

DIGITAL MARKETING

What is search engine optimization Optimize Your Domain Now!



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Search Engine Optimization 101 from Online Advantages



Everything about modern life starts and ends with the Internet and search engines, from the way we use the information to the way search engines retrieve and display the information we need and want. A given search engine "knows" what we want to see because of search engine optimization, or SEO, which allows content creators to optimize websites and content for more effective search engine marketing.

Communications, information, recreation, entertainment, shopping, dating. There is virtually no avenue or outlet, no medium or method of contacting another human being, which has not been impacted by the advent and evolution of the Internet and online search engines. We could even reasonably argue the Internet has had a larger role on the trajectory of humanity than the inventions of the movable-type printing press and gunpowder! Also check out Google's own guide here

[Search Engine Optimization \(SEO\) Starter Guide](#)

As the Internet has evolved from its root of simple bulletin board chat systems to real-time video and text chat, the planet has gotten smaller and humanity more connected in a way unprecedented in human history. International communication has been condensed and contracted to the point where talking between Jakarta, India, and Jacksonville, Florida, is a trivial matter. Virtually nothing known to humankind is unfindable on the Internet if you know where to look. If you picture an iceberg representing the Internet, 90% of it is below the surface—and of the remaining 10%, most users spend the entirety of their online lives without seeing more than 10% of THAT! This doesn't even consider 404 redirects; that's only the actual active sites and pages you can get to.

According to a recent estimate, Google, Amazon, Microsoft, and Facebook (the Big Four) alone store roughly 1,200 petabytes of information. ***One petabyte is one billion megabytes or one thousand terabytes!*** Thousands of software vendors such as Moz, information outlets like Wikipedia, and tools like Webmaster Central have won and mostly cornered the market on content, making the United States the primary epicenter of the World Wide Web and the trade and commerce which stems from it.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization): Let's Go!

In the face of this unprecedented deluge of information and access to the collective knowledge of humankind, the problem faced by companies, small businesses, and entrepreneurs becomes how to position their products, services, and offerings in front of the people who can best benefit from them in web searches. The top players, the ones you see at the top of your Google and other major search engines' results such as Yahoo, Bing, and Yandex, are the ones who have effectively addressed and utilized search engine optimization (SEO, pronounced "ess eee oh") to increase their visibility, brand recognition, and customer base. Unfortunately, most people don't understand how SEO works, how to optimize their site, or why it's important. This leaves money on the table for their competitors and compromises their ongoing relevance.

But how do you harness the power of SEO and Internet marketing for your business?

That's where Online Advantages comes in. Our seasoned staff of experienced marketing strategists, content creators, writers, and web designers have the skill, knowledge, experience, and passion to help you effectively advertise and grow your company's online footprint without forcing you to learn the basics of an entire brand-new skill set, elements of which may be obsolete before you're even finished with the course! This is especially true of the category of broad whitepapers, seminars, and webinars selling SEO training, which claim to transform rank amateurs and beginners into brand new search engine optimization "ninjas," "Jedi" and "gurus." Because **search engine** algorithms change so rapidly, information which is valid on Monday could be out of date by Friday!

To understand why SEO from Online Advantages can help your company grow, we need to take a deep dive into what SEO is and is not, what it contains, and how many ways there are to deploy a digital marketing campaign right—and wrong, as SEO changes and evolves. This is why we created this brief FAQ and beginner's guide to SEO basics and management, to help users, clients, and the general public understand just how vital the complex of skills which makes up SEO is to your business and to how people can find you online!

Search Engine Optimization Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Question: What is search engine optimization, and why do I care about it? –Karen, Shreveport, LA

