

SEO Education 101



By Matt Bush



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SEO: SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION INTRODUCTION

SEO stands for “Search Engine Optimization”, and is essentially the process of designing, building, and promoting a website with the search engines in mind. The purpose is to rank well in the search engines, which will then in turn provide you with organic search engine traffic.

Search engine optimization (SEO) is very important if you ever want to gain decent rankings in the search engine. Even though the word “SEO” can sound terribly intimidating, actually applying it to your blog is no where near as hard as it sounds. All you have to do is invest some initial time into learning the basics, and soon your blog will be better than 90% of the others out there, simply because you have SEO.

SEO encompasses not only the initial design of a website, but the promotion as well. Throughout the course of this series, we will be examining the various components of strong SEO.

Please feel free to view Video #1, to hear me talk about the introduction to SEO.

THE ADVANTAGES OF SEO

Before we go any further, I would like to talk a bit about the many advantages of SEO, and why you absolutely need to be applying it to your websites.

Advantages of SEO

- **Free Traffic!**
- **Makes your website more “friendly” and more likeable**
- **Most people don’t do it!**
- **It will increase your profits**

As you can see, there are several reasons why you should be doing SEO. To hear me talk a bit more about each of these reasons, be sure to check out Video #2.

SEARCH ENGINE BASICS

Before we start tackling SEO, I would like to first talk a bit about how search engines work. It is very important that we understand this, because SEO is essentially all about doing what we can to please the search engines.

Search engines basically gather data about every and any website they can find. Search engines send out little helpers called “spiders” that crawl the net, and store information about everything that they find. The search engines then rank the websites in order of importance, based on a variety of factors. They also penalize and reward websites, based on what they find.

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Important factors include:

Important Factors

- **Number and quality of backlinks**
- **Freshness of content**
- **Uniqueness of content**
- **“Authority” status**
- **Age**

Our goal then, is to provide the search engines a website that appears valuable to them, so we can achieve a high ranking which will in turn bring us traffic.

Please refer to video #3 to hear me talk in more detail about how search engines work.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOMAIN NAME

Choosing a good domain name is very important. It is the name for your business! I would strongly suggest not rushing into a domain name, and taking your time to brainstorm a few possibilities.

A few things to keep in mind when thinking about domain names include:

Domain Name Tips

- **.Com is the best extension**
- **Make it easy to remember**
- **Make it represent the content of your website**
- **Short names are best (when possible)**
- **Stay away from numbers and hyphens**
- **Keep the potential for branding in mind**

A great tool that can help with brainstorming can be found here:

<http://nameboy.com>

Just simply enter a few words that describe your site, and nameboy will generate a list of available domain names. To hear me talk a bit more about choosing a good domain name, please refer to Video #4.

THE IMPORTANCE OF KEYWORD RESEARCH

If you aren't doing proper keyword research before you build and expand your website, you are taking a stab in the dark at your pages becoming popular. Just writing on your niche isn't enough, you need to be spending time researching and discovering the best keywords to target.

The basic premise of keyword research involves finding keywords that have:

1. A reasonable amount of searches per day/month

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2. A reasonably low amount of competition on the internet for that specific phrase.

I highly suggest and recommend using Matt's Free Keyword Tool to do your keyword research. You can download it for free here:

