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Google Ranking

Google Ranking Factors

Google Search Engine Ranking Factors

ABSTRACT

An introduction into internal and external factors relevant for your web site ranking



Google Search Engine Ranking Factors

Is your website found on Google? Having a website does not guarantee that you can be found on Google's search engine results page. Your website must be indexed (saved in Google's database) first before it can be seen on Google search results.

A website can be indexed by following specific guidelines. Google and other major search engines provide guidelines in their webmaster area. Let us take a closer look at Google's [webmaster guidelines](#) and [site optimization guide](#) for your website to be found, indexed and rank on search engine results page.

Google Indexing Guidelines

These are the [webmaster guidelines](#) provided by Google to help websites be found and indexed. The guidelines will also help your website prevent illicit practices that may lead to site penalties and removal on Google index.

Design and Content Guidelines

- Make a site with a clear hierarchy and text links. Every page should be reachable from at least one static text link.
- Offer a site map to your users with links that point to the important parts of your site. If the site map is larger than 100 or so links, you may want to break the site map into separate pages.
- Create a useful, information-rich site, and write pages that clearly and accurately describe your content.
- Think about the words users would type to find your pages, and make sure that your site actually includes those words within it.
- Try to use text instead of images to display important names, content, or links. The Google crawler doesn't recognize text contained in images. If you must use images for textual content, consider using the "ALT" attribute to include a few words of descriptive text.

- Make sure that your <title> elements and ALT attributes are descriptive and accurate.
- Check for broken links and correct HTML.
- If you decide to use dynamic pages (i.e., the URL contains a "?" character), be aware that not every search engine spider crawls dynamic pages as well as static pages. It helps to keep the parameters short and the number of them few.
- Keep the links on a given page to a reasonable number (fewer than 100).
- Follow the Image Guidelines for best practices on publishing images
 - Don't embed text inside images
 - Give your images detailed, informative filenames
 - Create great alt text
 - Provide good context for your image

Technical Guidelines

- “ ” • Use a text browser such as Lynx to examine your site, because most search engine spiders see your site much as Lynx would. If fancy features such as JavaScript, cookies, session IDs, frames, DHTML, or Flash keep you from seeing all of your site in a text browser, then search engine spiders may have trouble crawling your site.
- Allow search bots to crawl your sites without session IDs or arguments that track their path through the site. These techniques are useful for tracking individual user behavior, but the access pattern of bots is entirely different. Using these techniques may result in incomplete indexing of your site, as bots may not be able to eliminate URLs that look different but actually point to the same page.
- Make sure your web server supports the If-Modified-Since HTTP header. This feature allows your web server to tell Google whether your content has changed since we last crawled your site. Supporting this feature saves you bandwidth and overhead.
- Make use of the robots.txt file on your web server. This file tells crawlers which directories can or cannot be crawled. Make sure it's

current for your site so that you don't accidentally block the Googlebot crawler. Visit <http://www.robotstxt.org/faq.html> to learn how to instruct robots when they visit your site. You can test your robots.txt file to make sure you're using it correctly with the [robots.txt analysis tool](#) available in Google Webmaster Tools.

- If your company buys a content management system, make sure that the system creates pages and links that search engines can crawl.
- Use robots.txt to prevent crawling of search results pages or other auto-generated pages that don't add much value for users coming from search engines.
- Test your site to make sure that it appears correctly in different browsers

Quality Guidelines


- “ ” • Make pages primarily for users, not for search engines. Don't deceive your users or present different content to search engines than you display to users, which is commonly referred to as "cloaking."
- Avoid tricks intended to improve search engine rankings. A good rule of thumb is whether you'd feel comfortable explaining what you've done to a website that competes with you. Another useful test is to ask, "Does this help my users? Would I do this if search engines didn't exist?"
- Don't participate in link schemes designed to increase your site's ranking or PageRank. In particular, avoid links to web spammers or "bad neighborhoods" on the web, as your own ranking may be affected adversely by those links.
- Don't use unauthorized computer programs to submit pages, check rankings, etc. Such programs consume computing resources and violate our Terms of Service. Google does not recommend the use of products such as WebPosition Gold™ that send automatic or programmatic queries to Google.
- Avoid hidden text or hidden links.

