
SEO Primer

How to keep your brand found in an ever-expanding web.



Updated November 2017

Introduction to SEO

This SEO primer is a collection of informal notes from secondary sources to provide beginners with a solid non-technical introduction to SEO from an operational perspective.

If you have gone through the effort of creating a web presence, then you want to be found. Of course, people who know you can just type in your URL or Google your brand name to find you.

But if you're like most brands you're probably just as interested in the people who have yet to discover your offer. For those prospective customers, there are only three ways they will ever discover you online.



1. Organic Mentions

This is when you are mentioned or recommended by an individual or organization you have not paid. This could be on social platforms like Facebook or Twitter, or in a review or blog post, rating site or article. It could also be less formal via email or a Skype conversation. This is also known as word of mouth (WOM). The reason it is so important to building brand equity today is that:

- a. Studies (and common sense) tell us that mentions are, by far, the most trusted form of introduction when they come from a trusted source.

- b. With today's global peer-to-peer network, one influencer's word of mouth can literally influence millions of purchase decisions.
- c. WOM is also a double-edged sword because the impact of this exposure can help or hurt a brand with equal power depending on whether the comment is positive or negative and the source.

2. Organic Search

The next most trusted source of information is search engines like Google, Baidu, Bing, Yandex, and Yahoo. Since search engines are typically the first stop for people seeking information on purchases, it is important today for brands to be found via search. "Organic" refers to the fact that you have not paid the search engine to appear in their results.

3. Paid

This is effective and the easiest to execute, but the least-trusted channel to help prospects discover you online. It includes things like Google AdWords, banner ads, video pre-rolls, Facebook advertising, sponsored Twitter posts, etc.

This method provides the advertiser with the most control over exposure and the fastest short-term results. Advertisers should be cautioned not to let the investment in paid detract from investing in a sound web presence and quality content that can attract traffic based on its own merits.

Although this document is focused on organic search, all three of these channels have a role to play in any online marketing program. It's a good idea to have a plan in place to cultivate each one. The idea is to balance them in accordance with your resources and brand objectives. As things change, it is helpful to regularly adjust that balance to adapt to the evolving needs of your brand and market.

On-The-Page Factors

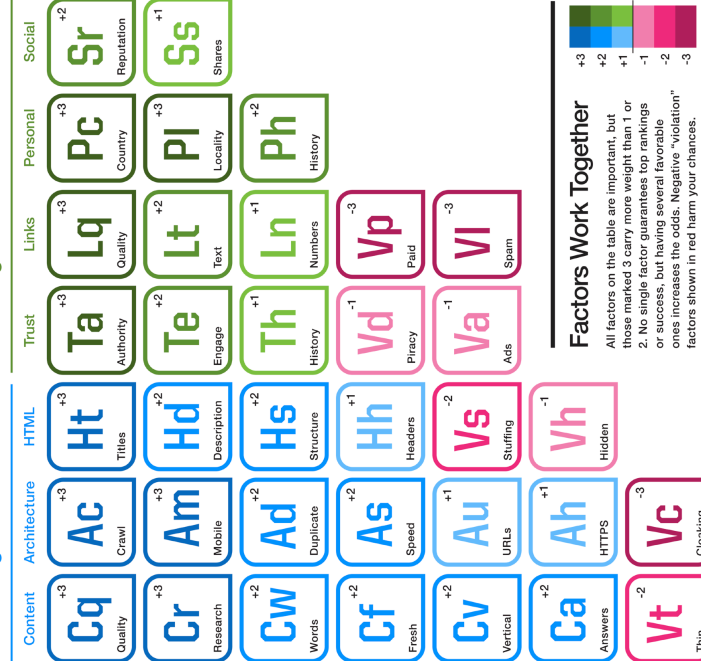
These elements are in the direct control of the publisher

Content	Architecture	HTML	Trust	Links	Personal	Social
Cq QUALITY Are pages well written & have substantial quality content?	Ac CRAWL Can search engines easily "crawl" pages on site?	Ht TITLES Do HTML title tags contain keywords relevant to page topics?	Ta AUTHORITY Are links from trusted, quality or respected web sites?	Lq QUALITY Do links pointing at pages use words you hope they'll be found for?	Pc COUNTRY What country is someone located in?	Sr REPUTATION Do those respected on social networks share your content?
Cr RESEARCH Have you researched the keywords people may use to find your content?	Am MOBILE Does your site work well for mobile devices?	Hd DESCRIPTION Do meta description tags describe what pages are about?	Te ENGAGE Do visitors spend time reading or "bounce" away quickly?	Lt TEXT Do many links point at your web pages?	Pl LOCALITY What city or local area is someone located in?	Sh HISTORY Has someone regularly visited your site?
Cw WORDS Do pages use words & phrases you hope they'll be found for?	Ad DUPLICATE Does site message duplicate content issues well?	Vc CLOAKING Do you show search engines different pages than humans?	Th HISTORY Has site been flagged for hosting pirated content?	Ln NUMBER Have you purchased links in hopes of better rankings?	Ph HISTORY Has someone regularly visited your site?	Ss SHARES Do many share your content on social networks?
Cf FRESH Are pages fresh & about "hot" topics?	As SPEED Does site load quickly?	Vh HIDDEN Do colors or design "hide" words you want pages to be found for?	Va ADS Is content ad-heavy? Do you make use of intrusive interstitials?	Vp PAID Have you created links by spamming blogs, forums or other places?	Vi SPAM Have you created links by spamming blogs, forums or other places?	
Cv VERTICAL Do you have image, local, news, video or other vertical content?	Au URLS Do URLs contain meaningful keywords to page topics?					
Ca ANSWERS Is your content turned into direct answers within search results?	Ah HTTPS Does site use HTTPS to provide secure connection for visitors?					
Vt THIN Is content "thin" or "shallow" & lacking substance?	Vc CLOAKING Do you show search engines different pages than humans?					
Architecture	HTML					
Ac CRAWL Can search engines easily "crawl" pages on site?	Ht TITLES Do HTML title tags contain keywords relevant to page topics?					
Am MOBILE Does your site work well for mobile devices?	Hd DESCRIPTION Do meta description tags describe what pages are about?					
Ad DUPLICATE Does site message duplicate content issues well?	Vc CLOAKING Do you show search engines different pages than humans?					
As SPEED Does site load quickly?	Vh HIDDEN Do colors or design "hide" words you want pages to be found for?					
Au URLS Do URLs contain meaningful keywords to page topics?						
Ah HTTPS Does site use HTTPS to provide secure connection for visitors?						
Vc CLOAKING Do you show search engines different pages than humans?						

The Periodic Table of SEO Success Factors

Search engine optimization (SEO) seems like alchemy to the uninitiated. But there's a science to it. Below are some important "ranking factors" and best practices that can lead to success with both search engines and searchers.

On-The-Page SEO



Factors Work Together

All factors on the table are important, but those marked 3 carry more weight than 1 or 2. No single factor guarantees top rankings or success, but having several favorable ones increases the odds. Negative "violation" factors shown in red harm your chances.

Off-The-Page Factors

Elements influenced by readers, visitors & other publishers

Trust
Ta AUTHORITY Do links, shares & other factors make pages trusted authorities?
Te ENGAGE Do visitors spend time reading or "bounce" away quickly?
Th HISTORY Has site or its domain been around a long time, operating in same way?
Vd PIRACY Has site been flagged for hosting pirated content?
Va ADS Is content ad-heavy? Do you make use of intrusive interstitials?
Links
Lq QUALITY Are links from trusted, quality or respected web sites?
Lt TEXT Do links pointing at pages use words you hope they'll be found for?
Ln NUMBER Do many links point at your web pages?
Vp PAID Have you purchased links in hopes of better rankings?
Vi SPAM Have you created links by spamming blogs, forums or other places?
Personal
Pc COUNTRY What country is someone located in?
Pl LOCALITY What city or local area is someone located in?
Ph HISTORY Has someone regularly visited your site?
Social
Sr REPUTATION Do those respected on social networks share your content?
Ss SHARES Do many share your content on social networks?

