Search Engine Optimization Glossary

A

ALT Text/Tag or Attribute: A description of an image in your site's HTML. Unlike humans, search engines read only the ALT text of images, not the images themselves. Add ALT text to images whenever possible.

B

Backlinks Counter: (AKA inlinks, incoming links, inbound links, or inward links): Inbound links or backlinks, come from an external site to yours. The number of backlinks is an indication of the popularity or importance of your website. If backlinks to your site are found on sites with unrelated content, they are considered less relevant. The higher the relevance of your backlinks, the greater their quality because it is more likely that the viewer would actually click the link to your site.

Blog (AKA web log): A discussion or informational site published online and consisting of posts displayed in reverse chronological order. Publishing more relevant, high quality content on your own website is more beneficial than publishing your content on other sites.

C

Conversion Forms: Form that collects orders, subscribers, feedback, and inquiries on your website. This is important to have in order to grow your business, however they do not affect your SEO score.

D

Description: (AKA Meta Description): This description allows you to influence what is displayed in search results. It should be between 70 and 160 characters and should include your most important key words. This is entirely automated and is determined by content and references to the page.

DMOZ: (AKA Open Directory Project or directory.mozilla.org): DMOZ is a directory of websites. Listings on a similar topic are grouped into categories, which can then include smaller categories. It is important to submit your website because search engines take DMOZ into account when deciding order to results in a search.

Doctype: There are several types of HTML. It is important to specify which type you are using so that a web browser can understand how to interact with it correctly. A programmer can do this for you.

Domain Availability: It is important to purchase different versions of your website name (.com, .net, etc.) in order to ensure that viewers trying to find your website will be redirected to the correct site, if they enter it incorrectly. It is also important to register all of these domains so that cybersquatters (or domain squatters) do not take a similar domain to yours in order to profit off of your goodwill and confuse viewers.

Dublin Core: Dublin Core (DC) is a set of 15 standard elements used to describe the contents of your website. DC provides core properties of a website that helps your audience when searching for a site. Registering with DC improves your SEO.

E

Email Privacy: It is necessary to protect your email in order to prevent others from eavesdropping on your confidential information, as well as to protect yourself from getting your email spammed. In order to protect your email, all routers in the email pathway, and all connections between them, must be secured through data encryption. This will not improve your SEO score, but is good to have for protection of your email addresses.

Encoding: An HTML file is saved with a particular character encoding. Information about the form of encoding that the file uses is sent to browsers so that they can interpret it. If the declared encoding doesn't match the encoding that has actually been used, browsers can't read it and search engines can't either, which can cause certain characters to show up wrong on your website. A programmer can ensure that the encoding is correct.

F

Favicon: (AKA Favorite Icon, shortcut icon, website icon, URL icon, or bookmark icon): A favicon is an image that is created by a web designer and installed into a Web site (or Web page) by several means. Graphical web browsers will then make use of it. Browsers that provide favicon support typically display a page's favicon in the browser's address bar (sometimes in the history as well) and next to the page's name in a list of bookmarks. A coder can do this for you.

Flash: Flash makes the content look appealing. This is often used to stream videos, audio players, advertisements, and interactive multimedia to a webpage. Avoid using flash content for the entire website because it is ignored by search engines, and therefore, will not be indexed.

Frames: Frames allow for two or more pages to display in the same browser window. As a result, search engines may see your home page as empty and may refuse to index the content on your website at all. If you really want to have frames on your browser page, use a NOFRAMES tag (code language). Frames should be updated to tables instead.

G

Google Analytics: Google Analytics lets you measure your advertising return on investment as well as track your Flash, video, and social networking sites and applications. Without measuring these factors, you will not be able to confirm that they are growing.

Google Preview: How your site appears in Google search results

H

Headings: Headings are simply how they sound; headers or titles to a page. Search engines use headings to index content on your page. Tell your coder to structure your website using HTML headings. It is important that they use your keywords in headings starting with the most important keywords at <H1>. For strong SEO, only use one <H1> tag per page.

I

Images: Search engines cannot read or see images on your website. Therefore, it is necessary to add alternative text (the alt attribute) to describe the image, which helps search engines index it into Google Images. It is recommended to limit alternative text to 150 characters.

Indexed Pages: (AKA Indexed Content): This refers to the pages on a website that a search engine has explored and stored. If a page, or site, has not been indexed by a search engine, there is no chance that it can show up in search engine results. The more pages indexed, the better. To increase the number of indexed pages on your website, check/create your XML Sitemap (definition below) and submit it to Google and build backlinks to your site.

In-Page Links: An internal link is a hyperlink that is a reference or navigation element in a document to another section of the same document or to another document that may be on or part of the same website or domain of the internet.

Inside Pages Analysis: In order for a high SEO ranking, you must not duplicate the titles of different pages or the keywords (AKA tags) associated with each when coding.

IP Canonicalization: (Internet Protocol Canonicalization): IP is your social security number for your website. The website URL is the more user-friendly shortcut to the IP address. It is important that your website's IP address is forwarded to your website's domain in order to prevent the popularity from getting split up between the 2+ pages. This will also help search engines understand how to index the website. A coder can do this for you.

K

Keywords Consistency: It is important to be consistent with your use of keywords, and specifically using the most important keywords consistently. This consistency needs to spread across content, title, description, headers, internal links, and backlinks.

