indexing is identifying the words and expressions that best describe the page and assigning the page to particular keywords. For a human it will not be possible to process such amounts of information but generally search engines

deal just fine with this task. Sometimes they might not get the meaning of a page right but if you help them by optimizing it, it will be easier for them to classify your pages correctly and for you – to get higher rankings. When a search request comes, the search engine processes it – i.e. it compares the search string in the search request with the indexed pages in the database. Since it is likely that more than one page (practically it is millions of pages) contains the search string, the search engine starts calculating the relevancy of each of the pages in its index with the search string. There are various algorithms to calculate relevancy.

Each of these algorithms has different relative weights for common factors like keyword density, links, or met tags. That is why different search engines give different search results pages for the same search string.

What is more, it is a known fact that all major search engines, like Yahoo!, Google, Bing, etc. periodically change their algorithms and if you want to keep at the top, you also need to adapt your pages to the latest changes. This is one reason (the other is your competitors) to devote permanent efforts to SEO, if you'd like to be at the top.

The last step in search engines' activity is retrieving the results. Basically, it is nothing more than simply displaying them in the browser – i.e. the endless pages of search results that are sorted from the most relevant to the least relevant sites.

2.5.2. SEO Contents for Search Engines

SEO no longer means scattering keywords like Hansel and Gretel throwing breadcrumbs. The newest search engines scan pages almost as your readers might. Jakob Nielsen, a researcher and expert in human-machine interaction at the Technical University of Copenhagen, found that almost 80 percent of a web site's visitors scanned the page rather than reading it line by line.

They spent their first fractions of a second on the page deciding if it was worth their time. Search engine programmers still use

this research to devise algorithms that provide more organic and meaningful rankings. The same things that catch a visitor's eye will get a search engine's attention. The upper left corner of the page is the most valuable real estate on the page, as it's where a reader's eyes go first. Put important text there so search engines and people will see it immediately.

It's also a good spot for boxed text and itemized lists, both of which appeal equally to carbon-based and silicon-based brains. Bold text makes people and machines notice, but use those tags judiciously. Too much bold text looks like an advertisement and will cause search engines to devalue your site.

Italic text bold HTML tags should surround meaningful concepts, not emphasis words. Bolding a "very" or italicizing a "more" means nothing to a search engine, so apply those tags to important concepts and sub-headings. Searches now look for associated terms and relevant phrases, not just keywords. A person picks up meaning from context and readily distinguishes the term "clipping" as it applies to hair from the same word as it refers to film stock or video game graphics. Let your visitors -- human and machine -- know whether you're talking about German shepherds as a dog breed or as an exciting career in European wool and mutton. In your SEO text, include synonyms and relevant terms to let search engines recognize the purpose of your site. Happily, there's a way to work these terms into our content without monitoring keyword and key phrase percentages: simply write the kind of engaging copy that people like to read..

2.5.3. SEO success factors

There are three major groups covered by Search Engine Land's Periodic Table of SEO Success Factors:

- On-The-Page SEO
- Off-The-Page SEO
- Violations

These subgroups contain one or more individual SEO factors with a specific weight or importance. Violations, while a group unto themselves, are displayed under the group and subgroup to which they’re associated.

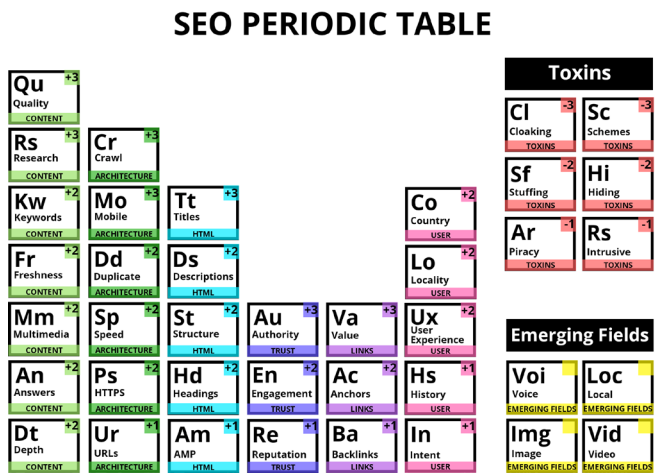


Figure 1. SEO factors Periodic Table.

Those two letter acronyms you see on the chart? That’s our play on the periodic table of elements and the letter representations, or symbol, of each element. You may have had to remember that the symbol for gold was Au or that iron’s was Fe. In the Periodic Table of SEO, we’ve tried to make it slightly more intuitive. The first letter of each “SEO element” comes from the subgroup that it’s in and the second letter stands for the individual factor.

2.5.4. SEO Search Marketing Landscape

No single SEO factor will guarantee search engine rankings. Having a great HTML title won’t help if a page has low quality content. Having many links won’t help if they are all low in quality. Having several positive factors can increase the odds of success while the presence of negative factors can worsen those odds.

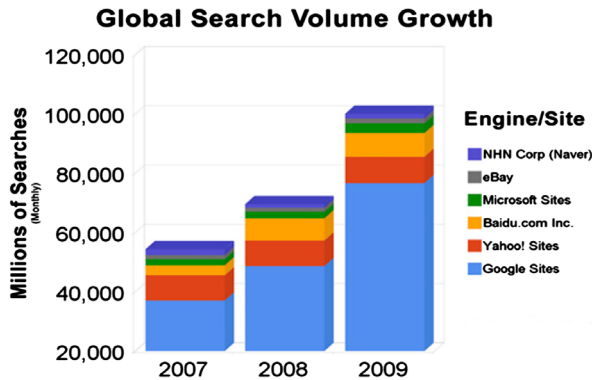


Figure 2. SEO Volume Growth up to 2009.

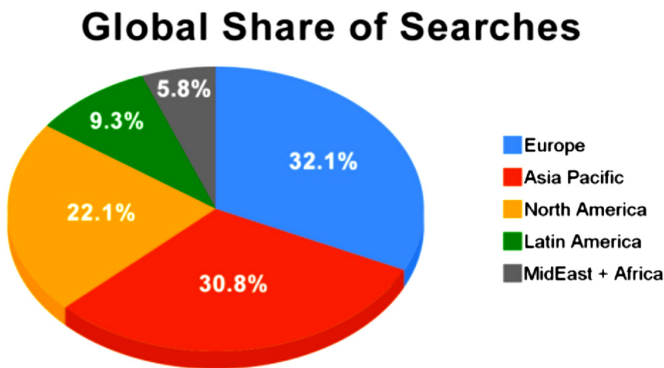


Figure 3. Searches History.

To avoid undesirable content in the search indexes, webmasters can instruct spiders not to crawl certain files or directories through the standard robots.txt file in the root directory of the domain. Additionally, a page can be explicitly excluded from a search engine's database by using a meta tag specific to robots. When a search engine visits a site, the robots.txt located in the root directory is the first file crawled. The robots.txt file is then parsed, and will instruct the robot as to which pages are not to be crawled. As a search engine crawler may keep a cached copy of this file, it may on occasion crawl pages a webmaster does not wish crawled. Pages typically prevented from being crawled include login specific pages such as shopping carts and user-specific content such as search results from internal searches.

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CHAPTER

3

SEO REPORTING

INTRODUCTION

SEO reports give an overview of how a website is performing in search engines. Their focus is typically on domain metrics, organic traffic, and rankings. But they also highlight any work done by the SEO agency or freelancer.

Good SEO is based on planning and actually doing the work day in, day out. An SEO report is the analysis of this planning and work combo, in order to see the effects produced.

It goes without saying really: without analyzing your work, how do you know it's working?

But an SEO report isn't just for your benefit, primarily it's for your clients.

Without the client being sat next to you while you work, they are going to have no way of knowing what you are doing.



Usually, the report is the only way they will be able to see the work you are doing (or the effects of it at least). So an easy to digest report allows clients to vet your work and justify why they keep paying you.

An effective SEO report conveys three things:

- **Progress:** Not only is this the knowledge you are giving the client (why they hired you), the report should also show progress. E.g. How much you have grown their site that month? And how have you moved the needle since the last report?
- **Insights:** Your knowledge of things that apply directly to your client, specifically: highlighting issues and areas that still need work over the upcoming months.
- **Recommendations:** What you would recommend the client do to reach their goals?

Your client wants to see how their money is being spent. They want to understand the work being done on their site. And they want to track progress.

3.1 DEVELOPMENT OF SEO REPORTING

A quality SEO reporting tool is a necessary investment for any digital agency, large or small. For one, clients are going to want to see evidence of progress. It's a whole lot easier to have an automated report with all important key performance indicators (KPIs) delivered on a scheduled basis, rather than manually assembling and cross-referencing data points at the last minute.

Additionally, good SEO reporting software will give you the information you need to flag action items, see the results of experiments, and ultimately run a successful SEO campaign.

There are hundreds of SEO reporting tools on the market, each with its own benefits and drawbacks.

Agency Analytics, SEMrush, Moz, Google Data Studio, Authority Labs, and SE Ranking are just a handful of the resources available to agencies.

Similar to the adage in real estate – pick any two of location, price, or size – as an agency you must weigh the balance of price, features, and ease of use.

For instance Google Data Studio is free and comes jam-packed with rare features like database integration, but there is a steep learning curve.

3.1.1 Google Analysis

There are lots of great tools for helping you with SEO – from researching keywords, to understanding what your competitors are doing and reporting on your website's movement in search results, but you absolutely need be using Google Analytics to understand what's actually working once people find their way to your website. And you can even use Google Analytics for additional insights to tweak your SEO and content strategy.



1. **Not provided custom report :-** The first thing you'll need to overcome is 'not provided' when it comes to understanding the performance of your SEO efforts. If you're not familiar with 'not provided', it basically tells you that someone came from a secure organic search, as individual keywords are kept hidden from Google Analytics (or any analytics tool for that matter).

Now when you perform a search you'll still be on the secure version of Google. If you then click on an organic result through to your website, Google will not send the individual keyword used through to your website (and therefore not to your analytics tool either).

You do get to see the total number of people coming from organic Google searches, but you don't get to see the keywords – instead you'll see 'not provided'.

2. **Segments:-** Segments are a powerful way to understand how your SEO traffic is performing after they land on your website. It allows you to see exactly what people are up to!

The default segment applied to your Google Analytics reports are 'All Users' which will mean absolutely everybody is included in your reports. You can click on 'All Users' at the top of your reports to modify which segment (or segments) are being applied.

3. **Acquisition reports :-** The Acquisition reports are a staple. They allow you to quickly compare your SEO traffic to the other ways people are finding your website. Here we can see how important organic traffic is for the website.
4. **Pages report (and landing pages) :-** Since our SEO efforts are focused on highly engaging content for our audience the Behavior reports provide valuable insights into what's working (and what's not working) when it comes to acquiring audience members, engaging them and converting them into leads and customers.

The 'All Pages' report shows you the content people are viewing on your website. You'll notice that the report is ordered by 'Page views' which means your most popular content is at the top of the report. Another useful metric is 'Page Value' on the right of the report – this uses goal conversion data to establish which pieces of content create value.



5. **Referrals report :-** The referrals report shows you website that are linking to your content. Building links can be an important part of SEO, so seeing how people are currently linking to your website can help you identify additional opportunities to create content.

Take some time to browse through the different websites that are linking to you. Clicking on each individual referring website will allow you to see the individual pages that are linking – it can be useful to open each of these pages to see how people are linking and what they're saying about your brand.

6. **Duplicate page titles :-** Ideally, each page on your website has a unique page title, but this isn't always the case as it's really common to use a generic page title for more than one URL on a website. Google Analytics can help you identify URLs that use the same page title.

To find duplicate page titles navigate to the 'All Pages' report (under 'Behavior' and then 'Site Content'). Then select 'Page Title'. You'll see the the page titles of all of your website content in the report.

7. **Search Console reports:-** The Google Search Console reports allow you to understand how people are finding your website inside Google search results. To use the reports you'll need to link Google Search Console with Google Analytics (this is generally really simple), to do this head to 'Admin' and select 'All Products' under 'Product Linking' and then follow the steps to link Google Search Console.

Once you're done you'll find the Search Console reports available directly within Google Analytics. The reports include:

- **Landing Pages** which show you the pages people are finding in Google search results. The data includes impressions, clicks, CTR (Click-through Rate) and average position (along with some metrics from your Google Analytics tracking code).
- **Countries** reports on where your website is being seen and engagement broken out by country. For example, you can see the CTR for each country to identify places where your content is more relevant than others.
- **Devices** shows you a breakdown by mobile, tablet and desktop devices. This allows you to see how you perform on each of the devices. You can click on a particular device for a more granular view of the landing pages and the keywords (search queries) people are using on each device.
- **Queries** show you the keywords people are searching for on Google to find your website.



9. **Geographic report :-** For localized businesses SEO is all about where people are located and making sure you're visible when your target audience is nearby. The geographic reports allow you to understand how you're performing compared to these target audience members.

Apply the Non-Organic Traffic segment and compare it to the Organic Traffic segment to compare performance. Look for the 'low hanging fruit' where there is a big difference between the segments. This can help you identify areas that need additional work in your SEO efforts.

Using the geographic report you might identify other regions to target and in some cases an opportunity to target different languages (using the 'Language' report).

10. **Site Search report:-** If you have an option for people to search within your website, then you can make use of the Site Search reports. These can provide really valuable insights because they show you what your existing audience members are actively looking for – which means you can give it to them!

You'll need to configure the Site Search reports before you get started and then you'll be able to head to 'Behavior', then 'Site Search' and 'Search Terms' to see what people are searching. Spend some time going through the report and look for keywords that can be used to inspire new content on your website.

Taking the time to create new content around appropriate keywords will mean that you'll be delivering a better experience for your existing audience (the people searching) and you're also likely to see some SEO benefit from the new content too.

11. **Bounce rate :-** Bounce rate is an overall health metric that is especially useful when you're looking after SEO. It tells you how 'sticky' (or engaging) your content is and if people travel deeper into your website or if they abandon from the landing page.

Bounce rate is calculated by dividing the number of single-page sessions by the total number of sessions. For example, if you only had two people come to your website and one viewed a single page and another viewed two pages you would have 1 single page session and a total of 2 sessions. This means your bounce rate would be 50%.

In most cases you'll want to aim to decrease your bounce rate which also indicates that people are more engaged with your website. If you head back to Custom Report we covered previously, you'll notice that the report includes bounce rate.

3.1.2 Tracking and Reporting

While it's common to have multiple goals (both macro and micro), establishing one specific primary end goal is essential.

The only way to know what a website's primary end goal should be is to have a strong understanding of the website's goals and/or client needs. Good client questions are not only helpful in strategically directing your efforts, but they also show that you care.

Client question examples:

1. Can you give us a brief history of your company?
2. What is the monetary value of a newly qualified lead?
3. What are your most profitable services/products (in order)?



Keep the following tips in mind while establishing a website's primary goal, additional goals, and benchmarks:

Goal setting tips

- **Measurable:** If you can't track it, you can't improve it.
- **Be specific:** Don't let vague industry marketing jargon water down your goals.
- **Share your goals:** Studies have shown that writing down and sharing your goals with others boosts your chances of achieving them.

Measuring

Now that you've set your primary goal, evaluate which additional metrics could help support your site in reaching its end goal. Measuring additional (applicable) benchmarks can help you keep a better pulse on current site health and progress.

Engagement metrics

How are people behaving once they reach your site? That's the question that engagement metrics seek to answer. Some of the most popular metrics for measuring how people engage with your content include:

Conversion rate

The number of conversions (for a single desired action/goal) divided by the number of unique visits. A conversion rate can be applied to anything, from an email signup to a purchase to account creation. Knowing your conversion rate can help you gauge the return on investment (ROI) your website traffic might deliver.

Time on page: How long did people spend on your page? If you have a 2,000-word blog post that visitors are only spending an average of 10 seconds on, the chances are slim that this content is being consumed (unless they're a mega-speed reader). However, if a URL has a low time on page, that's not necessarily bad either. Consider the intent of the page. For example, it's normal for "Contact Us" pages to have a low average time on page.



Pages per visit: Was the goal of your page to keep readers engaged and take them to a next step? If so, then pages per visit can be a valuable engagement metric. If the goal of your page is independent of other pages on your site (ex: visitor came, got what they needed, then left), then low pages per visit are okay.

Bounce rate: "Bounced" sessions indicate that a searcher visited the page and left without browsing your site any further. Many people try to lower this metric because they believe it's tied to website quality, but it actually tells us very little about a user's experience. We've seen cases of bounce rate spiking for redesigned

restaurant websites that are doing better than ever. Further investigation discovered that people were simply coming to find business hours, menus, or an address, then bouncing with the intention of visiting the restaurant in person. A better metric to gauge page/site quality is scroll depth.

Scroll depth: This measures how far visitors scroll down individual webpages. Are visitors reaching your important content? If not, test different ways of providing the most important content higher up on your page, such as multimedia, contact forms, and so on. Also consider the quality of your content. Are you omitting needless words? Is it enticing for the visitor to continue down the page? Scroll depth tracking can be set up in your Google Analytics.

In Google Analytics, you can set up goals to measure how well your site accomplishes its objectives. If your objective for a page is a form fill, you can set that up as a goal. When site visitors accomplish the task, you'll be able to see it in your reports.

Search traffic

Ranking is a valuable SEO metric, but measuring your site's organic performance can't stop there. The goal of showing up in search is to be chosen by searchers as the answer to their query. If you're ranking but not getting any traffic, you have a problem.

But how do you even determine how much traffic your site is getting from search? One of the most precise ways to do this is with Google Analytics.

Using Google Analytics to uncover traffic insights

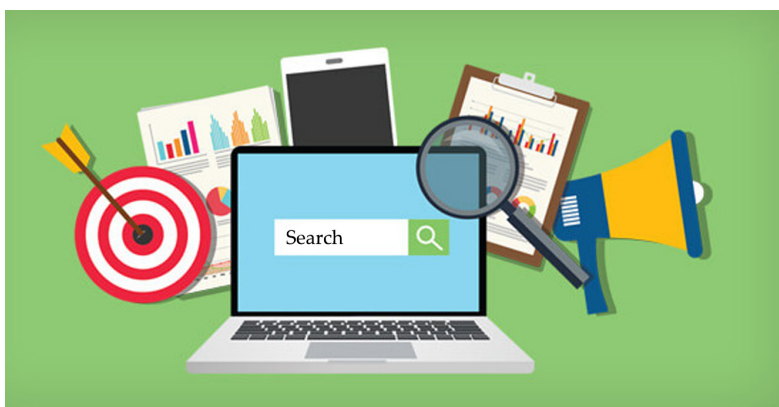
Google Analytics (GA) is bursting at the seams with data — so much so that it can be overwhelming if you don't know where to look. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a general guide to some of the traffic data you can glean from this free tool.

Isolate organic traffic: GA allows you to view traffic to your site by channel. This will mitigate any scares caused by changes to

another channel (ex: total traffic dropped because a paid campaign was halted, but organic traffic remained steady).

Traffic to your site over time: GA allows you to view total sessions/users/page views to your site over a specified date range, as well as compare two separate ranges.

How many visits a particular page has received: Site Content reports in GA are great for evaluating the performance of a particular page — for example, how many unique visitors it received within a given date range.



Traffic from a specified campaign: You can use UTM (urchin tracking module) codes for better attribution. Designate the source, medium, and campaign, then append the codes to the end of your URLs. When people start clicking on your UTM-code links that data will start to populate in GA's "campaigns" report.

Click-through rate (CTR): Your CTR from search results to a particular page (meaning the percent of people that clicked your page from search results) can provide insights on how well you've optimized your page title and meta description. You can find this data in Google Search Console, a free Google tool.

In addition, Google Tag Manager is a free tool that allows you to manage and deploy tracking pixels to your website without having to modify the code. This makes it much easier to track specific triggers or activity on a website.

3.1.3 Reports Submission

An SEO audit helps you evaluate the current state of the client's site and create a roadmap for improvements. You can see where the client is succeeding, failing, and making mistakes. And in the process, you get the information you need to create a client-facing document that describes problems and what you will do to fix them.

Determine your objective

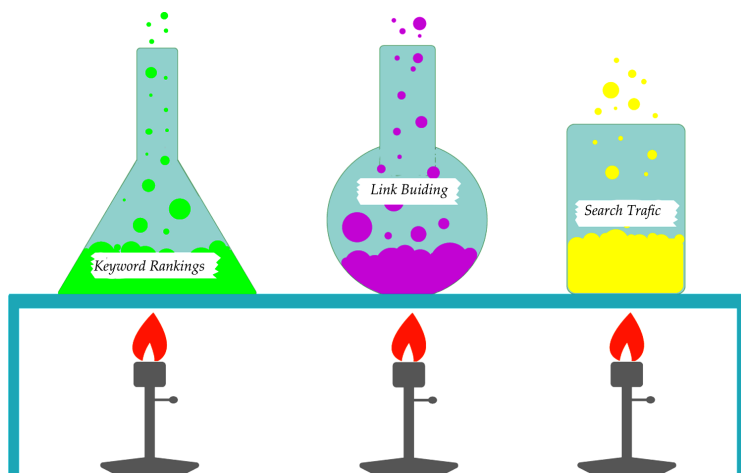
The first step in any endeavor is determining what you're setting out to achieve. You'll want to make sure to outline your current SEO goals clearly for your client. For example, your goal may be to increase rankings for select keywords, to increase overall Search Visibility, or to generate more inbound links. Perhaps even more importantly, you'll want to explain how these SEO goals will impact your client's business overall.

Include tangible business objectives, such as "increase monthly revenue" or "drive more traffic to your online shop," but don't forget to explain *why* you've chosen these as your objectives. Simply telling a client that you're planning to work on increasing their keyword rankings won't help them to understand why that's important. By outlining what you're working towards and why, you'll not only give direction to your report but also set your client's expectations.

Form your hypothesis

How you plan to accomplish your client's business goals through SEO is something that you'll definitely want to think about when putting your SEO report together. What do you think needs to happen in order to make sure your client's expectations and business goals are met? For example, if your client wants to increase the overall organic search traffic that comes to their site, you'll want to focus on improving their keyword rankings.

“Okay, but how are you going to do that?” asks your client. Here’s where you can outline your plan of attack and what you think will have the most impact, like making sure that all pages have meta descriptions that are the right length, or that all pages have title tags.



Asking yourself these types of “how” questions in advance will set you up for success when you go to create your report. A clear idea of your procedure — your way forward — will make sure the most relevant information is included and doesn’t get lost among a bunch of data irrelevant to your current goal. Taking the time early on to outline your next steps will help you stay on track and create concise, easy-to-digest reports.

Record your observations

The “Observations” portion of your report is your place to show real, tangible data to your client. You’ve outlined what you’re doing to help them achieve their current SEO goal, and now it’s time to show them the results of your labor.

Keyword performance

The idea here is pretty straightforward: show your client which of their keywords have improved in the rankings, and how their

Search Visibility has changed since the last report. For transparency, you may also want to include some info about the keywords that didn't do as well — now would be a good time to tell your client how you plan to tackle those low-performing keywords!

You may also want to display how your client is ranking compared to their main competitors and call out specific instances of improvement.

Page optimization

A great way to add in more detail about keyword rankings to your Custom Report is with Page Optimization modules. The Page Optimization tool allows you to pair a specific page on the site you're tracking with a target keyword to see a report of how well-optimized that page is for that keyword.

This is especially useful if your client has a specific set of keywords they need to be ranking for. The Page Optimization tool makes suggestions as to what you can do to improve your chances of ranking, and will show you what you're already doing that's helping your client rank where they are now!

When you add Page Optimization modules to your report, they can illustrate not only improvements you've made to certain pages and how rankings have changed for those keyword/URL pairs, but they can also highlight pages you're not already working on that may be good opportunities for optimization.

Inbound traffic

Showing your client that more people are heading to their site is a straightforward way to show off the progress you've made. If you can, be sure to point out where you think the increase in traffic is coming from, whether it's from higher keyword rankings, new backlink generation, or other factors related to the work you've done.

Link generation

If one of your goals is to generate more backlinks for your client, you'll want to show them what you've accomplished. Be honest about the types of links you're looking to acquire. For example, if you're interested in quality over quantity and are focusing your efforts on acquiring links from sites with high MozRank and MozTrust, make sure you let your client know that, and explain what effect it could have on their backlink profile. Will your strategy earn them more links overall, or higher quality links — and which is better for their business? Explain why your goal is the best plan of attack for achieving their overall business goals.

3.1.4 Securing Ranks

Over time, people have gotten smarter about the way they use the internet.

Like anything else, humanity's harnessing of the online world has followed a natural progression: when a new problem arises, solutions are tested until the right one is found.

It is then implemented, and people move on to a better place than where they were before.

Some people might think they can always tell if they're safe online. Just get a firewall, don't give out personal information to sketchy websites, use unique passwords; it's all been said before.

But computer hackers are out there. They are looking to harm websites and people and are much savvier than the average online user might expect.

Their skill is such that no one would even know their personal information was in danger until well after the fact.



As a digital marketer, website security is something you need to take seriously. This is not just because it's generally prudent, but because online security measures, or your lack of them, directly affect your SEO rankings.

If you have been optimizing a website's technical SEO and are now looking to move into the security aspect of that realm, know that doing so is relatively easy.

Let's look at a few ways that your website's security could be affecting your SEO.

1. **HTTPS Is a Ranking Signal:** -Any digital marketer knows that a website has to earn its organic search rankings.

It's easy to get caught up in the mindset of figuring out what Google "wants" to see in a high-quality website, and to an extent, there is nothing wrong with that.

But your ultimate goal as an SEO is not to please Google, not really. It is to please users, to deliver what they want and need.

And while this always means presenting users with relevant, authoritative content, it also means delivering them results that are nearly guaranteed to be safe to interact with. It comes down to this:

An unsecured website risks users' online safety and could be throwing a wrench in your SEO.

To secure data on your website and show users that you have done so, you'll need to switch to the HTTPS domain distinction. Doing that requires purchasing an SSL certificate.

Many top websites use HTTPS now, and, in fact, you risk looking outdated and unaware if you don't. This is part of the reason Google made HTTPS a ranking factor several years ago.



If you're investing in all other aspects of SEO, there's no reason you shouldn't be doing this, as well.

Now, moving to HTTPS might not immediately bump you up in the SERPs, but there are more than enough reasons for you to make the switch.

2. **Beware of Getting Blacklisted:-** Having a website with poor security doesn't mean you actually have any ill intent.

However, your site's lack of protection still puts you at great risk from hackers.

You and your team put in a lot of time and effort to get your SEO just right.

No matter how long you've had your site or how much content is on it, you should be protecting what's yours.

No one wants to find out that all their hard work has been tampered with.

If you don't have any methods of keeping your website secure, you're putting everything you have in danger.

Something that might surprise you is that SEO is a primary reason for many website hackings. If you've done any link building, you understand how important it is to work with reputable sites.

Unfortunately, not everyone is virtuous when it comes to boosting their SEO.

Without protection, your website can get hacked for the purpose of someone placing links on your site.

This is something you might not be able to catch until it's too late. If someone is hacking you for link building, you can assume they're linking to places you would not want to be associated with your website.

Search engines will pick up on this spam and could blacklist your site. Security helps protect the integrity of your website so that you won't be penalized because of hackers.

Even if you clean up your site after being blacklisted, it can take a while to get back to where you were before in the rankings.

3. **Users Need to See That You're Trustworthy:-** Many of the people who visit your site will likely be on the alert for red flags that it isn't secure.

If they see you don't have HTTPS in your URL, they could leave right away. But if they get direct notifications that it isn't secure, it's almost guaranteed that they'll leave as quickly as they got there.

If your webpages have high bounce rates, your lack of security could be a reason why.

And yes, you can go and fix the issue, but just remember that a number of people have already had a negative experience with your website. Rebuilding credibility takes time.

Work on this by ensuring users leave your site feeling positive about their experience.

This is at the core of good SEO.

3.1.5 Clients need to see in an SEO report

This is really dependent on the client, which feels like a non-answer. But different clients will want to see different things.

However, there are some things all clients will want to see and know:

- **SEO Health:** Overview of technical problems and errors that may affect SEO visibility.
- **Backlink Health:** See the type of backlinks pointing at the client's site.
- **Ranking Progress:** See how rankings have changed and to keep tabs on any potential drop-offs.
- **Organic traffic progress:** Quickly understand organic traffic and see what pages are driving traffic.
- **Sales/ Leads:** Show clients tangible ROI gained from SEO.

Pulling together this data is only a means to an end.

An SEO report isn't just a data dump. It's all about helping a client to make sense of this data.

Don't try and play smart and overwhelm clients with graphs and numbers.

Plot twist: Clients are people too.

Most people would rather cancel a service that they find hard to understand. Your job (and by extension the SEO report's job) is to help clients make sense of things. Any SEO worth their salt needs to be looking for trends and exploring why and how metrics correlate with one another. And this needs to be communicated to the client in an easy to read and informative report.

How long does it take to create this?

You can easily spend hours upon hours exporting data, cleaning it up, copy and pasting it, downloading graphs and so on.

But is this the best use of your time? Is this the best way to spend your client's money?

Creating an aesthetically pleasing report can convey marketing capability and help the client understand what you are actually doing.

But remember:

Don't get sidetracked making really fancy reports. There's a fine line between presentable and indulgent.

A report that's all style and no substance is only going to help you for so long.

That's where report templates come in.

Make an SEO Report

There are three things that go into making an SEO report that a client really wants to see. An effective client SEO report needs to:

1. Pull data;
2. Explain it;
3. Make further recommendations

Just like you, clients are busy spinning plates and wearing lots of hats (figuratively, not literally).

A clear marketing report goes a long way in helping them see impactful highlights (without reading an overly long report).

3.1.6 Ways to Improve your Site's Ranking (SEO)

Follow these suggestions to improve your search engine optimization (SEO) and watch your website rise the ranks to the top of search-engine results.

1. **Publish Relevant Content.** Quality content is the number one driver of your search engine rankings and there is no substitute for great content. Quality content created

specifically for your intended user increases site traffic, which improves your site's authority and relevance. Fine-tune your web writing skills.

Keywords

Identify and target a specific keyword phrase for each page on your website. Think about how your reader might search for that specific page with search terms like:

- masters in engineering management
- what is biomedical engineering?
- title IX resources
- northern lights
- how to apply for scholarships?
- application deadline

Multiple Keyword Phrases

It is very difficult for a webpage to achieve search engine rankings for multiple keyword phrases—unless those phrases are very similar. A single page may be able to rank for both “biomedical engineering jobs” and “biomedical engineering careers”. Ranking for “student affairs” and “dean of students” or “gender discrimination” and “violence reporting procedures” with a single page is unlikely.

If you want to rank for multiple keywords phrases with your website, you will need to make a separate webpage for each keyword phrase you are targeting.

Placing Keywords

Once your keyword phrase is chosen for a given page, consider these questions:

1. Can I use part or all of the keyword phrase in the page URL (by using keywords in folders)?

2. Can I use part or all of the keyword phrase in the page title?
3. Can I use part or all of the keyword phrase in page headings and subheadings?

Answering *yes* to these questions can improve your search engine ranking. Be **natural and user-friendly**, though. For instance, you do not want the word “engineering” to show up three or more times in the URL or have the phrase Northern Lights repeated in the page title and every heading. Readability and usability still trump search engine optimization.