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Search Engine Basics

How do Google, Bing, and other search engines find web pages matching a query and determine the order of search results?

There are four components to this process:

1. Crawling
2. Indexing
3. Serving
4. Ranking

Crawling

Crawling is the process by which a searchbot (also known as a robot, bot, or spider) discovers new and updated pages to be added to the Google index.

Search engines use computers to fetch (or "crawl") billions of pages on the web every day. The program that does the fetching for Google is called Googlebot.

A search engine's crawl process begins with a list of web page URLs, generated from previous crawl processes, and augmented with sitemap data provided by webmasters.

As the spider visits each of these websites it detects links on each page and adds them to its list of pages to crawl. New sites, changes to existing sites, and dead links are noted and used to update the search engine index.

Indexing

A spider processes each of the pages it crawls in order to compile a massive index of all the words it sees and their location on each page.

In addition, search engines process information included in META tags and attributes, such as URL name and ALT attributes.

Search engines also spider and index the HTML content on a web page. Spiders can process many, but not all, content types. For example, Google cannot process the content of some rich media files or dynamic pages.

Serving

When a user enters a query, the search engine searches its index for matching pages and returns the results it believes are the most relevant to the user.

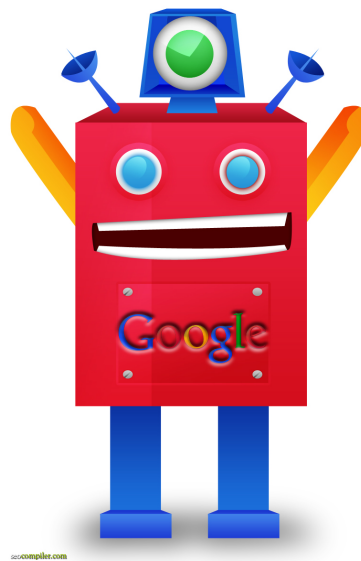
Relevancy is determined by over 200 factors, one of which is the PageRank for a given page.

Ranking

PageRank is the measure of the importance of a page based on the incoming links from other pages. In simple terms, each link to a page on your site from another site adds to your site's PageRank.

Not all links are equal: Google identifies spam links and other practices that negatively impact search results. The best types of links are those that are given based on the quality of your content.

The pages with the highest PageRank relevant to the query term (keywords) have a much better chance at placing higher in the rankings.



Secret Sauce

Search engines use complex mathematical formulas to determine your website's relevance in relation to a given keyword and to establish your website's exact place on the page. While they do not publish these criteria, experts have reverse engineered what these engines look for to determine relevance and rank.

Search Engine Optimization

Ask a question these days and nine times out of ten the answer you'll get is "Google it." Search engines are now the first stop for people looking for info on anything and everything – including your products and your brand.

In Sweden alone, with a population of nearly 10 million, there are more than seven million searches on Google every day. Since each search is unique, it's difficult to pinpoint exactly how many clicks you will get in relation to how Google ranks you, but the trends are very clear.

Google serves up ten organic results per page, plus other things like ads and recommendations. In general, people tend to skip the ads, click on the first few organic links on page 1 of the results, and seldom make it to page 2.

In fact, beyond those first ten results is a wasteland. Only 25 people in 10,000 will visit a site ranked at number 15, and, if you're below 25, it's less than one in 10,000. In other words, if you aren't on the first page of search results, virtually everyone searching for information about your industry will land on your competitors' sites. That is why a spot on page one of Google for your keywords is one of the most sought-after real estate on the web.

How your website ranks is determined by many factors. Our goal is to optimize your webpages to appear as high as possible in search results.

Where you end up in search results probably seems out of your hands. But when you understand how the engines choose websites, it's not that difficult to boost your rank. Search engine optimization (SEO) convinces search engines that it's your website users want when they search for certain keywords.

The other major way companies try to get more traffic from search engines is Pay Per Click advertising (PPC – Google AdWords being the big one). This lets you pay search engines to show your website when users search for certain keywords.

Today, PPC is the most popular form of search engine marketing (SEM) – to the tune of 90% market share. However, SEO is by far the better strategy, especially over the long run. Very few users click on paid ads, and, once the PPC campaign ends, the traffic boost dies. With SEO, all users are targeted and your traffic is boosted over the long haul.

On the next two pages, we have applied the results of some studies to a random search we conducted for "cloud backup". That phrase gets around 22,000 searches a month globally.

Google Result Impressions Percentage

Rank	Impressions	Percentage
1	2,834,806	34.35%
2	1,399,502	16.96%
3	942,706	11.42%
4	638,106	7.73%
5	721	6.19%
6	416,887	5.05%
7	331,500	4.02%
8	286,118	3.47%
9	235,197	2.85%
10	223,320	2.71%
<hr/>		
11	91,978	1.11%
12	69,778	0.85%
13	57,053	0.70%
14	46,822	0.57%
15	39,635	0.48%
16	32,168	0.39%
17	26,933	0.33%
18	23,131	0.28%
19	22,027	0.27%
20	23,953	0.29%

SOURCE: <http://www.gravitateonline.com/google-search/2nd-place-1st-place-loser-seriously>

Organic vs Paid

Note: there are two types of search results:

Organic Results

These are meant to be unbiased results ordered by relevance. Ideally, we want to appear on the first page of organic results, within the top 10.

Paid Results

These are the listings that surround the organic results which companies purchase, i.e., through Google AdWords.

Where to focus?

A 2012 study of 1.4 billion searches showed that search engine users overwhelmingly click on organic results on Google and Bing by a margin of 94 percent to 6 percent.

Ironically, the spend on clicks is almost exactly the opposite. Only 10% of search engine marketing budgets were spent on SEO tactics to improve organic results, while 90% of budgets were spent on pay per click (PPC) results.

The image shows a Google search results page for 'cloud backup'. The search results are divided into two main sections: Organic Results (highlighted in pink) and Paid Results (highlighted in blue). The Organic Results section contains several articles from various sources, including PCMag, Lifewire, Backblaze, Cloudwards, Acronis, and Wirecutter. The Paid Results section contains a single advertisement for 'Remote backup service'.

Organic Results
Get 94% of clicks

Paid Results
Get 6% of clicks

Where do people click?

Exact numbers will vary from study to study, search to search, but there are clear trends:

■ Page One

Gets around 90+% of clicks for any given search.

■ Organic Results

Get around 90% of clicks

■ Top 3 Organic

Get around 60-80% of organic clicks on page

The lion's share of traffic goes to the first three organic results served up on page one of a Google search.

