

Search engine optimization: an introduction

[Science](#), [Computer Science](#)



You're a business owner because you care about creating value in the world and for yourself. You have a website because you want to direct internet traffic to your business. Search Engine Optimization sounds scary and arcane to you, maybe, but it shouldn't. It's just a basic extension of those principals that've driven your business so far, with a few difficult rules that have since been broken down into simple tips.

SEO is a conglomeration of website design tactics that allow your business' website to be prioritized in search rankings. The higher your website's search ranking, the greater primacy awarded and the quicker your website appears in search results. This is desirable; the earlier your website appears, the more people who click through, and the less who click through to your competitors.

SEO has come a long way from the golden years of spamming white keywords on a white background to increase your engine viability without alerting your users, but the basic ideas of this era remain the same. While we now avoid these blackhat tactics, especially as newer search engines are able to detect and penalize your website for them, we still attempt to use keywords and be as unobtrusive as possible for our users.

Better than to explain what to do in SEO, we can explain what not to do. More websites have been lost due to these easily avoidable negative factors than those won based on the abstruse and occasionally opaque positive (it has been estimated that Google uses over 10, 200 factors to rank your website).

Because some of these rules are so opaque and completely antithetical to the mindset of a businessman, we must cover them immediately and seriously. There are three cardinal sins of SEO: Link spam, paid links, and keyword stuffing. Following that, we'll cover the three virtues, those things that you want to prioritize as much as possible. These are content novelty, content quality and content/keyword research.

Link spam is self-explanatory. Dropping as many links to your website as possible as far throughout the internet as possible is not something search engines look highly upon. Search engines want to see organic linkage in a small subsection of the internet; in the unlikely case your content goes viral, they want to see your content expand slowly before it reaches an exponential fever pitch. It is extremely difficult to imitate this to raise your SEO rankings and your website will suffer for the attempt.

Paid links are a bit more difficult to understand, but the idea is simple. If a search engine is aware that you're paying for websites to carry your links, you will be very heavily penalized. It is currently unknown exactly how search engines can detect this and the penalties are extremely severe. Month-long bans are not uncommon.

Keyword stuffing is simple to understand. If you come to an understanding that a specific keyword always boosts your SEO ranking and you choose to repeat it hundreds of times in an attempt to boost that SEO rating, your website will suffer instead.

We understand the virtues of SEO as counterparts to those cardinal sins. Content novelty is, in a sense, inverse to link spam. If a search becomes uncharacteristically popular, most search engines will look to see if any new content exists on the search relative to the content before. If this is the case, the websites hosting that new content will get boosted. For example, if a tsunami occurred in the last few days, the top results on Google wouldn't be what they normally are: explanations of the meteorological impact of tsunamis, major tsunamis in history or other general content. No, the top results would concern where the tsunami occurred, or the local effects of the recent tsunami or other such novel content.

Content quality is a misnomer. It only concerns the amount of time search engine users spend on your website after clicking through from a result. The longer, the more of your website they trawl, the better.

Content/keyword research is the simplest. If you have a page about selling baseballs, for instance, you want to optimize your page so people looking to buy baseballs can find it. If you put yourself in their shoes, you'd want to go to Google and write 'buy baseballs' or 'where to buy baseballs'. Therefore, you should have the phrases 'buy baseballs' or 'where to buy baseballs' somewhere on your page.

Avoiding the cardinal sins and adhering to the virtues is difficult, which is why SEO often takes weeks to optimize properly. But, with these tips, you can easily start your site on the right foot.