L

Language: Declaring the language allows for the content on your website to be translated, displayed correctly, and indexed by search engines properly. This is something a coder can do for you.

Load Time: Google measures the amount of time it takes for your page to fully load and uses it as a criterion to determine rank. Faster load times are tracked by Google and help or hinder your search rankings. This is something that a coder can help you with.

Long Tail Keyword: An uncommon or infrequently searched keyword, typically with two or more words in the phrase. Small businesses should consider targeting long tail keywords, as they are lower difficulty and often have more qualified searchers. Common keywords such as 'software' are more competitive, and very hard to rank high for them in search.

M

Metadata: Data that tells search engines what your website is about.

Meta Description: A brief description of fewer than 160 characters of the contents of a page and why someone would want to visit it. This is often displayed on search engine results pages below the page title as a sample of the content on the page.

Meta Keywords: Previously used by search engines in the 90s and early 00s to help determine what a web page was about, the meta keywords tag is no longer used by any major search engines.

Mobile Load Time: It is important that your website loads on a mobile device in five seconds or less. This is something that a coder can help you with.

Mobile Optimization: Ensure that your website is prepared for mobile browsing. For mobile optimization, you need to resize and compress images and enlarge font size on your website when on a mobile phone or tablet. A coder can do this for you.

P

PageRank: This is a method used by Google to rank websites by importance in their search engine results. The PageRank goes from 0 to 10, with 0 being lowest and 10 being highest.

Page Size: Page size affects speed of website. The biggest contributors to increased page size are images and JavaScript files, so limit the usage of these. The optimal page size is 800 X 600.

Popular Pages: This indicates the specific pages within your website that are the most popular. This can be monitored using a web analytics tool, such as Google analytics.

Printability: Sites should provide print pages to the user with the same content but in a more printer-friendly format. In addition, to increase conversion rates, make sure that your organization's address and phone number are on each printed page. A coder can do this for you.

R

Related Websites: This includes any websites that have similar content and are potentially competitors with your site.

robots.txt: (AKA Robot Exclusion Standard): robots.txt is a file that prevents web robots from seeing all or part of a website that is otherwise public. A coder can add these files to your site for protection.

S

Safe Browsing: Safe Browsing is a service provided by Google that enables applications to check URLs against Google's lists of suspected dangerous pages. This is good to have in order to prevent infected pages from having access to your site.

Server IP: An IP address is the postal address to the Server IP It has little impact on SEO, except in the cases where multiple websites are all hosted on the same server IP. In that case, you need to make sure each website is on a separate C-Class IP address. A coder can do this for you.

Server Signature: For safety purposes, it is best to always have your server signature turned off.

Social Impact: Social impact is referring to your presence on social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Spam Block: Spam can hurt your SEO ranking. Avoid forum and blog spam, and use professional email software to prevent your emails from ending up in spam folders.

Speed Tips: Use a caching method, gzip, and avoid nested tables, inline styles, CSS files, and JavaScript files in order to maximize speed of website. These can be taken care of by a coder and front-end developer.

T

Technologies: It is important to be familiar with the technologies that you use on your website and for what purposes (i.e. Google Analytics → Analytics). Some of these technologies can slow down your website.

Text/HTML Ratio: A text/HTML ratio tool determines the total amount of text on your website over the total website. The ideal range for this is 85% text and 15% HTML or code.

Title: This is the title of each page. Each should be between 10 and 70 characters and unique to that specific page in order to prevent search engines from confusing them.

Traffic Estimations: This is calculated through multiple traffic tracking tools.

Traffic Rank: The lower the number of the ranking, the higher the amount of visitors to the website. The most common estimates come from Alexa Rankings. Alexa's traffic estimates are based on data from its global traffic panel, which is a sample of all Internet users. The panel consists of millions of Internet users using one of over 25,000 different browser extensions.

Twitter Account: This refers to analytics collected from your organization's Twitter account

Typo Availability: It is important to purchase different versions of your website name (dsaxo.net, dsacp.net) in order to ensure that viewers trying to find your website will be redirected to the correct site, if they mistype. It is also important to register all of these domains so that cybersquatters (or domain squatters) do not take a similar domain to yours in order to profit off of your goodwill and confuse viewers.

U

Underscores in the URLs: (These_are_underscores): It is important to avoid using underscores in your URL and instead use hyphens. Google considers hyphens word separators, but does not consider underscores word separators.

URL: (AKA Uniform Resource Locator, Web Address): URL is a string of characters that specific to one resource. It is the global address of a document on the Internet. URLs should be short, but descriptive in order to be better recognized by a search engine. Use clean URLs to make your site easier for Google to read and understand. An example of an unclean URL and a clean URL are below:
>Unclean: http://example.com/index.php?page=foo
>Clean: http://example.com/foo

URL Rewrite: URL rewrite refers to having a clean URL, which is described in URL above.

W

WWW Resolve: WWW Resolve refers to your website with and without "www" redirects to the same page.

W3C Validity: This is for coders to check their work and receive feedback and suggestions for their website code.

X

XML Sitemap: An XML Sitemap helps search engines to better read and understand your website. A coder can create this for your site.

0 – 9

404 Error Page: This is the page that appears when the server cannot find the desired page. It is beneficial to customize your 404 Error Page. A coder can do this for your website.