>Answer: Search engine optimization (SEO) is the entirety of the methods and practices which drive your online presence and make your business show up in organic search results. There are two basic kinds of SEO (ways to optimize your website), both of which work together to attract attention to your website and the products and services you'll offer. These are: Front End Your front-end or "on-page" SEO includes everything a potential customer sees as an outcome of Google searches and other search engines, such as domain names, the created content on your website, social media marketing including AB testing for ads, guest articles, and blog posts. These individual points are often, and not entirely accurately, piled up under the umbrella of content marketing. Creating great front-end SEO combines and balances useful keywords, compelling, informative, and relevant content, guest posts, white hat internal and external link building, and multimedia such as images and video to attract human eyes, interest, and ultimately business. Back End Back-end or "off-page" SEO is the somewhat more complicated part. This is where website design, architecture and user experience, day and dark mode settings, XML site map layout, Bing webmaster tools, tools for Google webmasters and developers such as the Google search console, PPC marketing initiatives, and so on are executed. These descriptive and ancillary signals work in the background, but are just as important to your online marketing and pointing search engines and customers to your business as your front-end signals. Part of what makes getting started with SEO factors so complicated is the sheer number of moving parts involved. This article is an example of content that has been carefully designed and developed to conform with multiple SEO signals and the latest Google algorithm updates while still delivering relevant information to you, the reader. Another concern is making sure to stay with "white hat" practices which comply heavily with major search engines' best practices, webmaster guidelines, and quality standards, so as to obtain organic traffic and boost conversion rates as a relevant result for human eyes while avoiding getting flagged for questionable or disavowed practices which "black hat" operators use to get quick results.

Black hats versus white hat tactics may be faster, but they also run the risk of getting your website suppressed or even banned from search engines entirely! When you improve SEO optimization and your site's content, you also improve your Google ranks and the search quality for everyone--especially your potential customers!

Question: I know SEO stands for search engine optimization, but what do I need to optimize in my online presence? –Oliver, London, UK

Answer: Every search engine uses an algorithm, or several algorithms working in concert, to determine what the user is looking for, also known as "search intent," and return the most relevant results for the given PC or mobile search through crawling, indexing and evaluating the potential returns based on the available signals. You can experiment with this yourself by typing "[Your city] [type of restaurant]" on a desktop or laptop, then run identical searches on mobile devices. When you hit the enter key on each device, you get ranked results based on the search parameters you put in, also commonly known as keywords. But that keyword string will only get you one set of results. Typing in "[type of restaurant][your city]" may give you different results. "[Type of restaurant] [your city]open now" will give you still another complex of results, and mobile pages are an entirely different beast again! Good SEO needs to optimize your site and maximize your company's profile across search strings using a number of tactics and tools so your content, and your website, will be the first thing people see. This means management of not only the public-facing keywords, location signals such as [local search](#) and other points of interest, but also the back-end signals and indicators which tell search engines your website and company are legitimate and offer the perfect solution for the searcher's needs. Duplicated content, outdated or irrelevant pieces of content, and expired pages on your site can all damage your search rankings and reputation, as each one is a negative ranking factor!

Question: I still don't understand what a keyword is? – Fred, New Orleans, LA



Answer: A keyword is any word, or word cluster, that search engine users might choose to locate a given website, product, or service. Keywords are search engine optimisation at its most basic, because they form the heart of the search queries that make search engines work. There are three basic kinds of keywords, fittingly for a beginner's guide to SEO, which we'll dive into right now!

Primary Keywords These keywords are the fundamental idea, concept for which an article, page, blog post, website, or individual web pages on your site want to rank, also known as the primary search query by some SEO experts. When a user decides to enter a keyword, they're sending a signal to Google and other search engine they're using that they're looking for something specific. They're only one of the ways what people search for online gets found. For example, odds are good that you found this page because you entered "search engine optimization" into Bing, Google, Yahoo, or Yandex, and this was one of the first few results you saw. This page's primary keyword is actually the search string "search engine optimization." The purpose of using keywords is to make it as easy as possible for searchers to be sure they're in the right place and getting what they need, whether that's information, a product, or services. People use these literally every time they use a search engine, but the user experience is such that they rarely think about why and how search engines use these to position results and evaluate how and in what order to display them to users.

Related Keywords Related keywords, as the name implies, are keyword variations that relate to the primary keywords we described above. They're closely linked to the main keyword, but are offshoots of it, which means they offer another avenue for users to get where they need to be. For instance, "SEO," "search engine," "search engine results pages," and so on might appear in a list of related keywords. Using related keywords can help drive more traffic from search engines to create a broader funnel that captures more users, which is why search engine marketing emphasizes them so heavily.

LSIs and Entities The third type of keyword, Latent Semantic Indicators or LSIs and entities, vary a lot more than keywords do. For example, we can take "search engine optimization" and break it down into its component parts, split it up, rearrange the words, or substitute others such as "optimize for search engines," and we can create primary or related keywords with very little effort. LSIs and entities have their own place in pieces of content because they help to reinforce the keywords, enhance relevance, and signal and point search engines to more specifically relevant content based on the searcher's query.