Page

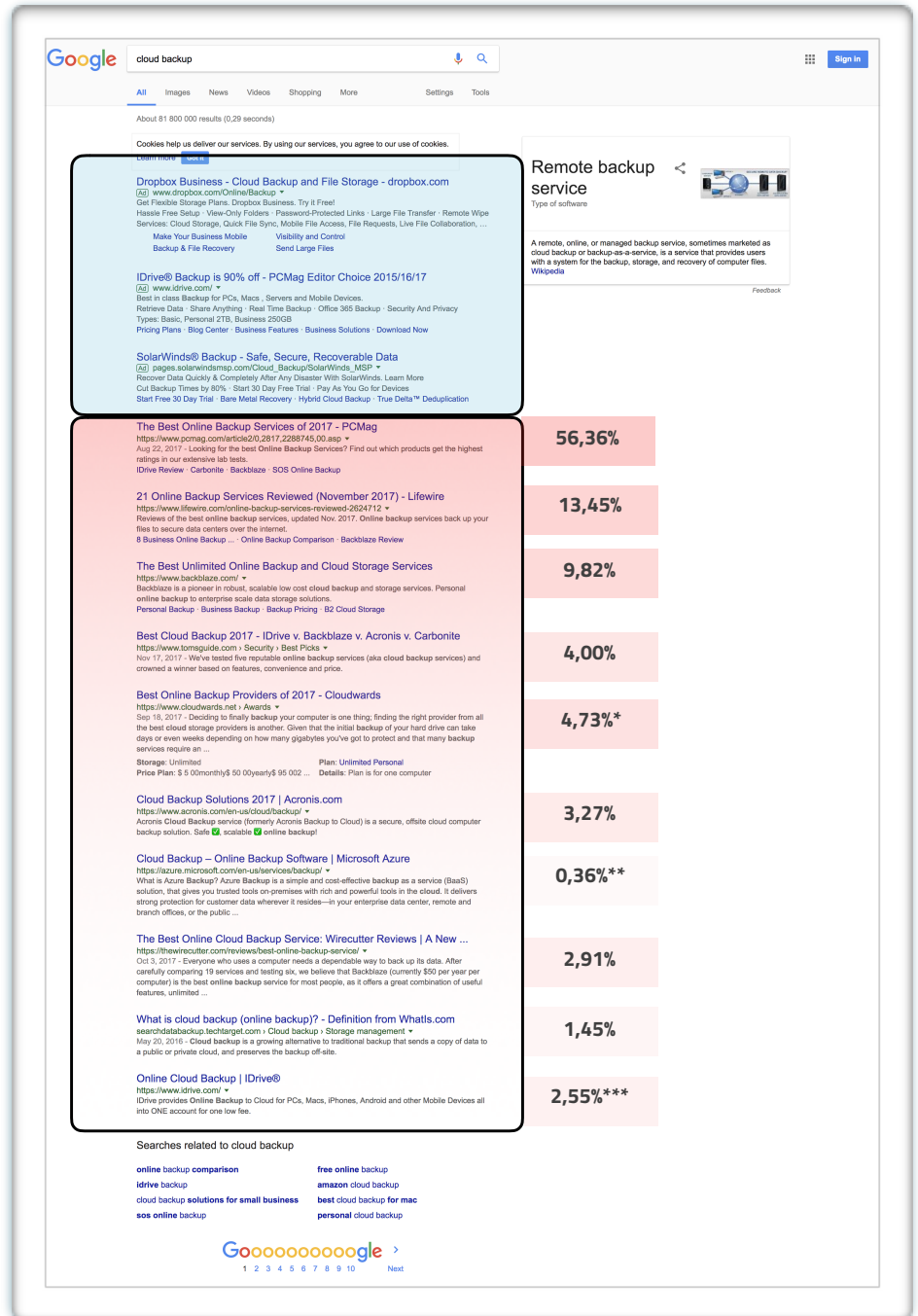
In this study, the page one results got 99% of organic clicks

Position

In this study, the top 3 organic results get about 80% of organic clicks.

Clutter

Google serves up ten organic results per page plus an increasing number of ADS, suggestions, and other stuff.



Notes:

* Although this result is lower on the page, it received more clicks. The author speculates that more appealing copy on the lower entry led to this.

** In the original study, this result was an indented sub-link that accounts for the sharp dip in clicks.

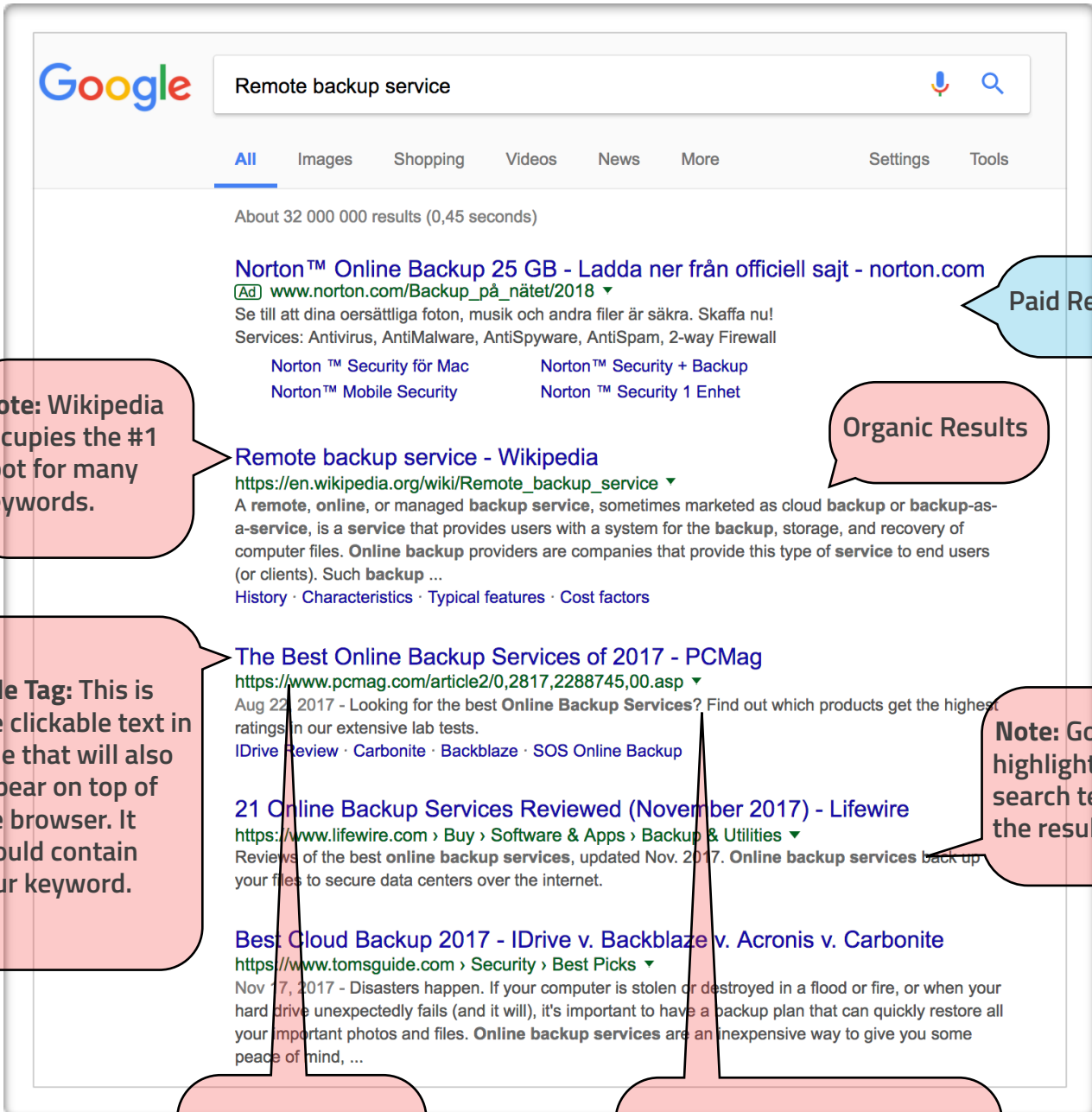
*** The author speculates that the bottom result stands out more and, therefore, gets a small spike in clicks.