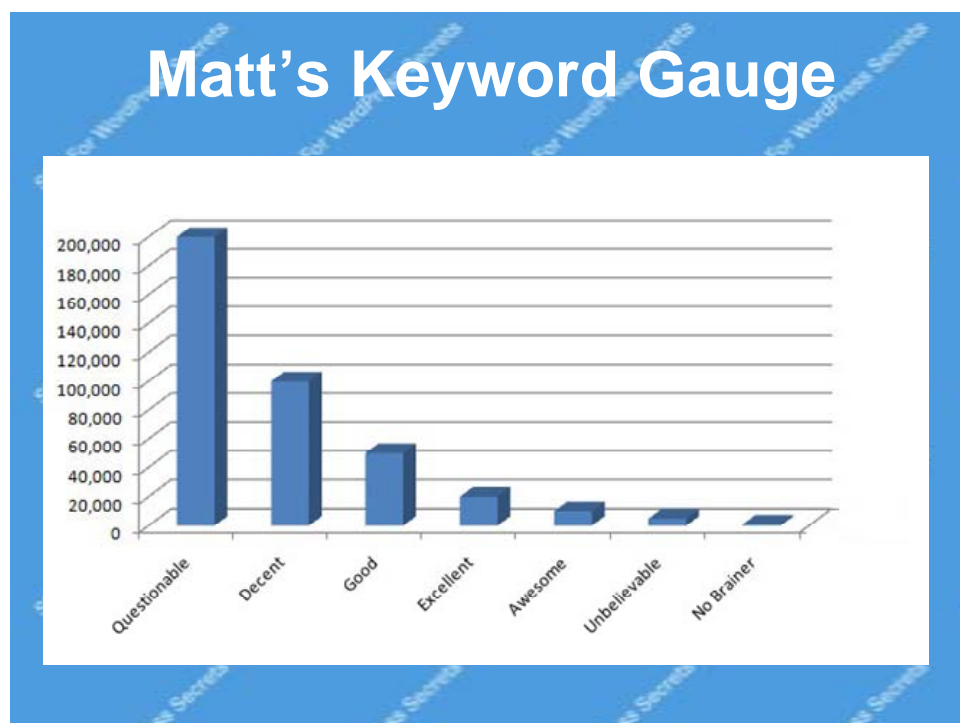
<http://MattsFreeKeywordTool.com>

There is also a free video series that comes with the tool. I am going to highlight the keyword research process for you here.

You basically want to avoid two problematic areas:

1. Keywords with too much competition (you would not be able to rank high enough)
2. Keywords with too little search volume (you may rank high, but still get very little traffic)

The keyword tool will help you find keywords in that "sweet spot", where they are receiving a fair amount of hits per day, and there is little competition. Just how much competition should you aim for?



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Please refer to video #5 to hear me talk more specifically about finding the best keywords to target.

THE ROLE OF THE TITLE TAG

The title tag is very important. When creating a webpage, the title tag is a single phrase that represents what your page is about. Search engines look to the title tag to understand what the page is about, and it is important that we use it as a way to communicate it to them as clearly as we can.

The title tag for each page can be found towards the top of each HTML page that you create, between the <head> tags. It looks like this:

```
<title>Dog Training Tips For Dog Owners</title>
```

I would strongly suggest that you are including the keyword phrase that you are targeting in the title tag.

Please review Video #6 for further details on title tags.

UNDERSTANDING META TAGS

Meta tags are used to give the search engines additional information about each page you create on your website. It is important to understand that this information is only seen by the search engines, and not your actual visitors.

The meta tags also appear towards the top of each page, between the <head> tags.

The most important meta tags include:

Description Meta Tag

This tag gives you a chance to describe what your page is about. It can be longer than the title. Here is an example of the syntax:

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```
<Meta Name="Description" Content="Information on dog training. Includes help with barking...">
```

Keywords Meta Tag

This tag gives you a chance to list several keywords that are found and discussed on your page. Here is an example of the syntax:

```
<Meta Name="Keywords" Content="dog training tips, dog training, dog training information,...">
```

Robots Meta Tag

This tag is an example to tell the search engines if you don't want them indexing or spidering a section of your website. By default, search engines spider everything, so you will only use this tag if you want to keep them away from something. Here is an example of the syntax:

```
<Meta Name="Robots" Content="Nofollow">
```

In the early days of search engine ranking, meta tags were very important. They are significantly less important today, though I certainly feel they remain an important part of search engine optimization, and recommend that you take the time to create them for each webpage that you publish.

Please review video #7 to learn more about meta tags.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ANCHOR TEXT

Whenever you create a link to one of the pages on your website, whether it be from another page on your site, or somewhere else across the internet, you will have the opportunity to use optimized anchor text.

When a search engine spider comes across a link, they depend on the link's anchor text to tell them what the linked page is about. Using the keywords that you want to rank for in your anchor text is extremely important!

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Here is an example of anchor text:

To learn more <a href="<http://mysite.com>">dog training tips be sure to check out my website...

The anchor text used in the example above was “dog training tips”.

To learn more about anchor text, I suggest reviewing Video #8.

USING HEADER TAGS EFFECTIVELY

As you start to write the actual content of each page you create, you will have an opportunity to use header tags. Header tags essentially tell the search engines what the most important part of the page is. You will want to take great care to make sure you are using header tags appropriately. To create a header tag, just enclose whatever phrase you choose with the following tags:

```
<h1>Potty Dog Training </h1>
```

You can also use varying levels of header tags throughout your post, changing the number from 1-5. You will only want to use “1” once, but can use the others to varying degrees. I wouldn’t suggest getting carried away though!

You will want to make sure that you are enclosing the keywords that you want to rank for in your header tags. Are you starting to see a pattern here?

Please review video #9 to see me create header tags.

SETTING UP A PROPER LINKING STRUCTURE

When a search engine spider finds your website, you will want to make sure that you make it easy for them to find all of the additional pages that you have created. This is done by making sure that you have an effective linking structure.

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It is a good idea to have a sitemap, which is a single page which has a link to every single page on your website. You will want to make sure that a link to the sitemap is visible on every single page on your site. You don't have to make the sitemap link very blatant, as it is not really intended for your human visitors, but the search engines.

It is also highly recommended that you link your website together in a way that "makes sense". This means that if you have a page about one topic, and have additional pages that are related, you will want to make sure you create links to those pages. This not only helps the search engines understand how your site is linked together, but helps your visitors to find more information about whatever it is that they are interested in.

Please review video #10 to hear me talk more about creating a proper linking structure.

KEYWORD HIGHLIGHTING

Next I would like to talk about how we can choose individual or groups of words within each page we create and single them out, telling the search engines that these are the most important words in the paragraph. This can be done by using italics, bold, and underlining.

This is accomplished simply by using specific tags when creating your page:

`` = Bold

`<i></i>` = Italics

`<u></u>` = Underline

You can also combine more than one of these to really emphasize a phrase.

Please refer to Video #11 to see me talk a bit more about how these tags can be used.

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AN OVERVIEW OF LSI

I wanted to take a moment to talk about Latent Semantic Indexing, otherwise known as LSI.

LSI is a relatively new thing, and something that the search engines are looking for when determining the value of each website that they come across. LSI refers to looking at the keywords that are being used on your website, and further examining how they are connected.

Let's say for example that you have a website that is about dog training. If you use the keyword phrase "dog training" over and over again, it can appear spammy. The search engines want to see that you understand your subject, and are looking to see additional words on your website that are related to dog training. LSI examples in this case would include phrases like "dog obedience, dog school, training collar, etc".

To hear me talk a bit more about LSI, please refer to Video #12.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT BACKLINK?

Now we will start focusing on external SEO, which involves doing everything we can to get high quality backlinks pointing towards our website.

As the search engines determine what websites will rank the highest, they place great weight on the links that are pointing at the site.

Not all backlinks are created equal however, and we will want to direct our efforts on getting the best ones possible. Here are the most important factors to consider when looking at the value of a backlink from an external website:

Backlink Factors

- Age of Website
- Pagerank of Website
- Number of Outbound Links on Website
- Relevance of Content
- Uniqueness of Content
- “Authority” Ranking of Website

The next series of videos will deal with various methods on how to get high quality backlinks.

Please review Video #13 to hear me talk more about the factors that make up a good backlink.

PROMOTION: ARTICLE MARKETING

If I was only going to recommend one link building strategy, it would be article marketing. There is a reason it is so popular, it is because it actually works!

Article marketing consists of creating articles from your niche, and submitting them to article directories. At the bottom of each article you write, you are allowed to link to your website. There are quite a few article directories that are very highly respected by the search engines, and having links from there pointing to your site is a huge advantage.

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Additionally, once your article is in the directories, other webmasters will come and publish your article. It is not uncommon for one article to get you several high quality backlinks.

I would not suggest submitting to every article directory you can find, but rather just stick with the top few. This would include:

<http://ezinearticles.com>

<http://goarticles.com>

<http://searchwarp.com>

<http://articlecity.com>

<http://isnare.com>

To hear more about why you need to be exploring this opportunity, be sure to check out Video #14.

PROMOTION: SUBMITTING TO FREE DIRECTORIES

Submitting to directories is an easy way to get some decent backlinks. In my opinion, directory submissions are a bit “old school” and not as effective as they use to be, but are still worth your while, especially if you just focus on the top directories.

Besides finding niche specific directories, here are a few worth checking out:

<http://www.dmoz.org/>

<http://www.webworldindex.com/>

<http://www.worldwidewub.org/>

<http://www.411.com/>

<http://www.zeal.com>

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<http://www.wowdirectory.com>

To see me talk a bit more about directory submissions, please view Video #15.

PROMOTION: SUBMITTING TO PAID DIRECTORIES

In addition to dealing with free directories, you may also want to consider submitting to a few paid directories. I do not feel this is necessary to your success, though if you have some money and want to get a faster start this is certainly an option.

The Yahoo directory is an option, though it is quite expensive, almost \$300! Additional directories worth considering include:

<http://bestoftheweb.com>

<http://business.com>

<http://joeant.com>

<http://www.avivadirectory.com/>

To hear me talk a bit more about paid directories, please review Video #16.