Content

Beyond page URL, title, and headings, content is most influential on search engine rankings. Repeat your keyword phrase several times throughout the page—once or twice in the opening and closing paragraphs, and two to four more times throughout the remaining content.

Don’t forget to use bold, italics, heading tags (especially an H1), and other emphasis tags to highlight these keyword phrases—but don’t overdo it. You still want your language and writing style to read naturally. Never sacrifice good writing for SEO. The best pages are written for the user, not for the search engine.

2. **Update Your Content Regularly:** You’ve probably noticed that we feel pretty strongly about content. Search engines do, too. Regularly updated content is viewed as one of the best indicators of a site’s relevancy, so be sure to keep it fresh. Audit your content on a set schedule (semesterly for example) and make updates as needed.
3. **Metadata:** When designing your website, each page contains a space between the <head> tags to insert metadata, or information about the contents of your page. If you have a CMS site originally produced by the UMC web team will have pre-populated this data for you. However, it is important for you to review and update Metadata as your site changes over time.

Title Metadata

Title metadata is responsible for the page titles displayed at the top of a browser window and as the headline within search engine results. It is the most important metadata on your page.

For those with a CMS website, the web team has developed an automated system for creating the meta title for each webpage based on your page title. This adds to the importance of using well-thought-out page titles rich with keyword phrases.

Description Metadata

Description metadata is the textual description that a browser may use in your page search return. Think of it as your site's window display—a concise and appealing description of what is contained within, with the goal of encouraging people to enter. A good Meta description will typically contain two full sentences. Search engines may not always use your Meta description, but it is important to give them the option.

Keyword Metadata

Keyword metadata is rarely if ever used to tabulate search engine rankings. However, you should already know your keyword phrases, so it doesn't hurt to add them into your keyword metadata. You'll want to include a variety of phrases. As a general rule, try to keep it to about 3-7 phrases with each phrase consisting of 1-4 words. A great example would be «computer science degree.»

4. **Have a link-worthy site:** Focus on creating relevant links within the text. Instead of having “click here” links, try writing out the name of the destination. “Click here” has no search engine value beyond the attached URL, whereas “Michigan Tech Enterprise Program” is rich with keywords and will improve your search engine rankings as well as the ranking of the page you are linking to. Always use descriptive links by linking keywords—

it not only improves search engine optimization, but also adds value to your readers, including those with disabilities or who are using screen readers.

5. **Use alt tags:** Always describe your visual and video media using alt tags, or alternative text descriptions. They allow search engines to locate your page, which is crucial—especially for those who use text-only browsers or screen readers.

3.2 STEAL THE SEO REPORT TEMPLATE

The reporting template is by no means the best out there, nor is it a one-size-fits-all solution.

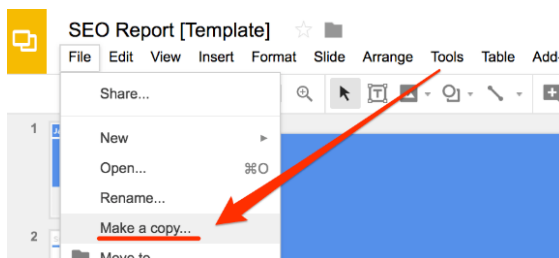
But it is a great starting point to create your first SEO report. Or to maybe just provide some structure to an existing report.

To get started creating SEO reports your clients will actually want to read, you are going to need a few tools to work with and to modify our template:

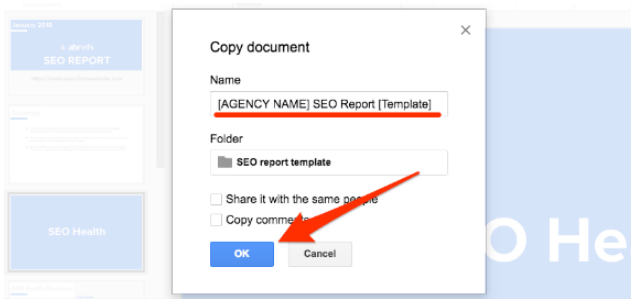
- Google Slides;
- Ahrefs;
- Skitch (or a similar app for taking screenshots)

First things first, click here to make a copy of the SEO report template.

To do this, hit File > Make a copy



Give the template a name, choose where you want to save it (on your Drive), then hit OK.



You will now have a fully-editable copy of the file on your Google Drive.

Please do not request edit access to the original document. We cannot grant this permission as it will destroy the original template for everyone else.

Be sure to change the color scheme to either match your branding or your clients. Likewise, you can also add your own logo and your clients URL.

If you need to get to grips with using Google Slides before getting started, check out the guides in the Google Learning Center.

Other than the time it will save you, the main advantage of using this template is its flexibility.

You can tailor the slides to suit your client's needs, as well as your service offerings.

Focused on local SEO? Tailor the organic traffic slides to specific locations to highlight what geographical locations are bringing in the most traffic.

Focused on producing high-quality content? Drill down to the content pages that generate the most backlinks.

The point is, these templates are here to save you time. Tailor them to your needs and off you go.

Just because it's a template, doesn't mean it has to be a boring copy and paste job. (although granted, there is some copy and pasting involved here)

3.2.1 Title Card

The first slide is the easiest part of the report to create.

Add in the date/month of the report, your own logo, as well as your client's website URL and you are good to go.

Make sure to change the date to the reporting month. It's surprising how easily this can be overlooked!

Once you've finished the title slide, it's time to move on to the actual SEO reporting.

3.2.2 Summary

A summary page works as an effective intro page to your report. You can summarise key items in the marketing campaign for the month, or maybe highlight significant wins.

It can be as simple as a quick blurb using concise natural language (without being condescending). Or it can be a detailed summary of all the online marketing work you have done that month.

This effort can go a long way. Especially in companies where reports get passed around between departments.

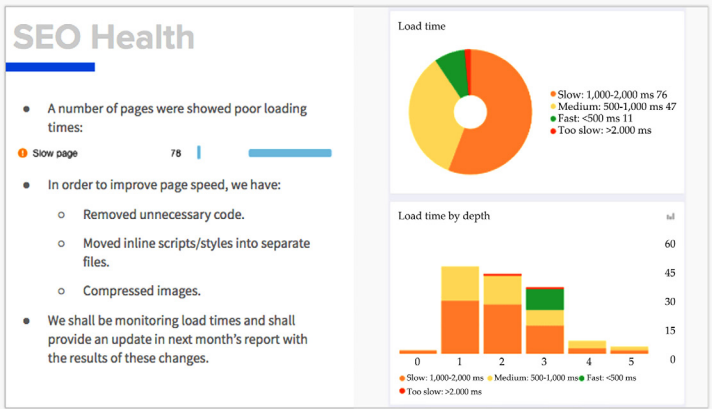
A good summary provides context to your client and turns your SEO report into a story.

What type of things can you include?

- Big and small tasks completed during that reporting period;
- Items that are being actioned or that require attention;
- A brief summary of increases (or decreases) in organic traffic;
- Any upcoming meetings, tasks, etc.

3.2.3 SEO Health Overview

This is where you'll give a snapshot of the website's health; an overview of technical problems and errors that may affect SEO visibility.

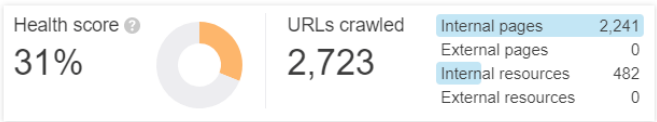


To get this data:

Go to the Ahrefs Site Audit tool.

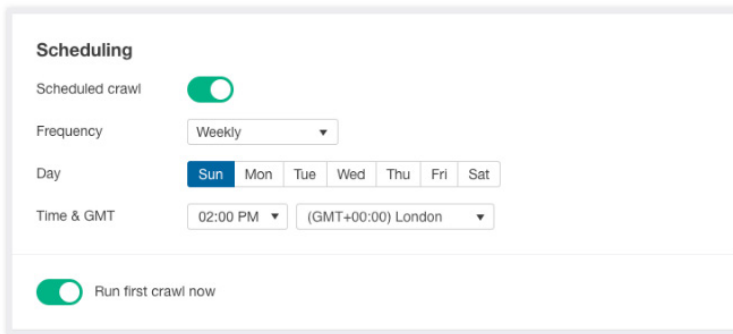
Run your clients site through the tool.

On the overview page, you'll be able to grab a screenshot of the health score, URLs crawled and page types.



Copy this into the slide under the 'This month' heading.

What's useful about the audit tool is you can schedule it to run. It would be a good idea to run this monthly so you have new stats each month to compare it to.



Scheduling

Scheduled crawl ☒

Frequency Weekly

Day Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

Time & GMT 02:00 PM (GMT+00:00) London

☒ Run first crawl now

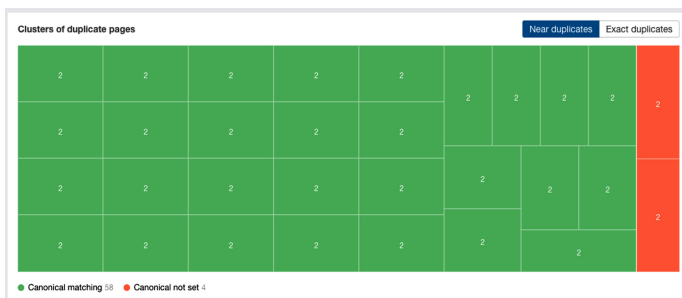
If you have only just started using the audit tool and have no previous data to reference, don't worry. Just delete the 'Last month' box for now. In future, to get data from previous crawl reports go to Site Audit > Project > All crawls.

In the text box provided on the slide, you can give some insights into what's gone up or down, and why this might be the case.

What type of things can you include in your report? Well here are some of the most common SEO issues:

Duplicate content & low word counts

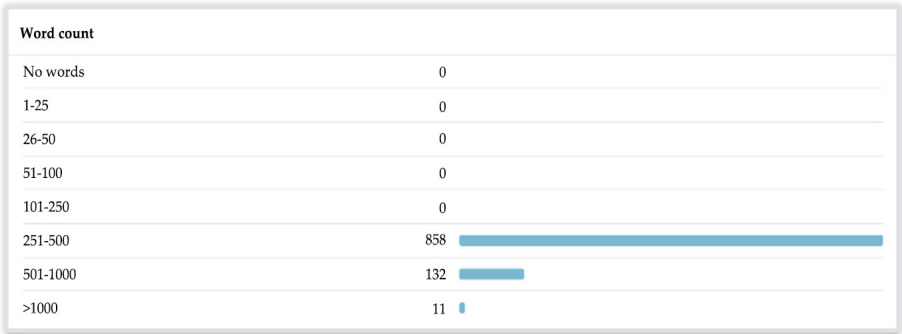
Go to Reports > Content quality. This will show you duplicate content clusters and word counts of pages on your client's site:



Having duplicate content on a site is a no-no. Aside from being of no use to visitors (and therefore search engines), you'll have pages competing with each other in the SERPs.

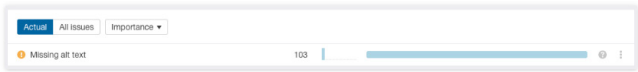
This will negatively affect rankings because search engine crawlers won't know what pages to serve up.

As for word count, while there is no minimum word count for a page, Google does rank more in-depth content higher. Therefore it's safe to say that low word counts are not going to rank as well.

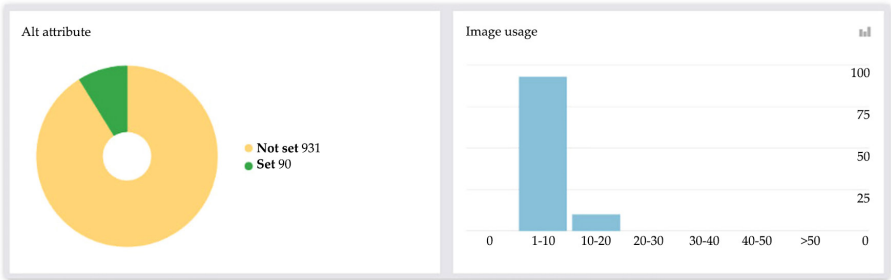


Missing alt tags & broken images

Go to Resources > Images to see missing alt tags:



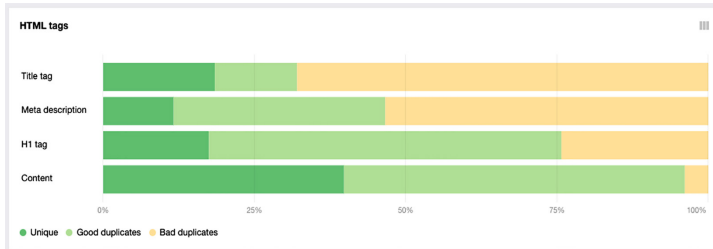
Although search engines are pretty advanced, when it comes to images they still need a little help. This is where alt tags come in to help them understand what the images are about via text descriptions.



Site Audit will visualize missing alt tags, image sizes and load times which can then be added to your report.

HTML issues

Specifically, these issues are most commonly to do with title tags, H1 tags and meta descriptions. Go to Internal > HTML tags for a sweet graph that visualizes all of these:



Broken links

Go to Reports > Outgoing links and you'll be able to see if your site has too many on page links, temporary redirects & Broken internal and external links.



Broken links are inevitable. As a website grows, links get changed (without being redirected) and you get 404 pages. It happens. And it becomes a big problem when you've got hundreds of 404 pages.

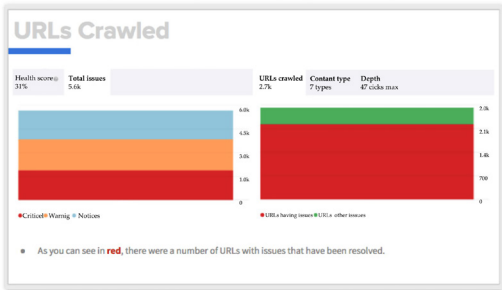
A user landing on a 404 page is not getting the information they wanted, which can result in loss of traffic.

They also waste your crawl budget. If a search engine crawler visits your site and sees a mountain of broken links, there's a chance your working pages won't get crawled and indexed.

Identify broken links in the Site Audit tool and fix them. Make a note of how many you fixed and add this to the report to let your client know.

3.2.4 URLs Crawled

This slide goes into more detail about the SEO health of the site; focusing on the health score and number of URLs crawled.



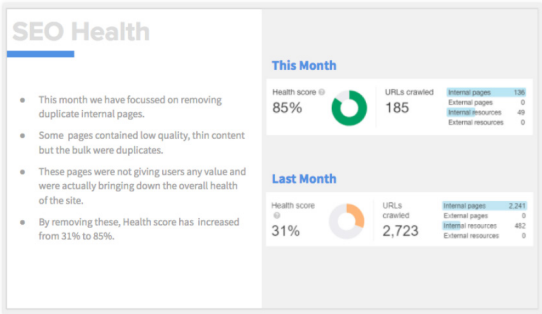
The website might have a lot more or a lot fewer pages by the time you recrawl it, which will affect the total number of issues.

So it would make sense to show your client not only the difference between the current and previous month but also the full progress since you took over their website, relative to the number of existing pages of their website.

To find these graphs, go to Project history in Site Audit. At the top, you'll see graphs for URLs crawled and a breakdown of the health score.

3.2.5 SEO Health Analysis

Depending on your comments on the previous slides, this is here to enable you to go into more detail about aspects of SEO Health.



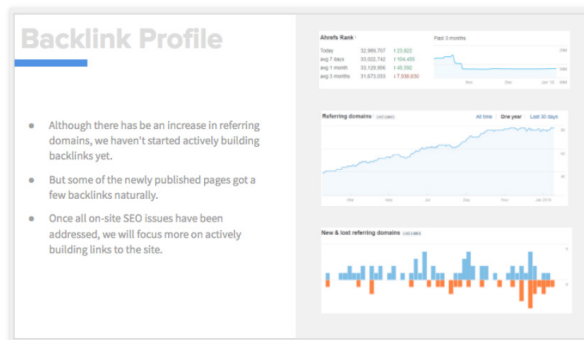
Here you can mention further specific SEO health tasks that have been completed for that month. And then provide the relevant graph.

To the left of the Site Audit tool, under reports, you'll be able to generate different reports on technical aspects of performance, such:

- **HTML tags:** Title lengths, duplicates, missing meta descriptions;
- **Content:** Word counts and duplicate content;
- **Links:** Link types, incoming and outgoing;
- **Performance:** Page speed — how fast is your website loading?

3.2.6 Backlink Profile Overview

Next up is the backlink profile: showing the client the type of backlinks pointing at their site and the organic traffic they are driving.



One of the biggest challenges of SEO is link building. The backlink overview section is a chance to communicate with clients this importance.

This slide will show the backlink health in more detail, like new & lost domains.

Go to Site Explorer.

Take a screenshot of the backlink profile (Ahrefs rank, referring domains, new & lost) and paste it into the slide.

Depending on what you are focusing in on backlinks-wise, you can choose to show new and lost domains or the anchors cloud. Both of these are found in the Backlink profile overview.

3.2.7 Backlink Profile



This slide is designed to allow you to go into further detail about your link building work done during the month.

It can include:

- The number of backlinks you earned for the client;
- The quality of the links you gained;
- Top Anchor Texts;
- Number of any links were lost;
- How much traffic your new links are bringing in

Ahrefs overview report displays useful visual information about how the site is performing. A quick glance at the graphs shows whether SEO is driving the site in the right direction.

To get these graphs, go to Site Explorer and enter domain then explore.

This will show the overview report for the domain. You'll see the graphs on the backlink profile tab. Take screenshots of the referring domains and pages and add into the slide.

3.2.8 Organic Search

One of the things about SEO most clients want to know is: “is it working and where my traffic is coming from?”

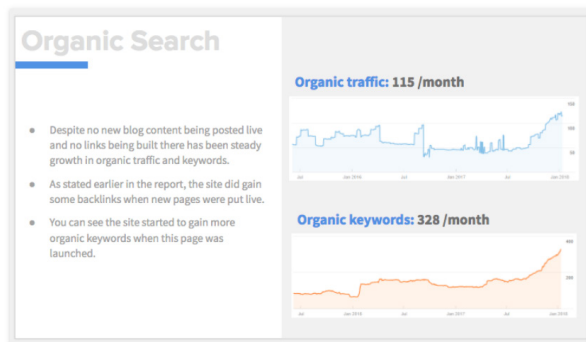
You can use Ahrefs' Site Explorer to quickly understand organic traffic and see what pages are driving traffic.

Let's start with traffic and keywords:

Ahrefs' tracks millions of keywords (hello big data), and so whenever a client's website is seen in the top 100 for any of those millions of keywords being tracked, the keyword graph will go up.

How does this help clients know their SEO is working?

Even if traffic isn't going up yet, the mere fact that more of their keywords are entering the top 100 means that your SEO has started working. It's like Rank Tracker on steroids.



Clients want to see how traffic has changed since you began doing SEO.

In Site Explorer, go to the organic search tab.

Copy the two graphs showing traffic and keywords.

Don't forget to manually type in the traffic and keywords per month figures. Sorry, no copy and pasting here! But you don't want your clients to miss the great results you got them.

3.2.9 Organic Positions

Not only is it useful to show clients the organic traffic you are driving to their website, but also how this is distributed across the keywords. Ahrefs' position distribution history graphs do this nicely:

To get to it, while on the Organic search tab of Site Explorer, just scroll down and you'll find it below the keywords graph.

These graphs show the spread of organic rankings across the website pages. They give a rounded view of how the organic keywords are performing across the site by showing:

- The top 3 positions;
- Positions 4-10;
- Positions 11-50

3.2.10 Organic Keywords

You can't really have an SEO report without mentioning rankings. Not only are they an essential part of search visibility, they are a good indicator of whether your online marketing strategy is working.

On the next slides, you'll be able to showcase organic rankings, how these rankings have changed and keep tabs on any potential drop-offs.

More specifically, you can show clients the keywords that bring in the most traffic, but at this moment might be different from those that they actually wish to rank for.

By keeping them in the loop about the best performing keywords and pages, you will help your clients better understand what kind

of search traffic their website gets. Leading on from the organic traffic analysis, this slide is made up of 2 screenshots from the organic search tab in Site Explorer.

Before we report on the keyword rankings you are tracking, you'll want to identify search terms that are bringing in traffic using Ahrefs' organic keyword tool.

Ranking number 1 for a keyword that brings in zero traffic is pretty pointless and a perfect example of a vanity metric.

To get your top organic keywords, on the Site Explorer overview, go to the organic search tab. Then scroll down and you'll see your top 5 organic keywords. These are the keywords that bring the most organic traffic to your site.

Screenshot them and add them to the slide.

3.2.11 Ranking Visibility

It wouldn't be an SEO report if we didn't mention rankings now, would it?

Go to the Rank Tracker tool and select your client. Take a screenshot of the overview widget and add to the slide.

As a good overview of your client's most important keywords, you can show them performance over time. Clicking on the positions widget shows how many keywords are in Top 3, 4–10, 11–50, etc.

In the top left, you can toggle between desktop and mobile views. But for even more SERP data, you can click on the widgets and toggle for a more detailed view.

You can get small graphs showing trends of Visibility, Avg. Position and Traffic (for these specific keywords).

These graphs give a quick overview of your keywords you are tracking. Specifically:

- **Visibility:** the percentage of all clicks for the tracked keywords that go to your client's website.

- **Average position:** self-explanatory really, but the average ranking position across all keywords from 1 to 100.
- **Traffic:** this is Ahrefs estimation of organic traffic going to a URL (calculation based on search volume and website position).
- **SERP features:** how many SERP features (featured snippet, image pack, video etc) are present for the tracked keywords.
- **Positions:** the number of keywords that have seen an increase or decrease in position.

3.2.12 Ranking Insights

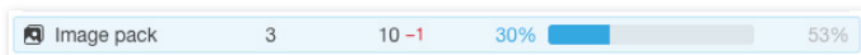
This slide shows your client what is happening in the search results for their keywords in terms of SERP features. The ones that they can own, and the ones that they cannot own.

You can click on any feature to put the focus there. For instance, on the screenshot above you can see that there are a ton of Featured Snippet opportunities among the tracked keywords, but the client's website is hardly ranking in any.

Not only can you show your client SERP features they are missing, but you can also show the features they are appearing in. This shows them that the SEO is working.

It's useful to show these graphs to your client because they show how people are engaging with their website. And therefore give you evidence to back up your suggestions

For example, say you notice an increase in keywords appearing in the Image pack:



You can then suggest to your client that they produce more content featuring high-quality images and prioritize image optimization.

3.2.13 Ranking Progress

Whether you agree with tracking keyword rankings or not, they do help convey search visibility to a client.

By using tags in Rank Tracker, you'll be able to show your clients keyword rankings without boring them with pages and pages of rankings.

The Tags feature allows you to label keywords so you can group them. For example, if your client was a car garage, you could use tags to group together their different offerings.

- Winter tyres, budget tyres, run flat tyres etc could be tagged under *Tyres*.
- Car diagnostics, MOT testing, exhaust repairs etc could be tagged under *Servicing*.

If you are only tracking a handful of keywords, you could include them all in the report. On the other hand, if you are tracking hundreds of keywords you could filter out only 10–20 of the most crucial keywords that a customer cares about the most.

However you decide to show your client rankings, the good thing about them is: even if your traffic is not going up, rankings can tell you if the website is moving in the right or wrong direction.

What do you want to show clients?

- Total number of ranking keywords
- Amount of organic traffic generated by those keywords
- What URL is ranking for these terms

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On Page

CHAPTER 4

ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

INTRODUCTION

On-page SEO (also known as “on-site SEO”) is the practice of optimizing web page content for search engines and users. Common on-page SEO practices include optimizing title tags, content, internal links and URLs.

On-page SEO is the practice of optimizing individual web pages in order to rank higher and earn more relevant traffic in search engines. On-page refers to both the content and HTML source code of a page that can be optimized, as opposed to off-page SEO which refers to links and other external signals.

This is different from off-page SEO, which is optimizing for signals that happen off of your website (for example, backlinks).

4.1 BASIC OF ON-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

On-page SEO refers to any optimization that you control and include on your website. With on-page optimizations, you aim to make your website more usable and valuable to users to improve your rankings or visibility in search results on Google, Bing, and other search engines.

4.1.1 What on-page SEO ranking factors should I optimize?

With on-page SEO, you have several different ranking factors. You want to optimize all these factors. Taking the time to optimize each of these factors will improve your rankings in search results and make your website more competitive and difficult to beat.

On-page optimization factors you should focus on include:

- URL
- Title tag
- Meta description
- Heading tags
- Alt tags
- Keywords
- Content
- Speed
- Internal linking
- Images
- Mobile-friendliness

Example of some on-page SEO action items include:

- Optimizing your title tags and meta descriptions
- Writing in-depth, quality content
- Cleaning up your site's code
- Streamlining your site's navigation
- Speeding up your website

Keep reading to learn how to do on-page optimization for each of these on-page SEO factors!

4.1.2 Difference Between ON Page and OFF Page SEO

| On Page SEO | Off Page SEO |
|--|--|
| On page Seo includes providing good content, good keyword selection, putting keyword on correct places, giving appropriate title for every pages etc. | Off page Seo includes link building, increasing link popularity, search engine, link exchange etc. |
| In on page seo we will analyze complete website. | In off page seo we will promote the website. |
| In on page seo we will use internal linking. | In off page seo we will use direct linking. |
| Technique which are used in on page seo.. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish high-quality content. • Optimize page titles and meta descriptions. • Optimize page content. • Headings and content formatting. • SEO Images and other multimedia elements. • URL optimization. • Internal links. • External links. | Technique which are used in off page seo.. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influencer Outreach. • Contribute as Guest Author. • Social Media Engagement. • Social Bookmarking Sites. • Forum Submission. • Blog Directory Submission. • Article Submission |

| | |
|--|--|
| According to the MOZwebsite owners spend about 70% of time on on page activity | While on off page it only 30% activity |
| On-page SEO looks at what your site is about | Off-page SEO looks at how popular your site is |

4.2 HOW TO OPTIMIZE FOR ON-PAGE SEO

Now that you know what factors influence your on-page SEO, you can start optimizing them. Remember, it will take time to optimize your site, as well as see the results from it. Following best practices for these factors, however, will help you create a website that can endure algorithm updates.

4.2.1 Title Tag

The title tag is an important part of your on-page SEO strategy. Here are eight important aspects to consider when optimizing your title tags for search.

The title tag is an HTML tag that exists in the head section of each webpage. It provides an initial cue or context as to what the topical subject matter is of the respective page it is on.

The title tag is featured prominently in the search engine results pages (typically it is used as the clickable link) as well as in the browser window.

Other than those two places, it isn't as visible as other web content on a given page (e.g., body copy, image content, and other aspects) that a user will see immediately when landing on the page.

Title tags aren't a visual element users will see on a webpage, so the title tag can sometimes be overlooked.

At the same time, the title tag by itself has little impact on organic rankings. No one item alone is magical or powerful – especially if your content is low-quality or you’ve neglected technical SEO.

Here are eight important aspects to consider when optimizing your title tags for search.

1. ***The Page’s Context Within the Site:-*** Before you can write an optimized title tag, you need to know where the page fits into the overall hierarchy of the website.

A home page title tag is going to be much different than a blog post or product page.

For websites that have a lot of pages, it can be challenging to come up with tags that are different from page to page. That’s why mapping out your site and knowing where each page fits into the context of your subject matter is important.

Each page deeper you get into the site, the more specific you can and should be.

You can repeat words and phrases but should be more detailed each step down into the site you go.

An ecommerce example of title tags at different levels of the site that have appropriate context:

- **Home Page:** Groomsmen gifts and unique men’s gifts by The Man Registry
 - **Product Category Page:** BBQ sets and utensil gifts for groomsmen by The Man Registry
 - **Product Page:** 5-Piece Customized BBQ utensil set by The Man Registry
2. ***Topical Relevance Within the Page :*** -The next step of understanding where the page fits in the hierarchy of the website overall is to evaluate the content on the page.

The title tag is most impactful for search engines and users when it introduces the topic of the page and the same important keywords are used in body copy, image alt attribute, the meta description, URL, and other aspects of the page.

It is a wasted exercise to ignore the page content when writing the title tag if it contributes to a higher bounce rate and can't lend more relevance to the topic of the page.

3. ***Unique Tags:-*** Duplicate title tags are not helpful to searchers or search engines.

If you have duplicate tags you'll see them in Google Search Console or Bing Webmaster Tools reports and you'll often find that the search engines have chosen to ignore your title tag and use other content it found on your page for the blue link text in the SERP.

When multiple pages have the same tag, those tags are useless to the search engine.

You can use the data provided in Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools to find where you have issues as well as run your own tests through any number of on-page auditors and crawling tools.

If you have duplicate tags within your site, add writing custom tags to your SEO action plan.

4. ***Use Dynamic Options When Possible:-*** If you have a large website, or one that features a large amount of dynamic data – like an ecommerce website – find ways to semantically code your tags.

Most content management systems and website platforms will automatically generate the title tag to start with.

If you want to override or customize the default title tag at scale, work with your developer or within your website platform settings to find ways to add more detail and customize at different levels.

The more you can scale and not have to manually manage hundreds or thousands of tags, the better.

An example of a dynamic structure could include some standard text in all product page tags but with the specific name of the product populated from the database.

For example, it could be “[product_name] groomsmen gifts from The Man Registry.” The bracketed “product_name” would be a variable that would populate that part of the title with the actual product name in the database.

In this case, you wouldn’t have to manually write all product title tags and can ensure they are unique. For cases where you have the same products with variations or attributes like different colors – you can also look at ways to add more variables from the database.

5. ***Searcher Intent Keyword Use:-*** We can all relate to times we really want to find an answer to something specific, yet the top ranking sites are answering a different question. The same goes for great content that gets unnoticed.

Knowing what your audience is searching for, and how they are searching, is critical for title tag optimization.

If you don’t know what words and phrases people are using when they are searching, then you’re at risk of guessing wrong.

Don’t skip keyword research or ignore it when you are optimizing title tags.

You don’t have to worry about every literal version of a keyword or phrase in the current context-based era of SEO, but you also can’t ignore the searcher and their intent.

Your goal for an optimized title tag is to match the wording that you use with what is being searched for as long as the perceived intent is the focus of the content of the page.

6. ***Call to Action in SERP:-***Remember that the title tag will be shown as the text in the blue link in the search results page (SERP).

This is prominent real estate and the message featured here greatly impacts the searcher’s decision on whether to click through to your site or move on to the next search result.

Your focus must be on answering the question, need, or desire of the searcher.

Having a clear vision of what your page is about and what the desired outcome is for you and your visitor are critical.

If you're trying to accomplish too many business goals on a single page, it can be hard to focus clearly enough on what the call to action (CTA) should be. If you find this to be the case, consider breaking your content out into more topics and pages.

Much like the art of writing a solid PPC text ad headline, the title tag needs to match the intent of the searcher to earn their click.

When writing your title tag, keep in mind that the tag is truncated by Google at 70-71 characters. The user won't see any word past that character count.

