

★ SEO Basics

and practical application for creative entrepreneurs

★ What is SEO?

SEO = Search Engine Optimization

Optimizing your website for search engines helps you play nice with search engine algorithms which results in ranking higher in search results.

★ What is SEO (cont...)

Most people focus on SEO as it relates to Google and its algorithm changes...

However, there are many search engines ranking and indexing sites. DuckDuckGo.com has been receiving praise from tech blogs.

★ Why SEO?

To rank higher in search results for keywords and phrases related to your content

To find your audience and attract them to your content (think free + organic advertising / marketing)

★ How deep down the rabbit hole?

SEO can become an abyss of information leaving you overwhelmed and stuck

There are layers and layers of information, techniques, tricks, Dos, Do Nots, and it is always changing as Google updates/changes their algorithms A LOT.

✦ Keep it simple

- provide valuable content
- don't try to “game” the search engines
- learn about SEO...then FORGET ABOUT IT
- consistent blogging with an awareness of popular topics + keywords can help you stay relevant but focusing on keywords is a BAD idea

★ Elements of SEO

- meta tags and data
- keywords and phrases
- internal and external linking (backlinks)
- social media
- authority (aka Google Authorship)
- freshness factor + consistency

★ Meta Tags & Data

- meta tags include information added to the HTML code of your website that sends information about your website and the content of each page to search engines

★ 4 Primary Meta Tags

- Meta Keywords Attribute - A series of keywords you deem relevant to the page in question.
- Title Tag - This is the text you'll see at the top of your browser. Search engines view this text as the "title" of your page.
- Meta Description Attribute - A brief description of the page.
- Meta Robots Attribute - An indication to search engine crawlers (robots or "bots") as to what they should do with the page.

★ Tag samples

Title tag: `<head><title>Example Title</title></head>`

Description: `<meta name="description" content="This is an example of a meta description. This will often show up in search results.">`

✦ However...

Google announced in September of 2009 that neither meta descriptions nor meta keywords factor into Google's ranking algorithms for web search. Google uses meta descriptions to return results when searchers use advanced search operators to match meta tag content, as well as to pull preview snippets on search result pages, but it's important to note that meta descriptions do not influence Google's ranking algorithms for normal web search. ([Source](#))

★ On-page Factors

After Meta Data (“behind the scenes”) factors, let’s look at on-page factors:

- valuable content
- user friendly
- bot/crawler accessible
- keyword targeted (topic focused)
- built to be shared via social media
- multi-device ready
- authorship, schema, meta data, rich snippets

[This series of articles goes in-depth about all the elements of SEO.](#)

★ Images

Images have their own meta tag attributes:

- alt="describe photo using keywords"
- title="specifically tell what the photo includes using keywords if possible"

do Not force use of keywords (ever)

WordPress provides "Alt", "Title" and "Description" fields when you upload/insert photos. Use Them!

★ Schema.org

Schema.org is the result of collaboration between Google, Bing, Yandex, and Yahoo! to help you provide the information their search engines need to understand your content and provide the best search results possible at this time. Adding Schema markup to your HTML improves the way your page displays in SERPs by enhancing the rich snippets that are displayed beneath the page title. ([source](#))

This is a specific vocabulary of tags (or microdata) added to HTML of your website to improve the appearance of your site in search results.

★ Rich Snippets

Google allows webmasters to include Rich Snippet information which enhances the way your pages appear in search results.

★ More Factors

Page Speed and Mobile responsiveness are important factors.

Slower sites rank lower.

Sites that are not mobile-friendly are now being pushed further down in search results.

★ Linking

Links and Anchor Text are an important part of SEO.

Anchor Text is the linked word or phrase you use to create a link; use keywords/phrases and stay relevant.

✦ Internal Linking

Internal linking is when you link text on one page of your website to another page on the same domain.

★ Internal Linking

Each page/post should include the following internal links:

- link back to category
- link back to sub-category (if applicable)
- link back to homepage (“Home” in navigation or Logo in header accomplishes this)

✦ Internal Linking

When creating content, any time you reference another article you have published, link to it using “anchor text” inside the content of your newer article.

