

An Introductory Guide To Basic Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

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What is Search Engine Optimization SEO ?

SEO is the process of 'optimizing' your web site to achieve higher rankings in Search Engines by highlighting specific keywords. These are the words that are most important to your business.

SEO is divided in a number of sections; this guide is to cover ORGANIC SEO, which is SEO that doesn't cost any money. The two sections of this guide will be divided into ON PAGE and OFF PAGE optimization.

Keywords

Good keywords or keyword phrases are the words most important to your business and the words prospective visitors' type into searches. These give a list of the websites that contain these keywords; the resulting sites given by the search engine are the Search Engine Result pages or SERPs.

The important thing is to find the right keywords or specific keywords. For our example a Printing Company that is based in Bridgnorth is looking to target the Bridgnorth businesses with its services.

Instantly you may think PRINTING is a good keyword, it is, but is it specific enough and how many other sites on the web are targeting PRINTING ? So the best keyword phrase is PRINTING BRIDGNORTH or BRIDGNORTH PRINTING. It is more specific, with less people using this phrase.

Good tools to find the best keyword for your site are:

Google Keywords Tool <https://adwords.google.co.uk/select/KeywordToolExternal>
Good Keywords <http://www.goodkeywords.com/good-keywords/>

On Page Search Engine Optimization

Ok we have our keywords now what do we do with them ?

The first part is On Page SEO that is the way the keywords and phrases are used in your site and where they are placed.



TITLE TAG

The title tag is the primary factor to good rankings; it is, as the name suggests, the Page Title that appears on the top of your browser bar for each page of your site. This is in the <head> section of your web page and is the first line prior to other META TAGS. This should be different for each page and be the Title to the page content.

The HTML code is:

```
<title>This is the title</title>
```

Some key factors are:

- Use a maximum of 3 keyword phrases
- Use 100 characters or less
- Do NOT use the same Keyword more than TWICE
- Don't FULLY CAPITALISE Keywords

META TAG : Description

This is the META tag, again in your <head> section, that describes your page content. It should be a summary of your keywords and put into a readable sentence. For many search engines such as Google this is the Descriptive line below the title in Search Engine Result pages.

For example:

[Bridgnorth Print Services - Printing & Finishing For Bridgnorth ...](#)

- 10 visits - 11/11/2009

Welcome to *Bridgnorth Print Services* - providing a full range of printing services for Bridgnorth and the surrounding area.

www.bridgnorthprint.co.uk/ - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#)

The HTML code is:

```
<meta name="description" content="This is the description" />
```

Some key factors are:

- Use a maximum of 3 keyword phrases
- Use your main keywords at the start of the description
- Use 255 characters or less

META TAG : Keywords

This is a granddaddy of META Tags and is actually now ignored by many major search engines, as they trawl the page content to find their own keywords.

Despite this it is good practice to include it in your <head> section, include your keyword phrases separated by commas.

The HTML code is:

```
<meta name="keywords" content="keyword1, keyword2, keyword3" />
```

Some key factors are:

- Use a maximum of 25 words or phrases.

META TAG: Summary

So to summarise your <head> section should now contain a Title, Description and Keywords so would thus look something like this.

```
<title>This is the title</title>
```

```
<meta name="description" content="This is the description" />
```

```
<meta name="keywords" content="keyword1, keyword2, keyword3" />
```

META TAG: Others

Some other commonly used META Tags are

```
<meta name="author" content="The author of the site" />
```

This is a useful place to state who designed the site, most used by web design companies.

```
<meta name="robots" content="index, follow" />
```

This instructs search engines robots to include this page when they trawl your site and to FOLLOW any links to other pages and trawl them too.

Body Text

This is the text content of your page and it should also contain your keyword phrases throughout the page content. There are some key factors to take note of though before you start stuffing your keywords all over the place.

Some key factors are:

- The index or homepage is most important ensure you have a text content of a minimum of 100 words
- Include your keywords phrase a maximum of 4.5%-5% of the content so if you have 100 words on the page repeat each keyword phrase a maximum of 4 or 5 times, keyword frequency is important.
- Use your H1, H2, H3 tags. These are given particular attention and you should include some of these in order on your page, each with keyword phrases. H1 is the most important and 'ideally' should contain your Page Title. Use H1 only once, H2 & H3 no more than twice. H4, H5, H6 a few times.
- It is a good idea to Bold or Italicise your keywords occasionally.
- Keep your keyword phrases together try not to separate them with words like 'and' and 'is' keyword proximity is important.

Links

The anchor text of a link is very important to optimise the page it is linking to. When creating a text hyperlink ensure the text contains the keywords of the page it is linking to. Text linking is far better for SEO than using images for hyperlinks.

The HTML code is:

```
<a href="pagename.html">This Is the Anchor Text</a>
```

Navigation

For good SEO always use a text based menu, try to ensure that on your index page contains text links to all your 'primary' pages. Remember a Text Link is far better for SEO results than image links.

Sitemap

This is a key page and should contain a list of ALL your pages in your site with text links. You should include a HTML format one and an XML format page and link to the HTML page via a text link on the index page.

For a fast way to create your own sitemaps try using

XML Sitemaps <http://www.xml-sitemaps.com/>

Off Page Search Engine Optimization

This is a KEY part to good rankings and if you have a web site that you didn't design yourself or have Web Content management it is the one thing you can do yourself to increase your ranking.

Inbound Links

Link Popularity is very important to good rankings. These are the inbound links to your site from other sites. The better your On Page SEO and the more inbound links you have the higher your page ranking will be.

Link Exchange

The common way to get inbound links is to do link exchanges with other sites relevant to your site. Contact such sites and offer them a link exchange. Then add a text link to their site and request a text link to your site in return. This is best done by emailing the webmaster with a personalised email explaining what you like about their site and how it would be beneficial to both parties to do a link exchange.

Some key factors are:

- Try to do link exchanges with sites that have a high Page Ranking
- AVOID FFA pages and link exchange programs, this can be detrimental to your page rank.
- Always use and request text links using your keywords.

Checking Your SEO Results

Page Ranking

We have mentioned page ranking, the best way to check your page rank is with Google Page Ranking which is included in the Google Toolbar.

Download the toolbar to your web browser and activate the Page Rank, details on this can be found at :

Google Toolbar http://www.google.com/intl/en_uk/toolbar/ie/index.html

Web Page Analysis

You can analyse your SEO efforts and results using a number of online tools.

Two excellent tools are:

Web Page Analyser <http://www.freewebsubmission.com/web-page-analyzer.html>
Google Analytics <http://www.google.com/analytics/>

For more advice and support on web design & SEO visit:

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