Get your important words and phrases in there. Be concise, be direct, and prioritize the important words to appear as early in your title tags as possible.

For example, you might have the average sounding home page title tag of: "Groomsmen gifts and unique men's gifts by The Man Registry".

You could test out more actionable language like "Shop the best groomsmen & unique men's gifts at The Man Registry".

7. ***Don't Try Too Hard:-*** Avoid repetitive and spammy looking titles.

Resist the temptation of overdoing it with your title tag.

The search engines are focused on context – not literal keyword use, frequency, and density.

Pick words that are clear to the topic of the page and intent and stick with them in the title tag.

You can use longer form areas of the page to elaborate and build on that context.

An example of a dangerous title tag would be: "Groomsmen gifts, Groomsman Gifts, Gifts for Men, Unique Gifts".

Overplaying and repeating words is a quick way to find trouble.

8. *Keep Perspective of the Title Tag's Impact:-* Don't overemphasize the importance or impact of the title tag alone.

While you might see a small bump from optimizing all the title tags on your site, you can't expect that the title tag alone is your key to SEO success.

Holistic search optimization is much more important.

In many cases, title tag optimization is just the start or an entry point until you are at the top of the SERPs – making small adjustments and have the luxury of spending time obsessing over minor wording changes to see how they impact rankings one position at a time.

4.2.2 URL

Your URL is like an address, but for a page on the Internet.

Best Doggy Day Care in Daytona Beach, FL | Rover.com

<https://www.rover.com> › Florida › Daytona Beach ▾

Find the best **doggy day care** in **Daytona Beach** from our network of over 300000 trusted local sitters. Easily book affordable **dog daycare** near you!

URLs for your website's pages should include brief descriptions of the page's topic.

For example, if you have a page about dog daycares in Daytona Beach, a good URL for that would be www.yoursite.com/dog-daycares-in-daytona. Or, if you have multiple locations, you may use the following format: www.yoursite.com/locations/daytona/dog-daycare.

Including your keyword in your URL instead of a long string of jumbled numbers also makes your site easier to navigate and gives people a better idea of your page topics.

Which of the following URLs would you rather visit, for example?

- <https://www.example.com/category/subcategory/keyword.html>
- <https://www.example.com/125typu4f5ww56fifl6639j875fe.html>

Use clean, organized URLs — like the first example above — to improve your site’s architecture and help you rank higher in relevant search results.

4.2.3 Meta Description

our meta description is your page’s summary and appears in SERPs.

[Best Doggy Day Care in Daytona Beach, FL | Rover.com](https://www.rover.com)

<https://www.rover.com> › [Florida](#) › [Daytona Beach](#) ▼

Find the best **doggy day care** in **Daytona Beach** from our network of over 300000 trusted local sitters. Easily book affordable **dog daycare** near you!

A meta description doesn’t influence your on-page optimization directly. It’s a feature that helps users, however, learn more about your page. The fact that Google will bold user search terms that appear in your meta description is another reason to optimize your meta description for on-page SEO. Include your core and related keywords in your meta description for the best results. Your page about dog daycare in Daytona Beach, for instance, may use the following meta description: “Looking for dog daycare in Daytona Beach? Come to Rover’s for dog daycare, dog grooming, and more!”

For the best results, your meta description should stick to 160 characters.

4.2.4 Headings

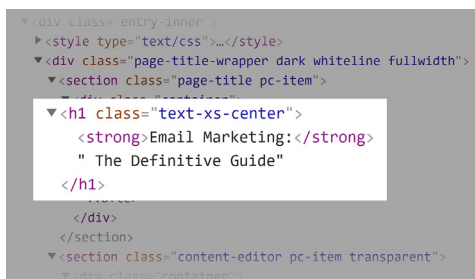
The H1 tag is like a mini title tag.

In fact, Google has stated that using an H1 tag “helps Google understand the structure of the page”.



Most platforms (like WordPress) automatically add the H1 tag to your blog post title. If that's the case, you're all set.

But that's not always the case. You want to check your site's code to make sure your title is wrapped in an H1. And that your keyword is inside of that H1 tag.



Wrap Subheadings in H2 Tags

Include your target keyword in at least one subheading. And wrap that subheading in an H2 tag.

Will an H2 tag make or break your on-page SEO?

Nope. But it can't hurt. And my own SEO experiments have shown me that wrapping your target keyword in an H2 tag can make a dent.

Here's an example of this strategy in action (target keyword="content marketing tools"):

```

    "So if you want to get more traffic from your content,
    you'll love these awesome tools."
  </p>
  <p>Let's dive right in.</p>
  <h2 id="cmttools" class="text-center">25 Best Content
  Marketing Tools</h2>
  ><h3 id="pexels" class="h2">...</h3>
  ><p>...</p>
  ><p>...</p>
  <p>Pexels.</p>

```

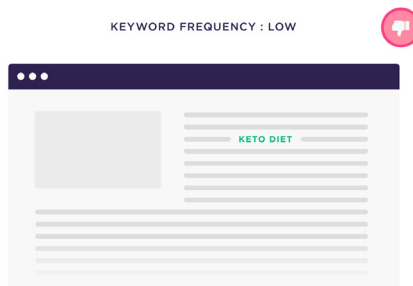
4.2.5 Keyword Frequency

Keyword Frequency is just like it sounds: It's how many times your keyword appears in your content.

Google may deny that using the same keyword multiple times helps. But SEO pros with experience will tell you that it definitely works.

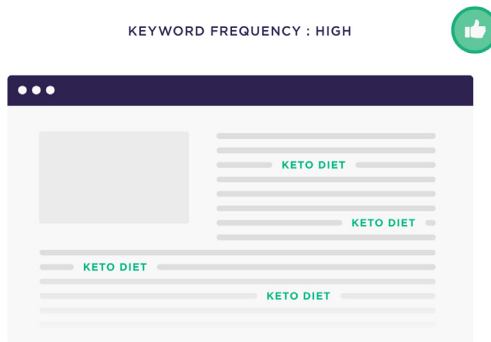
Think about it this way:

Imagine that you have a page that Google THINKS is about a specific keyword. But that keyword only appears once on the page.



How confident can they be that the page is about that keyword? Not very.

On the other hand, if the page mentions the keyword 10 times, Google can be more confident about that page's topic.

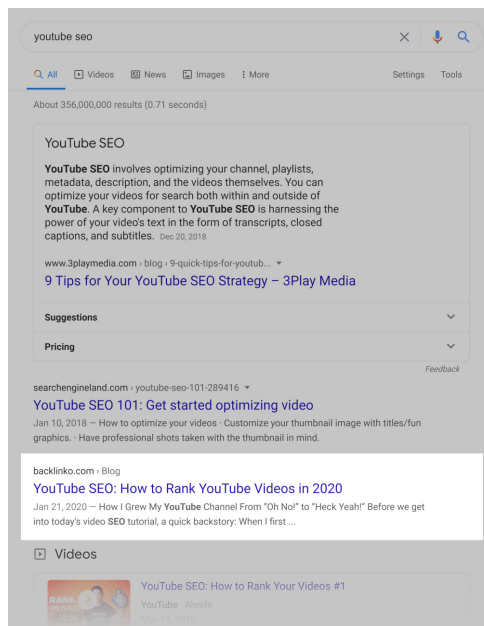


To be clear:

This isn't about keyword stuffing or anything like that.

It's simply mentioning your target keyword a few times to confirm to Google that your page really is about that topic.

For example, one of our posts ranks in the top 3 in Google for the keyword "YouTube SEO".



4.2.6 Content

Content provides users with answers and search engines with context.

Dog Boarding Cost

The average cost charged by dog boarding kennels is **\$30 to \$50 per night** with most pet owners spending **\$40**. Weekly boarding rates start at **\$150** while monthly prices cost **\$500** on average. Overall, finding the right dog boarding option for your dog will depend mainly on what's available in your area and your personal preferences.

DOG BOARDING COST

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| National Average Cost | \$40 |
| Minimum Cost | \$25 |
| Maximum Cost | \$85 |
| Average Range | \$30 to \$50 |

It happens to the best of us—we have to go out of town or work on a big job, and there's no one to look after the dog. A [dog boarding service](#) that's close by with prices that suit your budget, has trained staff, and caters to your pet's needs can be found within a matter of minutes on HomeGuide. Here's everything you need to know about pet boarding what prices you can expect to pay.

Content is critical to on-page optimization.

With content, you give users a reason to visit your site.

Whether it's to read a blog post or check out a product page, people browse your content. Optimizing your content can help search engines understand and rank your content, which can lead to people finding your website.

On-page SEO for content revolves around the following practices:

- Using your keywords in headings and paragraphs
- Breaking your content into skimmable headings
- Complementing your content with helpful images
- Ensuring your content uses correct spelling and grammar
- Making your content trustworthy and authoritative

In addition, you should regularly add new pages of content to your site so that search engines will see that you're active online. You can

do this with new blog posts, landing pages, and other strategies that show Google you're hard at work for your customers.

Finding and removing duplicate content also improves your on-page SEO.

Duplicate content refers to blocks of similar content on multiple pages on your website — and it's undesirable for two reasons:

1. **Google doesn't know which page to rank:** When numerous site pages contain the exact same information, search engines won't know which page to rank in search results.
2. **Duplicate content confuses site visitors:** When visitors encounter duplicate content on your site, it can confuse them, and they may not know what step to take next. Duplicate content throws a wrench in your content funnel and prevents your audience from taking action.

Duplicate content is bad for on-page SEO, so make sure to regularly check your site for duplicate content and remove it.

4.2.7 Internal links

An internal link is any link from one page on your website to another page on your website. Both your users and search engines use links to find content on your website. Your users use links to navigate through your site and to find the content they want to find. Search engines also use links to navigate your site. They won't find a page if there are no links to it. There are several types of internal links. In addition to links on your homepage, menu, post feed, etc, you can also add links within your content. We call those contextual links. Contextual links point your users to interesting and related content. Moreover, they allow search engines to find out what content on your site is related and to determine the value of that content. The more links an important page receives, the more important it will seem to search engines. Therefore, good internal links are crucial to your SEO.

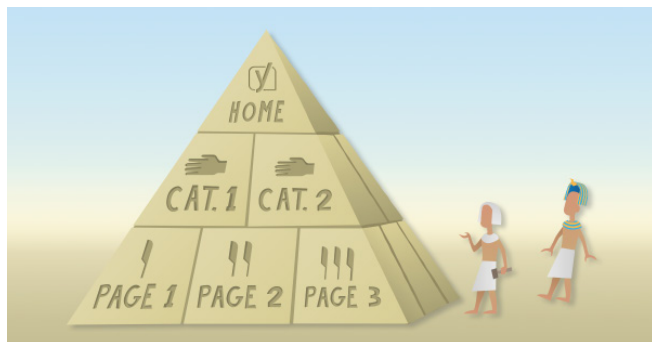
Setting up an Internal Linking Strategy

It's crucial for your site's SEO to evaluate and improve internal linking strategy on a regular basis. It's one of the ways to improve the fitness of your website. By adding the right internal links you make sure Google understands:

- the relevance of pages;
- the relationship between pages;
- and the value of pages.

To set up your internal linking strategy, there are several things to take into account. How you go about it exactly, of course, depends on your site and your goals, but the following steps are a good rule of thumb.

1. *Determine the ideal structure for your site :-* We always advise website owners to imagine their website as a pyramid. On top of it is your homepage, below that there are some sections or categories, and further down there are individual posts and pages (possibly with subcategories in between).



2. *Decide what your most important content is:-* Then, you should determine what your most important content is. In short, it's your best and most complete content; it's about the core of your business. It's the content you want people to find when they're searching for a topics or products that you specialize in.

Because you want to let Google know that this is your most essential content, you need to add many links to it. There are various spots from where you can link to your cornerstone content. Here, we'll give the most common options, from your post's copy to your navigation.

3. *Add contextual links:-* This will show Google – and users! – that those articles are topically related. You can link directly from sentences in your copy or add links at the end of your post.

And don't forget to link back from the cornerstone to the individual posts.

4. *Link hierarchical pages:-* If you have hierarchical pages on your website, link parent pages to its child pages and vice versa. Also, don't forget to link sibling pages to each other. On a well-organised site these pages should be related and linking them like this will make perfect sense.
5. *Consider adding a related post section:-* There are many plugins and modules that add complete related posts sections to your posts. If you use one, we recommend testing whether the related posts actually *are* related posts. If you're not sure, linking to posts manually is probably best. That's what we do on Yoast.com – we select a related post manually (or with a little help from our internal linking tool – more on that later) and place a link to that post at the bottom of the article.
6. *Try adding navigational links:-* Besides linking from topically-related posts and pages, it's possible to make your cornerstone content more authoritative by adding links to it from the homepage or the top navigation. You should do this with the posts and pages that are most important to your business. This will give these posts or pages a lot of link value and makes them stronger in Google's eyes.
7. *Add links to your taxonomies :-* Taxonomies, like categories and tags, help you organize your site and help users and

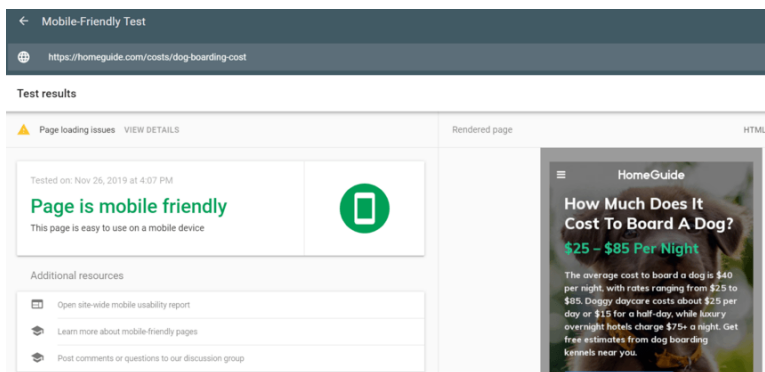
Google to understand what your content is about. If you have a blog it could be beneficial to add internal links to the taxonomies the post belongs to. Adding links to the category and tags helps Google to understand the structure of your blog *and* helps visitors to more easily navigate to related posts.

8. *Consider adding links to popular or recent posts:-* The last option to mention is creating internal links to the most popular or newest posts on your website. Preferably create these sections in the sidebar or the footer of your website to have them appear on all pages and posts.

As link value passes to these most popular/recent posts from many different pages and posts they really get a boost. Besides that, the posts will be easier for visitors to access, which will increase traffic – and more traffic is a positive sign to Google.

4.2.8 Mobile-Friendliness

Mobile-friendliness describes your site's usability on mobile devices.



A mobile-friendly website is essential because more than 50% of the Internet's traffic comes from mobile devices. If people on smartphones and tablets can't access your site, your rankings in search results will go down.

Search engines like Google, for example, use mobile-friendliness or responsiveness as a ranking factor. This means, if your site isn't optimized for mobile users, you're missing out on valuable leads and revenue.

Mobile compatibility isn't a suggestion anymore. It's a requirement, especially if you want to rank well for your keywords. Google considers mobile compatibility when it ranks your website. Low compatibility = low rank.

On-page optimization for mobile-friendliness often focuses on developing a responsive site. With a responsive website, you have a single site, which makes it easy to update your website and add new content.

Use Google's Mobile-Friendly Test tool to check your site's responsiveness!

4.2.9 Alt Text

Alt text matters for four main reasons.

1. Improves accessibility
 2. Can improve 'topical relevance'
 3. Can help you rank in Google Images
 4. Serves as anchor text for image links
1. *Alt text improves accessibility*:- Millions of people are visually-impaired, and many use screen readers to consume online content. These work by converting on-screen content, including images, to audio.

Images without alt text cause problems for screen readers because there's no way to communicate the content of the image to the user. Usually, they skip over these images, or worse, read out long and unhelpful image filenames.

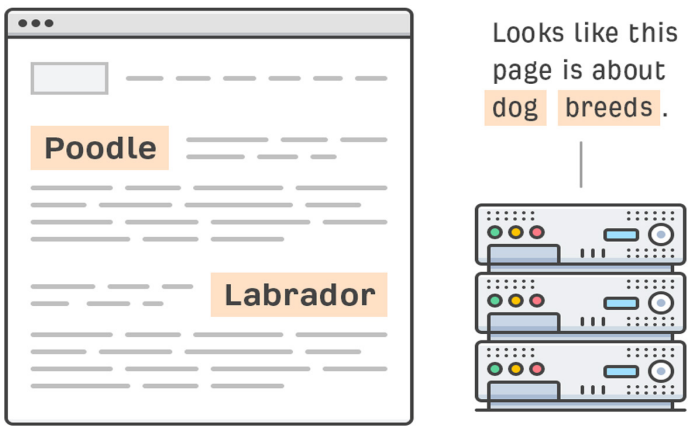
**Screen Readers May Read Out Ugly
Filenames for Images Without Alt Text**



2. *Alt text can improve 'topical relevance':*- Google looks at the words on a page to understand what it's about.

For example, if the page mentions poodles, labradors, and retrievers, then Google knows it's about dog breeds.

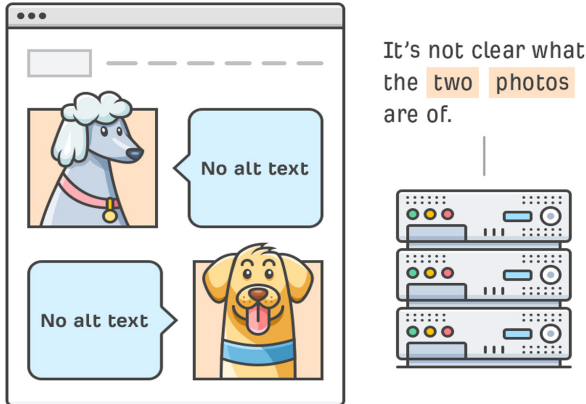
**Google Looks at the Words on a Page
to Understand What It's About**



How does this relate to images?

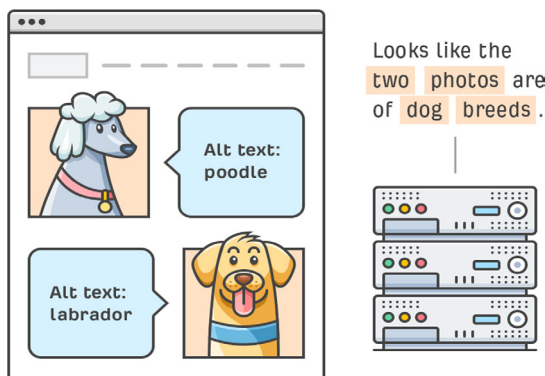
Because sometimes, context is ‘locked away’ in images that Google can’t read.

Images Without Alt Text Hide Potentially Important Content from Google



While Google can almost certain tell that these are images of dogs without alt text, the specific breed may be less obvious—and that’s where alt text comes in.

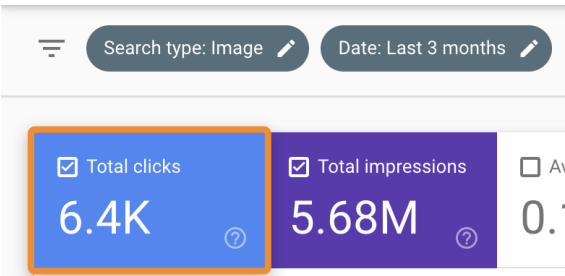
Alt Text Reveals Important Content to Google



3. *Alt text can help you rank in Google Images:-* Google Images is the world’s second-largest search engine. It’s responsible for 20.45% of all online searches, putting it ahead of YouTube, Bing, and other search engines combined.

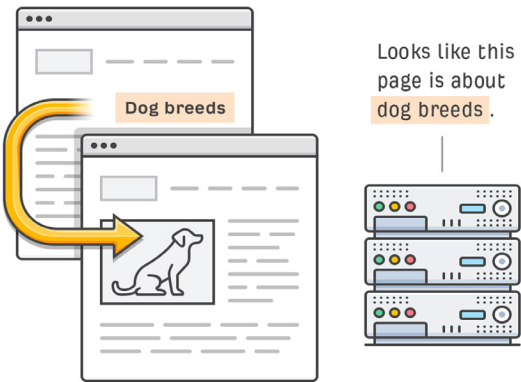
This means there's an opportunity to drive traffic from Google Images.

Just look at the number of clicks we've had to the Ahrefs Blog from Google Images in the past three months:



4. *Alt text serves as anchor text for image links:-* Anchor text refers to the clickable words that link one webpage to another. Google uses it to understand more about the web page and what it's about.

With Text Links, Google Uses Anchor Text to Understand More About the Linked Page

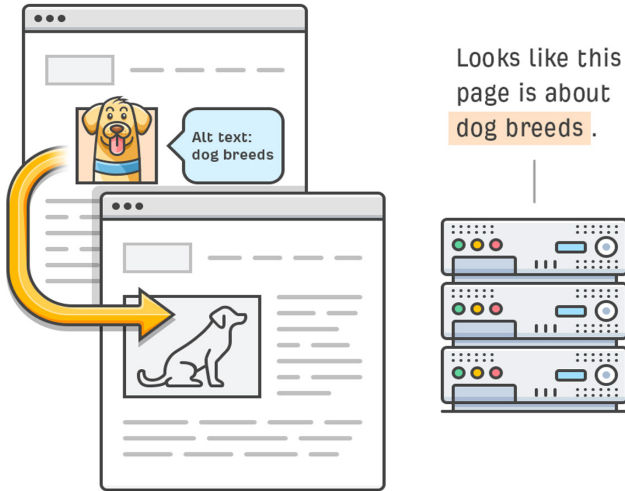


But not all links are text; some are images.

Google states:

If you do decide to use an image as a link, filling out its alt text helps Google understand more about the page you're linking to. Imagine that you're writing anchor text for a text link.

With Image Links, Google Uses Alt Text to Understand More About the Linked Page



4.2.10 Canonical Tag

A canonical tag (aka “rel canonical”) is a way of telling search engines that a specific URL represents the master copy of a page. Using the canonical tag prevents problems caused by identical or “duplicate” content appearing on multiple URLs. Practically speaking, the canonical tag tells search engines which version of a URL you want to appear in search results.

Code sample

```

1 <!-- HTML: TAGS FOR CONTENT: EACH-OF-THIS-PARTY, AKA:-->
2 <!-- HTML: TAGS FOR CONTENT: EACH-OF-THIS-PARTY, AKA:-->
3 <!-- HTML: TAGS FOR CONTENT: EACH-OF-THIS-PARTY, AKA:-->
4 <!-- HTML: TAGS FOR CONTENT: EACH-OF-THIS-PARTY, AKA:-->
5 <!-- HTML: TAGS FOR CONTENT: EACH-OF-THIS-PARTY, AKA:-->
6 <!-- HTML: TAGS FOR CONTENT: EACH-OF-THIS-PARTY, AKA:-->
7 <!-- HTML: TAGS FOR CONTENT: EACH-OF-THIS-PARTY, AKA:-->
8 <!-- HTML: TAGS FOR CONTENT: EACH-OF-THIS-PARTY, AKA:-->
9 <!-- HTML: TAGS FOR CONTENT: EACH-OF-THIS-PARTY, AKA:-->
10 <!-- HTML: TAGS FOR CONTENT: EACH-OF-THIS-PARTY, AKA:-->
11 <!-- HTML: TAGS FOR CONTENT: EACH-OF-THIS-PARTY, AKA:-->

```

The rel=canonical tag in action. Here, it indicates that the page on which this tag appears should be treated as a duplicate of the specified URL.

The problem with URLs

You might be thinking “Why would anyone duplicate a page?” and wrongly assume that canonicalization isn’t something you have to worry about. The problem is that we, as humans, tend to think of a page as a concept, such as your homepage. For search engines, though, every unique URL is a separate page.

For example, search crawlers might be able to reach your homepage in all of the following ways:

- <http://www.example.com>
- <https://www.example.com>
- <http://example.com>
- <http://example.com/index.php>
- <http://example.com/index.php?r...>

To a human, all of these URLs represent a single page. To a search crawler, though, every single one of these URLs is a unique “page.” Even in this limited example, we can see there are five copies of the homepage in play. In reality, though, this is just a small sample of the variations you might encounter.


Modern content management systems (CMS) and dynamic, code-driven websites exacerbate the problem even more. Many sites automatically add tags, allow multiple paths (and URLs) to the same content, and add URL parameters for searches, sorts, currency options, etc. You may have thousands of duplicate URLs on your site and not even realize it.

4.2.11 Robot Meta Tags

Robots meta directives (sometimes called “meta tags”) are pieces of code that provide crawlers instructions for how to crawl or index web page content. Whereas robots.txt file directives give bots suggestions for how to crawl a website’s pages, robots meta directives provide more firm instructions on how to crawl

and index a page's content. There are two types of robots meta directives: those that are part of the HTML page (like the *meta robotstag*) and those that the web server sends as HTTP headers (such as *x-robots-tag*). The same parameters (i.e., the crawling or indexing instructions a meta tag provides, such as "noindex" and "nofollow" in the example above) can be used with both meta robots and the x-robots-tag; what differs is how those parameters are communicated to crawlers.

`<meta name="robots" content="noindex, nofollow">`



Parameters

Meta directives give crawlers instructions about how to crawl and index information they find on a specific webpage. If these directives are discovered by bots, their parameters serve as strong suggestions for crawler indexation behavior. But as with robots.txt files, crawlers don't *have* to follow your meta directives, so it's a safe bet that some malicious web robots will ignore your directives.

Below are the parameters that search engine crawlers understand and follow when they're used in robots meta directives. The parameters are not case-sensitive, but do note that it is possible some search engines may only follow a subset of these parameters or may treat some directives slightly differently.

Indexation-controlling parameters:

- **Noindex:** Tells a search engine not to index a page.
- **Index:** Tells a search engine to index a page. Note that you don't need to add this meta tag; it's the default.
- **Follow:** Even if the page isn't indexed, the crawler should follow all the links on a page and pass equity to the linked pages.
- **Nofollow:** Tells a crawler not to follow any links on a page or pass along any link equity.
- **Noimageindex:** Tells a crawler not to index any images on a page.

- **None:** Equivalent to using both the `noindex` and `nofollow` tags simultaneously.
- **Noarchive:** Search engines should not show a cached link to this page on a SERP.
- **Nocache:** Same as `noarchive`, but only used by Internet Explorer and Firefox.
- **Nosnippet:** Tells a search engine not to show a snippet of this page (i.e. meta description) of this page on a SERP.
- **Noodyp/noydir [OBSOLETE]:** Prevents search engines from using a page's DMOZ description as the SERP snippet for this page. However, DMOZ was retired in early 2017, making this tag obsolete.
- **Unavailable_after:** Search engines should no longer index this page after a particular date.

Types of Robots Meta Directives

There are two main types of robots meta directives: the *meta robots tag* and the *x-robots-tag*. Any parameter that can be used in a meta robots tag can also be specified in an x-robots-tag.

We'll talk about both the meta robots and x-robots tag directives below.

Meta robots tag

The meta robots tag, commonly known as “meta robots” or colloquially as a “robots tag,” is part of a web page's HTML code and appears as code elements within a web page's `<head>` section:

```
<head>
<title>Moz: SEO Software, Tools and Resources for Better Marketing</title>
<link rel="alternate" type="application/rss+xml" title="RSS 2.0" href="http://feedpress.me/mozblog">
<meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1">
<meta name="description" content="Backed by industry-leading data and the largest community of SEOs on the planet, Moz builds tools that make inbound marketing easy. Start your free trial today!">
<link rel="canonical" href="https://moz.com">
<meta name="robots" content="noodp">
</head>
```

Meta robots tag

Code sample:

```
<pre><meta name="robots" content="[PARAMETER]"></pre>
```

While the general `<meta name="robots" content="[PARAMETER]">` tag is standard, you can also provide directives to specific crawlers by replacing the “robots” with the name of a specific user-agent. For example, to target a directive specifically to Googlebot, you’d use the following code:

```
<meta name="googlebot" content="[DIRECTIVE]">
```

Want to use more than one directive on a page? As long as they’re targeted to the same “robot” (user-agent), multiple directives can be included in one meta directive – just separate them by commas. Here’s an example:

```
<meta name="robots" content="noimageindex, nofollow, nosnippet">
```

This tag would tell robots not to index any of the images on a page, follow any of the links, or show a snippet of the page when it appears on a SERP.

If you’re using different meta robots tag directives for different search user-agents, you’ll need to use separate tags for each bot.

X-robots-tag

While the meta robots tag allows you to control indexing behavior at the page level, the *x-robots-tag* can be included as part of the HTTP header to control indexing of a page as a whole, as well as very specific elements of a page.

While you can use the x-robots-tag to execute all of the same indexation directives as meta robots, the x-robots-tag directive offers significantly more flexibility and functionality that the meta robots tag does not. Specifically, the x-robots permits the use of regular expressions, executing crawl directives on non-HTML files, and applying parameters at a global level.

```

pragma: no-cache
date: Tue, 11 Apr 2017 16:40:20 GMT
content-encoding: gzip
x-content-type-options: nosniff
server: GSE
strict-transport-security: max-age=10886400; includeSubDomains
content-type: text/html; charset=utf-8
status: 200
cache-control: no-cache, no-store, max-age=0, must-revalidate
x-robots-tag: noindex, nofollow, nosnippet ← x-robots-tag in action
alt-svc: quic=":443"; ma=2592000; v="37,36,35"
x-xss-protection: 1; mode=block
expires: Mon, 01 Jan 1990 00:00:00 GMT
200

```

To use the x-robots-tag, you'll need to have access to either your website's header .php, .htaccess, or server access file. From there, add your specific server configuration's x-robots-tag markup, including any parameters. This article provides some great examples of what x-robots-tag markup looks like if you're using any of these three configurations.

Here are a few use cases for why you might employ the x-robots-tag:

- Controlling the indexation of content not written in HTML (like flash or video)
- Blocking indexation of a particular element of a page (like an image or video), but not of the entire page itself
- Controlling indexation if you don't have access to a page's HTML (specifically, to the <head> section) or if your site uses a global header that cannot be changed
- Adding rules to whether or not a page should be indexed (ex. If a user has commented over 20 times, index their profile page)

4.2.12 404 Error

A 404 error is an HTTP response code stating that the browser was able to connect to the server but could not find the page in question.

404 errors are more common with websites that have a lot of web pages and have to constantly undergo maintenance.

404 errors in SEO are risky because there is a high chance that the website is going to lose a lot of page rank value depending on the number of errors.

Taking search engines like Google, Having a 404 error for a page that no longer exists causes Google to delete its indexing for the webpage and subsequently remove page rank on all the links pointing towards the webpage hence making the links useless.

How do you fix 404 errors in SEO?

Fixing 404 errors in SEO has only one answer, which is using as many 301 redirects as possible.

Redirection, in general, retains 90-99% link equity(ranking power) the links pointing to the websites won't end up becoming useless immediately.

Although this is to be take in consideration that 301 redirects should be taken in relevance to the webpage with the 404 error, as using 301 redirects blindly could result in losing traffic.

If you have too many 404 errors, there are two ways that you can use 404 errors in SEO

Bulk redirect

Bulk redirect consists of taking every web page and redirecting them towards the main homepage

Selective redirect

Selective redirect consists of downloading all the backlinks of your website then proceeding to select the ones that are the most important. After you select the most important backlinks for your website, proceed to redirect them.