[\(example 1\)](#) | [\(example 2\)](#)

✦ External Linking

External Linking is when anchor text from your website points to an article or page on a website with a different domain.

This is how websites (more specifically domains) pass “link juice”.

✦ External Linking

Many SEO “experts” believe External Linking is one of the more important factors. The links could be considered as “votes” by the search engines.

However, major search engines have developed many factors that judge the value of an external link and the linking domain...necessary to combat “black hat” tactics for creating back-links (avoid back-linking services).

★ External Linking factors

- The trustworthiness of the linking domain.
- The popularity of the linking page.
- The relevancy of the content between the source page and the target page.
- The anchor text used in the link.
- The amount of links to the same page on the source page.
- The amount of domains that link to the target page.
- The amount of variations that are used as anchor text to links to the target page.
- The ownership relationship between the source and target domains.

(source)

★ External Linking

External Linking is the driving force behind Guest Blogging. If you can land articles on popular blogs or media websites, they typically include a short author blurb and a link back to your website (passing their SEO juice and showing search engines a highly valued website deems your content valuable).

★ Social Media

Specifically on Google, G+ posts are indexed and appear high in search results.

Links from Twitter, FB, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Tumblr and other popular social sites, send signals to search engines affecting how your website pages are ranked. Reddit, Digg, and other bookmarking sites fit into this as well.

Consider this an extension of External Linking, but social media provides more insight into how popular your content is and how engaged your audience is.

★ Video

YouTube is a search engine...

#2 behind its owner, #1 Google.

With that said, a YouTube strategy can be valuable for many reasons.

★ Video

Other sites such as Vimeo, Videscape, and Dailymotion also rank high in search results so YouTube is not the only platform for video.

However, books and books have been written about YouTube SEO Optimization.

★ YouTube SEO

The Cliff's Notes version of most important factors for YouTube SEO:

- Title tag information
- Audience retention
- Keywords in description tag
- Tags
- Video length
- Number of subscribers after watching
- Comments
- Likes and dislikes

([source](#))

★ YouTube SEO Tips

Focus on keywords in Title, Description and Tags - more focused, the better.

Description can be LONG so take advantage of it.

You can include A LOT of tags; take advantage.

(example)

★ YouTube + Google+

The YouTube comments and messaging system has been fully integrated with Google+.

When you comment on videos, you have the option to post your comment to your G+ profile. This then notifies the artist or author of the video you shared their content.

When you send messages to your subscribers using YouTube's Dashboard, you are essentially sending them a private message via G+ which tags them and notifies them about your message.

★ Another tip

Google search results (and anywhere else where you create a profile and search while logged in) are tailored to your search habits. As you do more searches, click more links, watch more videos, and share articles; the engine gets better at knowing what you are searching for...think Google's autocomplete feature.

Also, Google, by default when logged in, serves you “private” search results based on your habits and (I believe) location. There is a button with a Globe you can click to “hide private results”.

There is a difference in the results. When testing your pages, be sure to test logged in + private hidden as well as logged out so you get a better idea of how your pages are really ranking in results.

★ Summary

- SEO, learn then forget
- Keep it simple
- Focus on providing valuable content and focusing that content on (specific) topics relevant to your audience.

★ Content Ideas

- Reviews - reviewing music or a product/service
- Interviews - audio, video or text interviews with professionals and peers in your field/genre/topic of interest
- How Tos or Guides - topic focused content related to music production, songwriting, and other topics you know about

★ Ultimate List of Topics

Provided by Digital Marketer: <https://www.digitalmarketer.com/blog-post-ideas/> - [Link to the infographic](#)

★ More helpful links

- [SEO Centro](#) - SEO Tools
- [Meta Tags](#) (via Wordstream)
- [MOZ](#) - SEO Guide and very in-depth info
- [Google Keyword Planner](#) (must be logged into Adwords account)
- [Keyword Tool](#) (Google, YouTube, Bing, App Store)
- [Google PageSpeed Insights](#) | [Webmaster Tools](#)
- [Bing Webmaster Tools](#)
- [YouTube Music Insights](#)
- [Google Analytics](#)
- [TubeBuddy](#) (browser extension for YouTube)
- [Search Engine Land's Guide to SEO](#)