For example, "Best Search Engine Optimization in Dallas Texas" has a primary keyword, search engine optimization; two related keywords, Dallas and Texas, which stipulates that this content specifically refers to only one "Dallas." This is important in making the search more accurate because there are 14 of them in the US, from Oregon to North Carolina! However, "Best," "Dallas," and "Texas" also serve as LSIs and entities in this case, because they enhance and offset the primary keyword by making it clear that the best SEO in Dallas, Oregon may not be the best SEO in Dallas, Texas. (Unless it's Online Advantages, of course!)

Question: How do search engines work to find what users are looking for? –Kathryn, Winston-Salem, NC

Answer: As long as the Internet has been around, since the DARPA Net days in the early 80s, the question of how to weed out irrelevant, erroneous, low-quality or non-authoritative sources from search results has been a continuously vexing problem. This is especially true because in its purest form, the Internet was designed to allow users to access information about everything in the universe. As more pages were added to the Internet's indexes, there would be more data available, leaving engineers concerned that users would assume the information they were getting was valid, but unable to be sure.

The idea, and the dream, was to make finding a way to be sure people were getting the best and most accurate information as intuitive as saying your best friend who's an expert on the topic, "Tell me about-?"

The first iterations of search engine land were a very patchwork, Wild West affair. Aggressive sales and marketing ran rampant in largely lawless spaces because even the most egregiously actionable content was already years ahead of the laws that could constrain it. This caused considerable consternation among users, politicians, and fledgling private search engines themselves, as they raced to work against bad actors to aid users in avoiding inappropriate, inaccurate, or junk information. These early efforts to create an SEO playbook created their own issues, though, as users quickly figured out workarounds for Google's efforts. To these people, SEO was a game with stakes in the billions of dollars and bragging rights to other gamers on the line. To fix this, Google developed some of the most stringent search engine algorithms around. These algorithms actively sought to describe, seek out, and penalize sites that didn't deliver what they promised to users. As the first algorithms were deployed, they immediately began to show results as sites which had been thorns in users' sides for years suddenly went invisible, vanishing from the Internet altogether.

The message was clear: Your website can either establish trustworthiness and play by the rules or die trying to find the ultimate hack.

Today, SEO is a lot more than just walls of keywords, internal links, external links, and website architecture. It's how your website displays and functions its content across platforms, how valuable that content is to users, and how accessible it is to disabled users. But with the incredible amounts of data its algorithms have harvested, Google has also managed to learn how the time of day, type of device, user location, search history and other key factors indicate what users are looking for, and how to most ideally sort, display, and present this information to users faster, so they can find what they're looking for within the first five results approximately 95% of the time. Given that an estimated 5.6 billion searches happen on Google every day, they're doing a great job of getting it right—and those numbers are only going to get higher. By implementing new ways of identifying user intent and new ways of indexing and presenting information to users, it's not hard to imagine that Google will soon be around 97-98% accurate, impacting everything about the way we search for, receive, and absorb the data we need!

Question: What does gaming a search engine mean? – Scott, Rapid City, SD

Answer: Gaming a search engine means using gray hat or black hat techniques to try to trick the engine into displaying websites higher in the results than their content actually deserves. Some examples of this include duplicate content, hidden or invisible text, links to and from other irrelevant sites, sites in another language, and similar tactics. As the algorithms get more sophisticated and better at catching today's gamers, the "hats" will come up with new ways to get around the engine's restrictions. The problem is, these will only work for so long. Black and gray hat tactics persist because they work—for a while. Website owners may see a dramatic overnight increase in traffic and clicks, but it won't take long before the latest iteration of the algorithm catches whatever the black hats did and shut it down. When this happens, it leaves your website holding the bag, and they're probably long gone before you can pick up your phone to ask what happened. Then you're the one who has to pay for their bad behavior—and in extreme cases, your site might possibly never recover. The best way to avoid gaming the system is to make sure you're providing users with the best possible organic search results and keeping your local search game tight. By focusing on delivering the best information, products, services, and content, you'll find you're gaining traffic organically, over time, without having to spend a fortune on paid search ads, PPC, and sketchy linkbuilding schemes that deliver great short-term ranking factors, but fall apart fast when they're recognized for what they are. By keeping your content above reproach and question, you can be assured of regular visitors and your site being recognized as a legitimate authority in your field.