- Don't use cloaking or sneaky redirects.
- Don't send automated queries to Google.
- Don't load pages with irrelevant keywords.
- Don't create multiple pages, subdomains, or domains with substantially duplicate content.
- Don't create pages with malicious behavior, such as phishing or installing viruses, trojans, or other badware.
- Avoid "doorway" pages created just for search engines or other "cookie cutter" approaches such as affiliate programs with little or no original content.
- If your site participates in an affiliate program, make sure that your site adds value. Provide unique and relevant content that gives users a reason to visit your site first.

Search Engine Ranking Factors to Consider



Following the best practices from [Google's Search Engine Optimization Guide](#) will make it easier for search engines to both crawl, index and rank your website.

Create unique, accurate page titles



-  Accurately describe the page's content
 - Avoid choosing a title that has no relation to the content on the page
 - Avoid using default or vague titles like "Untitled" or "New Page 1"
- Create unique title tags for each page
 - Avoid using a single title tag across all of your site's pages or a large group of pages
- Use brief, but descriptive titles

- Avoid using extremely lengthy titles that are unhelpful to users
- Avoid stuffing unneeded keywords in your title tags

Make use of the "description" meta tag

-   Accurately summarize the page's content
 - Avoid writing a description meta tag that has no relation to the content on the page
 - Avoid using generic descriptions like "This is a webpage" or "Page about baseball cards"
 - Avoid filling the description with only keywords
 - Avoid copy and pasting the entire content of the document into the description meta tag
- Use unique descriptions for each page
 - Avoid using a single description meta tag across all of your site's pages or a large group of pages

Improve the structure of your URLs

-   Use words in URLs
 - Avoid using lengthy URLs with unnecessary parameters and session Id
 - Avoid choosing generic page names like "page1.html"
 - Avoid using excessive keywords like "baseball-cards-baseball-cards-baseballcards.htm"
- Create a simple directory structure
 - Avoid having deep nesting of subdirectories like /dir1/dir2/dir3/dir4/page.html
 - Avoid using directory names that have no relation to the content in them
- Provide one version of a URL to reach a document
 - Avoid having pages from subdomains and the root directory (e.g. domain.com/page.htm and sub.domain.com/page.htm) access the same content
 - Avoid mixing www. and non-www. versions of URLs in your internal linking structure
 - Avoid using odd capitalization of URLs (many users expect lower-case URLs and remember them better)

Make your site easier to navigate

- “ ” • Create a naturally flowing hierarchy
 - Avoid creating complex webs of navigation links, e.g. linking every page on your site to every other page
 - Avoid going overboard with slicing and dicing your content (it takes twenty clicks to get to deep content)
- Use mostly text for navigation
 - Avoid having a navigation based entirely on drop-down menus, images, or animations
- Use "breadcrumb" navigation
- Put an HTML sitemap page on your site, and use an XML Sitemap file
- Consider what happens when a user removes part of your URL
- Have a useful 404 page
 - Avoid allowing your 404 pages to be indexed in search engines
 - Avoid providing only a vague message like "Not found", "404", or no 404 page at all
 - Avoid using a design for your 404 pages that isn't consistent with the rest of your site

Offer quality content and services

Quality content and services helps build your website's reputation and trust with both users and Google.

- “ ” • Write easy-to-read text
 - Avoid writing sloppy text with many spelling and grammatical mistakes
 - Avoid embedding text in images for textual content (users may want to copy and paste the text and search engines can't read it)
- Stay organized around the topic

- Avoid dumping large amounts of text on varying topics onto a page without paragraph, subheading, or layout separation
- Use relevant language
- Create fresh, unique content
 - Avoid rehashing (or even copying) existing content that will bring little extra value to users
 - having duplicate or near-duplicate versions of your content across your site
- Offer exclusive content or services
- Create content primarily for your users, not search engines