Source: <http://www.marketinghub.info/serp-click-distribution/>

Anatomy of a Search Result

Example

Here is an example of results when you google "Remote backup service"



Note: Wikipedia occupies the #1 spot for many keywords.

Title Tag: This is the clickable text in blue that will also appear on top of the browser. It should contain your keyword.

URL: This is the web address of the page. It too should include the keyword for that page.

Meta Description: The text under the URL. This is the text that (along with the Title Tag) should entice the reader to click on your link. If written well it can help you boost click through rates.

Paid Result

Organic Results

Note: Google highlights the search term in the results

It all Starts with Keywords

Keywords aren't new. You'll find extensive mention of them in John Caples' classic *Tested Advertising Methods* first printed in 1932. But they have taken on new significance in a world where choosing the right word to associate your brand with can mean the difference between millions of page visits or utter obscurity.

Today, a "keyword" is what's typed into the search bar on a search engine to return results. It can be a single word, but is usually several (called a "keyword phrase").

When developing an SEO strategy, choosing the right keywords for which to optimize is critical

Three criteria to consider in keyword selection:

1. Relevancy

Keywords need to relate specifically to what your website is about. The more specific, the better the keyword.

2. Search Volume

Obviously, some keywords are searched more than others. The more specific a keyword becomes, the less search volume.

3. Competition

Websites with the same type of content are competing for the same keywords. The better your SEO practices, the better you can rank against your competition.

The ideal keyword will be highly relevant and have higher search volume and lower levels of competition. Striking the right balance is an art combined with science.

Keyword Phrases

In addition to individual keywords, you should optimize for keyword phrases that consist of several words – e.g., "organic oat drink".

It is best when the keyword phrases you optimize for are popular ones, so you can get a lot of exact matches of the search string. But sometimes it makes sense to optimize for two or three separate keywords ("oat drink" and "organic") than for one phrase that might occasionally get an exact match.

Secondary Keywords

Optimizing for secondary keywords can be a goldmine because, when everybody else is optimizing for the most popular keywords, there will be less competition (and probably more hits) for pages that are optimized for the minor words.

For instance, "Laktosfri" might have thousand times fewer hits than "Lactose Free" — but if you are operating in Sweden, you will get less, but considerably better and more targeted traffic.



KEYWORD	COMPETITION	GLOBAL MONTHLY SEARCHES
oatly	Low	6,600
oatley	Low	49,500
organic oat drink	Medium	28
oat drink	Low	2,400
oat milk	Low	22,200
nondairy milk	Low	6,600
lactose-free milk	Medium	49,500
lactose-free drinks	High	880
lactose intolerance	Low	301,000
soy milk alternatives	Low	390
milk alternatives	Low	12,100
dairy free	Low	450,000
what are oats	Low	2,240,000
oats nutrition	Low	40,500

KEYWORD	Competition	GLOBAL Monthly Searches	SWEDISH Monthly Searches
lactose free	Low	301,000	590
laktosfri	Medium	22,200	18,100

Source: Google Adwords Keyword Tool

On-page vs. Off-page SEO

You can easily get overwhelmed by the nitty gritty of SEO. But, from a broad perspective, we can divide SEO into two categories: on-page and off-page SEO.

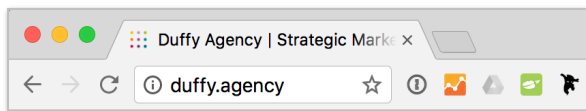
On-page SEO

These are the things that you can do on any web page to influence its search engine ranking. There are several elements to consider, but here are the top six for starters.

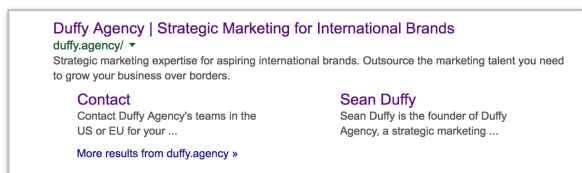
▪ Title Tag

This is the most relevant factor that directly reflects what the webpage is about. It is the main text that describes what is on the page to the search engine. The title tag for the Duffy Agency's company site is "Duffy Agency | Strategic Marketing for International Brands". It appears in three key places:

- *Browser* — These are the words that appear on the top of the browser when you are on a webpage. People don't often read this.



- *Search Results* — This is the first line of your page description in search results. People do read this.



▪ URL

This gets into how your website is put together. Search engines read URLs to determine relevance. Get expert advice to ensure your URLs are helping SEO.

▪ Meta Description

The meta description is an HTML tag which summarizes the content of the webpage. Although it is not a ranking factor, it helps get the visitors from search engine to click through to your page because it appears right underneath the URL on the search engine result page (SERP).

▪ Content

Content really is king for ranking. The most important factor (by a wide margin) is content. Providing quality, unique content on one very specific topic that is useful to people is the most powerful thing you can do to put you on the top of Google. Why? Because a search engine's reason for being is to find, index, and serve up quality, unique content on one very specific topic that is useful to people. Trying to optimize poor content is betting that you can fool the brain trust at Google. Don't fight the bot. If you want top rating search results, produce top content.

▪ Image Alt Text

Images can be a powerful draw for search. But search engines cannot see pictures. They can only read them. That is why it is important to ensure that every image has "Alt Text" or a search-friendly description (using your keywords) of what the picture is about.

▪ Internal Anchor Text

Internal anchor text is the clickable text in hyperlink from one page on a domain to the other page on the same domain. To have a descriptive keyword in the anchor text helps search engines quickly understand the contextual information about the content of the link. Editors should always avoid using phrases like "click here" that does not indicate any information as anchor text.

For more information on our product specifications, [click here](#).

For more information, please read our [product specifications](#).

Off-page SEO

Search engines look at your web pages to decide how they rank. But just as important, they look to see what other pages can tell them about your content. Basically, if the search engine sees that sites that are related to your keywords and reputable links to your page, then your content must be pretty good. Off-page elements that influence search rank are:

- **Links**

Links from other sites are less important than they used to be, but still a factor. But all links are not created equal though. The reputation of the site linking to you has a huge impact. For example, one link from *The New York Times* could be worth more than 100,000 links from less reputable sites. It also matters what words are used to link to your site. The more strong links you have, the better.

- **Sharing**

How often your content shared on social networks. Search engines can see this and take it as an indicator that the content is good. Also, the reputation of the person sharing the content is key. Like the example with *The New York Times* above, having an authority on your keyword share your content could mean a lot more than an average person sharing.

14,274 SHARES



- **Trust**

This has to do with the perceived authority of your content. Does the page/site seem genuine and well respected on the internet? A part of this is also how old the domain name is and how it has changed and behaved over the years.

- **Traffic**

Search engines try to assess the quality of the traffic to your site. Where do visitors to your page come from? Do you have a lot of return visits?

- **Content**

Again, the most effective thing you can do to increase off-page performance is to produce quality content on-page that is easy for people to link to and share. This is the knock-on effect of good content. It gets shared, mentioned, and linked to a lot. These off-page SEO benefits are also seen by search engines and influence your page's rank.



- **External Anchor Text**

Like internal anchor text, this is the clickable text used to link to another web page but on a different domain (like the image attached below showed how [firehead.net](#) links to Duffy Agency's website). Links are important to build SEO credibility for keywords. Search engines remember what words were used to link to your page and subsequently uses those words to help determine what the page is about. You want anchor text to include your keyword or keyword phrase. What's the world's most common anchor text? "Click here" which, unfortunately, says nothing about the page being linked to.

