

# We Have a Website. Now What?

## On-site Search Engine Optimization Best Practices

A Practical Guide to Improve Your Online Marketing Efforts  
*Revised March 2016*

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# Introduction

This book is intended to empower entrepreneurs. By using this book as a guide, entrepreneurs can expect to see greater numbers of targeted traffic to their site(s) from organic search.

## **Why do organic search rankings matter?**

1. For many people, search engines are the starting point for information on buying decisions.
2. There are billions of searches down every month and that number is growing. (Over 17 Billion searches we conducted in United States in December 2015 according to ComScore.)
3. It's tough to buy traffic. The average click-through rate for paid search ads is 2%, according to Convario.

## **Are there also off-page SEO items that I should know about?**

Yes, search rankings aren't just a result of good on-page optimization. Search rankings also take into account other factors that aren't directly in your control. You can take my [SEO for WordPress course](#) to learn about off-site SEO and many more advanced SEO concepts, including off-site SEO best practices.

## **Why are there so many links?**

This book is written for someone without a strong technical background. As such, I've provided links to any jargon I used throughout the book. If you're curious about a term, follow the link for an explanation.

FYI: Links are in [green](#) text.

\*If you plan to print this document, print it in landscape mode.

# Content

The only surefire way to great search rankings is to create great, original content. Search engines do not need, nor do they reward, duplicate content.

Be focused. Each page or post on your domain should be dedicated to a keyword or phrase that you're trying to rank well for. Use your keywords frequently in the body tags of your pages. A good rule of thumb is that your content should be at least 300 words, and you should have a keyword density of 1-2%, meaning it should appear 1-2% of the time within your body content.

While you should include your keywords frequently in the body tags, do not spam a page by placing text in the same color as the background or hiding keywords in places that people can't see. This is a way to get banned from a search engine or be placed in the supplemental index.

Search engines do not properly index **Flash** hyperlinks or moving text. Try to avoid having flash-based site navigation and a flash-only homepage.

Avoid using **frames** because they don't allow content to be indexed properly in most cases.

Load times are important both for search engines and for visitors. So, avoid using excessive **JavaScript**.

# Page Titles

Page titles are extremely important for both search engine optimization and for your [click through rate](#).

Page titles should contain no more than 60 characters that are keyword-centric and directly relate to what is on the corresponding page.

Using more than 60 characters is risky because often times your title will be cut off in search engine results pages, and the more words you use the more you dilute the strength of each word.

Place important keywords early in the page title. The first words typically receive the biggest reward.

# URLs

Search Engines take into account the names of directories and files in each URL where there is content.

Thus, your keywords should appear in the directory names and file names.

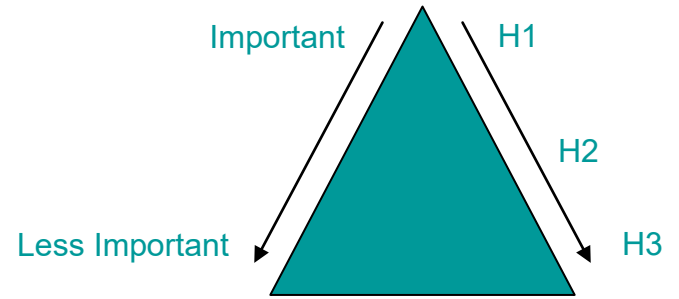
Static URLs rank better than dynamic URLs.

If you're going to use multiple words when naming a file or directory use a hyphen, not an underscore, between the two words. Google tends to ignore underscores, but views hyphens as dividing two distinct words.

# Headings

**Headings** let both the reader and the search engine know what is important on your page and help to visually break up sections of written content.

There should only be one of each tag per page, with your most important keyword appearing in the H1 tag and descending from there in order of importance down the page.

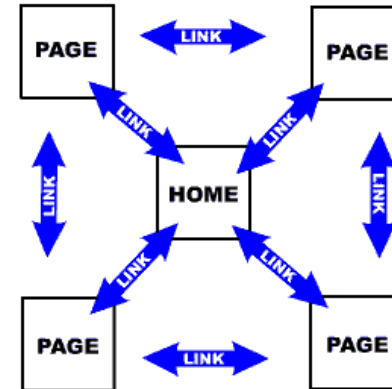


# Link Structure

How your pages link to one another is important.

Important pages on your site should link to one another. If you have your site broken into distinct sections, the main pages of each section should link to one another.