Question: How do I know if I need to hire an expert in search engine optimization? –Chris, St. George, UT

Answer: As long as you're sure that you're as aggressive as possible in promoting your brand, not leaving money on the table or lagging behind your direct competition when you appear in search engine rankings and social media channels, you're probably okay. If your online presence at least goes head to head with other sites in your markets, industry, niche, or lane, and you're seeing progressive organic search traffic, which increases consistently month over month, you're probably okay. If you're not a beginner at setting up on-page and off-page SEO, and the management of your ranking factors across search engines remains consistent over time with verifiable driven traffic from search across the channels you control and authoritative alternative sites, you're probably okay. If you advertise your goods and services and each ad shows consistent results, you're probably okay. But what if you might not be okay? Beginners often damage their traffic because, to put it bluntly, they don't know what they're doing. Some common examples of this include:

- - Attempting to manipulate search engine ranking factors without understanding the basics of how the math, algorithm cluster, and crawlers specific to individual search engines work (i.e. Bing, Yahoo, Google) to evaluate the relative value of your information versus the searcher's intent
 - Attempting to be entirely too descriptive in your metadata and ignoring other signals which your site's presence may benefit more from, or disregarding metadata altogether to emphasize ranking factors which are less relevant
 - Failing to mark up your website's schema and sitemaps, such as specific nofollow signals, XML files, and title tags, to attract a given search engine's programmed robots to crawl your site for the most accurate, up to date information and explicit external signals, generating more organic traffic
 - Trying common, often old "hacks" for targeting and getting more traffic and a higher shared rank, which look great on paper. They give overly fast results and may even encourage faster subscribe growth. They also have a proven history of running afoul of algorithm rules and, in practice, could possibly get your site blacklisted, marked as spam, or even banned.

When it comes to the root of SEO, you need reproducible results from techniques that have been specifically shown and seen to work properly over time across iterations of search engines. These methods are structured to work on the user's location and the searcher's query intent to redirect them to your site and social media instead of your competition, regardless of changes in algorithms and remarketing strategies. A beginner may know "just enough to be dangerous," falling into the trap of feeling sure that this hack will absolutely give them the results they want rather than playing a straight game by focusing on organic, repeatable, scalable results over time. When it comes to your online presence, stop gambling your reputation on dangerous amateurs. Online Advantages has the resources to test your site and social media presence, identify the weaknesses, and shore them up to improve your overall outcomes. It's better to pay a little more to know you're in the best possible hands, protected from negative consequences, and getting real results rather than taking unnecessary risks.

Question: How is front-end content optimized for search engines? –Amy, San Jose, CA

Answer: Front-end content optimization relies on a mixture of signals or indicators which tell a search engine your content has an important relevant role in answering the search in question. Some of these include:

- - - Keywords and search strings, which are the active search queries. Every time you type a search into Google, Bing, and so on, you are using keywords and search strings that affect your results' appearance in Google. Different arrangements of keywords into a search string yield different results because of how the algorithms assign value and weight to various words.
 - Latent semantic indicators (LSIs), which are keywords tangentially related to the primary keywords, similar to synonyms for algorithmic purposes. For example, if we were creating content for "auto mechanic San Jose," some LSIs we might use include "auto repair," "body shop," "auto glass," "warranty," and "synthetic motor oil." While these words don't directly equate to the original search query, they are of sufficient relevance to warrant inclusion in the content.

- ○ ■ Anchor text: Proper anchor texts, or the words used to "anchor" a link, are the basis upon which to build links that work with the content and the user's needs and help build relevance. However, a bad link building scheme can be worse than no links at all. A single broken link or link with poor anchor text probably won't impact you much because websites go dormant without warning, cease to exist, change their addresses and don't put up proper redirects, and so on, and Google webmasters and engineers understand this. But multiple broken links *can* hurt your site because if a search engine lands on bad, incorrect, or unusable pages enough times, it will take these repeated failures as an indicator that you're not keeping tabs on the information you're delivering to your visitors.
- Authority links: A good SEO strategy incorporates both outbound links to authoritative websites such as government agencies, well-known nonprofits, and customer advocacy groups; inbound links which point other search engines to your content; and internal link schemes which route visitors to other information on your site. Ideally, your content will end up becoming an authoritative voice in its own right, which other people refer to for information, in much the same way Amazon has become an authority link for just about anything relevant to the world of online commerce.

- ○ ■ Relevant images, video, and similar content help break up long-form content, add visual flair, and reinforce or enhance the information in the content. They also give you another avenue to show up in search results through image search options, which is a very strong signal!
- Proper title tag markup to describe accurately and concisely why this content should be seen by and delivered to each searcher.