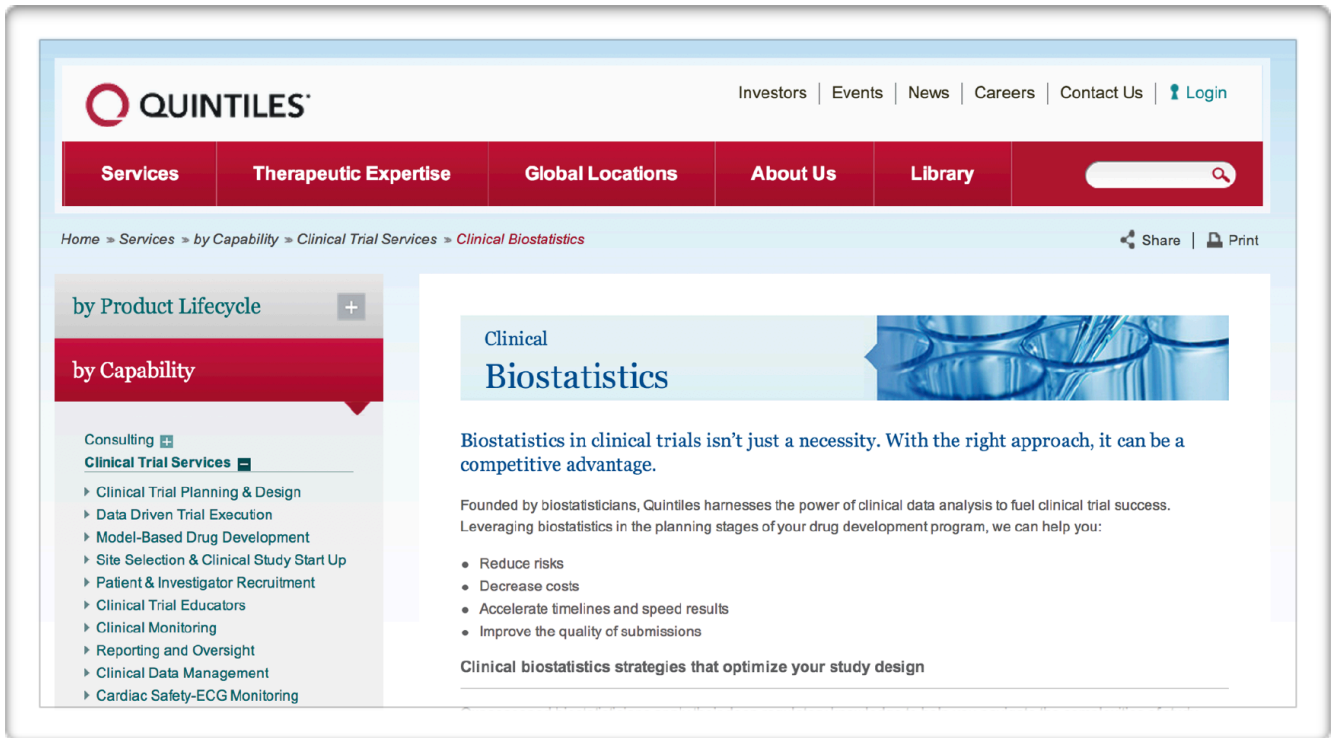


What is your job title?

My job title is brand strategist, although I like to think of it as brand detective because I solve mysteries such as why is our brand invisible in Germany, why don't the Chinese understand our offer or what do Brazilian women feel about exercise? I work at a company I founded in 2001 called [Duffy Agency](#). We use sleuthing, strategy and marketing communication to build brands internationally. We have offices in Malmö, Sweden, and Boston, USA.

How search engines crawl web pages

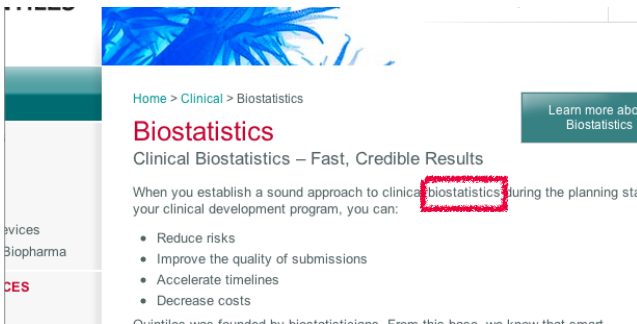
You see this:



The search engines see this:



Four Ways to Improve



Keywords & META Tags



Keywords in <title> tag

This is one of the most important places to have a keyword because what is written in the <title> tag shows in search results as your page title. The title tag must be short (six or seven words at most, never more than 65 characters) and the keyword must be near the beginning. That's why you will often see that pages with good SEO often put the brand name at the end of the description, giving the more

Keywords in URL

Keywords in URLs help a lot - e.g., <http://www.quintiles.com/clinical-services.html>, where "clinical services" is the keyword phrase you attempt to rank well for. But if you don't have the keywords in other parts of the document, don't rely on having them in the URL to make up for it. It's best to have them in the URL and elsewhere.

Keyword density in document text

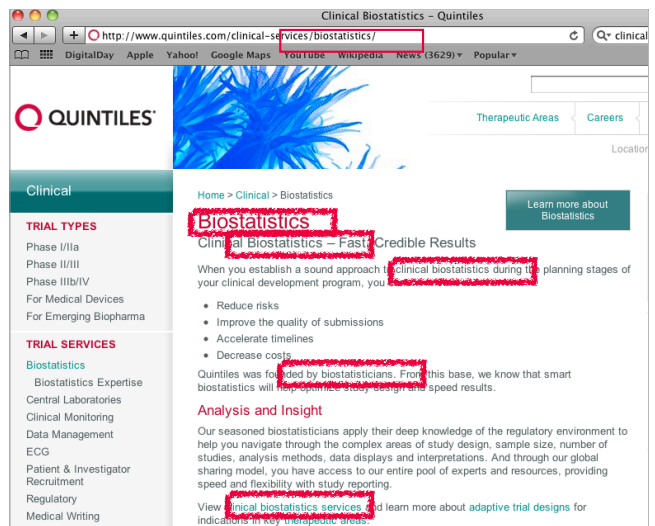
Another very important factor you need to consider when writing web copy is how you use the keyword in flowing text. Major keywords should show up between three to seven times per hundred words (3-7 %) and one to two times (1-2%) for minor keywords. In the example below the keyword for this page is "biostatistics". It is used five times on the page. Note that it is also in the URL.

Let's take a closer look at the four main on-page components that affect search engine results.

1. **Keywords & META Tags** – the words and phrases users input into search engines to find your web page
2. **Links** – including out-bound and internal as well as in-bound (off-page links).
3. **Content** – the words, pictures, links, and media on a page
4. **Domains, URL's, WebMastery** – how the site is built and how pages are named.

At the core of on-page SEO are the keywords. These words should be carefully chosen to reflect how the people you want to attract to your page search. We have used the website of the clinical research organization Quintiles to illustrate the following concepts.