The image on the right shows proper link structure between pages.



This image demonstrates proper link structure.



# Internal Links

Having internal links from one page to another is important, because it helps ensure that content gets indexed properly. In addition, pages with more internal links pointing to them are seen as more important by search engines.

The **anchor text** of each link should contain keywords that relate to what is on the following page.

For example, having a link for a digital camera that says “Click Here” does less for SEO than a link that says “digital camera”, even if each one links to the same page.

# Images

Search engines cannot “see” what is inside an image. Therefore, most search engines have a hard time properly indexing images.

To have images help with search rankings, use your targeted keywords in the image file name and use **alternative text** to describe the image.

It is also good to use captions near images. Search engines pickup on the proximity of the text and it helps them index the image.

# Description Meta Tag

Your meta description isn't overly important as a SEO ranking factor, but it can help greatly with your click-through-rate. And, what good is it to rank for your intended keyword if you don't secure the click.

Each page should have a unique description that sells that particular page's content and is less than 140 characters.

Try to focus on action, persuasion and intrigue when creating text for your meta descriptions. You want to entice the visitor to click on your result.

# Sitemaps

**Sitemaps** are XML files that list out all the URLs on a website.

Creating a sitemap and submitting it to search engines is a good way to communicate how your site is structured and where pages and posts are located. Sitemaps ensure that all of your URLs are found and indexed properly.

## Where should you submit your sitemap?

- Google Search Console - <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools>
- Bing Webmaster Tools - <http://www.bing.com/webmaster>

<http://www.yourdomain.com/sitemap.xml>

# PDFs

Similar to how search engines struggle to “see” an image, they struggle to understand what is contained in a PDF.

To Optimize a PDF, open the PDF and go to File>Document Properties. Then, complete the title tag. You may also complete the Author tag, subject line, and keywords tag. However, these are much less important than the title tag.

While the PDF is open, go to Advanced>Accessibility>Add Tags to Document. Then, add meta tags just like you would to a html page.

\* To add a page title and add meta tags, you need to use Acrobat Professional.

You should also include your keywords in the PDFs file name.

Sometimes search engines will generate a description of a PDF based on the first few sentences, so good topic sentences can pay dividends.



# Site Speed

Today, Google will reward fast loading websites and penalize slow sites in search.

If you are hosting your website in a shared hosting environment, you should:

- Analyze your website and how it loads with [WebPageTest.org](#) and [Google PageSpeed Insights](#).
- Reduce the number of requests on each page.
- Utilize caching technologies.
- Compress your images, and use a Content Delivery Network to serve media files faster.
- Minify scripts.

For hosting fast WordPress sites, I recommend [WP Engine](#).

# Keywords Meta Tag

The keyword meta tag is no longer relevant in search engine optimization and does not have to be present in order to rank well in major search engines.

You should avoid using it as it can be seen as a spam signal nowadays.

# Resources

Below are free resources that I recommend using before and after your search engine optimization project.

## Tools

[Google AdWords Keyword Tool](#) - A free tool from Google that allows you research keywords by search volumes.

[Website Grader](#) - Submit your website domain and it will tell you how well your site is optimized.

[Yoast SEO for WordPress](#) - A free plugin for WordPress websites that allows you to customize your Page Titles and Meta Descriptions. It offers a content analysis tool, and a built-in XML sitemap tool that updates as you add/edit/delete pages and posts.

[Open Site Explorer](#) - A free tool that allows you to research inbound links and determine domain authority for your own sites and your competitor's websites.

## Recommended Blogs on Search Engine Optimization

[Google Webmaster Central Blog](#)

[Search Engine Watch](#)

[Search Engine Land](#)

[SEO Moz](#)

[HubSpot](#)



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# Conclusion

Thanks for reading. I hope you learned a thing or two.

If you would like complete SEO training for WordPress, please check out my [SEO for WordPress online training course](#).

The course includes over 2.5 hours of video lectures showing real workflows, multiple reference guides, a discussion board and much more. You can get lifetime access to the course for just \$20.

Whether or not you liked this e-book, I'd appreciate it if you critiqued my work. Please take the short, eight question [survey](#).



## About the Author

- Craig Rentmeester is a graduate of the University of Minnesota.
- Craig currently lives in Minneapolis, MN.
- Craig is the founder of [Relevante Marketing, LLC](#).
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Thanks,  
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