

# Introduction to SEO

## What is SEO (Search Engine Optimization)?

Search engine optimization is a crucial part of creating a successful presence on the internet.

**But what is SEO?** It's a bit of science and marketing mingled together! It's the practice of improving where your site appears when people perform searches, and uses techniques that are both "on page (within the pages of the site) and off page (outside the pages of the site) in order to increase the traffic a site receives from the search engines. An example of an on page technique would be adding keywords to your pages, and an example of an off page technique would be exchanging links with another website. We will discuss these techniques in more depth later.

It's very important to note with search engine optimization that pleasing your site visitor and providing a good user experience will often also lead to good results with the search engine. It is the search engine's goal to provide the best results to Internet users - make this your goal as well!

We are passionate about helping you make an impact with your website, and that includes giving you a hand with SEO. Here are some of the benefits that we provide to all our users:

- **Search engine compatible XML site maps.** XML sitemaps make it easier for search engine crawlers to see the depth of your website and keep track of changes, such as new pages being added or deleted. By publishing your sitemap, by default we let search engines know which pages have changes, without making them to crawl each and every one.
- **Page title are H1 tag by default.** As search engines crawl websites, they rate the importance of site content based on which HTML tags they are under. The H1 tag ranks as the the most important, making your title the top ranking piece of content on the page.
- **Alt tag options for all images.** When search engines look at content, they index images based on their alt tags. Websites with images that include alt tags appear as being rich in content, and therefore rank higher.
- **Low load time.** One of the things that affects SEO is the load time of a website. A site with low load times will rank higher than one with high.
- **Images are optimized and have dimensions parameters.** To improve your site's load time of your website we optimize your images for the Web by default. If you need your images to appear in their original format you can turn optimization off.
- **Adding Meta description tags to each individual page.** Adding meta descriptions that match the content of your website helps the SEO ranking of your website.
- **Nested navigation.** Nested navigation allows you to silo content based on subcategories that will improve the breadth of keywords you site. Nested navigation also reduces the amount of links on a page, improving your SEO.
- **Adding hyphens between blank words in page names.** Compared to underscores or percentage signs, hyphenated page names have a higher SEO ranking.
- **Ease of updating.** Pages that are updated frequently rank higher in SEO than those that are not. We pride ourselves on providing the ability to make site changes quickly and easily.
- **All content is HTML and indexable (as opposed to Flash-based sites or Javascript-initialized content).** This means that all your content is easily found by search engines.
- **Name pages with keywords.** When search engines rank your website, they take into account the page name. Having the name of a page match your site's keywords will give you a boost in the rankings. We give the users the opportunity to take control of their SEO, and name their own pages..

## Measuring your SEO success

The most important part of getting started with SEO is being able to manage your site's performance and see where you can improve. SEO is a constant process, and the SiteBuilder offers an SEO performance-management tool, Traffic Builder, built in.

Traffic Builder's dashboard provides an at-a-glance insight into your keyword and search engine rankings. It also includes an integrated scan that delves deep into your site, highlighting any problem areas your site may have..

## Why is SEO important?

To better understand what SEO is, you need to understand why it is important. Any website that needs traffic to survive needs search engine optimization. There are millions of webpages on the Internet, and it is the job of the search engines to add those pages to its index, and whenever a query is performed, to find the best webpages to match that query."

"There are many, many factors that search engines take into account when choosing which websites are displayed, and in which order. They look at factors such as site tags, and page content, as well as the amount of links coming into a site, and the of quality these links. Performing various search engine optimization techniques on your site will help it get noticed by the search engines, giving them reasons to send searchers to you.

## What is a search engine?

Search engines provide internet users with a way to find information in an organized fashion. A search engine uses special software, called an algorithm or spider, to go through the entire web and add pages to its index. These engines are used by millions of people every day, and it is up to the search engines to provide their users with the best information possible. When you perform a search, the search engine will pull the most relevant web pages from their index to show you.

The three major search engines are [Google](#), [Yahoo](#) and [Bing](#), although there are various smaller engines.

## What is indexing?

Indexing is an important part of having a presence on the web, but **what does it mean to be indexed?**

Search engines have extremely large indexes, holding a copy of every webpage they have crawled and chosen to add to their index. The search engine spider crawls through the web following links. When it finds a page to add, it will make a copy of it and add it to its index. Upon completion, the site can be considered as having been "indexed".

The process of being indexed can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months, and it takes place for all new websites. Your site will only show up in search results after it has been indexed.

To find out whether your site has been indexed, go to Google and search "site: [mysite.com](#)" (substituting your website for [mysite.com](#)). This will give you a list of your site's pages that are in the index – if there are no results, the indexing has not happened yet. You can do this same search at Yahoo and MSN.

## What's search engine ranking, and how do search engines rank pages?

**Search engine ranking** refers to where a website appears in the search engine results.

Each search engine and directory has its own ranking and listing criteria. Generally, search engines use proprietary ranking algorithms to determine the quality and relevance of a web page to decide whether or not to add the page to its index. The exact criteria used are a closely-guarded trade secret. This is to ensure that no one can "hack" the system and engage in unfair SEO practice.

When calculating page rankings, search engines focus on copy, title tags, keyword usage and the amount and relevance of inbound hyperlinks to decide on your search engine ranking.

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