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OFF-PAGE OPTIMIZATION

INTRODUCTION

Off page optimization is defined as the technique which helps the website to improve its ranking on the search engine results page. These factors functions outside the boundaries of the web pages. These ranking factors are not directly controlled by the publisher. Off-page optimization basically deals in link building for SEO.

Off page SEO is a long term and time consuming process. It includes acquiring backlinks to your webpage from the authority sites, Social media and social bookmarking. Off page factors work in the background to improve the search rankings. Search engines have been running on two wheels, On page and Off page factors. Even if one dis-balances, it will lead to failure in proper SEO. Talking about Off page optimization, there are people who ignore

off page optimization, but still expect quick results. To make sure that your website ranks, there should be visibility of the website and so the balance needs to be maintained.

Off page SEO plays an important role in the backend. Without applying off page factors, surely your website can not rank. This is due to the major factors such as link building, social media, videos, blogging etc. If any website needs references from a website, it (website) should be socially active and should definitely be shared amongst the communities of their niche.

Hence, off page factors are essential for any website to rank.

5.1 OFF PAGE OPTIMIZATION TECHNIQUES FOR BETTER RANKINGS

By applying off page SEO tactics, you can boost the ranking of your web page, be noticeable and get drive traffic on your webpage. Let's go through various techniques to optimize your web page.

- *Link building* - It is one of the most famous ways of doing off page optimization. Link building is defined as building external links with your website. The main aim is to get as much links or votes you can to rank higher than your competitors.
- The webmasters are looking out for cheat codes that how they can build links to their websites. The more the backlinks, the better is the authority. Some of the ways which the helps in increasing link building are:
 - ***Blog Directories*** - These are directories like yellow pages which links the entry back to a website.
 - ***Forum signatures*** - By commenting on forums, people were getting a link back to their website as they used to leave links in their signatures.
 - ***Comment link*** - Just as in forum signatures, where you leave a link in your signature when you comment on any other's blog to get a link back, here, instead of

writing your name you write keywords in the comment. For example, Instead of writing 'Comment by Joe' you write 'comment by where to buy dogs' or something of that sort.

- **Article directories** - If you publish your article in the article directories, you will get a backlink to your website. Mainly directories accept only original content, but there can be some directories which accepts article which are reworded or spinned.
- **Shared content directories** - In shared content directories, websites like hubpages or info-barrel allows you to publish your content and in return, you can add links favoring your website.
- **Link exchange schemes** - This is an interesting way to build links. The scheme talks about getting in touch with the webmasters of different websites and exchange links, i.e. linking website 'X' to website 'Y' and in return website 'Y' would link to website 'X'. There is another complex method which is by exchanging links with 3, i.e. linking website 'X' from website 'Y' and website 'Y' links to another website.
- **Social Media** - Another way of building links is by engaging your website on social media platforms. It is a great way to attract traffic. The links which you see on social media are generally no-follow links, but this does not indicates that those links do not have any value. Mentioning your brand on social media platforms will drive a hell lot of traffic. Go straight with your strategy and website, you will definitely start ranking.
- **Social Bookmarking** - This is another great way of promoting and attracting huge traffic to your website. This can be done by promoting your blogs on famous websites such as, Redd it, Scoop It, digg, Stumble Upon etc. The content is very frequently updated on such sites, which is appreciated by Search engines.

- **Guest Blogging** - We know the fact that by curating new, unique, compelling content, building up new links will drive traffic to your website. Blogging is a way to attract traffic with bare cost. By posting comments on other websites will allow you to add links in the comments section? The links will be crawled by the search engines leading to driving traffic to your website.



5.1.1 How does off Page Optimization Benefits in SEO?

The benefits of off page optimization are:

- **More rankings** - By using the techniques of “off page” optimization, a successful strategy will help increase your website rankings in the SERPs. This will help you attract more traffic.
- **More exposure** - The best part about SEO is when you start ranking higher on SERPs, you get more exposure, i.e. more clicks, more visits, more links and more mentions on social media. This is a chain of events which takes place one after another.

- **Better page-rank** – Page-rank is a concept introduced by Larry page which talks about importance of a website in the eyes of Google. The concept is about ranking the web pages between 1 to 10. The higher the rank, the better is the website in the eye of Google.

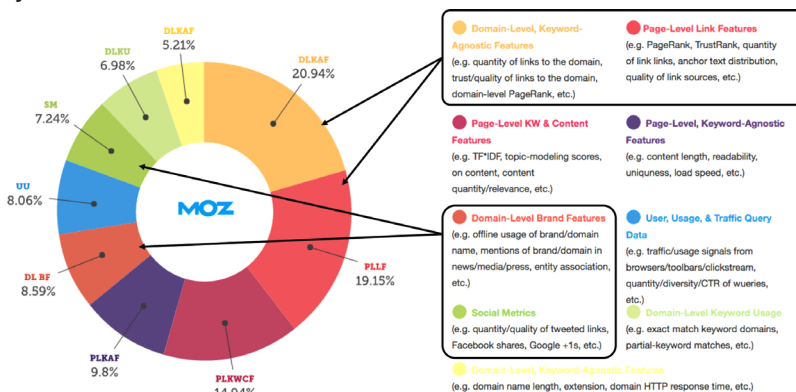
5.1.2 What is off-page SEO?

“Off-page SEO” (also called “off-site SEO”) refers to actions taken outside of your own website to impact your rankings within search engine results pages (SERPs).

Optimizing for off-site ranking factors involves improving search engine and user perception of a site’s popularity, relevance, trustworthiness, and authority. This is accomplished by other reputable places on the Internet (pages, sites, people, etc.) linking to or promoting your website, and effectively “vouching” for the quality of your content.

5.1.3 Why does off-page SEO matter?

While search algorithms and ranking factors are constantly changing, the general consensus within the SEO community is that the relevance, trustworthiness, and authority that effective off-page SEO affords a website still play a major role in a page’s ability to rank.



While we don't know the full algorithm Google uses to rank content, data from our Search Engine Ranking Factors study show that off-site SEO-related factors likely carry more than 50% of the ranking factor weight.

5.1.4 Links and off-page SEO

Building backlinks is at the heart of off-page SEO. Search engines use backlinks as indications of the linked-to content's quality, so a site with many high value backlinks will usually rank better than an otherwise equal site with fewer backlinks.

There are three main types of links, defined by how they were earned: natural links, manually built links, or self-created links.

- Natural links are editorially given without any action on the part of a page owner. For example, a food blogger adding a link to a post that points toward their favorite produce farms is a *natural link*.
- Manually built links are acquired through deliberate link-building activities. This includes things like getting customers to link to your website or asking influencers to share your content.
- Self-created links are created by practices such as adding a backlink in an online directory, forum, blog comment signature, or a press release with optimized anchor text. Some self-created link building tactics tend toward black hat SEO and are frowned upon by search engines, so tread lightly here.

Regardless of how links were obtained, those that offer the greatest contribution to SEO efforts are generally those that pass the most equity. There are many signals that positively contribute to the equity passed, such as:

- The linking site's popularity
- How related the linking site's topic is to the site being linked to
- The "freshness" of the link

- The anchor text used on the linking site
- The trustworthiness of the linking site
- The number of other links on the linking page
- Authority of the linking domain and page

5.1.5 Non-link-related off-site SEO

While earning links from external websites is the most commonly practiced off-page SEO strategy, almost any activity that a) occurs outside of your own website and b) helps to improve your search ranking position could be thought of as “off-page SEO.” These include things like:

- Social media marketing
- Guest blogging
- Linked and unlinked brand mentions
- Influencer marketing

It’s important to note, though, that the net result of each of these activities is to somehow create a reference to your site from elsewhere on the web — be that reference a link, a mention of your brand or website, or otherwise. So, the concept of truly “non-link-related” off-page SEO is actually a bit of a misnomer!

A note on local off-page SEO:

- Off-page SEO relies on human behavior (namely, that people only reference and share content they like). As such, it applies to both organic and local SEO. Even in a brick-and-mortar business, high-quality products get a lot of word-of-mouth referrals from current customers — the in-person equivalent of off-page SEO.

How to do off-page SEO

At a high level, improving the “off-page SEO” of a website involves improving search engine and user perception of a site’s quality. This happens by getting links from other sites (especially

those that are reputable and trustworthy themselves), mentions of your brand, shares of your content, and “votes of confidence” from sources outside of your own website.

5.2 PAGE RANK

PageRank (PR) is an algorithm used by Google Search to rank web pages in their search engine results. PageRank is a way of measuring the importance of website pages. According to Google:

- PageRank works by counting the number and quality of links to a page to determine a rough estimate of how important the website is. The underlying assumption is that more important websites are likely to receive more links from other websites.

Currently, PageRank is not the only algorithm used by Google to order search results, but it is the first algorithm that was used by the company, and it is the best known.

PageRank is a link analysis algorithm and it assigns a numerical weighting to each element of a hyperlinked set of documents, such as the World Wide Web, with the purpose of “measuring” its relative importance within the set. The algorithm may be applied to any collection of entities with reciprocal quotations and references. The numerical weight that it assigns to any given element E is referred to as the *PageRank of E* and denoted by $PR(E)$.

A PageRank results from a mathematical algorithm based on the web-graph, created by all World Wide Web pages as nodes and hyperlinks as edges, taking into consideration authority hubs such as cnn.com or mayoclinic.org. The rank value indicates an importance of a particular page. A hyperlink to a page counts as a vote of support. The PageRank of a page is defined recursively and depends on the number and PageRank metric of all pages that link to it (“incoming links”). A page that is linked to by many pages with high PageRank receives a high rank itself.

Numerous academic papers concerning PageRank have been published since Page and Brin's original paper. In practice, the PageRank concept may be vulnerable to manipulation. Research has been conducted into identifying falsely influenced PageRank rankings. The goal is to find an effective means of ignoring links from documents with falsely influenced PageRank.

5.2.1 A Little Flash Back on PR

PageRank was developed by Larry Page and Sergey Brin at Stanford University in 1996. They did this as a part of their research project to make a new kind of Search Engine.

It was based on the idea of analyzing links or categorizing them into a hierarchy based on their popularity. Sergey and Brin founded Google Inc. and shortly afterwards this (PageRank) formed the prototype for the Google Search Engine.

So, what is PageRank all about?

PageRank is a method employed by Google to determine the importance or relevance of a page. Every website is given a Google PageRank on a scale of 0-10. It is one of the many factors that determine Google Search Results.

Links given by one website to another are like votes. The more number of votes that a website gets from credible sources, the more important Google will consider it and therefore, would be more trusted by the users.

The higher the value of PR the better ranked is the site on SERP. As we go higher, it becomes more difficult to attain a good score. Score 0 is worst and score 10 is best.

- Score 0- site is PR 0
- Score 1- very poor
- Score 2- poor

- Score 3- average
- Score 4- above average
- Score 5- good
- Score 6- very good
- Score 7- great
- Score 8- you are an amazing site
- Score 9- you are even more huge/ big
- Score 10- you are the best! Like google.com, adobe.com and apple.com.

Were you aware of the formula behind calculating the PageRank?

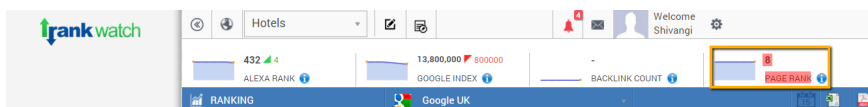
To calculate the PageRank of a page, all its Backlinks (both, inbound and outbound) are taken into account. Here is the simple (okay fine, complicated!) equation for calculating the PageRank:

$$PR(A) = (1-d) + d(PR(t1)/C(t1) + ... + PR(tn)/C(tn))$$

- T1-tn are the pages that are linked to page 'A' whereas
- 'C' is the total number of outbound links of page 'A' and
- 'd' is the Damping Factor (probability that the visitor will continue) usually set to 0.85.

How to check Google PageRank?

Simply install PageRank toolbar for Chrome for instantly checking the PR of a site. If you want a good tool which along with your PageRank, will guide on a lot of SEO factors, visit RankWatch



The above screenshot shows the PageRank of Hotels.com.

5.2.2 Link juice: The concept behind PageRank

When a website 'A' links to your website/webpage, Google sees this as a favorable vote from Site 'A' to your website. All of the other (similar) links votes are considered by Google to conclude about the relevance of the web pages, in particular and the website, in general. Here lies the basic concept of PageRank.

When any website links to your website/web pages, or in case of internally linking your pages, the link passes 'PageRank point' or what is commonly referred to as 'link juice' transfer.

Now, the amount of link juice which passes basically depend on two factors:

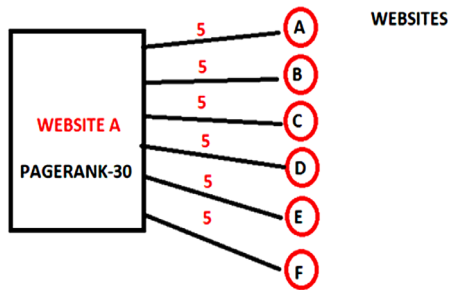
- Number of PageRank points of the webpage which is passing the link juice/PageRank points.
- Total number of links on the webpage which is passing the link juice/PageRank points.

One thing to know here is that, though Google gives a PageRank score between 1-10, but the 'points' each page gets from the link juice (passed by high quality inbound links) can significantly exceed 10.

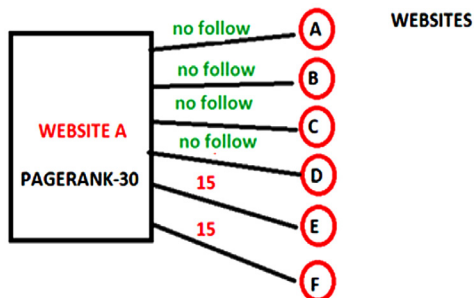
Web pages of highly significant and powerful websites can pass link juice points on hundreds and thousands.

is link juice passed/transferred?

Link Juice or PageRank that is passed is a percentage of the original PageRank of the site. Usually 10%-15% is retained and the rest is divided equally among the outgoing links. It is important to note that each web page is only allowed to pass link juice till a certain limit. The limit depends on the PageRank of the page. Unnecessarily linking to pages may not get us their link juice if the website has reached its limit of transferring link juice. If the website changes the attribute of the link to 'no follow' then, in that case, there is no transfer of Link Juice.



For example, you have a PageRank of say 30 and you are linking to six websites. The link Juice is transferred equally among these six websites. Each gets a Link Juice of five. If we give 'no follow' tags to four of those websites then the remaining two get all the Link Juice. You can also transfer Link Juice to your own web pages by linking to them. This re-enforces Google to give more importance to those pages.



Have you been wondering overtime that why your PR has been falling?

First of all, let me clear a confusion plaguing almost everyone: When you link to another website, you do not lose your PR! It only accounts for, as a vote. Yes, when you add some new pages to your website, a dilution (a very small amount) of PR takes place. However if the links to inside pages is built to improve their PR, the homepage's PR also improves overtime.

On the other hand, a site's PR is reduced if a high PR site removes its links pointing to your site.

Additionally, PageRank of a page or a website may decrease for no apparent reason. The web is vast. The number of pages being added to the web is increasing every day. As the number of pages increases, so does the PageRank. As the total PageRank increases, it affects the position of pages on the rank scale. Hence, pages may drop a PageRank for no apparent reason.

Google's index is increasing on a daily basis. Google re-evaluates each page on a monthly basis. This is also known as the 'Google Dance'. When the dance gets over, a page could have either gained or lost a rank for no reason. Other factors affecting loss of PageRank are cloaking, paid and irrelevant links, hidden text links, site wide linking and automated link exchanges.

5.2.3 Some ways to improve your PageRank

Well, a simple answer to this would be to "get links from quality sites". This will ultimately account for increased PR. If it's getting harder for you to manipulate PR, it's probably better to concentrate on getting quality, and reputable sites to link to you.

Additionally, if you want a particular page to have a good PR, make sure that it has unique content, capable of getting placed in the SERPs in the eyes of Google. Well, the bottom line is, get links from real sites and in-turn have links on them.

- **Keywords-** Use keywords judiciously. Make use of appropriate keywords in your content, title tags, meta description, links, etc. also called keyword optimization.
- **Mentions-** Find out where you are being mentioned on social media, blogs, and discussion forums, etc. Send them e-mails to include the link or your website in their mentions.
- **Authentic content-** have authentic yet SEO optimized content.
- **Earn Backlinks-** you can earn Backlinks from guest blogging, commenting on others blogs and participating in forum discussions.

- Broken Links- Fix your website's broken links.
- Internal Linking- Have strong internal linking. It makes the website user friendly and easy to navigate.

5.2.4 So, finally should you be bothered about PageRank?

Well, a little amount of care would not hurt! PageRank is one of the factors that determine where your web page appears in search result ranking, but if all other factors are equal, PageRank can have significant impact on your Google rankings.

Though PageRank is not as important as before, but your ranking in SERPs can be indirectly affected by the PR of the pages linking to you. Links must be relevant. If a page with a PR of 8 has no relevance with your website then it holds no value for your website. Google removed PageRank from its Webmasters Tools few years back. This shows that its importance has decreased.

However, in some cases, PageRank plays an important role. If two websites with similar quality content on page SEO and Backlinks have different PR then, in such cases, websites with higher PR will rank higher in Search Results. This is when PR is given utmost priority.

Are you also occupied with questions below too? Worry, not. We have an answer for you

Are there any flaws in PageRank?

As everything created by man has flaws so does Google's PageRank. These flaws leave room for manipulation to get higher ranks. Google keeps coming up with updates to combat its flaws and give better quality results.

Ways to manipulate Google are:

- 'Google Bombs'- When a group of people deliberately links a particular phrase or a word to a website in order to elevate it in the Search Results. A classic example

of this is the phrase ‘miserable failure’ which bloggers linked to George W. Bush’s biography which ranked it as the most relevant link.

- ‘Link Farming’- This is when people randomly link to websites without taking into account the relevancy of the content of the website. They do this just to increase their links. This is often done using software’s that generate and submit links to thousands of websites automatically.
- Fake PageRank- There are various Black Hat SEO techniques that people use to get a good PageRank. These are ways to cheat Google to get a ‘Fake PageRank’ like cloaking and redirecting your site to a higher PageRank domain. There are various tools on the web to check fake PageRanks:
 - <http://icheckrank.com/fake-rank-checker.php>
 - <http://checkpagerank.net/>
 - <http://www.seomastering.com/fake-pagerank-checker.php>

Does changing the Domain name have an impact on your Site’s PageRank?

Changing the domain name does have an impact on your PageRank and organic traffic. The amount of impact varies on how you shift your content to the new site. However, if done slowly over a few weeks or months, it can considerably reduce the risks.

Here’s how to do it:

- After you have bought a new domain, do not just let it be parked on the web. Put up a small version of your website on it or put a coming soon page so that the Search Engines are able to crawl it. By placing some content of your website on this domain tells Search Engines that your new website is a real one and not a parked one.

- Transfer parts of your website sub-domain by sub-domain, using the 301 redirects. This helps you gauge how the redirects are faring. After some time, check if the redirect was successful and if it has or has not affected your traffic. If it has affected traffic to your website, then how much?
- Once you upload content on your new website, it is essential to place redirects from the old domain to the new one. Map each page to the appropriate URL. Do not redirect all the URLs to the homepage.
- In Google Webmasters Tool, there is the 'Change of Address tool'. Register both the old and new websites on this and mention that the old one has been transferred to the new address. This tool works at the website level. It tells Google that the entire transition has happened for the whole domain and not specifically a few pages.
- Even though the 301 redirects are supposed to pass on the PageRank and the anchor text data, even then, contact the people whom you were linking to or who were linking to your website (only the important one) and inform them about the change of address and request them to make the necessary changes.
- In spite of 301 redirects, renew the change of address every 180 days. Patience is the key!

5.3 LINK BUILDING IN DETAIL

Link building has been one of the leading factors in SEO now. Gone are those days, when webmasters could flood their website with links (and not to forget, irrelevant and useless links) and still, see their websites reaching the apex of the SERPs. Due to this nonsense spreading all over the web, Google had to use its punishment wand. Hence, it came out with the Google Penguin update and started penalizing sites with spammy links. With the introduction of this update, webmasters started understanding the relevance of link building in their SEO campaign. The ever

changing landscape of SEO and link building has all the more increased the need for building high quality backlinks. Search engines treat links as 'votes' for determining the relevance and popularity of websites. In the journey of crawlers all over the web, links are nothing but the streets and paths between the pages.



Well, there is no technical definition to this term.

- If you ask my interpretation of the same, it is simply doing your best to get good quality sites to link to you. It can also be understood as a proven marketing tactic to help increase your brand visibility and promotion.
- And now, if you want a more standardized definition, it somewhat goes like this:
- Link building is a process of acquiring hyperlinks from high quality and good websites. Hyperlinks, you may ask? They are simply, links which help the users and the search engine crawlers to navigate between the pages on the web. Many SEOs agree that link building forms one of the hardest and time consuming parts in the SEO campaign and not to forget, a recent survey revealed that 80% of the companies engaged in SEO spend more than \$1,000 every month for link building.
- Needless to say, if you can master this art of building good quality links, it can help you to excel over your competitors.

5.3.1 How do search engines perceive these link?

Links are useful for search engines in two ways:

- They help search engines to discover new pages.
- They help in determining which pages should rank in the SERPs.

You may ask how? On crawling the plethora of pages over the web, search engines extract their respective content and subsequently add them to its index. In this process, they also determine if the page has the required quality to rank for a particular keyword.

So, the jist of this is that they don't look at the content alone, but also at the number of links pointing to that page from external websites and the qualities of these websites as well. Other factors remaining constant, the more the number of high quality websites linking to you, the greater is the chance of your website ranking in the search results.

5.3.2 Off-Page SEO Tactic 1: Link Building

Link building should be the backbone of any off-page SEO strategy, given the weight of links in Google's algorithm, but it is important to understand how you should be approaching link building as an off-page tactic.

One of the key goals of off-page SEO is to build your business' authority. Links from authority websites help to position your own site as an authority — they are a vote of trust from one site to another.

The 1 goal of link building should be to earn quality links from authority sites. You should always focus on quality over quantity. It is important to understand what the link gap between your own site and your competitors looks like.

But there is a little more to link building as an off-page tactic than simply targeting authority sites (note: it is not easy to get authority sites to link to another, but with the right approach, it

is absolutely possible). Here are the three primary factors you should be considering with link building:

Authority

By now, hopefully, you already understand why the authority of links is so important. You can find the authority of any website that you are looking to earn a link from or to understand the authority of links that currently point to your domain using our own proprietary metric — Authority Score. But what exactly is AS, and what does it measure?

Authority Score is our compound domain score that grades the overall quality of a website and tells you how impactful a backlink from a site can be. The score is based on the following SEMrush data:

- The domain’s quantity and quality (authority) of backlinks.
- Quantity of referring domains and quantity of referring IPs.
- Follow vs. no follow links.
- Organic search traffic (from our Organic Positions report).
- The number of users (from our Traffic Analytics report).

To gain insights into the authority score of current links, you can use the Backlink Analytics tool. You can view your site’s links and their associated authority score on the ‘backlinks’ tab:

Backlinks 1 - 100 (5,654,352)

Closest list Table settings Export

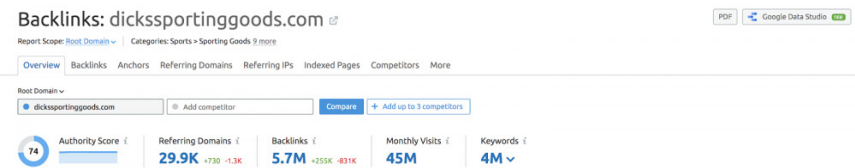
Links per ref. domain All 1 3 10 All links Follow NoFollow Sponsored UGC By type All New Lost Advanced Filters

| Page AS | Source Page Title and URL | Ext. Link | Int. Link | Anchor and Target URL | First Seen | Last Seen | Disavow |
|---------|---|-----------|-----------|--|----------------------|--------------------|---------|
| 87 | Perfect Game USA - World's Largest Baseball Scouting Service www.perfectgame.org/Schedule/FeaturedEvents.aspx?fid=30 | 38 | 171 | www.dickssportinggoods.com/c/baseball-equipment-gear/camp-Display%3AWebsite%3AVendor%3APerfectGame%3ADigitalAd%3ABaseball%3A | 29 Feb'20 | 22 Apr'20 | + |
| 86 | Basement Finishing Columbus Ohio Remodeling Contractors - Latest Trends in Bas... www.ringelephants.org/ | 4 | 13 | weights www.dickssportinggoods.com/products/air-hockey-tables.jsp | 19 Jan'20 | 10 d ago | + |
| 85 | 404 Not Found Kingdom Sports www.kingsports.net/classes/zumba-fitness | 35 | 79 | www.dickssportinggoods.com/c/soccer-gear/equipment | 8 Oct'18 | 13 d ago | + |
| 85 | Youth Sports Sponsorships Sports Matter by DICK'S Sporting Goods www.sportsmatter.org/ | 8 | 15 | CA Disclosure www.dickssportinggoods.com/c/california-disclosures DICKS.COM www.dickssportinggoods.com/ | 9 May'19 9 May'19 | 9 d ago 9 d ago | + |
| | | | | Terms of Use www.dickssportinggoods.com/c/terms-of-use | 9 May'19 | 9 d ago | |

You will see that the authority score in the first column header ‘Page AS.’ The higher the score, the higher the authority of the link.

But what about when prospecting for new links?

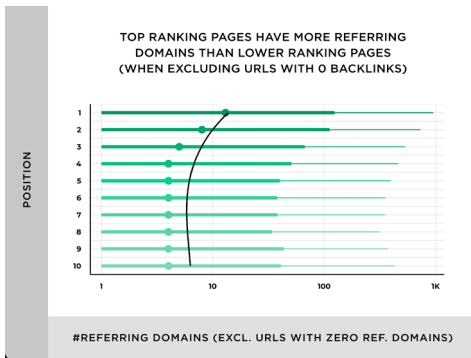
You can run any domain through the Backlink Analytics tool, and you will see the AS for that domain, not just those that link to it. You will find this on the domain’s overview tab:



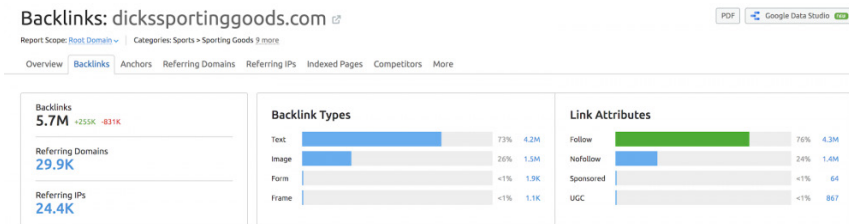
Remember, the goal of link building should be to earn links from sites with a high Authority Score, and with the data available from these tools, you can layer these insights into your prospecting.

Unique Domains

Another key metric of link building success is the number of linking root domains that point to your site, even above the number of backlinks. Studies have shown a clear correlation between the number of linking domains and higher rankings. Domain diversity should be a key focus as part of your strategy.



You can see the number of unique domains that link to your site using the referring domains tab of the Backlink Analytics tool.



Topical Relevance

You should always aim to land links from sites that topically align with your own. As an example, if you run a travel site, you should aim for the majority of the links that you earn to come from other travel sites; bloggers, online publishers (such as Lonely Planet), tourism boards, and the like. It makes sense.

Sites typically link to those that cover a similar topic, not those that aren't related. That said, it is OK to have some links that come from other topics if they are natural and make sense; just aim for the majority to be closely topically aligned.

But what about specific tactics that you can use to build and earn authority links?

You can check out our detailed guide to link building strategies that work in 2020 to gain a detailed understanding of tactics that you could be using, but our favorites include:

- Digital PR
- Unlinked Brand Mentions
- Resource Link Building
- News jacking

That said, there are a lot of effective tactics you can use to build great links, and diversifying your link profile should also be a key focus.

5.3.3 Off-Page SEO Tactic 2: Brand Building

It is now a well-known fact that Google rewards brands.

And brand building activities should form a key part of not just your wider SEO and marketing strategy but also part of your approach to off-page SEO. And once again, it all hooks back to build your online authority, both for users and search engines.

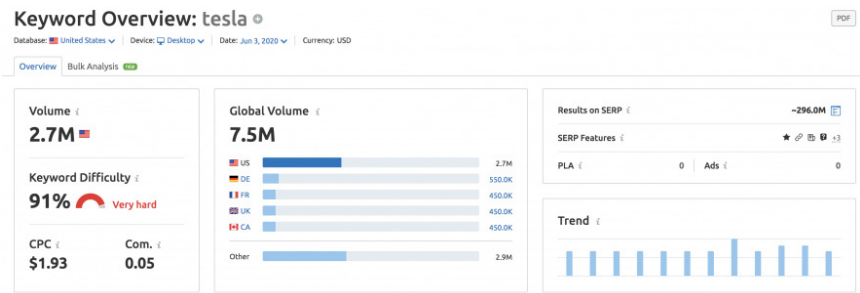
But just how does brand building intersect with your SEO strategy, and what are the metrics of success?

Brand Searches

Perhaps one of the strongest indicators that you are building your brand is an increase in brand searches.

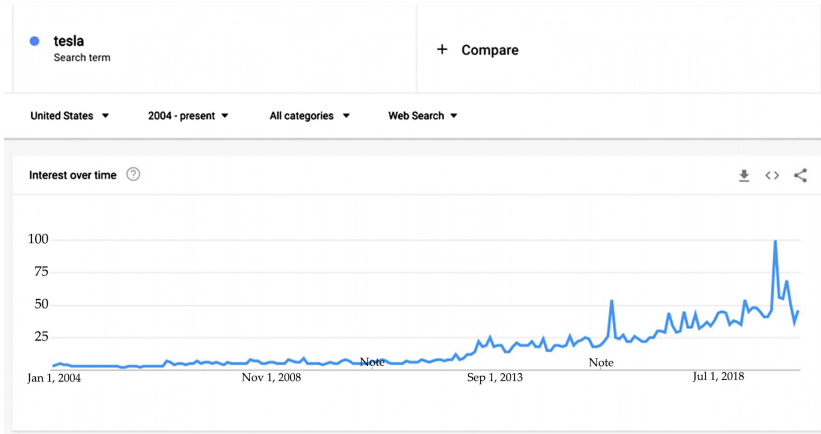
This could be searches for your brand name, products, or a domain name.

To see how your branded searches have changed over time, head to the Keyword Overview tool and enter your brand name. You will see a ‘trends’ box that indicates how search volumes have changed over the past month.



You should also take a look at Google Trends to help track interest in your brand.

Again, enter your brand name and see how interest has changed over time; it is possible to look back as far as 2004.



There is another reason why it's so important to focus on brand-building efforts, too, and that's brand SERPs.

What are brand SERPs?

These are the search results that show when someone searches your brand name.

- "Search queries in the SERPs for your brand name are vital touch-points for both people and machines and are therefore absolutely essential to your business.
- You should be tracking, evaluating, and improving them consistently."