Write better anchor text

- 👏 ● Choose descriptive text
 - Avoid writing generic anchor text like "page", "article", or "click here"
 - Avoid using text that is off-topic or has no relation to the content of the page linked to
 - Avoid using the page's URL as the anchor text in most cases (although there are certainly legitimate uses of this, such as promoting or referencing a new website's address)
- Write concise text
 - Avoid writing long anchor text, such as a lengthy sentence or short paragraph of text
- Format links so they're easy to spot
 - Avoid using CSS or text styling that make links look just like regular text
- Think about anchor text for internal links too
 - Avoid using excessively keyword-filled or lengthy anchor text just for search engines
 - Avoid creating unnecessary links that don't help with the user's navigation of the site

Use heading tags appropriately

- Imagine you're writing an outline

Similar to writing an outline for a large paper, put some thought into what the main points and sub-points of the content on the page will be and decide where to use heading tags appropriately:

- Avoid placing text in heading tags that wouldn't be helpful in defining the structure of the page
 - Avoid using heading tags where other tags like `` and `` may be more appropriate
 - Avoid erratically moving from one heading tag size to another
- Use headings sparingly across the page
 - Avoid excessively using heading tags throughout the page
 - Avoid putting all of the page's text into a heading tag
 - Avoid using heading tags only for styling text and not presenting structure

Optimize your use of images

- “ ” • Use brief, but descriptive filenames and alt text
 - Avoid using generic filenames like "image1.jpg", "pic.gif", "1.jpg" when possible (some sites with thousands of images might consider automating the naming of images)
 - Avoid writing extremely lengthy filenames
 - Avoid stuffing keywords into alt text or copying and pasting entire sentences
- Supply alt text when using images as links
 - Avoid writing excessively long alt text that would be considered spammy
 - Avoid using only image links for your site's navigation
- Store images in a directory of their own
- Use commonly supported filetypes

Make effective use of robots.txt

- “ ” • Use more secure methods for sensitive content
 - Avoid allowing search result-like pages to be crawled
 - Avoid allowing a large number of auto-generated pages with the same or only slightly different content to be crawled: "Should these 100,000 near-duplicate pages really be in a search engine's index?"
 - Avoid allowing URLs created as a result of proxy services to be crawled

Be aware of rel="nofollow" for links

- “ ” • Setting the value of the "rel" attribute of a link to "nofollow" will tell Google that certain links on your site shouldn't be followed or pass your page's reputation to the pages linked to. Nofollowing a link is adding rel="nofollow" inside of the link's anchor tag.

When would this be useful?

- Blog comment
- Guestbooks
- Forums
- Shout-boards
- Referrer listing

- Don't want to pass reputation on a referenced website

Promote your website the right way

- “ ”
 - Blog about new content or services
 - Don't forget about offline promotion
 - Don't forget about offline promotion
 - Avoid attempting to promote each new, small piece of content you create; go for big, interesting items
 - Avoid involving your site in schemes where your content is artificially promoted to the top of these services
 - Add your business to Google's Local Business Center
 - Reach out to those in your site's related community
 - Avoid spamming link requests out to all sites related to your topic area
 - Avoid purchasing links from another site with the aim of getting PageRank instead of traffic

Consider Site Speed when designing your website

An interview by [WebProNews](#) to Google Engineer Matt Cutts, discussed the importance of site speed in ranking a web page.

- “ ”
 - Google consider speed to be very important to the web, and they are considering it to play a role in the rankings of websites in search results.
 - Avoid Slow loading page design and features.

Make use of free webmaster tools

Using Google's webmaster tools can help you identify issues that, if addressed, can help your site perform better in search results.

- “ ”
 - see which [parts of a site Googlebot had problems crawling](#)
 - upload an [XML Sitemap file](#)
 - [analyze and generate robots.txt files](#)
 - [remove URLs already crawled by Googlebot](#)
 - [specify the preferred domain](#)
 - [identify issues with title and description meta tags](#)
 - understand the [top searches used to reach a site](#)
 - get a glimpse at [how Googlebot sees pages](#)
 - [remove unwanted sitelinks](#) that Google may use in results

- o [receive notification of quality guideline violations](#) and [file for a site reconsideration](#)

Having your website compliant to Google's indexing guidelines and implementing Google's search engine optimization advices will surely help your website reach targeted customers from search engines. If you like to learn more about Search Engine Optimization and other Internet marketing approaches, please simply [contact us](#) at any time. Also don't forget to have a look inside our [Online Portfolio Presentation](#), to get a whole idea about the products and services we offer.

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