These are just a few examples, and the thought processes and actual mechanics of making them work as part of a cohesive search engine marketing scheme are beyond the scope of this SEO guide. However, it gives you the general idea of how these items function and why they matter.

Question: The search term I want to rank for returns hundreds of thousands of results. How does a search engine decide the best order to display them to the searcher, and how can I affect this order? –RaeKwon, Dallas, TX

Answer: The algorithms search engine use to return their results, known as "search engine results pages" or SERPs for short, are complicated and depend on a mixture of content-based signals, search terms, and user history, as well as other signals and indicators known only to the search engines' internal teams themselves. By using strong organic SEO, useful long-form content, and appropriate back-end metadata and webmaster keys, you can help position your content to perform better across a range of keywords, giving you broader reach and enhanced performance versus your competition.

Question: Do I need different SEO strategies for different search engines? –Maria, San Luis Obispo, CA

Answer: The answer to this one is a little more nuanced, but boils down to "Yes—and no." Generally speaking, most webmasters in the US and Western Europe tend to focus more or less exclusively on Google. As the 800-pound gorilla and undisputed heavyweight champion of the search engine world, if you can successfully manage Google's algorithms, Bing, Yahoo, and Yandex will more or less take care of themselves. However, depending on what you're trying to accomplish and exactly which demographics you are targeting, you may find some strategies are more applicable to certain search engines than others. In some cases, you may need a complete website redesign, **optimizing** for both conventional PC and mobile search to achieve the highest possible search ranking. Rather than trial and error, you will likely find it far easier and less stressful to tell your Internet marketing agency what you want to achieve and let them do the heavy lifting, ensuring you get a better ROI for your marketing budget.

Question: What works best for driving SEO traffic from search engines? -Traci, New Braunfels, TX

Answer: The best methods for getting search engines to direct searchers to your website rather than your competition are white-hat SEO tactics that rely on organic growth and consistently delivering useful relevant content. While it's true there are quicker ways which will give you a rapid boost across search engines, such as link purchasing and other gray hat and black hat methods, these can quickly compromise your site's integrity and get it blacklisted by the very search engines you're courting. Online Advantages uses only legitimate white-hat techniques with proven track records and consistent results to develop your SEO strategy to ensure you get the results you need and keep your website visible while your competitors wonder how you did it—or try the black hat tactics which leave you at the top of the list honestly and legitimately!

Question: What is SERP analysis, and how does it boost your keyword research? -Jonathon, Miramar, CA

Answer: "If you're coming for the queen, you'd better not miss." More to the point, it's much more difficult to make a concerted run for the top of the SERPs if you don't know who's already gotten there and how they compete with you. SERP analysis tells you who's ranking for what and which keywords they are using, which allows you to design a keyword research scheme which not only gives you a better chance of meeting them where they already are but surpassing them using keywords they ignored or dismissed as not worth their time.

Question: When doing keyword research, what should we pay attention to besides the search volume and difficulty of the keyword? How do you know which keywords to target? –Serj, San Antonio, TX

Answer: It's natural to want to aim for the biggest traffic pullers with the highest search volume when evaluating keywords. The problem is, the "good" keywords are more competitive and thus harder to rank for. A good SEO scheme considers both high-traffic, high-demand keywords and less competitive ones, as well as LSIs. Every signal you can link to your site is one you take away from your competitors, which place you ahead of the competition and help boost your presence and reputation over time. Generally speaking, targeting one high-value keyword and a couple of lesser-value keywords, or vice versa is a valid method of selecting the right keywords for your specific application. It is important to note that these are general observations and the specific scheme and methods applied for your website may differ from what we've outlined here when we evaluate your goals, objectives, and current standing in a holistic manner. However, you can rest assured when we take on your online presence, and we use only methods that have proven results and avoid the sort of signals which risk your site being pinged as search engine spam.

Question: Keyword research sounds complicated. Do we need to invest in a paid keyword tool? –Contessa, San Francisco, CA

Answer: When you've done it a few times, keyword research and, for that matter, most elements of SEO become fairly simple, almost rote. Google's keyword explorer tool is a good free starting point, but it has some inherent limitations to prevent black hat SEO marketers from engaging in search engine spamming or trying to game the algorithms to unfairly influence Google search results. Paid keyword research tools can help make your SEO planning easier and more deliberate, but they are not essential, especially if you have a dedicated Internet marketing agency on your payroll. Nowadays, most reputable agencies and search marketers will have their own suite of technical SEO tools they prefer and will be able to quickly and clearly articulate why they prefer and use these tools over others on the market. If you want to "follow along at home," so to speak, these programs could be a small tax write-off, but for practical purposes, you're better off letting your agency do the heavy lifting.