At first, you may consider these just to have a reputational impact, but there is a strong SEO consideration, too. Barnard continues:

- "The first pages of results for the search query {Brand} indicate how well Google understands your brand, and the first 2-3 pages of results for the search query {Brand + review} indicate Google's assessment of your credibility."
- Brand-building efforts help Google to understand your credibility, which is why it has become such an important off-page SEO tactic. When you build a brand, you will also find that you naturally earn links and mentions across the web, even without having to proactively work on these.

5.3.4 Off-Page SEO Tactic 3: Content Marketing

When we think of content marketing, it is all too easy to think of it only as an on-page SEO tactic — that being the creation and publishing of content that sits on your own website.

But, taking a holistic view, content marketing spans both on-page and off-page tactics. Publishing great content on your own site is only one part of content marketing; any content that you create and publish anywhere on the web falls under content marketing.

If you go ahead and write a guest post, that is content marketing. Publish an info-graphic that gets linked to from a top-tier newspaper? That is content marketing.

The appeal of using content marketing as a tactic is that the creation of great, engaging assets make it easier to focus on off-page factors. And this, typically, comes from the promotion of the content that you are creating — publishing great, engaging assets that others want to share and link to.

Common content marketing tactics that work well to promote to build off-page signals includes:

- Blog posts
- Infographics
- Surveys, studies & research papers
- Whitepapers & eBooks

Content marketing, as a tactic, is closely intertwined with link building, social media, and PR, as well as also helping to build your brand.

Quite simply, if you have a great piece of content, tell people about it. You can use our Content Marketing Toolkit to help you not only find popular topics that are gaining traction online but also find the most relevant industry media to promote your content.

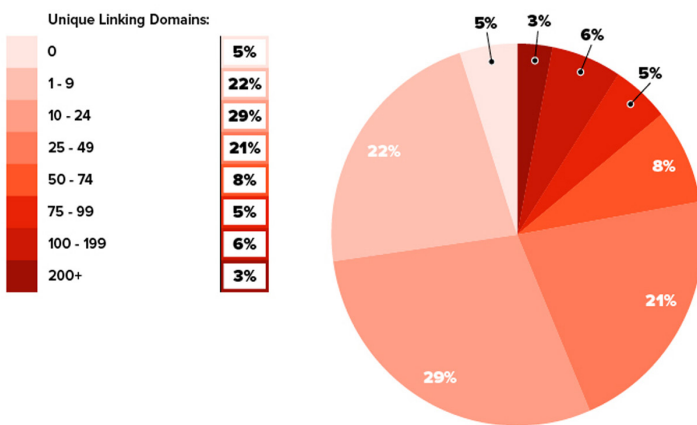
5.3.5 Off-Page SEO Tactic 4: PR

For a long time, PR and SEO were seen as two totally different marketing disciplines, but in recent years, the lines have blurred, and the two have come together.

Digital PR is now the link building tactic of choice for many SEOs, given that it is the perfect way to earn authority links at scale. You can use PR tactics to promote a great story and corresponding linkable assets, and it is possible to earn significant volumes of links as a result.

In fact, a recent study highlighted that the average campaign earns links from between 10 and 24 unique linking domains.

How Many Unique Domains Does an Average Digital PR Campaign Earn Links From?



PR contributes to off-page SEO signals in more ways than simply helping to build links. A great PR campaign can also:

- Increase brand awareness and resultant brand searches.
- Puts your business in front of your target audience and gets them talking about you.
- Drives referral traffic.
- Positions you as a thought leader in your industry and helps to build trust signals.

5.3.6 Off-Page SEO Tactic 5: Local SEO (GMB & Citations)

While local SEO is a complete discipline of SEO in its own right, there are certain elements that are key off-page SEO tactics — two are Google My Business and citations.

Google My Business

Google My Business plays a vital role in the online presence of pretty much any local business, and it is easy to forget that optimizing your page and getting it to rank on the map pack is actually off-page SEO.

GMB isn't your own website, and let's not forget that any efforts that focus on anything but your own site counts as off-page.

It has recently been reported that 46% of all Google searches are looking for local information and that 4 in 5 consumers use search engines to find local information. It is a simple fact that if it is not your business that is showing amongst local GMB results, it is one of your competitors.

Take a look at our ultimate guide to Google My Business for 2020 to learn the tips and tricks to help you optimize your listing, and understand how to make the most of the platform as part of your off-page strategy.

Citations

A citation is a mention of your business online that typically references not just your business name but also your NAP (name, address, and phone number). Think of them as business listings.

If you are a local business looking to rank for geographically targeted search terms both on the standard SERPs or as part of the map pack, you simply cannot avoid the importance of citations, given that they are considered to be one of the main off-page ranking factors.

But one of the keys to success with citations is consistency.

Inconsistent citations demonstrate a lack of coherency, and, for that reason, it is important that you take the time to ensure that all of your NAP references match up.


You can use our Listing Management Tool to audit your citations, find new opportunities, clean up duplicates, and manage reviews.

Listing Management

Get your business data correctly distributed to dozens of authoritative directories.

| Country | Business name | ZIP | Street address ⓘ | Phone number | |
|---------|---------------|------------|------------------|-----------------|--|
| US ▼ | Target ⓘ | 95110-2047 | 533 Coleman Ave | +1 408-346-2022 | |

Your Business Online Presence



| | |
|---------------|----|
| ✓ Present | 7 |
| ⚠ With issues | 14 |
| ✗ Not present | 6 |
| ? Unavailable | 0 |

Potential listings ⓘ

82

Distribute info

Export to PDF

5.3.7 Off-Page SEO Tactic 6: Social Media

It is 2020, and we live in a social-first world. In fact, 97% of digital consumers have used social media in the past month.

Social media plays a huge role in the way we, as consumers, use the web and search for answers to our questions. Think about it this way, social media platforms are used as a type of search engine (or answer engine as we are often now referring to them as).

And let's clear one thing up — social shares aren't a direct ranking factor.

Treat social media platforms as search engines and discovery platforms and understand that your presence across social can help put you in front of potential clients and customers who are looking for answers to their questions or to engage with the right brands on the social networks that they are using.

Social media is also often used as a customer service platform.

A customer wants to speak with your brand to raise a query or question? Most of your customers will reach out on social as the first port of call.

It is important that you maintain a strong presence, communicate professionally, and treat social as another brand channel, one that both existing and potential customers will discover at part of their sales journey.

5.3.8 Off-Page SEO Tactic 7: Forums

You may be surprised to see forums recommended as an off-page SEO tactic. Why?

Because for years, SEOs spammed forums, comments, and other UGC platforms as a way to build links (as a way to build not very good links).

For this reason, the attention for many shifted away from forums completely. But let's look back at one thing again, off-page SEO is about so much more than just links.

When used as part of a wider strategy, forums can add real value to your marketing mix. Rather than using forums (including both niche forums that are specific to your vertical and larger platforms like Quora and Reddit) as a way to build links, go in with a different mindset.

Think of using forums as a way to get directly involved in conversations that relate to your expertise, to position yourself as an expert, and quickly rise up to be seen as a specialist or expert.

Very few other platforms give you the opportunity to have open discussions with potential customers who are already asking questions about what you have to offer, and this is a fantastic way to begin building relationships and trust.

The screenshot shows the Quora interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Quora' logo, 'Home', 'Answer', 'Spaces', 'Notifications', and a search bar. Below this, a category bar includes 'Computer Shopping', 'Laptop Shopping', 'Laptop Recommendations', and 'Dell Laptops'. The main question is 'Which is currently the best laptop in the market?'. Below the question are options to 'Answer', 'Follow' (3), and 'Request'. There are also icons for comments (2), upvotes, and shares. An advertisement by SEMrush is displayed, asking 'What are the most effective link building strategies?' and mentioning 850 SEO and digital specialists. Below the ad, it says '6 Answers'. The first answer is by Shubham Jalan, a student, tech geek, and Marvel fan, dated September 12, 2017. His answer states that the choice depends on the user's need: everyday use (Dell Inspiron 5000 or Acer 575G), gaming (MSI, Lenovo, or Dell), or work (HP series). The answer has 2.3K views and options to 'Upvote' and 'Share'. At the bottom, there's a comment section with a placeholder 'Add a comment...' and an 'Add Comment' button.

With a bit of effort and commitment, you can relatively easily build up a strong community and level of trust from audiences on forums. Reddit and Quora are key large-scale platforms to use, but forums within your niche can be just as effective.

Forums have declined in popularity since their heyday in the 2000s, so there is a pretty good chance your competitors won't be there, making it much easier to cut through any noise.

5.3.9 Off-Page SEO Tactic 8: Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing comes in a number of different forms in 2020. Rewind a few years, and the tactic was all about bloggers doing sponsored posts. Today, it's all about Instagram, YouTube,

and TikTok. Don't start using influencer marketing as a way to build links unless they are nofollowed; links within sponsored content violate Google's Webmaster Guidelines.

We see a common theme here — off-page SEO isn't just about links.

Influencer marketing can be a phenomenal way to build your brand, amplify your content, and reach new audiences.

“

CREATING REMARKABLE CONTENT IS THE FIRST STEP TO AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY, BUT IF NOBODY ACTUALLY INTERACTS WITH YOUR CONTENT, IT'S A LOST EFFORT. FINDING THE KEY INFLUENCERS THAT WILL AMPLIFY CONTENT IS THE NEXT STEP. THIS IS WHERE CONTENT MARKETING AND INFLUENCER MARKETING BECOME BEST FRIENDS IN MODERN MARKETING.

”

We have already discussed how social networks are search engines in their own right. While they are used in a different way than Google, they are a form of a search engine where users are actively looking to find content.

Influencers can go a long way to helping to ensure you are present, as a business, on these platforms.

5.3.10 Off-Page SEO Tactic 9: Events

Events are making a comeback within marketing strategies and, believe it or not; they can help to contribute to your off-page SEO strategy.

Now more than ever, the number of online events such as webinars is significant, and they can go a long way to help build your brand.

Not only can they help to engage your audience, but you will also benefit from a real buzz around your business, which will

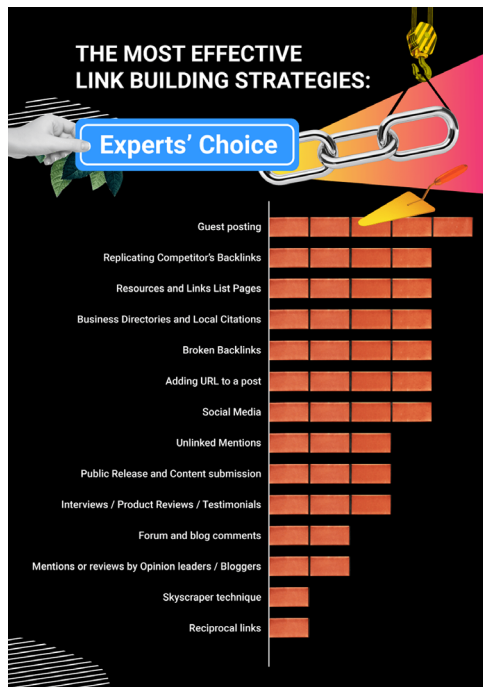
drive social engagement and even links. Host your event through Meetup.com? That is another search engine for local niche meet up events.

Don't, by any means, discount using events from your marketing strategy in 2020. Yes, they require effort to run properly, but that buzz can be difficult to replicate in other ways. They are also a great way to also pick up some fantastic PR coverage.

5.3.11 Off-Page SEO Tactic 10: Guest Posting

Guest posting, when done right, can contribute far more to your marketing strategy than just being used as a way to build links — it is all about writing as a guest for someone else's website and providing value and information to their audience.

However, there is no denying that it remains one of the most commonly used link building tactics, coming out as the most effective strategy in our 2019 study of 850 SEO specialists.



When executed properly, guest posting can help you put your brand in front of a targeted audience, send targeted traffic, and help to position you as experts in your field.

And, the reality is that links shouldn't be the only reason why you guest post; they should just be an added benefit if they happen.

Your primary objective of guest posting should be to reach a new audience, get in front of a related site's traffic, and build your brand. When you approach the tactic with this mindset, you will find that it can be highly valuable.

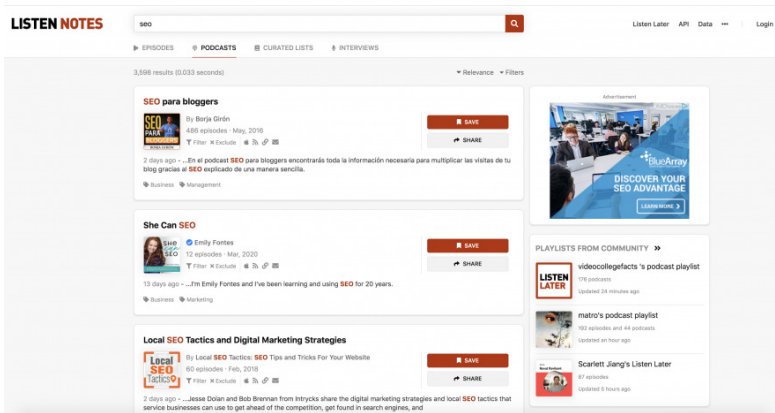
5.3.12 Off-Page SEO Tactic 11: Podcasts

Podcasts are insanely popular right now, and they are continuing to gain more listeners every month. In fact, 44% of Americans have listened to podcasts at least once in their life, while 73 million Americans listen to them monthly.

They are a big deal, and if you are not using them as part of your marketing strategy, you could be missing out on huge opportunities. Keep in mind, podcasting is work; see this guide on what it entails.

Let's look at the benefits:

- Most businesses still aren't using podcasts as part of their strategy, and this means that it is a great way to gain a competitive advantage.
- They are a great way to reach new audiences, share your expertise, and to gain visibility on search engines that are not Google.
- Apple's Podcasts is still a search engine — one that lets you find relevant podcasts with keywords.
- Google Podcasts is another, as is Listen Notes.



The businesses that recognize that SEO should cover more search engines than just Google are ultimately those who succeed in building a brand, and finding ways to target their potential audience whichever platform they choose to use.

5.3.13 Off-Page SEO Tactic 12: Reviews

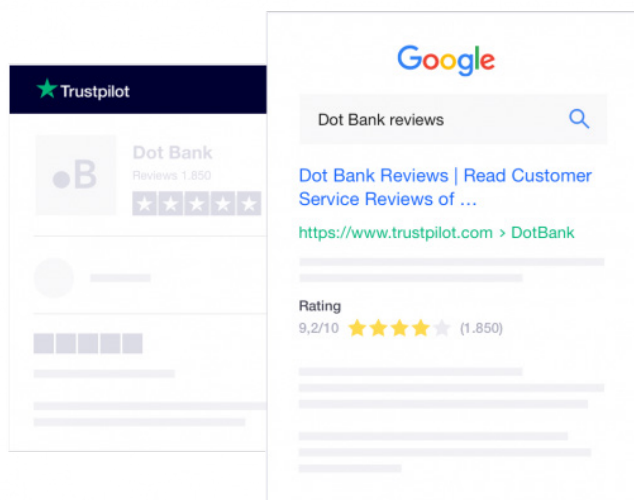
Your online reputation has never been so important.

Did you know that 93% of people say online reviews impact their buying decisions? Reviews are a big deal and a massively underrated off-page SEO tactic, and online reputation management is something that no business can ignore.

As TrustPilot says, “Perhaps the most underrated benefit of collecting reviews is that, when implemented properly, reviews can help Google better understand your site. The common understanding is that Google uses them to derive brand signals, which can boost your site’s domain authority and eventually your position in search.”

Once again, we are back to talking about brand signals. Off-page SEO, when stripped back to basics, all comes back to building your brand and creating signals that portray you as one that deserves to rank at the top of the SERPs.

A business that has collected great reviews on third-party platforms is positioning itself as a brand. Great reviews help to increase conversions and, once again, trust.



5.3.14 Off-Page SEO Tactic 13: Content Syndication

Sometimes, a publication will look to syndicate content from other sources to supplement their own original articles. They do this because it is easier than creating fresh content all the time.

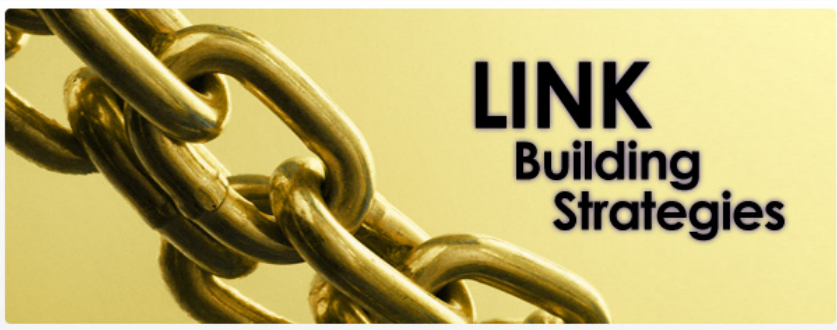
You often find that content is syndicated across sites that form part of a network owned by a TV or radio group. But publishers are starting to also use this to increase the content that goes live on their site every day.

5.4 TOUR THROUGH LINK BUILDING STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

Getting traffic to one's site (let me correct it); getting quality traffic to one's site has been the toughest task for webmasters. One evergreen technique to driving relevant content and rankings is link building. Therefore, the power of link building can never be

underestimated. Google has a simple point of view; the more the number of relevant links, the greater is the relevance and authority of websites.

So, your backlinks can be understood as ‘votes of confidence’. We discussed about what is link building and its need in the previous article. Here we will be discussing about the strategies for building links and the various techniques for building quality and safe links that Google will love.



Link building strategies

Relevance

Let's suppose that you have a website based on dog grooming. You get 2 backlinks:

- From a blog, explaining the “benefits of coffee”
- From a website featuring an article on the “best foods for dogs”

Needles to say, the backlink from the second website would be much more beneficial and valuable to you for the very simple reason, because that website is relevant with your business.

While the quality of the sites (that you link to) are of utmost important, it is equally important that those sites are relevant to the category/line of your business. So, it's better to approach only those sites to feature your content or offer you a link which have keywords that are important to your business.

Google's ranking algorithms dictate that if a user finds the search results that you offer as effective and useful, you are likely to rank well.

Go through the following points to analyze whether your backlink is relevant or not:

- Approach for links from site that functions under the same industry.
- Just in case, if the site is not directly connected with your industry, make sure that a particular section of it is related to your business/product in some way or the other.
- Links earned on a particular page should be in sync with the content on that page.
- If you are getting links from unrelated websites, make sure that the content of the page that is providing the link is in sync with the content of the page that is receiving the link.

5.4.1 Keep your Anchor Texts Natural

The days where you could do excessive link scheming, keyword stuffing and other black hat SEO and still escape Google's punishment are history now. If link building has gained so much importance over time, the significance of anchor texts cannot be underrated as well.

It is useful and beneficial to put keywords in some anchor texts here (if and only if they it is relevant to your website/webpage) here and there, but if you follow the policy of flooding keywords in anchors for all the inbound links, you are in for some great trouble of coming under Google's black hat practices radar and the following consequences. For instance, you are a website which sells dog grooming products. Now, in order to earn a backlink from a leading E-commerce website like Amazon, you write a guest blog on 'How single product/website retailers are losing their competitiveness' and get a reference back to your website

using anchor texts like best dog products, best seller for dog foods etc. Would it make any sense?

So, the bottom line is that stop using keywords in your anchor text just for the sake of it and keep the links natural. Until, the link is consistent with the context of your content, you have nothing to worry about.

5.4.2 Keep your link building strategy diversified

Earning links is not about following a static link building strategy for a long time. In the landscape of Google's ever changing algorithms, sticking with just one or two tactics for link building is not going to help you in any way. There is definitely no hard and fast rule or way to get you tons of high valued and qualified links. Try employing new tactics, if it works, continue with it for some time and keep improvising. Some of these ways include:

- Create, publish and promote high quality content
- Try and get recommendations and citations from important, reputed and valuable sites
- Guest blog for some highly trusted sites
- Immerse and involve yourself and have a strong social media presence
- Interview someone, highly regarded in your industry
- Write testimonials about your business product/service
- Take up membership in local civic organizations, marketing groups, Chamber of Commerce etc.

5.4.3 Focus more on Brand building

In the race for driving as much of the traffic they can and increasing the number of conversions, most SEO practitioners tend to forget this very important element of SEO - Brand building.

Building a strong brand presence should be the utmost priority of every webmaster. The wider is the brand awareness, the stronger

is the brand image and hence it would require lesser effort to voluntarily get high quality inbound links if the brand is well known.

Now, in order to establish your brand well, it's very important to use your own trails rather than copying your competitors. Your link building strategy should be completely different from that of your competitors in order to create your own value and prevent the confusion for the users. If both of you are featured on the same industry blogs, it would reduce your brand effectiveness and uniqueness.

Once you are through with the approach for framing your link building strategy, let's go on and find out about a few techniques for building links



Link building techniques

Forums

Forums turn out to be a great tool for promoting your link to your niche and get even more involved within the community. On entering a forum, always concentrate on giving more and taking less while replying to threads, answering question, offering advice etc.; try and contribute more in terms of value that is required by the member. This will, in a way build the trust in other's eyes about your genuineness and will also establish your reputation as an expert in your niche. Use your forum signatures effectively, generate curiosity on them to make them clickable. On

very unique way to do this is by periodically starting off with any controversial topic in your niche inviting passionate debaters and heated arguments. Another very important point is, try to “Do-follow” forums so that your the link to your site in the signature is easily crawled by the search engines. Some examples of such forums are V7nforum, Siteowners forum, Joomla forum etc.

Blog Commenting

Blog commenting helps build your relationships and authority in industry, which ultimately leads to organic links and traffic. Start by looking out for blogs in your industry; not just any blogs but, those blogs which receive a good number of traffic and engagement. Once you are done with this, follow the link of commentators and their respective blogs. In this way, you can decide on some places for placing your comments. Now, be very careful with your comment, don’t do it just for the sake of it. Read and understand the entire blog and then, go ahead and comment. Make sure you comment adds value and contributes in some sense to the same/related topic.

Guest Blog post

As explained in the section above, find good website in your niche that receive a good amount of traffic, engagement and comments. Reach out to them and request them to write a guest blog on your website and/or ask them if you could guest post on theirs. This is a very effective and simple way to building backlinks from quality websites

Blogging

Blogging is again a very good way of building backlinks and promoting your website. When you create unique, interesting and fresh content, people will voluntarily want to link to you. But, you need to create engaging content for that to happen including infographics, video tutorials, how to, lists etc.

Social Bookmarking

With internet becoming more interactive and users gaining more decisiveness on “what is good quality content and what is not”, building links through social bookmarking serves almost every online niche. You could submit your blogs or pages to the popular bookmarking sites including Digg, Reddit, StumbleUpon etc. Getting backlinks from these websites will help a great deal in your SEO as search engines really love these sites. But be careful in handling the tags which are important to broadcast your news on a wide area network.

Infographics

Infographics are still a viable method for building links, though they aren't as effective as they used to be. Infographics build links quick enough to influence a considerable change in PageRank, it builds links cost-effectively hence saving the big bucks of your budget and finally, it builds links safely, thus not inviting any negative attention from Google.

Infographics are concise and visual pieces of content that convey complex and significant information in a compelling, easy-to-understand, engaging and interesting way. These types of viral content has a lot of advantages including wide reach, increased visibility of your business, but it's link building still remains as it's most important advantage.

Whenever an infographic is shared on a site, sharers post a link back to it. Now, any of their readers who might share the infographic, would also link back to the original, hence generating a large number of backlinks.

Link Exchange

Link Exchange is another good way for building links. However, you need to be careful with this one. I am not asking to go around 'asking people for links'. Just move subtly with it. How, you may

ask? It's very simple, whenever you mention or cite any person/business/product in your post, just email him saying:

- *"Hey, just mentioned you in this blog post <http://www.xyz.com>"*.

It's a simple message intending to convey, *"Hey I did you a favour. Would you like to return the favour?"*

And well, the most effective way is to ask people whom you already know in your industry. In this way, you will be able to build yourself a platform for brand establishment. These types of relationships grow with time and helps to establish trust and respect amongst your industry peers.

Link baiting

Link baiting is another good method for promoting your website. It is simply content on your website, that people link to, not because you asked them to do so but, because they wanted to do so. These types of linkable assets can come in any form including great content, a helpful e-book, a viral video, time sensitive news, quizzes, images, infographics, contests, whitepapers etc. These assets turn out to be a great way for garnering links for your website.

Photo sharing

Photo sharing is a very good technique to help build your links. Images complement your web content and enhances visual experience. A great advantage of using image is that it builds your brand's recognition, effectively acquires natural links and diversifies the types of links generated to your website. These images would include photographs, drawings/illustrations, typography, cinemagraphs, memes etc. Share these images on as many photo sharing websites like Flickr, Picasa, Photobucket, Shutterstock etc.

Video promotions

Similar to photo sharing, you can share the videos created by you and submit to sites like YouTube, Vimeo etc allowing people to see and link to it.

Reviews

One of the most popular and simpler ways of getting backlinks and attracting traffic is to reach out to people and bloggers (of your niche) and request them to write reviews about your business product/service. This will naturally bring you links. Get listed on all the sites where you can likely expect a review like RateitAll, Kaboodle etc.

Directory submission

Many believe that directory submission is dead. But I think, it is just another source to get more of the targeted traffic. You just have to be effective and efficient while selecting the directories for submitting your website. While it is okay to submit your articles/blogs to general directories, niche directories are highly recommended. It for sure, gives delayed results, but is worth giving a try. Some good directories are Dmoz, Scrub the Web, Directory World, So Much etc.

Press release

Go with press releases or get involved in press, even a local publication would work well for starters. This can provide powerful backlinks from high ranking news domains. As pointed above, you can start with smaller local publication and then slowly work your way up with larger publications.

Article submission

This is another useful method for garnering links. You can submit your articles on popular article directory sites like Ezine, Go

Articles, Now public etc. This can also help you drive relevant traffic apart from getting you backlinks.

5.4.4 Link Popularity

Link popularity refers to the number of backlinks (incoming links) that point to a given website. In contrast to domain popularity, every backlink is counted separately. For example, in a blog about cars there are 10 different entries that have links to the website of a car dealer. In this case you would count a total of 10 backlinks. Link popularity used to be an important figure for search engines. These days many search engines have switched to focus on domain popularity, which in addition to quantity provides information about the quality of the backlinks. For this reason it is important to get as many high-quality backlinks as possible, since everyone who clicks on a backlink will be directed to your website.

Link popularity is an example of the move by search engines towards off-the-page-criteria to determine quality content. Off-the-page-criteria adds the aspect of impartiality to search engine rankings, as citations from other authors in the Web community helps define a site's reputation. In theory, great sites will naturally attract many links, and content-poor sites will have difficulty attracting any links. Link popularity assumes that not all inbound links are equal. For example, an inbound link from a major directory carries more weight than an inbound link from an obscure personal home page.

In search engine optimization (SEO) terminology it is the term used to describe the value of a Web site, where the measurement is based on the quantity of quality Inbound links (also called backlinks) to your pages. Many search engines, including Google use link popularity in its algorithm when determining where your Web site is listed in its SERP.

Link Popularity is an important Off-page SEO strategy. It refers to the total number of links that point to a website. These links are of two types; internal and external. Internal links are the links from

your own webpages and external links are from other webpages or websites.



The high link popularity shows that more people are connected to your site and it contains useful content and information. So, it is one of the important factors for the search engines to rank websites in search engine result pages, i.e. if there are two websites with same level of search engine optimization, the site with higher link popularity will be ranked higher than the other by the search engine.

However, the links to your site should be quality backlinks. A quality backlink is a link that has content that relates to your site as well as has high popularity. Anchor text also helps in determining the quality of a backlink. It tells what the link is all about. There are few guidelines you may follow before you look for link partners.

- The site should related to your content or information.
- Keep your site and its links focused.
- Share unique and relevant information.

5.4.5 Links Exchange

A link exchange is a confederation of websites that operates similarly to a web ring. Webmasters register their web sites with a central organization, that runs the exchange, and in turn

receive from the exchange HTML code which they insert into their web pages. In contrast to a web ring, where the HTML code simply comprises simple circular ring navigation hyperlinks, in a link exchange the HTML code causes the display of banner advertisements, for the sites of other members of the exchange, on the member web sites, and webmasters have to create such banner advertisements for their own web sites.

The banners are downloaded from the exchange. A monitor on the exchange determines, from referral information supplied by web browsers, how many times a member web site has displayed the banner advertisements of other members, and credits that member with a number of displays of its banner on some other member's web site. Link exchanges usually operate on a 2:1 ratio, such that for every two times a member shows a second member's banner advertisement, that second member displays the first member's banner advertisement. This page impressions: credits ratio is the exchange rate.

One of the earliest link exchanges was Link Exchange, a company that is now owned by Microsoft.

Link exchanges have advantages and disadvantages from the point of view of those using the World Wide Web for marketing. On the one hand, they have the advantages of bringing in a highly targeted readership (for link exchanges where all members of the exchange have similar web sites), of increasing the "link popularity" of a site with Web search engines, and of being relatively stable methods of hyperlinking. On the other hand, they have the disadvantages of potentially distracting visitors away to other sites before they have fully explored the site that the original link was on.

Engaging in link exchanges or paid linking activity is highly discouraged by Google and not recommended for webmasters seeking an advantage in search engine rankings. Google considers excessive link exchanges and exchanging reciprocal links "Link Schemes" and can suppress the linked site in search engine results or block in altogether.

Getting started with this strategy is simple, but you should follow a standard process every time you request a link. Let's break it down into a few easy steps:

- Do a Google search for your standard keywords--the ones that people generally use to find your site.
- Make detailed notes about the sites that appear regularly in the top ten listings for your major keywords.
- Use the Alexa Toolbar, Link Popularity or Technorati to find out what other sites these sites are linking to, whose linking to them and how much traffic they're receiving, then look up their contact information.
- Before making contact, make sure you know the correct URL for the site, the URL of the sub-page on which you want your link to appear, the name of the site owner or webmaster, the date you last visited their site, and a brief description of the contents of the site.
- When you're ready to contact the owners of these website and request a link, write a personal e-mail--don't use form letters. Be sure to include some positive comments about their site, information about you and your site (along with your URL), an explanation of why a link to you would benefit them, and instructions for contacting you to get started.

You want your request to be thorough and professional. If you can present a persuasive argument for why the link request benefits both of you, you stand a better chance of forging a connection. And if you're really eager to get your link on their site, be prepared to up the ante by offering them a commission or a link on your site in return. The investment could be well worth the extra exposure your marketing message receives.

Is Link Exchange the way to go?

Ever got emails from webmasters requesting, actually pleading you to provide a link to their websites? Familiar, isn't it? Okay, so what exactly is link exchange? Is it actually good for SEO or not?

Have similar questions? Read on to know more on the topics



Link exchange

It's much like the barter system, except here you trade in just links. You give your backlink to some website, and the same webmaster returns the favor by giving you his backlink. Sorted, right? Everyone is happy! But, only if it was this easy.

Prior to the *strict-Google-algorithmic scenario*, this was an often used practice. In fact, it constituted as a key to improve Google search rankings. But now, Google's algorithms have become much strict and sophisticated. Hence, links exchanges stopped working well for everyone. In fact, sometimes the sites involved were even penalized by Google.