- Keywords in <title> tag
- Keywords in URL
- Keyword density in document text
- Keywords in headings (<H1>, <H2>, etc. tags)
- Keywords in the beginning of a document
- Keywords in <alt> tags
- Keywords in META tags
- Keyword Mistypes
- Keyword dilution

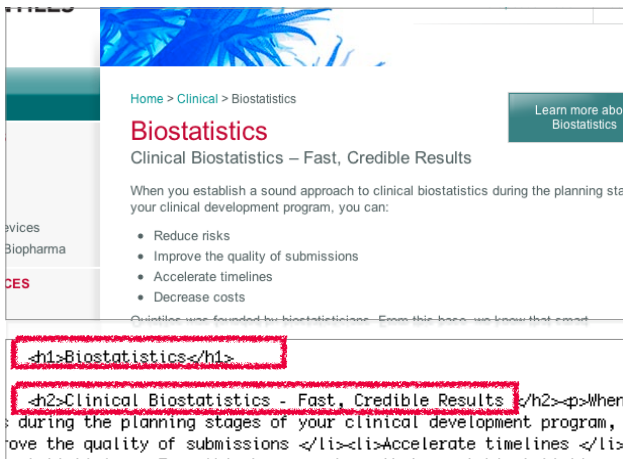


Keyword Stuffing

If a few keywords in the copy are good for SEO, then a lot of keywords must be even better right? Not the case. If you use the same keyword too much (over 10% of words are the keyword), then search engines will assume you are trying to trick them and will penalize your page, and lower its rank. Filling text with unnecessary keywords to impress search engines is called “keyword stuffing”. This not only lowers your search rank, but it also makes for monotonous reading. Don’t do it.

Keywords in headings (<H1>, <H2>, etc. tags)

The search engine reads the code, and to a coder, <H1> is the symbol used to indicate a major headline, while <H2> represents a sub-headline, etc. The search engine assumes that things in the headlines are most indicative of the content on the page. So this is one more place where keywords count a lot. But take care that your page has actual text about the particular keyword. If you use keywords in the headlines and not in the text, then the search engine may assume you are trying to trick it and could penalize the page. The example below shows the web page optimized for the word “biostatistics” and the corresponding code with <H1> and <H2> indicated.



The screenshot shows a website page for 'Biostatistics'. The main heading is 'Biostatistics' and the sub-heading is 'Clinical Biostatistics - Fast, Credible Results'. Below the headings is a paragraph of text and a list of bullet points. The HTML code for the H1 and H2 tags is highlighted in red boxes. The H1 tag is <h1>Biostatistics</h1> and the H2 tag is <h2>Clinical Biostatistics - Fast, Credible Results</h2>.

Keywords in the beginning of a document

As with title tags, it is best to use your keywords sooner rather than later in the text. This counts towards your rank, though not as much as title tag or headings. However, bear in mind that the beginning of a document does not necessarily mean the first paragraph – for instance, if you use tables, the first paragraph of text might be in the second half of the table.

Keywords in <alt> tags

Spiders don’t read images, but they do read their textual descriptions in the <alt> tag. If you have images on your page, be sure to supply a description of the image with keywords for your webmaster to include within the <alt> tag. This will also help to populate and better rank your images when doing an image search.

Keywords in META tags

META tags are written into the code of the web page but do not necessarily appear on the page. This is behind the scenes info that is used by search engines to understand what your page is all about. Because they are so prone to abuse (i.e. web masters filling them with false information in an effort to get more traffic) most search engines place less emphasis on them. Nonetheless, they are important to maintain.

```
.../c71dd987-edfe-4619-b754-  
...ight="98" alt="Dennis Gillings" style>
```

The most common META tags are:

- <TITLE>
- <DESCRIPTION>
- <KEYWORDS>
- **Title Tag** - The most important META tag, is the TITLE tag. The TITLE tag determines the clickable title of a search result, as well as the text which appears on the title bar of a web browser.
- Here are some tips on how to properly write TITLE tags:
 - Use fewer than six or seven words (no more than 65 characters). Otherwise, part of the title will be cut off by browsers and search engines.
 - Every page on the website needs to have a unique title.
 - Your primary keyword target should be at the beginning of the TITLE tag.
 - If required, place the company name at the end of the TITLE tag
- **Meta Description Tag** - The second most important META tag is the DESCRIPTION tag – it determines what text appears below the title in search results (with some exceptions). People who visit a webpage will not see this tag, unless they look at the source code.

- To write DESCRIPTION Tags properly:
 - Keep the description approximately 125-175 characters.
 - Don't put specific data searchers are looking for in the description tag; they might only read it and not visit the site.
 - Use the description to market to the user and increase the click through to the website.
 - The description is not a ranking factor, but be sure to use your target keyword(s) and keyword phrases so that they will be bold in the search results.

```
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" lang="en">
<head>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=UTF-8" />
<meta http-equiv="Content-Language" content="en" />
<title>
Pharmaceutical Clinical Research Organization CRO, CSO & Consulting - Quintiles
</title>
<link rel="shortcut icon" href="/elements/img/favicon.png" />
<meta name="robots" content="INDEX, FOLLOW" />
<meta name="keywords" content="Pharmaceutical Contract Research Organization, CRO, CSO,
Consulting, Medical Device, Biotechnology, clinical studies, clinical research organization" />
<meta name="description" content="Quintiles clinical research organization (CRO), CSO, & Consulting services helps pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device companies develop and market innovative therapies." />
```

Above are the meta tags written in the code for the page. Below is how it appears in a search result.



- **The Keyword tag** - This has become the least important META tag from a search engine ranking perspective. Most search engines no longer use this as a reliable ranking factor. However, it is nonetheless important to identify what the keyword for every web page is, so we suggest you consider them.

Content

Okay, you're sick of hearing it. But this is the most important aspect of your ranking. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

- **Unique content** - Having more content (relevant content, that is different from the content on other sites both in wording and topics) is a real boost for your site's rankings.
- **Frequency of content change** - Frequent changes are favored. It is great when you constantly add new content, but it is not so great when you only make small updates to existing content.
- **Keyword font size** - When a keyword in the document text is in a larger font size in comparison to other on-page text, this makes it more noticeable, so therefore it is more important than the rest of the text. The same applies to headings

(<h1>, <h2>, etc.), which generally are in larger font size than the rest of the text.

- **Keyword formatting** - Bold and italic formatting is another way to emphasize important words and phrases. However, use bold, italic, and larger font sizes within reason because otherwise, you might achieve just the opposite effect.
- **Age of document** - Recent documents (or at least regularly updated ones) are favored.

Domains and URLs

A few technical tips for your site.

- **Keyword-rich URLs** - As mentioned earlier, this helps add relevance to a particular web page. Care should be paid in page-naming to include keywords separated by hyphens.
- **Sitemap** - In addition to adding increased usability for some users, sitemaps help a spider navigate through a website and ensures no pages will be missed.
- **Site size** - Spiders love large sites, so generally, the bigger, the better.
- **Site age** - Similarly to wine, older sites are respected more. The idea is that an old, established site is more trustworthy (they have been around and are here to stay) than a new site that has just popped up and might soon disappear.
- **Hyphens in URLs** - Hyphens between the words in a URL increase readability and help with SEO rankings.
- **Things to avoid** - These things can hurt SEO:
 - Text in images
 - Images instead of text links
 - Frames
 - Flash
 - Trying to game the system
 - Search engines today are designed to detect pages that are trying to appear more relevant than they really are. If Google thinks a page is doing this, it can make the page virtually unsearchable. There is no warning and it's nearly impossible to undo this.