Question: What is search engine spam? –Alexis, [Charlotte, NC](#)

Answer: Search engine spam in its most common form is a type of keyword stuffing, wherein the content is so bogged down with keywords that it becomes nearly unreadable to human eyes. As search engine algorithms have become more sophisticated, they have evolved to look beyond the public-facing content on the page to the metadata and description meta tags for the various pages and posts. Some things a search engine watch for include too many keywords for the content, poor readability, incorrect or bloated alt attribute text, or too many keywords that do not demonstrate sufficient relevance to the primary topic. Many of these signals were originally developed by Google's Webspam team, headed by legendary former Google engineer Matt Cutts, who is now Administrator of the US Digital Service under the Executive Branch of the American government. All of these negative ranking factors can quickly get your site penalized with a drop in SERP ranking or even temporary or permanent blacklisting. Developing a keyword protocol that sends appropriate signals and tells Google this is the droid the search traffic for a given term is looking for, without delving into spam territory, is both a science and an art form that requires meticulous and ongoing familiarity with the changing algorithms. What was considered stuffing or spamming behavior in 2016 may have been A-OK in 2018 but is now verboten again, or vice versa. A reputable SEO and Internet marketing agency will be aware of these dangers and have steps and protocols in place to prevent problems at every step, now and in the future.

Question: What are the merits of description meta tags? –Markus, Box Elder, SD

Answer: Description meta tags are another method search engines use to determine relevance and content value to a searcher. Having good, accurate meta tags that correctly describe the content and don't go overboard with stuffing is important to get search engine crawler bots to look closer at your content. In some cases, the description meta tags might be used as part of the excerpt for the content, which shows up in the SERPS, so it's fairly important these be done well, much like XML sitemaps and other site metadata.

Question: What is an XML sitemap? –Wayne, Las Vegas, NV

Answer: XML sitemaps make it easier for search engine indexing bots to understand the layout of your site architecture and what's included under the various tabs. Five years ago, a sitemap wasn't considered as crucial as it is now, which is another example of how algorithm changes over time reflect new ways of looking at signals. Today, an XML sitemap is considered a best practice and can actually damage your ranking if you don't have one! In addition, the sitemap makes it easier for visually impaired visitors to find and access different portions of your website, which makes their presence a win-win for everyone concerned.

Question: What are "rich results," and how do I optimize to hit as many of them as possible? –Raul, Santa Fe, NM

Answer: Rich results are the kind of results you see on Google in the map pack or on Bing with their enhanced results. These include additional data such as pictures, reviews, map location data, and extra description content that explains what the results are or what they do. It isn't possible to optimize your website for every kind of rich result a search engine could possibly have because Google and other search engines work by using their various crawlers to try to strike a balance between being concise and delivering sufficient information to make choices between potentially billions of possible options as easy for users as possible without sacrificing authority. Because of this, when you're planning your search engine optimization approach, you'll have to decide which kinds of rich results you want your site to show up in and then structure your site architecture, alt text, backlink anchor text setup, and other signal basics to focus on SEO geared toward those specific items. This will encourage algorithms to crawl, index, and present your site as high as possible in search engine results. For example, if you're looking primarily at content marketing, you'll need to be considering things like whether video and images are adding to or distracting from your objectives. Having duplicated content is never a good idea, but having it in different languages than English, such as: Deutsch Española français Italiano Português Russkiy and so on can be helpful, given that you have proper hrefs tags in place. Different SEO tools and processes will require different approaches and focuses, different structured data setups, and different success factors. However, if you go in with a focus on SEO, especially technical SEO, to tell Google and other engines you have this information, this helps boost your trustworthiness and pagerank so you can get the maximum possible results.