All the above instances gave a bad image to link building and started to make people believe that this was an evil practice and will make them land in great troubles with Google.

Well, this is not entirely true. Google is only against artificial or manipulative links, i.e., those links which are used to fool Google and increase the rankings.

So, this means that can some link exchanges be good? Yes, of course!

Link exchanges can be good too!

Link exchanges with websites having the following characteristics will surely serve some good to your websites:

- If their website can get you a lot of related, relevant and targeted traffic.
- If the other website is a good resource of information that would be useful for your users.
- If their link neighborhood is clean and are a quality and authoritative website.
- If their website is not in direct competition with yours.
- The keywords that they rank for should be consistent with some of your keywords.

How can it be kept good? Keep it natural!

You don't have to think about it too much! You see, when you go ahead building quality relations with other webmasters of your niche, you will eventually keep having link exchanges, without even you thinking about it.

For example, I write a lot on SEO all the time. During my research, if I come across some really good stuff on the same lines of SEO, I tend to share it via my Facebook, Twitter etc. Sometimes, these articles also give me some nice ideas about the topic which I should write on. So, I reference or link them back while writing on those topics.

And I think, a lot of them would be doing the same.

So, you really think I would be penalized for all these link exchanges that are actually done for the purpose of adding value to my readers?

Is it really wrong to link with related niche sites in case if they link back to me?

Well, those are rhetorical questions. I think I made my point clear, link exchanges are good if you do them the right way.

But, what about my PageRank? Well, forget about it!

I know what you might be thinking right now. It's common to think that, when someone gives you a link, they pass their link juice and hence you improve your ranking prospects. But, at the same time when you exchange this link by giving them your link, you pass your link juice to them as well. Hence, both the transfers negate themselves and you are back to square one.

However, it is such a wrong way to think on these lines.

You should totally stop worrying about your Pagerank. Pagerank is just one of the hundreds ranking parameters of Google. If your site has quality content that focuses on the needs of your users, then it will naturally attract links.

Just go about linking to those sites which are going to add value to your content and the users.



Hoaxslayer

- If it's a new website that has no PR, no alexa, no backlinks etc.
- If the website is nowhere connected to your niche. Say, you are an SEO firm. Why would you in god's name want to link with a blog on beauty tips?
- If the website is giving out No-follow links. I mean, why do they even want to exchange links for then?
- If the website is giving you a requesting for exchanging links and have not even you're mentioned once in it. These kinds of emails are Send-to-all emails and are spammy, so beware.

- If the website have a poor navigation, horrible design, crappy content.
- If the website has a suspiciously large number of outbound links.

Conclusion: Just take care of the Penguin consequences

My advice would be to stop thinking and obsessing yourself with link exchanges. Give and take links freely if they add any value or providing an incentive to your website. Google Penguin will definitely punish you for an unnatural looking link profile.

Let the links flow naturally and you are good to go.

A natural link exchange would be one that would increase the traffic both ways.

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The background of the page features a blurred image of a person in a dark suit and tie, standing in front of a large digital display. The display shows a complex 'ANALYTICS DASHBOARD' with various data visualizations. These include a pie chart labeled 'Profits', a line graph, a bar chart, a circular gauge, and several smaller charts and icons. Text elements on the dashboard include 'ONLINE: USER A', '08/14/16', 'MOUSE CLICK NETWORK 12-18-79', 'Evolution', 'Actual vs Target', 'Availability', and 'PI Product'. The overall aesthetic is high-tech and professional, with a blue and white color scheme for the dashboard elements.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYTICS

INTRODUCTION

SEO analytics is defined as method of collecting own data to acquire organic traffic on your website. SEO analytics basically helps in increasing the organic traffic on your site through analyzing data. To master SEO analytics, you need SEO reporting, execution, task planning, and analysis to generate traffic on your site.

SEO analytics works based on data collected from your website. It makes your search engine free from any guesses, horoscopes, team politics, and client preferences. It enables data based on audience behavior, interests, and search patterns.

An effective, regular performance reporting flow is sufficient for any marketing team – SEO is no exception. It helps your team to be aware of your current situation and assess the reasons behind

it. By keeping all the performance data in a single place, your team can quickly detect systematic flaws and plan further actions. Finally, you can even predict the potential outcome of your SEO efforts.

6.1 GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Google Analytics is a free web analytics tool offered by Google to help you analyze your website traffic.

Even though “web analytics” sounds like a very small area of your digital presence, the implications of Google Analytics are in fact huge.

This is because for most companies, your website serves as a hub for all of your digital traffic. If you are running any marketing activities such as search ads or social media ads, your users are most likely going to visit your website somewhere along their user journey.

Given that your website is the central hub of your digital presence, your website is the best way to give you a holistic view of the effectiveness of all the campaigns you are running to promote your product/services online. Google Analytics is a free tool that can help you track your digital marketing effectiveness.

That’s why over 50 million websites around the world uses Google Analytics. If you are not using it, you should set it up right now.

The market leader and most commonly used analytics program is the free version of Google Analytics, or GA as it is sometimes known. The paid version of GA, called Google Analytics 360, offers some additional functionality in terms of report validity and sample sizes. But it’s mainly for websites that receive over 10 million page views per month. For the vast majority of websites, the free version of Google Analytics is perfectly fine.

Because of its functionality and widespread adoption in the market, Google Analytics is seen by many marketers as the single

source of truth for website traffic, engagement, and conversion data.

Google Analytics can track the user or consumer journey, providing rich data around channels used, locations, and devices. These journeys can then be tracked through to on-site activity, goals achieved, and exit point, as well as returning visitors, which indicates loyalty.

6.1.1 Benefits of Google Analytics

Google Analytics is an excellent choice for most marketing needs. Some benefits of the standard, free version of Google Analytics include:

- It's free
- It's easy to implement and easy to install
- It has a user-friendly interface
- It offers customizable reports, dashboards, and data collection
- Both basic and advanced options are available
- It offers seamless integration with other Google products
- It offers post-click integration with non-Google traffic sources, including Facebook, Yahoo, and Bing
- It provides extensive, valuable insights into web behavior

6.1.2 Limitations of Google Analytics

However, Google Analytics does have a number of limitations:

- It doesn't provide real-time data in downloadable historical reports
- The free version is limited to 10 million hits per month
- It offers limited customization
- It defaults to last-click attribution

- It's not always 100% accurate
- It's not as comprehensive at measuring the performance of top-of-funnel campaign activities like display and Facebook, where there is limited user visit and conversion data from these campaigns

However, despite these limitations, Google Analytics is still a highly effective web analytics tool for marketers in most instances.

6.1.3 Understanding the Basic Terminology

There are two key concepts underpinning analytics reporting – dimensions and metrics.

Dimensions describe data. They are things like country, channel, location, age, gender, and device used. Metrics measure data. Metrics might include visitor numbers, revenue, goal completions, and so on.

We segment metrics using dimensions – for example, visits by device type – to get a complete picture. So we can see the total visitor metrics for a website segmented by the device category dimension – that is, desktop, tablet, or mobile users. This allows us to better understand the effectiveness and scale of each device in driving visits and conversions on a website.

Some common dimensions within Google Analytics include:

- Channel Name
- Month
- Country
- Device

Some common engagement metrics within Google Analytics include:

- Sessions
- Users
- Percentage New Sessions

- Page Views
- Pages per Session
- Average Session Duration

You should explore the metrics that are available to you, and see how they can be segmented using dimensions to get a deeper understanding of your website traffic and customers.

6.1.4 What are conversion metrics?

Conversion metrics are an extension of standard visitor metrics. They focus on telling the story behind the valuable actions that users can take on your website. These are generally actions that impact commercial performance, such as revenue totals, conversion rates, and so on.

There are a number of common conversion metrics within Google Analytics. They can all be viewed in the Traffic reports, so you can see how much value each of the different channels is driving. Common conversion metrics include:

- **Goals** – the number of valuable actions taken on the site, including sales, leads, or downloads
- **Conversion Rate** – the percentage of visitors that complete a goal
- **Transactions** – the number of individual sales or shopping basket items sold on an ecommerce website
- **Revenue** – the monetary value of the ecommerce sales

You can start to determine the value of the campaigns from your different digital marketing channels by looking at the number of goals and transactions from each channel, the conversion rates, and the cost per conversion. With these three data points, you can decide if a channel is profitable in relation to its time and cost investment.

6.1.5 Using Google Analytics

Now that we've covered the background of web analytics tools and why they are useful for marketers and website analytics professionals, you're now ready to start using Google Analytics.

6.1.6 Setting up a Google Analytics Account

You can find Google Analytics at:

- www.google.com/analytics/
- analytics.google.com

Follow these steps to sign up for a GA account:

- To access GA, you will need an email attached to a Google account or your Google Ads login. A Gmail profile is fine.
- To set up your Google Analytics account, add your account information.
- Read and understand the Google Terms of Service.
- Enable data sharing settings, in order to link other Google products – Google Ads, Search Console, and so on – to GA.
- For practice purposes, you can add the GA demo account to your account list via the link: analytics.google.com/analytics/web/demoAccount

Installing the tracking code

Now you may be wondering how Google actually tracks users from your website. Well, for this to happen, you need a piece of code which must be put on your website to send data back to Google Analytics. This is the UA-code and it is provided during set up, but it can also be accessed later if required. This code should be given to your web developer to hard code directly onto every page of your website.

However, if you're an advanced user – and if you're using Google Tag Manager – you can add the Google Analytics UA-code into Tag Manager and it will fire the code on all pages of the website.

Keep in mind that testing is essential in all aspects of digital marketing, not least in analytics. So it's important to test to make sure your code is installed correctly and that it's firing as it should on the website.

Checking the Key Settings

After you have set up your Google Analytics account, all settings should be checked to ensure the accuracy of your data.

Within Google Analytics, there are three levels within settings – Account, Property, and View – and every item within these levels should be checked. To access these settings, click 'Admin', or the cog wheel in the bottom left of the screen.

The account is the highest level within settings and it is the access point for analytics. Within this level are the properties you want to track. There can be many properties within one account. Usually, a website or app would have its own property, so a business with multiple websites could have one account, with a property for each website.

Then within the property, you can segment the data into views. A property can have more than one view – usually there should be a raw view with unfiltered data, as well as a filtered view for main reports.

Collaborating with Your Team

In order to collaborate effectively with team members, as well as with external agencies and clients, you need to ensure that everyone is working from the same data source. To do this, you can grant access to other users within your Google Analytics account, and apply different permission settings. You can do this

in the User Management section at an Account, Property, or View level.

Linking to other tools

One of the really useful aspects of Google Analytics is its ability to seamlessly link to other Google products and tools, so that you can supplement your reports with additional insights. The main tools available to link to are Google Ads, Google Search Console, and Search Ads 360, formerly known as DoubleClick by Google.

To link these additional tools, you need to access the product linking section within the Property settings. Each of the available tools for linking are listed there and you simply follow the instructions to link the tools.

Now you have the basic information you need to get started with Google Analytics. But remember, gaining a return from Google Analytics data is an ongoing process of monitoring, analysis, and enhancement.

So don't delay – dive in and get set up – your digital campaigns will be all the better for it.

6.2 INSTALLING GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Setting up Google Analytics can be tricky. However, once you have it set up, you stand to gain a ton of invaluable information very quickly.

This is pure 80/20 — with a small amount of work now you stand to gain disproportionate rewards later.

To set up Google Analytics, you simply have to follow these steps:

- Step 1: Set up Google Tag Manager
- Step 2: Create Google Analytics account
- Step 3: Set up analytics tag with Google Tag Manager
- Step 4: Set up goals

- Step 5: Link to Google Search Console

6.2.1 Step 1: Set up Google Tag Manager

Google Tag Manager is a free tag management system from Google.

The way it works is simple: Google Tag Manager takes all the data on your website and sends it to other platforms such as Facebook Analytics and Google Analytics.

It also allows you to easily update and add tags to your Google Analytics code without having to manually write code on the back end—saving you time and a lot of headaches down the road.

Let's say you want to be able to track how many people clicked on a downloadable PDF link. Without Google Tag Manager, you'd have to go in and manually change all the download links to do this. However, if you have Google Tag Manager, you can just add a new tag to your Tag Manager to track the downloads.

First, you'll have to create an account on the Google Tag Manager dashboard.

The screenshot shows the 'Add a New Account' setup screen for Google Tag Manager. It features a vertical progress bar on the left with two steps: '1 Setup Account' (highlighted with a blue circle) and '2 Setup Container' (highlighted with a grey circle). Under 'Setup Account', there is a text input field for 'Account Name' with the placeholder 'e.g. My Company', a dropdown menu for 'Country' set to 'United States', and a checkbox for 'Share data anonymously with Google and others' which is currently unchecked. A 'Continue' button is located below these fields. Under 'Setup Container', there are two buttons: 'Create' and 'Cancel'.

Enter in an account name and click continue.

You'll then set up a container, which is essentially a bucket containing all of the “macros, rules, and tags” for your website, according to Google.

Add a New Account

✓ **Setup Account**

Account Name **My company**
Country **United States**

2 **Setup Container**

Container name
e.g. www.mysite.com

Where to Use Container

☐ Web ☐ iOS ☐ Android ☐ AMP

Create Cancel

Give your container a descriptive name and select the type of content it'll be associated with (Web, iOS, Android, or AMP).

Once that's done, click create, review the Terms of Service, and agree to those terms. You'll then be given the container's installation code snippet.

Install Google Tag Manager ✕

Copy the code below and paste it onto every page of your website.

Paste this code as high in the **<head>** of the page as possible:

```
<!-- Google Tag Manager -->
<script>(function(w,d,s,l,i){w[l]=w[l]||[];w[l].push(['gtm.start':
new Date().getTime(),event:'gtm.js']);var f=d.getElementsByTagName(s)[0],
j=d.createElement(s),dl=l!='dataLayer'?l='':l; j.async=true;j.src=
'https://www.googletagmanager.com/gtm.js?id='+i+dl;f.parentNode.insertBefore(j,f);
})(window,document,'script','dataLayer','GTM-KTVW6QC');</script>
<!-- End Google Tag Manager -->
```

Additionally, paste this code immediately after the opening **<body>** tag:

```
<!-- Google Tag Manager (noscript) -->
<noscript><iframe src="https://www.googletagmanager.com/ns.html?id=GTM-KTVW6QC"
height="0" width="0" style="display:none;visibility:hidden"></iframe></noscript>
<!-- End Google Tag Manager (noscript) -->
```

For more information about installing the Google Tag Manager snippet, visit our [Quick Start Guide](#).

OK

This is the piece of code you'll be pasting into your website's back end in order to manage your tags. To do that, copy and paste the two snippets of code onto every page of your website. As the instructions say, you'll need to the first one in the header and the second after the opening of the body.

If you're using WordPress, you can easily do this by pasting the two pieces of code into your WordPress theme.

Settings

Scripts in Header

```
<!-- Google Tag Manager -->
<noscript><iframe
src="//www.googletagmanager.com/ns.html?id=GTM-XXXX"
height="0" width="0"
style="display:none;visibility:hidden"></iframe>
</noscript>
<script>(function(w,d,s,l,i){w[l]=w[l]||
[];w[l].push({'gtm.start':
```

These scripts will be printed in the `<head>` section.

Scripts in Footer

6.2.2 Step 2: Set up Google Analytics

Like Google Tag Manager, you're going to want to create a Google Analytics account by signing up on the GA page.

Analytics

Start analyzing your site's traffic in 3 steps

- 1 Sign up for Google Analytics
All we need is some basic info about what site you'd like to monitor.
- 2 Add tracking code
You'll get a tracking code to paste onto your pages so Google knows when your site is visited.
- 3 Learn about your audience
In a few hours you'll be able to start seeing data about your site.

Start using Google Analytics

Sign up

Sign up now, it's easy and free!
Still have questions? [Help Center](#)

© 2019 Google | [Analytics Home](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Send Feedback](#)

Bookmark this page

Enter your account and website name, as well as the website's URL. Be sure to also select your website's industry category and the time zone you want the reporting to be in.

Analytics

New Account

What would you like to track?

Website ☐ Mobile app ☐

Setting up your account

Account Name
Account name cannot have more than one tracking ID.

My website

Setting up your property

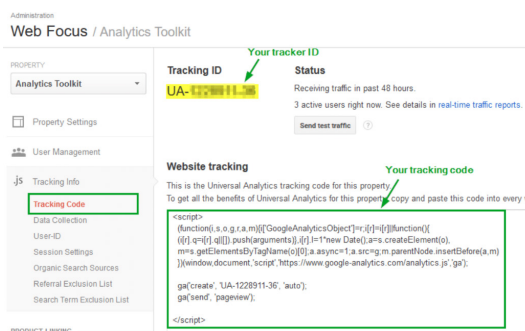
Website Name
My awesome website

Website URL
http://

Industry Category
Select One

Reporting Time Zone
United States (GMT-08:00) Los Angeles Time

Once you do all that, accept the Terms and Services in order to get your tracking ID.



The tracking ID is a string of numbers that tells Google Analytics to send analytics data to you. It's a number that looks like UA-000000-1. The first set of numbers (000000) is your personal account number and the second set (1) is the property number associated with your account.

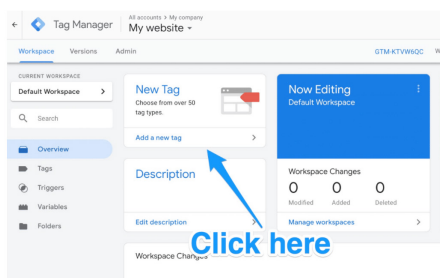
This is unique to your website and your personal data—so don't share the tracking ID with anyone publicly.

Once you have the tracking ID, it's time to move onto the next step.

6.2.3 Step 3: Set up analytics tag with Google Tag manager

Now you'll learn how to set up specific Google Analytics tracking tags for your website.

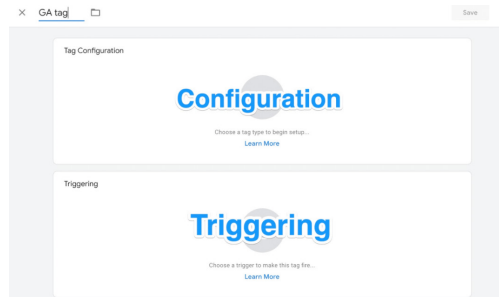
Go to your Google Tag Manager dashboard and click on the Add a new tag button.



You will be taken to a page where you can create your new website tag.

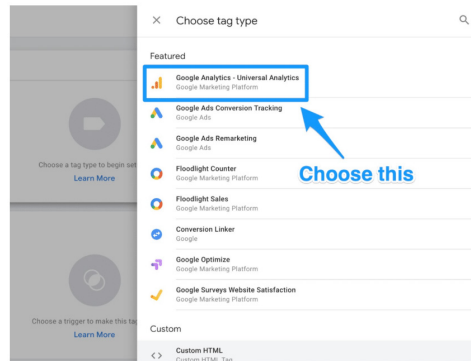
On it, you'll see that you can customize two areas of your tag:

- **Configuration.** Where the data collected by the tag will go.
- **Triggering.** What type of data you want to collect.

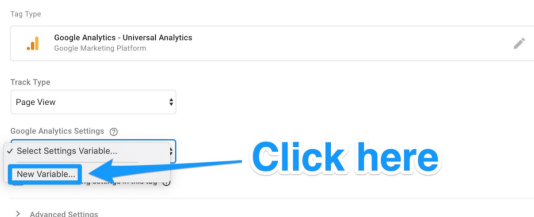


Click on the Tag Configuration button to choose the type of tag you want to create.

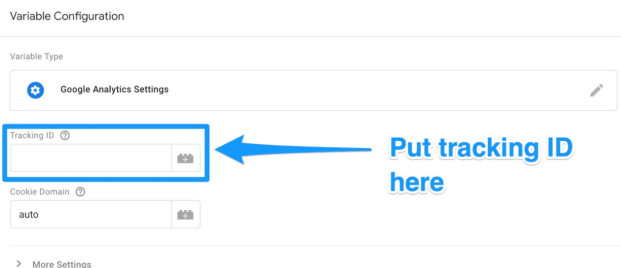
You'll want to choose the "Universal Analytics" option in order to create a tag for Google Analytics.



Once you click on that, you'll be able to choose the type of data you want to track. Do that and then go to "Google Analytics Setting" and choose "New Variable..." from the dropdown menu.



You'll then be taken to a new window where you'll be able to enter in your Google Analytics tracking ID. This will send your website's data straight into Google Analytics where you'll be able to see it later.

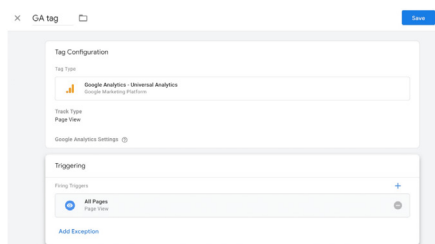


Once this is done, head to the "Triggering" section in order to select that data you want to send to Google Analytics.

As with the "Configuration," click on the Triggering button in order to be sent to the "Choose a trigger" page. From here, click on All pages so it sends data from all your web pages.



When all is said and done, your new tag set up should look something like this:



Now simply click on Save and voila! You have a new Google Tag tracking and sending data to your Google Analytics page about your website!

We're not done yet, though. You still need to set up your goals — which brings us to...

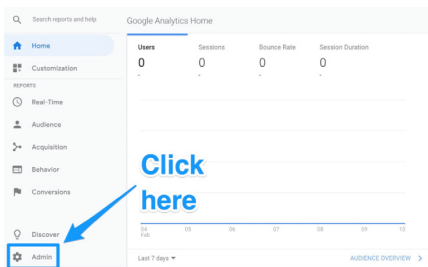
6.2.4 Step 4: Set up Google Analytics goals

While you probably know the key performance indicators for your website and business, Google Analytics doesn't.

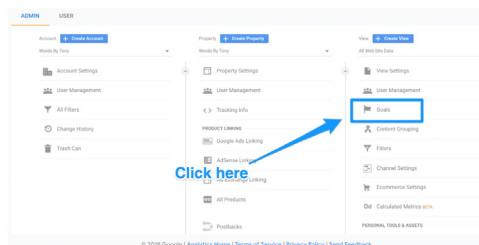
That's why you need to *tell* Google what success looks like for your website.

In order to do that, you need to set goals on your Google Analytics dashboard.

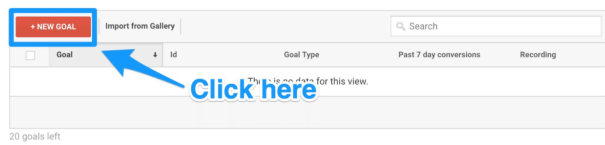
Start by clicking on the Admin button on the bottom left corner.



Once you do, you'll be sent to another window where you'll be able to find the "Goals" button.



Click on that button and you'll then be taken to the "Goals" dashboard where you'll be able to create a new goal.



From here, you'll be able to look through different goal templates to see if one matches your intended goal. You'll also need to choose the type of goal you want. They include:

- **Destination.** e.g. if your goal was for your user to reach a specific web page.
- **Duration.** e.g. if your goal was for users to spend a specific amount of time on you site.
- **Pages/Screens per session.** e.g. if your goal was to have users go to a specific amount of pages.
- **Event.** e.g. if your goal was to get users to play a video or click on a link.

✓ Goal setup Edit

Template:

2 Goal description

Name

Duration

Goal slot ID

Goal ID 1 / Goal Set 1

Type

☐ Destination ex: thanks.html

☒ Duration ex: 5 minutes or more

☐ Pages/Screens per session ex: 3 pages

☐ Event ex: played a video

☐ Smart Goal Smart Goal not available.

Measure the most engaged visits to your website and automatically turn those visits into Goals. Then use those Goals to improve your Google Ads bidding. [Learn more](#)

From there, you can get even more specific with your goals like choosing exactly how long users need to spend on your site in order to consider it a success. Once you're done, save the goal and Google Analytics will start to track it for you!

| + NEW GOAL | | Import from Gallery | | Search | |
|--------------------------|----------|------------------------|----------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Goal | Id | Success. | Past 7 day conversions | Recording |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Duration | Goal ID 1 / Goal Set 1 | Duration | 0 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

19 goals left

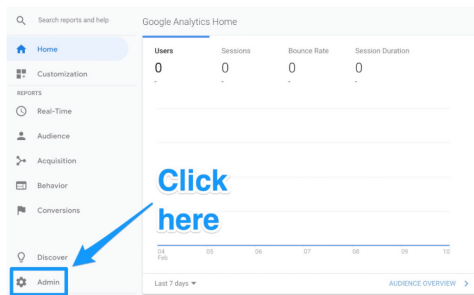
6.2.5 Step 5: Link to Google Search Console

Google Search Console is a powerful tool to help marketers and webmasters gain invaluable search metrics and data.

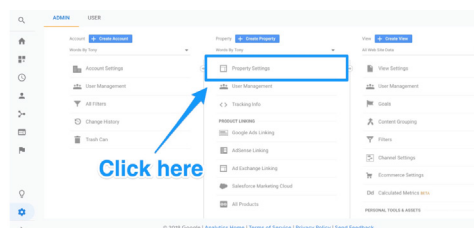
With it, you can do things like:

- Check your site's search crawl rate
- See when Google analyzes your website
- Find out what internal and external pages link to your website
- Look at the keyword queries you rank for in search engine results

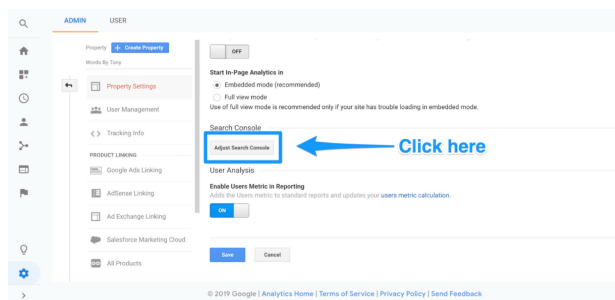
To set it up, click on the gear icon in the lower left hand corner of the main dashboard.



Then click on Property Settings in the middle column.



Scroll down and click on Adjust search console.

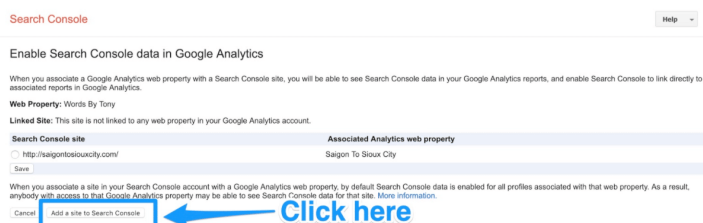


Here you'll be able to start the process of adding your website to Google Search Console.

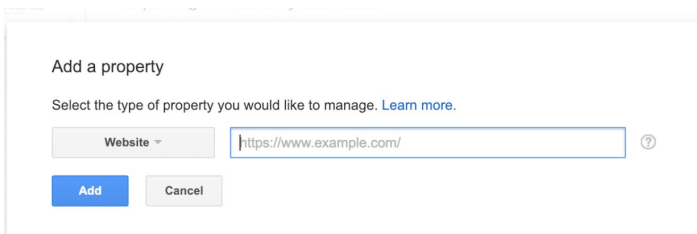
Search Console Settings



Click on the Add button and you'll be redirected to this page. At the bottom, click on the Add a site to Search Console button.



From here, you'll be able to add a new website to Google Search Console. Enter in your website's name and click Add.



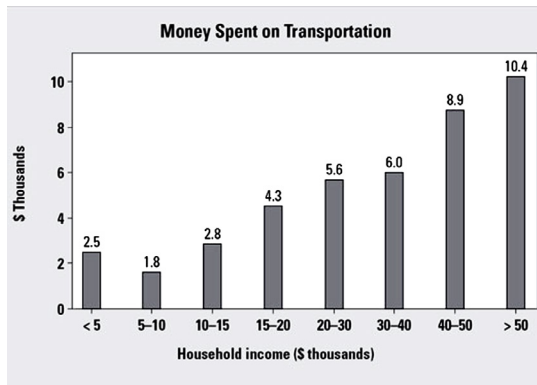
Follow the directions to add the HTML code to your site. Once you're done with that, click on "Save" and you should be taken back to Google Analytics!

Your data won't appear right away — so be sure to check back later to see your Google Search Console data.

6.3 INTERPRETING BARS & FIGURES

A bar graph (or bar chart) is perhaps the most common statistical data display used by the media. A bar graph breaks categorical data down by group, and represents these amounts by using bars of different lengths. It uses either the number of individuals in each group (also called the frequency) or the percentage in each group (called the relative frequency).

An example of a bar graph would be to show how much money people in the United States spend on transportation to get back and forth to work. The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (did you know such a department existed?) conducted a study on transportation in the U.S. recently, and many of its findings are presented as bar graphs like the one shown in this image:



This particular bar graph shows how much money is spent on transportation for people in different household-income groups. It appears that as household income increases, the total expenditures on transportation also increase. This makes sense, because the more money people have, the more they have available to spend.

But would the bar graph change if you looked at transportation expenditures not in terms of total dollar amounts, but as the

percentage of household income? The households in the first group make less than \$5,000 a year and have to spend \$2,500 of it on transportation. (*Note:* The label reads “2.5,” but because the units are in thousands of dollars, the 2.5 translates into \$2,500.)

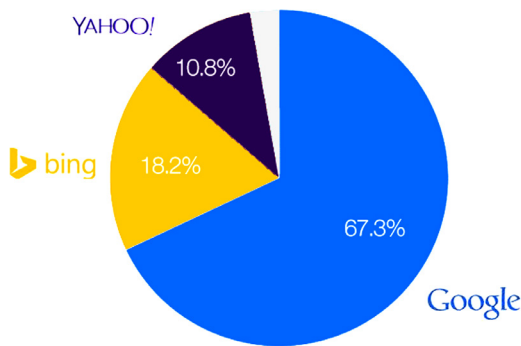
This \$2,500 represents 50% of the annual income of those who make \$5,000 per year; the percentage of the total income is even higher for those who make less than \$5,000 per year. The households earning \$30,000–\$40,000 per year pay \$6,000 per year on transportation, which is between 15% and 20% of their household income. So, although the people making more money spend more dollars on transportation, they don’t spend more as a percentage of their total income. Depending on how you look at expenditures, the bar graph can tell two somewhat different stories.

Another point to check out is the groupings on the graph. The categories for household income as shown aren’t equivalent. For example, each of the first four bars represents household incomes in intervals of \$5,000, but the next three groups increase by \$10,000 each, and the last group contains every household making more than \$50,000 per year. Bar graphs using different-sized intervals to represent numerical values (such as the above image) make true comparisons between groups more difficult. (However, the government probably has its reasons for reporting the numbers this way; for example, this may be the way income is broken down for tax-related purposes.)

6.4 WEBMASTER CENTRAL & BING/YAHOO

Google, Bing, Yahoo are the main three search engines that people use when browsing the web for pretty much anything. A large part of attracting customers to your website lies in your business’s place on the search results page; the closer you are to the top of the first page, the more traffic you receive. There are several different factors that go into those rankings, and they are based on algorithms developed by the search providers like Google and Bing (Yahoo search results are powered by Bing).