Links

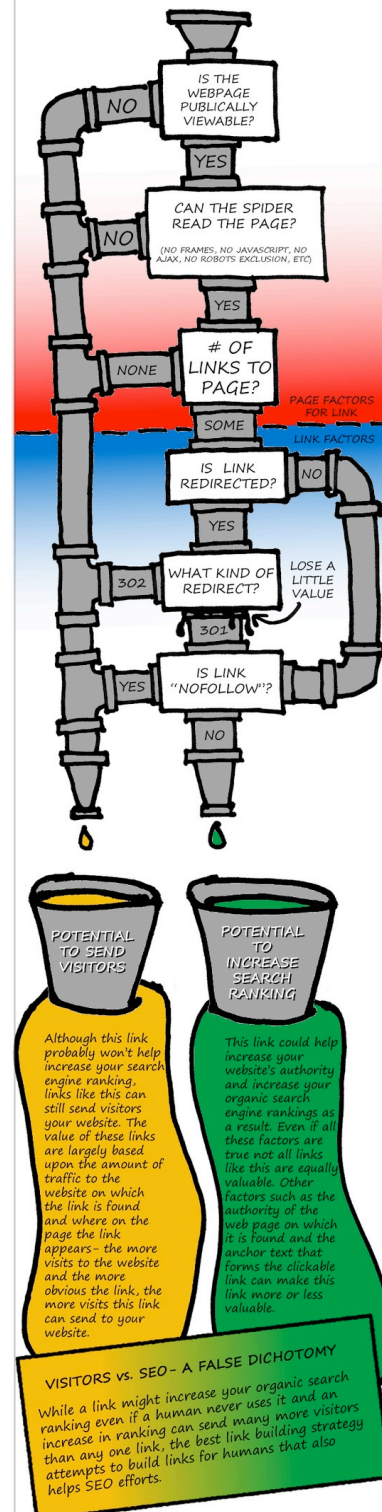
Be sure that your website has a clear, well thought through structure, not only to make it easier for visitors to find what they are looking for but for search engines to do the same.

Be sure that subpages link back to their category page and that every page links back to the home page (usually through your logo).

- **Inbound Links** - these are off-page SEO items that are worth a mention here.
- **Number of backlinks** - These are links from other websites to the page in question. Generally, the more, the better. But the reputation of the sites that link to you is more important than their number. Also important is their anchor text, whether there is a keyword in it, how old are they, etc.
- **Links from similar sites** - Having links from similar sites is very, very useful. It indicates that the competition is voting for you and you are popular within your topical community.
- **Age of inbound links** - The older, the better. Getting many new links in a short time suggests buying them.
- **Links from directories** - Great, though it strongly depends on which directories. Being listed in DMOZ, Yahoo Directory, and similar directories is a great boost for your ranking, but having tons of links from PR directories is useless.

HOW WILL A LINK HELP MY WEBSITE?

Not all links are equally valuable for your website. Answer the questions below to see how a link from a particular web page might be able to help.



Infographic produced by SEOrisk.com

Learn about link building (and other SEO tactics) each rated according to risk at SEOrisk.com.

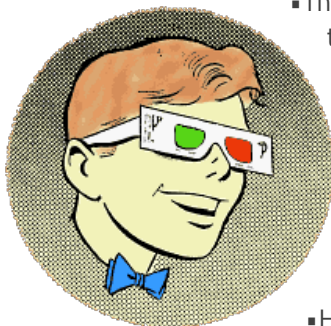
Copyright 2012 David Zimmerman

How to write web-friendly copy

Think in 3-D

When writing for a web page, you need to think in three dimensions:

- The Content: crafting the words, pictures, information that you are presenting
- The Presentation: visualizing how this content looks to the reader
- The Interactivity: thinking through how to get the reader to engage with your web page
 - Where do you want them to go?
 - What do you want them to do?
 - How do you get them to interact?



3. Make sure your copy is easy to read

- On the web, less is nearly always more. Write your copy for the impatient, online reader who is discouraged by long blocks of gray copy.
- It's easier to scan than read
 - People tend to scan web pages, so keep sentences and paragraphs short. Break up long copy with relevant subheads. Use boldface and italic fonts to call attention to important information.
 - Also, whenever possible, break information into bulleted or numbered lists.
 - Here are some guidelines for the length of your content:
 - Headings: 8 words or less
 - Sentences: 15 - 20 words
 - Paragraphs: 40 - 70 words
 - Page word count: 250+ words
 - Use short, simple words. Get to the point, then stop.

Follow these 10 web copywriting tips

1. List your keywords

- Before you begin writing, make a list of the most important keywords or phrases to embed in your copy that will help people find this particular webpage.
- Think in terms of "what words or phrases would my target audience type into a search engine when looking for my content".

2. Write for how your target market searches

- Use your list of keywords to create the phrases that people would use to search for your company's services and information.
- Be sure to weave those words and phrases into your copy.
- NOTE: Always spell out any acronyms, particularly in the first instance.

4. Write in a conversational tone

- The most powerful word in all languages is «YOU». Write for your reader, in a conversational tone, not for your ego.
- Get to know your reader
 - Is there a common style or tone you need to use to reach prospects?
 - Don't forget, they're coming to your website to do something -- make an inquiry, sign up for a course, or just obtain information.
 - Make sure every word you write moves them toward a solution.

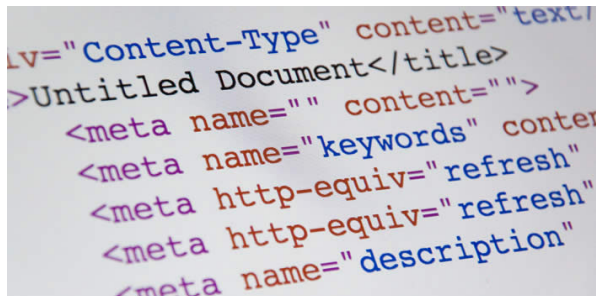
5. Create keyword rich headlines and subheads

- The headline is the most important piece of content you'll write.
- That's because:
 - Internet users scan web pages and the first thing they scan is your headline. If it doesn't grab their attention, they'll leave.
 - An effective headline can become the page's TITLE tag.
 - The headline can be placed on your home page as a link to content.
- When writing headlines:
 - Keep them to eight words or less.
 - Include important keywords.
 - Avoid the use of adjectives and prepositions (and, a, the, of).
 - Be clear and concise. Avoid wordy, wishy-washy phrases.

6. Include links where appropriate

- The web is about linking information.

9. Write your META Tags



- After you've completed your webpage copy, use our template to write your META tags. These will include:
 - <KEYWORD> Tag: Review the keywords you listed at the start of your writing exercise to make sure you've embedded them within your webpage copy.
 - <TITLE> Tag: If written correctly, your headline should serve as the TITLE tag.
 - <DESCRIPTION> Tag: Since this is used in search results, write a short, concise 125 to 150 character description of the webpage that will help a search engine user quickly see what that page is about (think of it as a Tweet).

- Make sure your copy is written with embedded links that guide your reader to other information within your site (and, when appropriate, to external sites).
- Never make a web page a dead-end.

7. Sell benefits not features

- If you want your web copy to sell products or services, you must write about the benefits to potential customers and not about features.
- A feature describes a product or service.
- A benefit is what the user gains from using that product or service.

8. Always include a "call to action"

- Don't leave the reader wondering what to do next. Encourage them to act and provide a link for them to do something:
 - Learn more about this service by following this link . . .
 - Register for this course today while space is available.
 - Sign up for our newsletter.
 - Contact us for more information.

- Are the META tags relevant to the words you've written for the page?
- If you are including photos or graphics with your web copy, make sure to provide a keyword-rich description that can be used as an <ALT> Tag.

10. Edit, edit, edit

- Finally, before you turn in your finished copy, look it over at least one more time as if YOU were the intended audience.
 - Can you scan the copy, reading only the headlines and subheads to understand the gist?
 - Are there long paragraphs that can be broken up into bulleted or numbered lists, or into multiple paragraphs?
 - Can you cut any superfluous words without changing the meaning?
 - Is there a definite call to action?
- If so, you've probably done a good job – but edit it one more time to be sure.

The "Perfectly Optimized" Page [👑]


Title & Meta Elements

Title: Chocolate Donuts from Mary's Bakery

Meta Description: Learn the 3 secrets to Mary's award-winning chocolate donuts, get times & locations for availability, and learn how to make your own donuts at home.