Question: How does keyword stuffing work, and why is it considered black hat tactics? –Alyssa, Coos Bay, OR

Answer: Most search engines like to see a sweet spot of around 1.5% keyword usage for primary keywords. This means that for every 100 words of copy, an ideal SEO balance would have the keyword used around 1.5 times. So you might use the main keyword twice in the next 100 and then once in the 100 following. This would give you 1.5 uses per 100 words of text. In the bad old days, it was common practice for the amateur website owner to stuff in every possible iteration of a keyword or keyword cluster as a quick and dirty way of hacking their way into top slots in search engine results. In really bad cases, they'd wind up putting in so many keywords that the content became effectively unreadable to human beings. Every so often, even now, you may stumble across a website that is just a wall of keywords that don't appear to have any relation or relevance to each other. There's no sense or logic to the keywords or how they're laid out—they're just there. This is a major violation of webmaster guidelines on just about every search engine. Website graders have advanced, so when doing this, they will notice changes in site behavior that lead to an unfair, unreasonable, or inexplicably sudden boost in website traffic, which means they will downgrade the website's authority ranking. When these tactics are detected by the robotstxt that tells Google to crawl the site in the first place, the algorithms work to tell Google to stop crawling, indexing, or displaying that page or website in search results until the illicit strategies are corrected.

Unfortunately, black hat techniques persist because the people who use them are willing to sacrifice a site's long-term longevity for a quick boost in traffic and apparent instant SEO success, whereas white hat SEO tactics focus on sustained, long-term, organic growth that attracts users and searchers naturally, using tactics such as delivering great content that informs and offers useful tips for readers.

The problem is that black hat tactics can leave your site flagged as spam and, therefore, invisible to users. Sometimes, site owners may even find themselves banned from showing up on search results pages at all! This is why putting in good on-page SEO work with a focus on SEO basics like high-quality content and maintaining a good online reputation are such important Google ranking factors. By working to reduce the problems and potential problems associated with black hat tactics like keyword stuffing, you make it more likely that people searching for your site will be able to find it!

Question: Where's a good place to look for SEO news and information that I can keep an eye on? –Benji, Mint Hill, NC

Answer: Two of the places Online Advantages likes to watch are SEO Round Table and Search Engine Land. Each journal is packed with great information and marketers' guide data, as well as useful metrics and information on SEO updates across the internet. Search Engine Land had an interesting article on September 1st, 2022, about an algorithm update from Google that is designed to better evaluate and reward helpful content such as canonical URL structure, meta description tag markup, heading tags, and other onpage optimization. As of the time of writing, the update was not complete yet, as Google estimated the full rollout to take around two weeks.

The reason this update is particularly interesting is that it was anticipated to have a ripple effect on core web vitals similar to that felt when Google deployed the Penguin and Panda algorithm updates.

Considering the impact those had on the SEO community and website owners worldwide, with many formerly dominant sites losing ground literally overnight in search query results, people have been watching new updates and how they're reported and seen to work with crawling indexing and displaying results "in the wild" very carefully. However, while Panda and Penguin were designed intentionally featuring largely punitive approaches to seeking out black hat content such as duplicated content or broken links, the Helpful Content update is intended to be more positive, lifting up sites Google indexed as featuring more useful content for users in the search hierarchy. Because of Google's influence, this article is a critical example of why having insight into Google processes and strategies is important for everything from improving your site HTML code to how your site's accessibility apparatus is designed. It's also a great example of why we at Online Advantages make a point to watch these sites carefully because they tend to be first on the scene with breaking news that's important for SEO professionals and those who work with search engine optimisation to know quickly!

Question: How can we develop an SEO Marketing strategy to dominate our competition on Google and other search engines? –Howie, Mooresville, NC

Answer: Every website and company is a little different, so the strategy for your website may not look anything like that your most direct competitor can benefit from even if you're both doing more or less the exact same thing. At Online Advantages, we start with a comprehensive online presence audit to evaluate where you are within your niche and among your competitors. Then we evaluate what elements are missing or need improvement to strengthen your position in the SERPs. Finally, we create a bespoke content marketing and social media management campaign that accounts for both public-facing and backend SEO to give you the most comprehensive plan possible. With our familiarity with and ongoing close scrutiny of search engine algorithm changes and the metrics they look for, we are a complete digital marketing solution that can help you get ahead of your competition and stay there.

We hope you've enjoyed our beginner's guide to SEO. While this is far from a complete guide, hopefully, it gives you a better idea of how these signals impact the user experience and whether and where your website shows up on result pages. SEO training is not something one can simply learn in 30 minutes; it is a years-long process complicated by algorithm updates and changing values on what is crucial and what doesn't matter in the realm of SEO. To learn more about how Online Advantages can get your business the visibility and online presence you deserve, we invite you to [click here!](#) - Online Advantages