In order to get your website as close to the top of that first search results page as possible, it is important to know how Google and Bing rank their search results. Since Google is by far the biggest search engine, most businesses start there. Through varying marketing campaigns, market research, and especially SEO, a business can do several things to improve their rankings in the Google search results. However, just because you rank on the first page of Google doesn't mean you will rank the same (or at all) on Yahoo or Bing. This can be pretty frustrating, especially considering the limited resources and time that most businesses have. So the big question becomes "Why do Google and Bing rank things differently?"



6.4.1 Difference between Using Google, Bing or Yahoo Search Engines

What is different is a hard question to answer, but for an amazingly simple reason. While we know several factors that each search engine uses in page rank, there are many more factors that we do not. The algorithms employed by Google and Bing are proprietary, and they will only share small pieces. While Google and Bing's algorithms certainly share factors, those factors are also weighted differently. Each search engine also penalizes businesses for certain things that they consider to be unethical or "Black Hat" SEO; that means anything that is trying to "trick" the algorithm or customers.

Those are just two factors that could potentially have an adverse effect on your page rank. A few other factors are things like the loading speed of your website, whether it is mobile friendly, and of course links leading to and from your site. According to the website Web Presence, there are a few other factors that go into page rank. Google, for example, focuses a lot of attention on specific parts of a website, and weighs other aspects less. Webpresence states: “Bing considers the whole array of SEO methods, rather than focusing on some more than others. With Google it’s largely about inbound links, but Bing isn’t quite as obsessed with these. Google doesn’t really pay much attention to things like <H1> tags, whereas Bing does give these extra weight. Basically, in order to optimize for Bing, use every technique in the book, from meta descriptions and titles to H1 tags.”

6.4.2 Google, bing or yahoo, which search engine to start with?

So where should you try to rank first, on Google or Bing? Most SEO professionals will say Google, and that makes sense since they are the biggest, and so much of SEO is focused on ranking well on Google. So, Google is a great place to start, but that does not mean that you should not try to rank on Bing as well. Different people prefer different search engines, and you want to make sure that reach as many potential customers as possible; so, don’t write off any potential customers by focusing only on one search engine.

Try to find out how your customers find you: how are they going online, and which search engine do they typically use? Have a professional look at your website and optimize it to improve its rankings. Consult an SEO professional to assist you in key word link building as links are an especially important part of ranking well on Google. Most of all, be patient and stick with it because while ranking well on any search engine is important, it does take time.

6.4.3 Getting Started Checklist

If you are new to Bing Webmaster Tools, this checklist can help get you started. Steps 1 and 2 will get you up and running, while steps 3 and 4 are optional, but highly recommended.

Step 1: Open a Bing Webmaster Tools account

You can open a free Bing Webmaster Tools account by going to the Bing Webmaster Tools sign-in or sign-up page. You can sign up using Microsoft, Google or Facebook account. Alternatively, you can also create a Microsoft account as part of your Webmaster Tools sign-up process, just select Microsoft as the convenient account and click on Create one in the next step.

Step 2: Add & Verify your website

Once you have a Bing Webmaster Tools account, you can add sites to your account. You can do so by entering the URL of your site into the Add a Site input box and clicking Add. Next, we would like to verify that you are the owner of the website. There are three ownership verification methods. Click the option best suited for your site and follow the on-screen instructions:

- Option 1: XML file authentication: click BingSiteAuth.xml to save the an XML file to your computer. This file contains your personal verification code. Next, upload the file to the root folder of the site you are trying to add.
- Option 2: Meta tag authentication: Copy the displayed <meta> tag with your personal verification code to the clipboard. Then open your registered site's default page (the home page) in your web development environment editor and paste the provided code at the end of the <head> section. Lastly, save and upload the revised default page containing the new <meta> tag to your site.
- Option 3: Add a CNAME record to DNS: This option requires access to your domain hosting account. Inside that account, edit the CNAME record to hold the

provided verification code (a series of numbers and letters) we have provided you. When done ensure the information is saved.

After performing the necessary steps stated in the verification methods, please click Verify. If Bing Webmaster Tools is able to verify your site, you will see a green checkmark at the top and a message saying that your domain is verified. If you see a red cross mark, please look at the error message to check with issue with site verification. Please resolve the issue and try again later.

6.4.4 Google Webmaster Tools

Google Search Console is a free web service. This allows webmasters to check indexing status and optimize website visibility, including the ability to:

- Submit and check a sitemap.
- Check and set the crawl rate, and view statistics about how Googlebot (Google's webcrawler) accesses a particular site.
- Generate and check a robots.txt file.
- List internal and external pages that link to the site.
- Determine what keyword searches on Google led to the site being listed in the search engines results page, and the clickthrough rates of such listings.
- Set a preferred domain, which determines how the site URL is displayed in search engine results pages.

6.4.5 Bing

Bing Webmaster Tools allows webmasters to add their websites to the Bing Index Crawler. The service also offers tools for webmasters to troubleshoot the crawling and indexing of their website, sitemap creation, submission and ping tools, website

statistics, consolidation of content submission, and new content and community resources. Their tools include:

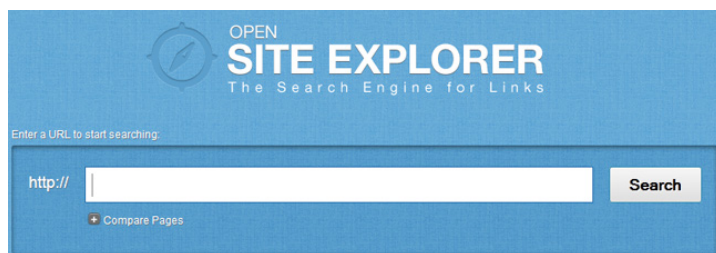
- Crawl issues allows webmasters to discover potential issues with their websites such as File Not Found (404) errors, blocked by REP, long dynamic URLs, and unsupported content-types.
- Backlink data allows webmasters to access data about their referring links.
- Advanced filtering.
- Data download allows webmasters to access the first 1000 results in a CSV file to analyze the results.
- Keyword search tool
- Robots.txt validator
- HTTP verifier
- Outbound links

6.4.6 Yahoo (Deprecated)

Yahoo Site Explorer was a service which allowed the viewing of information on websites in Yahoo!'s search index. Site Explorer has since been deprecated, having been merged into Bing Webmaster Tools.

6.5 OPEN SITE EXPLORER

Open Site Explorer is an optimization tool which is actually a search engine for links. It is a tool developed by Moz.com that helps you track the links leading to your website. It is one of the essential tools to be used as a part of off-site search engine optimization. A great part of filtering and comparison metrics is available for free, but if you want to get access to the advanced features and reports, you will need to have an account.



6.5.1 Why is Open Site Explorer useful?

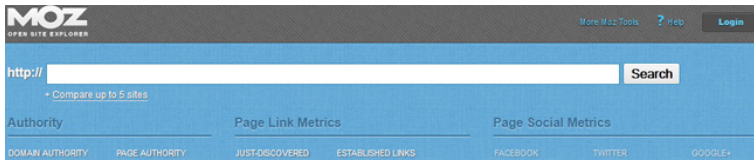
Links that point to your website help you increase the authority of your website which will increase your ranking in the search engines. Using this tool you can discover the links in order to determine who is linking to your website. This can help you strengthen those links and increase the number of relevant links leading to your website.

In addition, you can compare your website with your competitors in order to determine who links to their websites. This kind of information can help you discover new possibilities to obtain new links for your own website.

Discover broken links using this tool in order to reduce the negative effect these might have on your ranking. When you analyze your website in Open Site Explorer you will be able to see if there is any page with 404 header status in the HTTP status column. Check those links in order to determine that in fact the link is broken and fix this issue as soon as possible.

6.5.2 How to use Open Site Explorer?

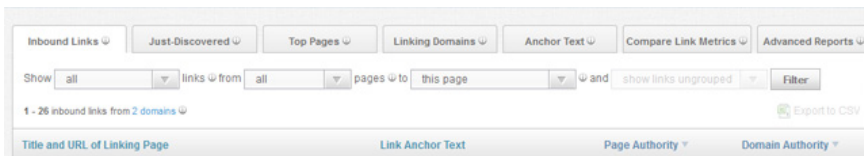
Visit the Open Site Explorer website or log in if you have an account. Type the URL of your website and the URLs of your competitors and click on "Search" button. The tool will load a comprehensive sheet with lots of details related to links.



On the top you can see the most important metrics first:

- **Authority** – This refers to both domain authority and page authority. You will see a number representing your website authority on the scale from 0 to 100.
- **Page Link Metrics** – Check out the number of root domains and total number of links.
- **Page Social Metrics** – These are the links from the social media account showing as Facebook shares, Facebook likes, Tweets and Google +1s.

Once you have scanned the most general data of your report, you are ready to analyze the report in details. Here are the components integrated in your link analysis:



Inbound Links

This part of the analysis shows you the inbound links to a specific URL or to your domain. You will be able to see the additional information for each linking page:

- Title and URL
- Link Anchor Text
- Page Authority
- Domain Authority

If you have too many links, you can sort out the results to separate only external or only internal links. The results can also be filtered to show link equity, no link equity, only follow, only rel=nofollow, etc.

Just-Discovered

Find recently added links using this option. The URLs are indexed only one hour after they have been shared on Twitter. Again, you can filter the results based on the same criteria mentioned above in order to narrow down the process of analyzing the URLs.

Top Pages

In order to maximize the link building process, you should focus on the best pages of your website. This does not necessarily have to be your home page. The pages are sorted out according to the page authority for each individual page.

The features available within this table are:

- Page Title and URL
- Page Authority
- Linking Root Domains
- Inbound Links
- HTTP Status
- Facebook Shares/Likes
- Tweets
- Google +1s

HTTP Status column is especially important. As we have mentioned above, it can help you detect any broken links on your website. Scan the results in the column and check the status codes. The code 200 usually means that everything is OK with the page. If you happen to spot some 404 code, meaning that the content cannot be found at that URL, this will be your signal to examine the link and see what could be causing the error. Not only do these errors have a negative effect on SEO, but you might be at risk of losing traffic due to unresponsive pages.

Linking Domain

Conduct a domain analysis in order to determine the influence of your website.

Anchor Text

This segment can help with keywords suggestions as it will display the anchor texts with which your website's URLs are usually related to.

Compare Link Metrics

You will get the list of the most important metrics compared to your competitors. Once you analyze these links you will be able to determine how you should improve your website position. Find out about your competitors and how they use links to influence their position in the search engines. You will also be able to find what you are doing well, based on the comparison metrics you see.

Advanced Report

Advanced report features advanced filters and metric that will create a comprehensive report with up to 100 thousand links. The reports can be exported as .csv file. This function is only available for the subscribers.

SEO experts, business owners, bloggers, marketers and anyone how works online and knows the value of being ranked at the top of the search results. Whether you have a blog or a website you wish to promote, you need to optimize your website in order to maximize the number of potential conversions, and Open Site Explorer is one of the tools you should definitely be using for this purpose.

6.6 WEBSITE ANALYSIS USING VARIOUS SEO TOOLS

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is one of the hardest parts of running a website. The way Google and other search engines rank your website changes constantly. This means you need to keep up with the latest SEO developments if you want to outpace the competition.

The good news is that there are plenty of excellent tools you can use to tackle on-site SEO and get the data you need to improve your ranking. If you know what they are and what they can do for you, you'll be well equipped for success.

6.6.1 Google Search Console

Google Search Console is a collection of services you can use to figure out how the search engine views your website. This service provides you with a wide array of free SEO tools, covering many different aspects of optimization.

For example, Google Search Console enables you to check out any crawling errors that have occurred on your website so you can correct them right away. It can also point out when your site is affected by malware, what keyword phrases people are using to find your site, the backlinks you've received, and more.

The many features this service offers makes it a near necessity if you're concerned about your Search Engine Results Page (SERP) rankings. There's a clear focus on Google results here, but don't worry. If you can rank well on Google, the chances are high that you'll also do OK in other search engines.

As far as actually using the service goes, Google Search Console is very simple to understand. It's also easy to add your website and get started, so there are no reasons to avoid it.

Key Features:

- Monitor how Google perceives your website.
- Keep track of what keywords visitors are using to reach you.
- Stay on top of any crawl, meta tag, or sitemap errors.
- Update your robots.txt file.
- Monitor your site's backlinks.
- Get alerts if your site is infected with malware.

6.6.2 Semrush

Semrush is a keyword research tool that enables you to get data about how many people are looking for specific terms. On top of that, it also provides you with information on similar keywords, related ads, product listings, and a lot more.

Along with being an excellent keyword tool, Semrush can also offer information about your competitors' strategies. For example, Semrush's competitive analysis tools can tell you how much traffic your competitors are getting, how much of that comes from paid ads, and what their backlinks are.

If you're the kind of person who loves doing keyword research, you need a tool like Semrush in your arsenal. With it, you'll be able to figure out exactly what keywords will give you the best results for your efforts, and check which terms your competitors are ranking for.

This service even enables you to peek into your competitors' text and media ads, which can save you a lot of money when it comes to testing. Keep in mind, however, that all this data means the learning curve with this service can be a bit steep.

Key Features:

- Research the value of specific queries.
- Check out what keywords your competitors are ranking for and how much traffic they're getting.
- Find information about other websites' backlinks.
- Look into your competitors' text and media ads.

6.6.3 BuzzStream

BuzzStream offers you a collection of tools to help with domain research, email marketing, and project management. It's a very all-in-one type of platform, and the sheer number of options it provides can be intimidating. With that in mind, let's focus on how it can help you tackle your SEO needs.

When it comes to research, BuzzStream can help you collate lists of results for the keywords you look into. Then it provides you with information about each of those websites, including overall rankings, related social media accounts, domain age and authority, and more.

In practice, you can use these features to help you do a thorough SEO audit, researching who your competitors are and the content they're publishing. Moreover, it can even help you create lists of their authors and what each one is up to, so you can keep an even closer eye on their strategies.

Key Features:

- Research your competitors based on any keywords you want to target.
- Collect data about domain age and authority for specific websites.
- Find out what your competitors' rankings are in the SERPs.

- Locate the social media accounts for your competition's sites.
- Create lists of authors who write for competing websites and follow what they're doing.

6.6.4 Moz Pro

Moz Pro is a suite of SEO tools created to help you tackle optimization using a data-driven approach. To give you a quick overview, Moz Pro is somewhat similar to SEMrush, in that it enables you to research both specific long-tail keywords and other domains. You can use this information to avoid keywords with little potential and to improve on what your competitors are doing.

When you look into a keyword using Moz Pro, it will show you a difficulty score that illustrates how challenging it will likely be to rank for that term. You also get an overview of how many people are searching for that phrase, and you can even create lists of keywords for easy comparison. These are all features you'd expect from a reliable keyword research tool, but Moz Pro stands out thanks to a very intuitive interface.

As for what's so unique about Moz Pro, the platform offers a Chrome extension you can use to get information on any domain you visit. Moreover, it can provide suggestions about on-page optimization and alert you about crawling errors, much like Google Search Console.

Key Features:

- Research how competitive a keyword is, as well as its search volume.
- Get suggestions on related keywords.
- Investigate your competitors, including which keywords they're targeting.

- Use a Chrome extension to look into other domains without going to the Moz website.
- Compare multiple keywords using custom lists.
- Get on-page optimization suggestions and error alerts.

6.6.5 Linkody

Linkody is all about backlinks. This tool allows you to find out who's linking to your website, learn what keywords they're using, and even "disavow" links you don't like. That last feature can be handy if you think someone is linking to your website as spam since you don't want search engines thinking you're trying to game the system.

While the main attraction here is the backlink reports, Linkody also offers a few notable extras. For example, it provides you with the option to generate reports that you can send to clients, monitor your site's social shares, and connect to Google Analytics.

Overall, it's a pretty niche tool, but quite useful if you need some help with link building. More importantly, it's a lot cheaper than the massive do-it-all services we've talked about so far.

Key Features:

- Analyze your website's backlinks.
- Disavow bad links that might affect your SEO.
- Generate backlink reports for your clients.
- Connect to Google Analytics to gain access to more data.
- Monitor your site's social shares.

6.6.6 Ontolo

Ontolo is a research tool you can use to find marketing and SEO opportunities. It can also help you find backlinking and guest

posting opportunities, which is not something you'd expect an automated tool to do so well.

The idea behind Ontolo is that it helps you find ways to grow your traffic beyond keyword research. If you want your website to become more authoritative, backlinks are essential, but finding the right opportunities can be daunting.

Ontolo helps you locate those opportunities, so all you have to do is pitch them (which sadly can't be automated). It can pull prospects from over 80 sources, so chances are you'll find excellent options regardless of what keywords you're trying to rank for.

Key Features:

- Look for guest posting and backlink opportunities.
- Collect data from over 80 sources to find the best prospects.
- Carry out research using simple-to-understand reports.
- Export your prospects to share them with others.

6.6.7 HubSpot's Website Grader

HubSpot's Website Grader is a lot more straightforward than the other SEO tools we've featured so far. To use it, all you have to do is enter a domain and wait for HubSpot to generate a report. When you get that report back, you'll find separate scores for your site's performance, mobile-friendliness, SEO, and security.

It's crucial to keep in mind that performance, mobile-friendliness, and solid security practices directly impact your SEO. In a way, your entire report is one giant analysis of how your site is faring from an SEO perspective. Better yet, this tool breaks down each part of the report and provides you with tips on how to improve every element.

HubSpot's Website Grader is incredibly simple to use, and it can help you improve your website quickly. Plus, it won't cost you a thing, so this one definitely deserves your attention.

Key Features:

- Analyze your website's performance, mobile-friendliness, security, and SEO.
- Receive separate scores for each aspect of your site.
- Get recommendations for how to improve each score.

6.6.8 Google AdWords Keyword Planner

Google AdWords Keyword Planner is one of the most comprehensive keyword research tools you can use. With it, you can look up keywords and get traffic estimates about them. More importantly, it can help you figure out how competitive keywords are based on their AdWords price.

To avoid overwhelming you with information, this tool lets you filter keywords out based on Cost-per-Click (CPC) or search volume. This way, you can get reports based only on the estimates you want to aim for.

Overall, the Keyword Planner offers a lot of the same functionality we've seen from other SEO tools on this list. The difference is that this one is part of the Google ecosystem, and you can get amazingly detailed reports for free.

Key Features:

- Find out the search volume for any keyword you want.
- Determine a keyword's competitiveness from its CPC.
- Get detailed reports for specific keywords.

6.6.9 WooRank

WooRank is similar to HubSpot's Website Grader in that you give it a link, and it provides you with a full report card. In this case, it gives you a single score for your entire website. After that, it launches into a list of everything you can do to improve its SEO and mobile-friendliness.

The main selling point, in this case, is that WooRank also provides you with tips to improve your site's usability and performance. From our experience, its recommendations are solid. To top it all off, you also get an analysis of how well you're doing from a backlink perspective.

Overall, this is an excellent tool if you want a quick rundown of what you're doing right and wrong on your website, including when it comes to SEO.

Key Features:

- Analyze your website's overall status, including SEO, usability, performance, and backlinks.
- Receive tips on how to improve your website and tackle SEO tasks.
- Analyze your domain's authority.

6.6.10 Varvy SEO Tool

Our next pick is another tool of the "Enter a URL and get a report" variety. However, this one is different from those we've introduced so far. What the Varvy SEO tool does is check to see if your website is following all of Google's SEO guidelines. It can produce a full report in seconds.

What's more, that report is very extensive. It checks for a lot of things, including page speed issues, mobile-friendliness, on-page SEO, and more. However, the best part is that Varvy SEO Tool really takes the time to explain why each setting is vital.

If you're new to SEO (or website optimization in general), you'll probably welcome all the information this tool has to offer. It even provides links to further reading for each setting it covers, in case you want to learn more about them.

Key Features:

- Check to see if your website follows Google's SEO guidelines.
- Receive a quick report, including precise information on how to fix each issue.

6.6.11 Screaming Frog

Screaming Frog offers an SEO Spider Tool, which is a sophisticated crawler that can accomplish a host of optimization tasks. This includes finding and fixing broken links and redirects.

If you operate an online store, Screaming Frog has some especially helpful options. For example, you can use the crawler to extract data from HTML pages on your site using CSS Path. This means you can use XPath or regex to gather data about prices, SKUs, and more.

You can even use this tool to generate XML sitemaps and connect them up to Google Analytics. What's more, Screaming Frog has a pretty robust free version, so you can try out the main functionality before you decide to leap in.

Key Features:

- Analyze titles and metadata.
- Crawl your site to find and fix broken links.
- Discover and resolve duplicate content and pages.

6.6.12 Yoast SEO

Yoast SEO is often touted as the number-one WordPress SEO plugin. Its features cover the full spectrum when it comes to SEO. You can conduct readability checks, for example, and set canonical URLs to avoid confusing Google with duplicate content.

Other functionality on offer includes keyword optimization, and the ability to preview pages in Google, Facebook, and Twitter. With the upgraded version of the plugin, you will also get some content assistance, since Yoast will offer you internal linking suggestions as you write pages and posts.

Yoast SEO has a robust knowledge database to help you get started. Plus, with the premium version, you'll have access to one year of 24/7 help from an expert support team.

Key Features:

- Optimize your content for specific keywords.
- Provide search engines with the metadata they need to understand your content.
- Avoid duplicate content.
- Handle critical SEO tasks automatically, such as creating a sitemap and optimizing permalinks.

6.6.13 Link-able

Link-able offers a fairly unique approach to optimizing your website, boosting SEO, and expanding your traffic. You can think of this service as a highly-specialized job board. It's designed to provide marketers with a reliable way to create backlinks for their content.

The process starts with a marketer posting a specific request on the Link-able website. This request will include details about the kind

of backlinks the marketer wants to build. They'll also provide any other information that might be helpful, much like a job posting.

Authors who have been thoroughly vetted by Link-able will be able to access the project database. They can submit proposals for specific projects and wait for the marketers to respond. If a marketer likes a proposal, Link-able connects the two parties, and the work is guaranteed.

Key Features:

- Find highly-qualified authors who have passed a rigorous testing process.
- Receive highly-relevant author matches and proposals for your projects.
- Focus on your content while employing others to handle link building.

6.6.14 Serpstat

Serpstat is a relative newcomer to the SEO application market. It offers a suite of data-driven analysis tools for marketers. Among the different options, you'll find an SEO audit tool, backlink checker, and competitor tracking features.

This is a project-oriented system, which means you can organize your websites into groups or individual projects. All of these can then be accessed through a well-organized dashboard. You'll be able to access any of Serpstat's features from your project list.

Serpstat is a little like a Swiss Army knife when it comes to functionality. You can use it to find broken links on your website, track down the cause of sluggish page loading times, and a lot more.

Key Features:

- Handle a high volume of website monitoring for clients.
- Use an on-site auditing tool for locating and fixing issues.
- Access to a Market Intelligence tool for sizing up your competition regionally and globally.
- Get easy compatibility with both the Mac and PC operating systems.

6.6.15 Ahrefs

Ahrefs offers several data analysis and optimization tools. In fact, all of its tools are included in the same pricing plans. This means you don't have to worry about missing out on critical features. Additionally, you'll have access to the Ahrefs Academy, which is an online knowledge base offering a wide variety of learning opportunities. One of the features you'll have access to is a content research tool. With this, you can use keywords to find out what related content has performed the best on social media or in organic searches. The Ahrefs platform also includes a comprehensive dashboard, so you can keep track of all your projects.

You'll also be able to find content related to your specific target keywords and filter the results to highlight websites that have not linked to you before. Since Ahrefs crawls over 5 billion web pages per day, you're sure to gain valuable insights from its data.

Key Features:

- Analyze your competitors' organic search rankings.
- Access a vast database of information.
- Gather valuable insights from a competitive analysis tool.
- Benefit from a Search Traffic index that boasts 489 million keywords originating from 155 countries.

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SEO

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CHAPTER

7

SEO MARKETING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

INTRODUCTION

Small businesses face many challenges with their digital marketing. They generally have smaller budgets, fewer resources, and weaker brand recognition.

One of the best ways small businesses can compete with larger brands is by generating more organic traffic. According to BrightEdge, more than half of web traffic and up to 40% of total revenue comes from organic search.

However, that involves an understanding of SEO marketing. This is one area where most small businesses admit they're challenged.

The following post will explain how SEO works and provide simple tactics for small businesses to utilize this strategy without busting their budget.



7.1 SEO MARKETING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IMPACTS PAGE RANKINGS

Before understanding how to optimize for search engines, it's important to understand what SEO is and how it works. SEO, or Search Engine Optimization, is the main tactic that marketers use to make their web pages visible to search engines like Google and Bing. Pages with stronger SEO will appear higher on search engine results pages (SERPs).

Search engines are constantly making updates to their ranking and SEO algorithms in an attempt to provide the user with the most useful content first. In 2018, there were at least 15 suspected algorithm changes. Some of these changes are minor, but others can have a major impact on keyword ranking and traffic.

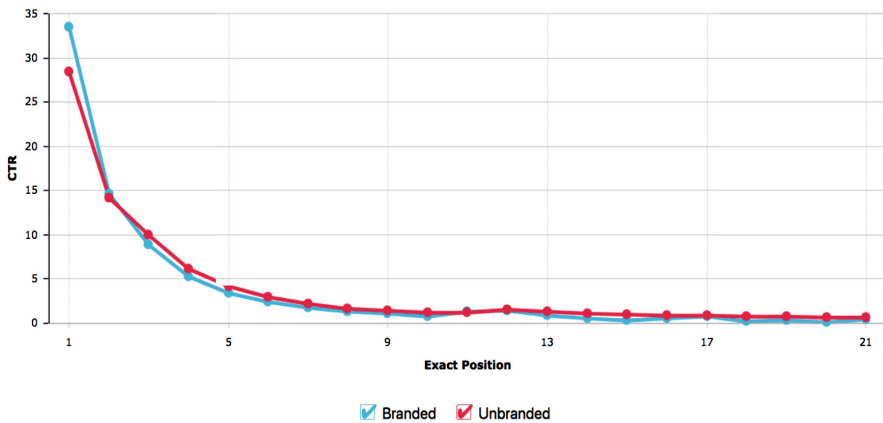
For instance, a Google Core Update in March 2019 caused a big drop in organic traffic for many reputable media and publishing outlets like The Atlantic, Vanity Fair, and the New York Times.

7.2 WEBSITE RANKINGS MATTER FOR SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING

To be successful with organic traffic, small businesses really need to try to rank on the first page of a SERP. There's a saying popular

with SEOs that the best place to hide a dead body is on page two of Google. It basically goes to show that most people will only look at the results on page one and either click on one of those links or search for something else.

In fact, the click-through rate on Google SERPs decreases exponentially with positioning. Links that appear in the first position have a 30% click rate. The number drops to 10% for links in the third position and falls closer to 2% towards the bottom of the first page.



Some larger brands will likely pay for Google ads to offset any shortcomings with their SEO strategy. For organic traffic, however, Google doesn't pay attention to budget or resources in its rankings. The best way small businesses can beat the bigger fish in organic traffic is to have better SEO.

7.3 STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR SEO MARKETING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES WITH A LIMITED BUDGET

Fortunately for small business owners, you don't need to have a major budget or large team to be successful with SEO. You just need to understand a few basic best practices and put them to

action.

Here are four simple steps you can take today to improve the SEO of your small business.

Go beyond keywords

Back in the early days of SEO, marketers would stuff their content with dozens of keywords in hopes that Google would see the frequency and boost the page ranking. The result was often disjointed text that was difficult to read and not beneficial for the user.

Today, Google will penalize content that includes too many keywords. Ideally, your content should have been 2 and 5% keyword density, which means you're mentioning it no more than five times for every 100 words you publish.

However, you need to understand more about why people are searching for specific keywords. Search engines are focusing more on user intent and will return websites that they feel best match what a person wants to do when they search for a specific topic. For instance, if you search for the term "best restaurants in Seattle," you will get results for specific restaurants, as well as articles that rank local restaurants by various criteria.

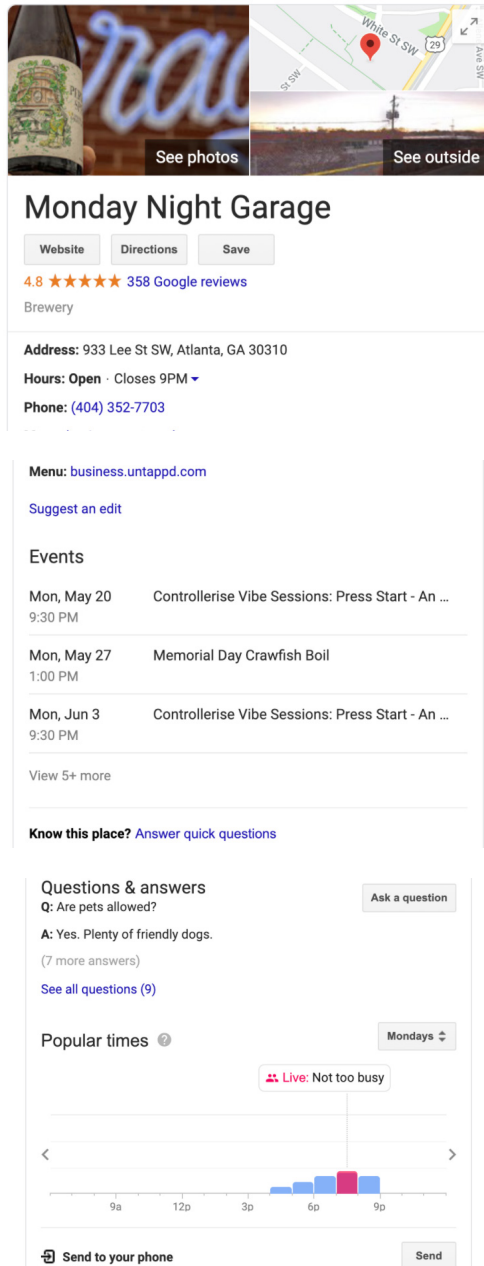
The bottom line: You need to focus on creating quality content that answers questions and provides relevant and useful information the people who land on your page expect to see.

Create a Google My Business profile

The number of online searches using the term "near me" have jumped by as much as 900% over the past two years. If you're using your online presence to drive people to your physical business location, it's imperative that you set up a Google My Business profile.

The process is free and it only takes a few minutes, but it adds authority to your business and provides more information that's

helpful to users. At the very least, you should include your name, address, and phone number. Take a look at all of the information made available by Monday Night Garage on its Google My Business profile.



The image shows a screenshot of the Monday Night Garage Google My Business profile. At the top, there are three images: a beer bottle, a map showing the location at the intersection of White St SW and Lee St SW, and a photo of the exterior of the building. Below these images are buttons for 'See photos' and 'See outside'. The main heading is 'Monday Night Garage'. Below the heading are buttons for 'Website', 'Directions', and 'Save'. The profile has a 4.8-star rating from 358 Google reviews. The address is 933 Lee St SW, Atlanta, GA 30310. The hours are listed as 'Open' and 'Closes 9PM'. The phone number is (404) 352-7703. There is a menu link to business.untappd.com and a 'Suggest an edit' link. The 'Events' section lists three events: 'Controllerise Vibe Sessions: Press Start - An ...' on Mon, May 20 at 9:30 PM; 'Memorial Day Crawfish Boil' on Mon, May 27 at 1:00 PM; and 'Controllerise Vibe Sessions: Press Start - An ...' on Mon, Jun 3 at 9:30 PM. There is a 'View 5+ more' link. The 'Questions & answers' section shows a question 'Are pets allowed?' with an answer 'Yes. Plenty of friendly dogs.' and a 'See all questions (9)' link. The 'Popular times' section shows a bar chart for Mondays, with a peak at 6 PM. There is a 'Send to your phone' button at the bottom.