URL: http://marysbakery.com/chocolate-donuts

LOGO | Navigation Menu




Bot Accessible

There are no impediments to search crawlers reaching this page or determining it's the canonical version.


Chocolate Donuts from Mary's Bakery

There's 3 secrets that explain why our **chocolate donuts** have won awards, generated hour-long lines, & even inspired hip-hop tracks. They are:

- #1: Our Ingredients
XYZ
- #2: The Baking Process
ABC
- #3: Timing
DEF




Uniquely Valuable




Built to be Shared

The content offers everything a searcher might want in a unique, high-quality amalgamation.

Like/tweet/+1 buttons make it easy for visitors to share on their favorite networks and provide social proof.





How to Get Hold of Mary's Chocolate Donuts (aka locations, pricing & availability)




How to Make Chocolate Donuts at Home (aka our recipe for the perfect donut)

Endorsements (including one from Homer!)






Phenomenal UX




Keyword Targeted

Clear layout, solid visuals, & beautiful, simple design make the page easy to use & enjoy.

Primary and secondary keyword phrases appear in prominent positions in the headline, title, & content.



Meta Data Inclusive



Multi-Device Ready

The page includes authorship, an enticing meta description, and schema markup for recipes, too.

Thanks to solidly-tested, responsive design, this page loads looking great on any device, screen size, and browser.

NOTE: Perhaps sadly, there's no "perfect optimization." This graphic's intent is to highlight areas that may be worthy of marketers' efforts.

by **Mary D.** of Mary's Donuts

Created by Rand Fishkin
MOZ

Suggested Reading

To learn more about SEO, check out these online resources from Moz.

- The Daily SEO Blog
 - <https://moz.com/blog>
- The Beginners Guide to SEO (from Moz)
 - <https://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-seo>
- 2017 Search Engine Ranking Factors
 - <https://moz.com/blog/local-search-ranking-factors-survey-results-2017>

An Easy Guide to SEO

Search engine optimization is the process of increasing your website's rankings on search engine pages. Search engine optimization can help your site show up in the rankings and gain visibility among online consumers, who are steadily increasing. This guide will help you understand what SEO is all about.

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization.

Why does SEO matter?
(and trust us, it matters)

243 Million People in the USA Use the Internet
Now that's a lot of people.

- 92% use search engines frequently
- 80% only look at organic search results (and ignore paid search ads)
- 78% research prior to purchasing
- 46% connect through smartphones

Why does rank matter?
(Rank - a position search engines assign your site)

Click Through Rates for Top 10 Sites Ranked in Google

Rank	CTR (%)
#1	18.2
#2	10.1
#3	7.2
#4	4.8
#5	3.1
#6	2.2
#7	1.9
#8	1.6
#9	1.6
#10	1.0

Interesting fact: 75% of users never click past the first page of Google

18.2% of people who searched in Google visited the #1 site listed vs. 1.04% of people who searched in Google visited the #10 site

visits / impressions = click through rate (CTR %)

Impressions are the number of times a site appears when relevant search queries are plugged into the search engines

Visits are the number of people that actually click on & go to your site after they see your search results

How does SEO work?

Hi, I'm a Search Engine Crawler. I crawl through the internet to help search engines rank websites, like yours! Here's what I care about.

- Is it relevant?** My main goal is to figure out and deliver the most relevant results when you search on search engines. I use clues just like you do when skimming through books to figure out relevance.
- Can I crawl it?** I have to be able to read through your site to consider it. I can crawl in most spaces, but I prefer sites with a good code structure. I also can't click, so I can't see things that require me to fill stuff out!
- Can I scan it?** I'm only looking to skim because I go through millions of websites in a typical week. That means I can't read all of your content, so I'll look for clues in obvious places.

URLs: www.example.com

Title Tags: Title of Web Page | My Site | My Company

Meta Data: Meta Keywords & Meta Descriptions

Image Tags: Image Alt Tags, Titles, & File Names

Headers: Header tags (H1-H3) Bolded font in text

Links: Links are a popularity vote. The more other sites link to yours - the more popular you are.

Content: Overall Text on Page

Importance Key: Importance for Crawlers (Low to High) vs. Importance for Users (Low to High)

How does it apply?

SEO can help businesses draw large gains in traffic. With algorithm changes like the Google Panda & Panda updates, the web is increasingly rewarding websites with great content & usability with higher rankings, while penalizing sites that use unethical practices known as "black hat".

Optimize your site while focusing on user experience to **increase rankings, gain more click-throughs, & result in higher conversions.**

The Grimes of SEO

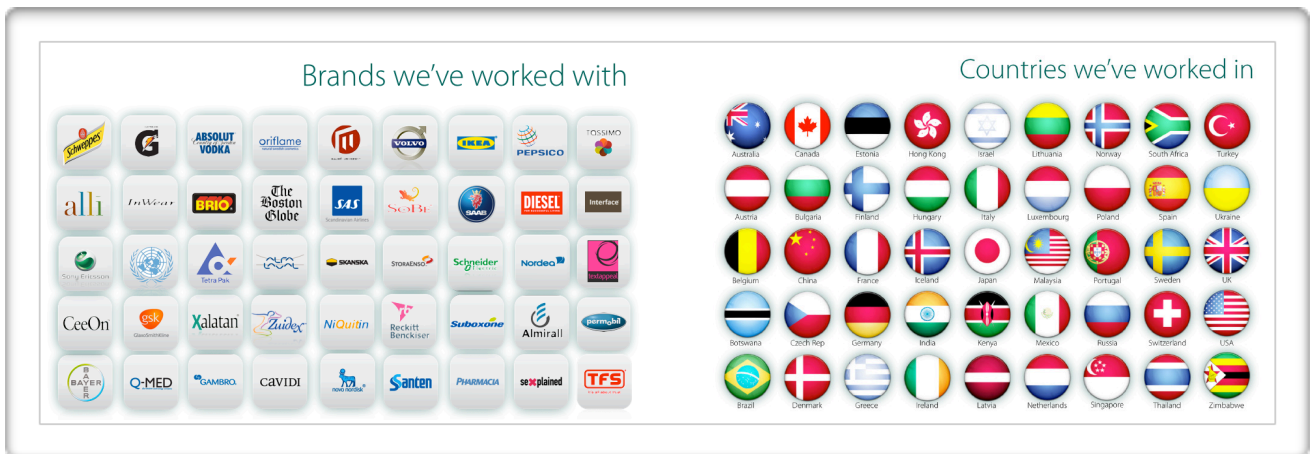
- Paid Links:** Purchasing links for unnaturally higher rankings
- Spinning:** Stuffing keywords into website and over-optimizing
- Cloaking:** Showing search engines a different page than users
- Hidden:** Hiding keywords within the background using similar color schemes
- Link Spam:** Creating links by spamming blogs, forums, and link farms

Source: <http://visual.ly/easy-guide-seo>

About Duffy Agency

Strategic Marketing Expertise for Aspiring International Brands

Duffy Agency is marketing consulting firm specialized in helping mid-sized companies grow internationally. In theory, all brands are able to market internationally today. But in practice, very few mid-size companies (or their ad agencies) have the bandwidth or expertise to succeed outside their home market. Since 2001, Duffy Agency has been bridging that gap with outsourced marketing strategy and implementation services that fuel rapid growth for aspiring international brands.



We serve clients globally from offices outside Boston and Copenhagen in cooperation with over 50 partner agencies across six continents. Since 2001, we have developed a proven methodology to accelerate the growth of both sales and brand equity in foreign markets. We have helped hundreds of companies grow their businesses in over 50 different countries. Perhaps we can do the same for you.

Contact us through our website: www.duffy.agency