Monday Night Garage

Website Directions Save

4.8 ★★★★★ 358 Google reviews

Brewery

Address: 933 Lee St SW, Atlanta, GA 30310

Hours: Open · Closes 9PM ▾

Phone: (404) 352-7703

Menu: business.untappd.com

[Suggest an edit](#)

Events

Mon, May 20 Controllerise Vibe Sessions: Press Start - An ...
9:30 PM

Mon, May 27 Memorial Day Crawfish Boil
1:00 PM

Mon, Jun 3 Controllerise Vibe Sessions: Press Start - An ...
9:30 PM

[View 5+ more](#)

Know this place? [Answer quick questions](#)

Questions & answers [Ask a question](#)

Q: Are pets allowed?

A: Yes. Plenty of friendly dogs.
(7 more answers)

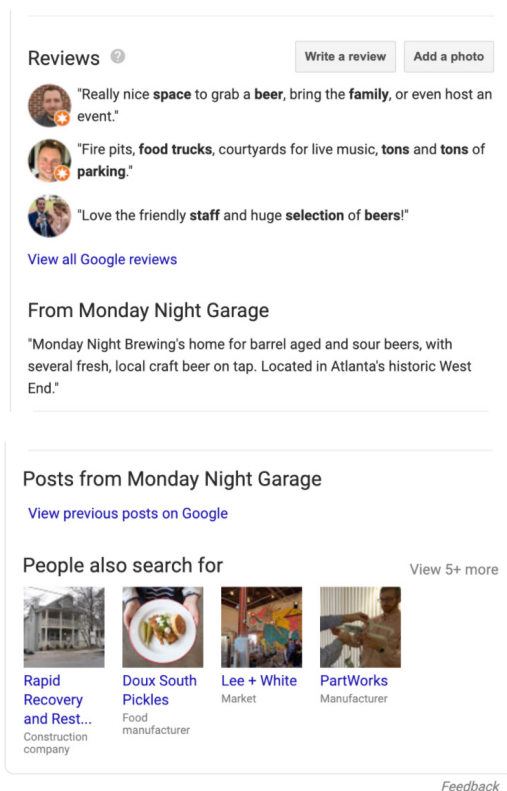
[See all questions \(9\)](#)

Popular times [Mondays](#)

Live: Not too busy

9a 12p 3p 6p 9p

[Send to your phone](#) [Send](#)

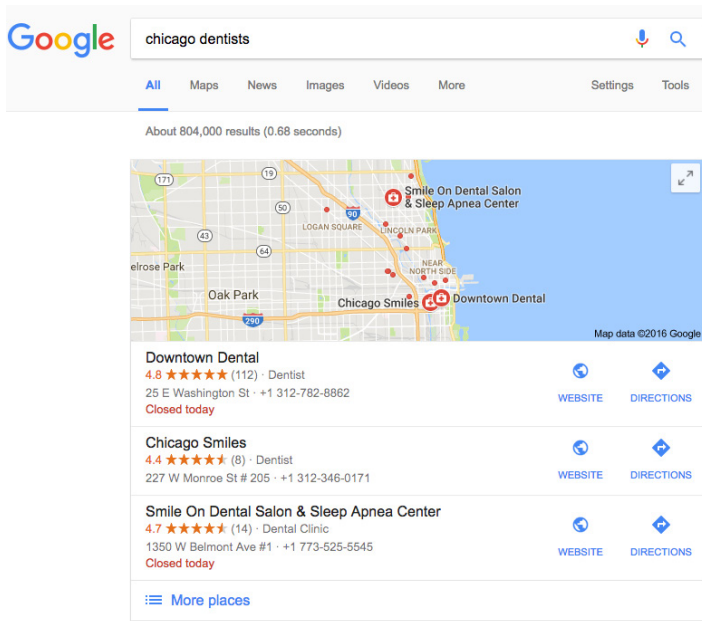


The best thing about creating a Google My Business profile is that you don't need to be an expert SEO to do it. You just need to know your company's information and follow Google's instructions, and you'll have your profile set up in no time.

Encourage customers to leave reviews

You're probably already aware of the power of positive reviews for your small business. After all, 86% of consumers read reviews for local businesses before becoming customers. You might not have realized that these reviews also impact your SEO performance.

According to Moz, Google considers customer reviews as one of its main factors in determining search ranking positions. In fact, reviews are valued as much as 15% in local pack search results, like the example here:



You can see the top three results underneath the map in this search term all include review scores. These reviews send a positive signal to Google that your business is trusted and provides a good customer experience.

It's important to remember that, while you want all of your reviews to be positive, a negative review here or there won't hurt your SEO as long as you reply to it in a timely manner.

Create backlinks from other sites

Link building is a major factor of off-site SEO that big brands might spend a large portion of their digital marketing budget to master. While having those extra funds to hire agencies and vendors helps, you can do some of the same things on your own.

It might take a little bit of time, but you can start an outreach program to contact relevant organizations to develop reputable backlinks to your page. The higher the domain authority of the page linking to you, the better the backlink in the eyes of Google. For instance, if your business is a Cajun restaurant, you could

reach out to a local newspaper or **media outlet** about including your business in an article about the best places to spend Mardi Gras.

You can also drive some traffic back to your site by creating listings for your business on other directory sites like Yelp and YP.com.

7.4 DON'T FORGET ABOUT COMBINING EMAIL MARKETING WITH YOUR SEO

Emails won't help improve your Google SERP position. However, the engagement from those emails could send positive indicators to search engines that will in the long run.

The most immediate impact will be additional traffic to your site, which shows search engines that your pages are active and popular. If people spend time there without immediately leaving, it'll also improve your bounce rates. Finally, the more people click around on your site, the more it shows Google that users are trusting your pages to learn more information about specific topics.

Remember, the goal of SEO marketing is to get people to discover your website and take actions when they're there. It's the same goal as your email marketing.

Small businesses are sometimes backed into a corner when competing against bigger brands. They often don't have the money and resources for advanced digital marketing campaigns and paid methods. The best way for small businesses to even the playing field is with a strong SEO strategy. To best optimize websites for search engines, small businesses need to focus on best practices, including:

- Creating great content that provides value for the user and gives them what they expect and hope to receive.
- Updating a Google My Business profile with basic information like business name, address, and phone number.

- Encouraging users to leave reviews or ratings about your business on Google, Yelp, Facebook, and other online sources.
- Building an email campaign aimed at improving engagement to your website.

You can track your SEO results in Google Analytics, which integrates with your Campaign Monitor dashboard. It can take several months to notice an impact from your tactics, but, if you follow these steps, you'll begin to see an increase in your overall traffic and revenue.

7.5 DIFFERENT WAYS SEO ONLINE MARKETING CAN TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS

With so many marketing strategies available to businesses, it's hard to decipher which ones are a great fit for your company. Before spending your marketing budget on a strategy, it's crucial that you get to know all the strategies available to you, especially one of the most important ones — search engine optimization (SEO). One of the most effective marketing strategies out there is SEO. But business owners and marketing managers alike often have the same questions. What is SEO online marketing and how does it work?

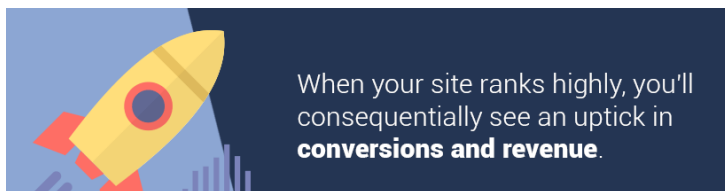
What is SEO online marketing?

SEO is one of the most popular marketing strategies out there, and for good reason — it's extremely effective.

Although the results of SEO take a few months to kick in, it's well worth the wait.

But what is SEO online marketing? Here's a quick definition:

SEO is the process of improving your website and online presence, both on-page and off-page to improve its rankings in search engines like Google.



When your website ranks highly in search engines, it will yield more clicks from users. The more clicks you receive, the more people look at your website, and the more they look at your website, the more opportunity they have to find a product or service that interests them.

Not only that, but when your site ranks highly, you'll see an uptick in conversions and revenue.

SEO online marketing combines on-page and off-page strategies that work together to get the job done.

On-page SEO includes all the changes you can physically make to your website in order to make it rank higher. Here are some examples:

- Keyword targeting and implementation
- Content creation
- Page speed optimization

Off-page SEO, on the other hand, refers to all the strategies that don't take place on your website in order to improve your rankings. Examples include:

- Link building
- Social media marketing
- Email marketing

When you call on an SEO agency to take care of your campaign, they'll likely use a mix of both on-page and off-page SEO for the best possible results.

5 reasons SEO online marketing has the ability to change your business for good

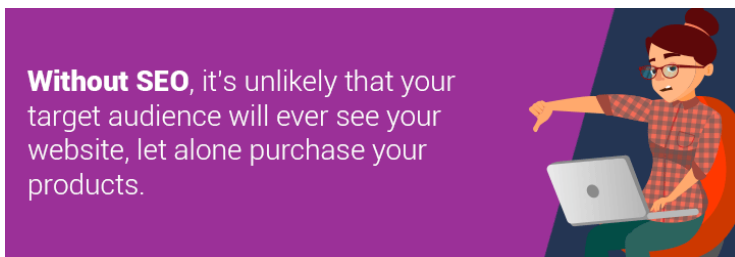
It's no secret that SEO is an effective way to market your business. It allows you to attract leads straight to your website, which means increased revenue for your company — regardless of your industry.

The importance of online SEO is obvious, but let's get into the nitty-gritty of why it's one of the best online marketing strategies out there.

Thousands of people search in Google every second

When you implement online SEO into your marketing strategy, you're essentially marketing your business to thousands of people — 67 thousand every second to be exact.

When you use SEO to market your products and services, you make your company offerings available to an expansive user base, which gives you a higher chance of attracting interested customers and making more conversions.



Without SEO, it's unlikely that your target audience will ever see your website, let alone purchase your products.

A lot of people ignore paid ads

Although some paid ads provide a great way to advertise your business, nearly 80 percent of users ignore paid ads that appear in search results.

That means you have a better chance of someone clicking on your website if it shows up organically in search. Ranking organically means that your website shows up as a result below the paid ads on a results page. You don't have to pay a single penny to appear in search results organically, but you do need a solid SEO campaign.

The screenshot shows a Google search for "computer monitors". At the top, the Google logo is on the left, and the search bar contains "computer monitors". Below the search bar, it says "Volume: 165,000/mo | CPC: \$0.90 | Competition: 1 ★". There are tabs for "All", "Shopping", "News", "Images", "Maps", "More", "Settings", and "Tools". Below the tabs, it says "About 4,650,000,000 results (0.56 seconds)".

On the left side of the results, there are two labels: "paid ads" in red and "organic results" in blue. The "paid ads" section is highlighted with a red box and contains three ads:

- Computer Monitors on Amazon | Free 2-day Shipping w/ Prime.**
www.amazon.com/
 Skip the Lines this Holiday Season & Save on **Computer monitors** with Amazon. Shop Best Sellers & Deals. Save with Our Low Prices. Fast Shipping. Read Ratings & Reviews. Explore Amazon Devices. Shop Echo & Alexa Devices · Shop Amazon Fire Tablets · Explore Amazon Smart Home
- Dell Computer Monitor | The World's #1 Monitors**
www.dell.com/
 ★★★★★ Rating for dell.com: 4.5 - On-time delivery: 99%+
 Buy Award-Winning **Monitors** for Your Home or Office at Dell.com Today! Exclusions Apply. Up To \$300 Off. Limited Time Offer. Free Shipping. Brands: XPS, Latitude, Alienware, Optiplex, Inspiron.
 Professional Monitors · 4K & 8K Ultra HD · Dell Monitor Deals · UltraSharp Monitors
- Computer monitors | MyBBY® Members Earn Points | BestBuy.com**
deals.bestbuy.com/Weekly/Deals
 ★★★★★ Rating for bestbuy.com: 4.6 - On-time delivery: 95%+
 Shop Our Official Weekly Ad For The Best Deals At Best Buy®!

The "organic results" section is highlighted with a blue box and contains two results:

- Computer Monitors - Amazon.com**
<https://www.amazon.com/Monitors-Computers-Accessories/b?ie=UTF8&node...>
 Shop for **monitors** from top brands including Dell, HP, Asus, ViewSonic, LG, and more. ... HP 23.8-inch FHD IPS Monitor with Tilt/Height... Acer R240HY bidx 23.8-inch IPS HDMI DVI VGA... LG 34UC80-B 34-inch 21:9 ... HP 23.8-inch FHD IPS Monitor · Dell · Asus
- Computer Monitors: LCD, LED Monitors - Best Buy**
<https://www.bestbuy.com/site/computers-pcs/computer-monitors/abcat0509000.c?id...>
 Find the **computer monitor** that's right for you at Best Buy. Compare and purchase monitors from 17-inch to 27-inch and up. Shop all of our LCD HD and LED HD ...
 4K Ultra HD Monitor · All Monitors · Gaming Monitors · LED Monitors

Companies implement SEO more than ever

If you want to stay ahead of your competition, SEO is a must. In fact, 61 percent of companies said that their biggest priority for 2018 was to grow their SEO campaigns.

That's a high percentage, which means if you don't opt for an SEO campaign, your business will likely fall behind in search. Your business will become overshadowed by companies that do have SEO, so it's extremely important to have a strong campaign in place.

SEO boosts conversions

In comparison to traditional marketing, the conversion rate of SEO is extremely high.

Traditional marketing strategies typically see a conversion rate of 1.7 percent, while SEO provides a conversion rate of 14.6 percent. That's a huge difference and perfectly illustrates why SEO is one of the best marketing strategies out there.

Local SEO is tremendously effective

If you're a local business, SEO is something that you should add to your marketing strategy without a doubt.

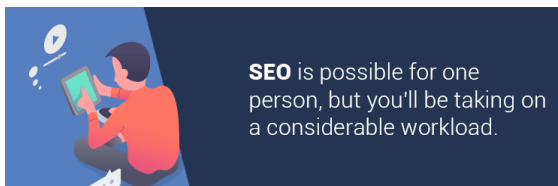
After users make a local business search, 88 percent of them will call or visit the business that they found and chose within 24 hours.

The catch is, you have to show up highly in search engines for local searchers to find you, and the only way to do so is to implement a strong local SEO strategy.

Can you do SEO online marketing on your own?

There are a lot of moving parts when it comes to SEO. Like we mentioned before, there is both on-page and off-page SEO, and they both play huge roles in the success of your campaign.

Many people wonder if SEO is an in-house strategy, and we're here to give you the answer.



SEO is possible for one person, but you'll be taking on a considerable workload.

One person could handle an SEO campaign, but be prepared to put in a lot of work to see the results you want.

SEO isn't a set-it-and-forget-it strategy, rather you have to keep up with the many demands of the strategy. What do we mean? Read on to learn about keeping up with your SEO campaign and planning a winning SEO strategy.

Continuous keyword research

Keywords are the basis of any SEO campaign since they are the building blocks of content. Finding the right keywords is so important because it determines the kind of content you'll write, and ultimately, how you'll rank in Google.

For example, if you choose keywords that have loads of competition and a high search volume, it's unlikely that you'll rank for that keyword. However, if you choose keywords that have a high search volume and not a lot of competition, you'll have a better chance at ranking.

These small nuances are the details that will make your keyword research worth it.

Don't forget, it's necessary to keep cranking out fresh content to ensure that your website ranks in search results, and continuous content means continuous keyword research.

Consistent content creation

The more content you write, the more keywords you can target, and the more keywords you target, the more chances you'll have to show up in search engine results to your target audience.

Content creation is one of the most important, if not the most important part of an SEO strategy. After all, content is what ranks, so it only makes sense that you have to have a solid content plan in place.

It's important that you also create different kinds of content.

For example, blogs are great for SEO because they provide a steady stream of fresh content, which Google loves. However, long-form

content that is 2000 words or more is also a fantastic way to rank in Google.

When you write extensively about a topic in a long-form article, you show Google that you know a ton about that topic. Typically, the more information you write, the more value you provide to users — which Google also favors.

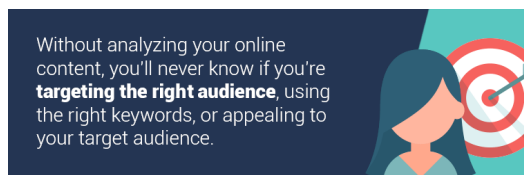
You'll also want to make sure that your content is engaging to users by adding multimedia like custom images, videos, and infographics. These can help to break up your content and keep users on your website for longer. Not only that, but it can create a more enjoyable experience overall for your site visitors.

Ongoing monitoring

When you implement a strategy on your website, it's crucial that you track its success, and SEO is no exception to the rule.

When you opt for an ongoing strategy like SEO, you'll have to keep an eye on it at all times to ensure that it's working properly.

Imagine posting a piece of content and never checking how much traffic it received from search engines. Without that information, you'll never know if your content is targeting the right audience, using the right keywords, or writing in a way that appeals to your target audience.



This makes it absolutely necessary to ensure that you have a way of tracking the success of your content, and you do so often. The information you yield from analyzing your content can help you tweak your campaign to guarantee that it's successful.

These three initiatives are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to SEO. There are so many other initiatives necessary to ensure its

success like link building, managing and linking to social profiles, creating effective title and meta tags, and so much more.

Though you can opt to take care of your SEO online marketing on your own, we typically suggest that you hire a top SEO agency to get the job done. When you hand over your SEO campaign to a professional, you're guaranteed results.

Not to mention, SEO takes a lot of time, and unless you have someone on your team that's already trained in SEO, it's an undertaking that will be a time commitment.

You'll have to spend time training your new (or current) employee on SEO, what is necessary to a campaign, and all the nuances that it carries. You'll have to pay for the many tools necessary to implement a successful campaign, and you'll also have to add a new employee to payroll.

When you hire an SEO company, you don't have to worry about a thing. Agencies are made up of seasoned professionals in the industry and you can rest assured that your campaign is in good hands.

Did you know that WebFX has over 200 marketing specialists that work on SEO campaigns just like yours?

How SEO online marketing works with your existing digital marketing campaigns

One of the greatest things about SEO is that it works together with just about any other digital marketing strategy. It can help benefit your campaign as a whole, and there's a connection between SEO and every other digital strategy.

SEO and PPC

SEO and pay-per-click (PPC) advertising are a power couple in the world of digital marketing. They work very well together because when used in tandem, they can help you earn more real estate in

search engine results pages. consider this, if you already have a top organic spot for one of your target keywords, you can double that real estate by placing the winning bid for a paid ad in search results. That means you have double the chances of attracting people to your site and having them convert.



PPC allows you to place ads for your target keywords. Much like you do keyword research for your SEO content, you also do keyword research for your PPC ads. Another reason these two strategies work so well together is that you can use the same keyword list for both campaigns.

One thing to keep in mind — your competitors are also likely bidding for the ad, so you'll have to have the highest bid to win the real estate in search engines. If you win, your ad will show up above organic results in search.

SEO and email marketing

Email marketing is one of the best marketing strategies out there. For an extremely low cost, you can see a huge return with this strategy. In fact, it has the highest ROI of any marketing campaign at a staggering 4400 percent. That means for every \$1 you spend on your email marketing campaign, you'll make a \$44 profit.

But what makes email marketing a great partner for SEO?

When you're creating SEO content for your website, it'll gain traction and popularity the more people view it. One great way to get people to your website to read your content is to provide links in your emails. Not only do these links take email recipients to your website, but they can also help to increase traffic and conversions, which is the goal of SEO in the first place.

SEO and social media marketing

Social media marketing is another fantastic match for SEO. Similar to email marketing, sharing links to your website content on your various social media platforms are a great way to increase traffic and conversions.

Not only that, but you can also link out to your social media platforms on your website, which increases brand awareness. This is a huge benefit to your SEO campaign!

SEO and web design

People don't often think of SEO as a relation to web design, but it absolutely is.

Google's job is to provide the best results to users, which is why their ranking algorithm is so complex. They want to ensure that the pages they rank aren't only providing beneficial and informative information but that they link to a website that is easy to navigate and enjoyable to visit.

That's where web design comes in. Without a great web design, users won't want to stay on your website for long. If you have a navigation bar that is difficult to use, or has too many options, users may navigate away from your website before they even read your content.

This can be a bad signal to Google, which can keep them from ranking your highly in search results. This is why web design is another crucial link to SEO.

If you want Google to rank your website highly, you have to have a website design that is aesthetically pleasing, easy to use, and informative.

7.6 LOCAL SEO: 15 MARKETING TECHNIQUES TO PROMOTE YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS ONLINE

Any business intent on marketing online can benefit from SEO, make a small investment go far, and send locals to their website.



Launching a business online can be quite intimidating to any small business owner. Fortunately, any business can benefit from search engine optimization (SEO), which can make a small investment go a long way, as well as making sure that local buyers find their websites. Therefore, local SEO is an obvious choice to promote and market your business on the Web. The following blog post provides 15(!) low-cost marketing techniques to help drive traffic and sales to your website.



What is local SEO?

Local SEO is a specialist technique that aims at getting your business name and website in front of people who are physically located near it. Search engines are the modern-day yellow pages, and your potential customers are looking to find you where you and your products and services are located.

Why is local SEO important?

According to 2009 Marketingcharts.com report titled “Great Divide’ Separates Small Biz, Online Consumers,” 82 percent of local consumers use search engines to find local businesses. Furthermore, more than half (57 percent) use Yellow Pages directories with 49 percent using local directories. Local consumers are going online to find local businesses. It is important to be visible in order to acquire new or existing business.

15 Marketing Techniques to Grow Your Business

Submit Your Website to Search Engines

The first thing you will need to do when launching a website is to submit the site to search engines; Google and Bing are the major search engines to focus on. Out of the 15 techniques, this will be the easiest but one of the most important.

- Google
- Bing

Make Your Website Easy to Use

Before marketing your website through various online channels, make sure that your meta data is accurate and follows the Google Webmaster guidelines. On-site optimization includes page titles and meta descriptions. Page titles should include your business name and one or two keywords that you want Web visitors to find you with. Avoid using too many keywords and make the titles and descriptions appear natural.

Implement Google Analytics

Web host providers will often try and bundle analytics and data packages, but the best, free analytics tool on the Web is Google Analytics. It takes less than two minutes to sign up and implement the code, and you can start collecting Web traffic data immediately.

Data includes the number of Web visitors, how long they browse your site, where the visitors are located, and how they arrived at your site. This is significant data for promoting your business and the most active channel (and geographic location).

Add Your Business to Google+ Local

Adding your business to Google+ Local is the next most important technique to implement. More people search for businesses online than anywhere else, and adding your website and business information to the Google local business directory can help. It's free and simple. Also, you can manage your listing information including business description, product/service details, photos, videos, and offers.

Create Social Network Business Profiles

If you are moving your business online, a great way to spread the word about your website launch is through social networks. Sign up to the business pages of Google+, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Foursquare to promote your business to your friends and network. Make sure you claim your business URL. For example, *facebook.com/mylocalbuisnes*.

- Facebook for business
- Twitter for business
- LinkedIn for business
- Foursquare for business

Not only is this at no cost, but you will also get trustworthy links from these profiles. The more trustworthy links you get to your website, the higher you will appear on Google.

Launch an Online Marketing Campaign

The only activity on this list that has a cost is Google AdWords. Google AdWords allows you to select keywords, write for online marketing ads, and attract visitors to your website based on what

customers search for. Each time your ad is clicked, you will pay Google (you set the highest amount before your campaign goes live). If no one clicks your ad, you don't need to pay.

Launching a Google AdWords campaign does not have to be costly. In fact, you can start with \$15 per week, giving you a chance to decide on whether bookings increase. A benefit of using Google AdWords is that you can be very targeted to where your ads show, whether it be state or town.

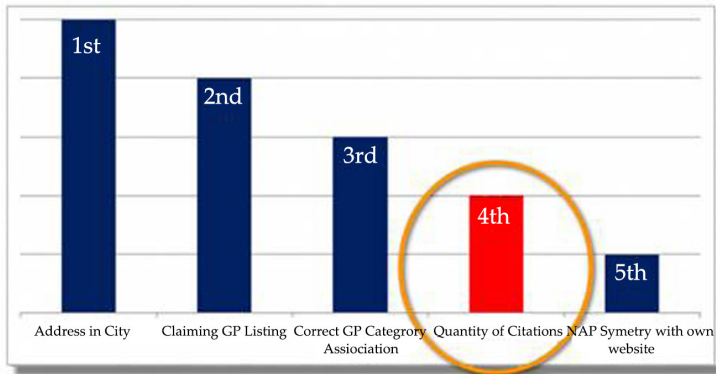
Get Listed in Local Directories and Local Listings

Get listed in local directories and increase the number of trusted inbound links to your website. Most directories are free, and by adding your business, you will see an increase in Web visits from potential customers. (According to Mashable, positive Yelp ratings can boost a restaurant's nightly reservations by 19 percent.)

- www.yelp.com
- www.bingforbusiness.com
- local.yahoo.com
- www.qykpe.co.uk
- www.hotfrog.co.uk
- www.yell.com
- www.scoot.co.uk
- www.smilelocal.com

Within two days of adding a small business to local directories, Web traffic from mobile grew from 0 percent to 18 percent of total traffic, and 30 percent of total traffic was referral.

Although claiming business citations is listed at number seven on this list, BrightLocal ran a survey in 2011 that found the top five most important local search ranking factors.



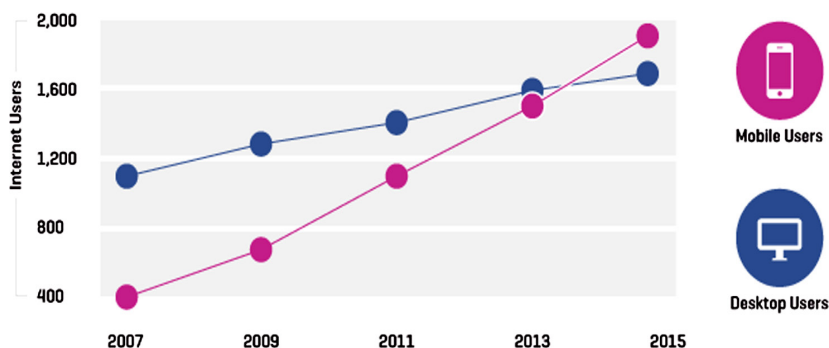
Get Involved in Your Community

This continues to bring home to Google the relevance of your business to a specific area, especially if you're able to include links to your website (be very careful not to spam social communities, though).

If there are local forums in your field, then it's a great idea to get your business actively participating in them. By creating a profile and adding value to the forums, this continues to add relevance of your business to Google.

Optimize Mobile SEO and Its Accessibility

The smartphone is the new yellow pages and mobile search, as a percentage of total Web traffic increases each month. In fact, experts predict that mobile usage will overtake desktop usage by 2014. Local businesses thrive on mobile searches as conversion rates searching on local terms tend to be higher. Make sure your website is optimized for mobile and is easy to use. If your website appears cluttered and loads slow to a searcher, they will most likely move on to your competitor.



Add Social-sharing Buttons

In the footer of your website, make sure you add a link your Google+ Local page along with other social sharing buttons.

Implement Webmaster Tools

Using webmaster tools in both Google and Bing helps you identify issues with your website. By fixing these issues, you will ensure that both search engines have no issues crawling (finding) your website when a local search is made.

- Google Webmaster tools
- Bing Webmaster tools

Implementing both tools is relatively straight forward, and your web developer should be able to support you with this.

Upload Pictures

The local directory sites like to provide users with pictures of your business. To help ensure that your business gets the best exposure, upload your own pictures. They don't need to be of a professional quality but they will represent your business, so make sure they are decent.

Ask for Reviews

Most local sites and directories allow customers reviews. Other than Yelp, most are supportive in requesting reviews. Customer reviews, whether good or bad, make your business more credible to future customers.

Research shows that having at least five reviews in Google+ Local is the magic number where the reviews may start to help with rankings. However, since the recent Google Places move to Google+ Local, reviewers are required to have a Google+ account.

Launch a Blog

Write about your industry, your talent, your services, and promote it in all channels. Blogging not only helps increase awareness of your business, but it also improves your writing. You will learn more within your field (become an expert!), and it is a great way to acquire new links to your website.

- WordPress.com
- Blogspot.com
- Tumblr.com

Be Consistent

Each time you add your website and business information to a local directory, social network, or forum, make sure you be consistent with your business name, address, telephone number, email address, website link, and business description.

Local SEO is Essential to Your Business

Small businesses cannot afford to spend a great deal of money for online marketing, but using the marketing techniques above will help lower the cost and support the launch of your local business

online. Local listings and SEO have always been important for small business online marketing efforts, but now they're even more essential.



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Search Engine Optimization and Marketing

Internet connectivity is ruling the globe in current scenario, and it is virtually unfeasible to find anything on the web without utilizing a search engine. But the question is what this search engine is? A search engine is complex software which may be compared to be a finder visiting to the various websites and their pages which help the searcher to find significant data. Today's world revolves around information that is the driving force behind any economic value chain. The thirst for information has led to the evolution of online "Search Engines" over last few years and are the most widely used instruments currently. Gradually marketers also started using this platform for marketing their products. SEO is a fundamental part of digital marketing because people conduct trillions of searches every year, often with commercial intent to find information about products and services. Search is often the primary source of digital traffic for brands and complements other marketing channels. Search engines such as Google and Bing use bots to crawl pages on the web, going from site to site, collecting information about those pages and putting them in an index. Next, algorithms analyze pages in the index, taking into account hundreds of ranking factors or signals, to determine the order pages should appear in the search results for a given query. Today's world revolves around information that is the driving force behind any economic value chain.

Students will learn search engine optimization with smart internet marketing strategies. The book explains the inner workings of Google's algorithm, and reveals the latest and greatest industry resources so you can always stay ahead of Google's updates. The thirst for information has led to the evolution of online "Search Engines" over last few years and are the most widely used instruments currently. Gradually marketers also started using this platform for marketing their products. The book focuses on the impact of search engine optimization as a marketing tool and its influence on various marketing variables like market share, brand equity and others. This book highlights many marketing variables getting affected by search engine optimization. The book also focuses on the impact of search engine optimization as a marketing tool and its influence on various marketing variables like market share, brand equity and others. Information contained in this book highlights many marketing variables getting affected by search engine optimization. This book will serve as an invaluable resource for social media analytics researchers and digital marketing students.

Ulrike Eastin, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the department of management studies. His teaching expertise includes consumer search engine marketing, business-to-business marketing, and qualitative and quantitative marketing research. His research is focused on business networks, qualitative and quantitative research methods, and entrepreneurship and innovation.