PROMOTION: RELEVANT BLOGS

Commenting on other people's blogs is a fantastic way to get some great backlinks. You have to remember that a large percentage of bloggers out there are doing it just as a hobby, and they will love it if you take the time to read their blog and make a thoughtful comment.

Do not spam your comments! If you try leaving a comment like "Nice Blog, Check Out My Website" it is going to get taken down. The key here is showing the blog owner that you actually are interested in their blog, and want to contribute towards it.

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If you really want to make the most of your time, only focus on blogs that have google page rank. This is a nice way to gauge the quality of the blogs you come across.

You can conveniently find the page rank of any website simply by visiting it as long as you have the google toolbar installed:

<http://toolbar.google.com>

Please refer to video #17 to see me talk a bit more about blog commenting.

PROMOTION: PRESS RELEASES

Press releases are a fantastic way to get the word out about your website quickly. It will also help you pick up several valuable backlinks. The best place to submit press releases through is PRWeb, located here:

<http://prweb.com>

PRWeb offers a variety of ways to distribute your press release, ranging from free to very expensive. If you are serious about your web business, you may want to consider spending some cash here, as it is well worth it. You will want to make sure that your press release is well written (PRWeb can help with that too).

Please note, press releases take time to write, and you will want to make sure they are high quality. I definitely feel that submitting them is certainly worth your time!

To see me talk a bit more about this, please view Video #18.

PROMOTION: CREATING YOUR OWN BLOGS

If you don't have a blog, you are missing out on a huge opportunity. Simply put, blogs open up doors for you to certain aspects of web promotion, and make it a lot easier to rise up in the search engines.

If your main website isn't a blog, you could consider adding one, such as:

<http://mywebsite.com/blog>

which could then push people towards your actual website.

Blogs are free. Popular blog software includes:

<http://wordpress.com>

<http://blogger.com>

<http://livejournal.com>

Of the three listed, I would suggest working with WordPress, as it is the most robust and offers the greatest amount of flexibility.

One of the great things about WordPress is that there are many plugins that you can install (also free) that will further enhance your blog. This makes it possible to do things like notify the search engines when you have new content, automatically bookmark your post to the social bookmarking services, setup future posts to go live automatically, and more!

Please refer to Video #19 to see me talk a bit more about creating a blog for your business.

PROMOTION: THE POWER OF A SQUIDOO LENS

Imagine if I told you that it was possible to get your very own webpage underneath a very popular website, where you would be free to promote your own website as much as you please? Thanks to websites like Squidoo, this is now possible.

Squidoo is located here:

<http://squidoo.com>

Squidoo is a social site where people can sign up for free, and create their own pages. The good news is that Squidoo pages carry a lot of weight in the search engines, and having backlinks from there can prove to be invaluable.

Squidoo is also very easy to learn. Even a novice can have a page up and running fairly quickly. Once you have your page established, you will not only receive the benefits of a strong backlink, but should receive traffic from Squidoo as well.

Please feel free to review Video #20 to see a tour of Squidoo.

PROMOTION: THE POWER OF A HUBPAGES HUB

Hubpages is another social website, where its users can sign up for free and create their own pages. It is located here:

<http://hubpages.com>

Hubpages is very similar to Squidoo, and I highly recommend that you take advantage of both of these websites. What a perfect way to create some strong backlinks that you have complete control over.

One final note however, you will want to make sure that your pages on Hubpages are of decent quality. If you just throw up content that is taken from somewhere else, or of low quality, your page will get shut down. Be careful!

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To see me talk a bit more about Hubpages, I suggest you review Video #21.

PROMOTION: FUN WITH WIKISPACES

Wikispaces is yet another place where you can sign up for free and create a nice little webpage underneath the “umbrella” of the popular Wikispaces website. The only difference here is that your page is actually a “wiki”.

Wikis are very popular right now (You’ve probably heard of Wikipedia, a very successful online encyclopedia) and having your own that you have complete control over, that you can then use to promote your website certainly has its advantages.

To hear a bit more about Wikispaces, please review Video #22.

PROMOTION: GAINING CREDIBILITY FROM FORUMS

Becoming active in forums is a fantastic way to increase exposure to your website, as well as help to establish yourself as an expert. Simply finding a forum that is related to your niche, throwing your website in your signature line, and answering relevant questions can bring about a nice amount of highly targeted traffic (and also results in backlinks too).

I would suggest not pushing your website too much, a subtle advertisement in your signature line should do the trick. Establishing yourself as an expert can go a long way, after all, wouldn’t you rather buy from someone that you trust?

To hear me talk a bit more about working with forums, please view Video #23.

DON'T OVERDO IT!

I have shared several great ways to get a ton of backlinks, but I want to suggest that you take care not to overdo your promotion, especially in the beginning. The key here is to show the search engines that you are gaining backlinks gradually, rather than all at once.

For example, if you were going to build 100 backlinks over the course of a month, gaining them all in one or two days would not be smart!

As your site matures, you will find that you can increase the amount of backlinks that you acquire. It's almost like you are more highly scrutinized when you are new (I think the reason for this is that so many people have tried to beat the search engines by creating new sites and then getting a zillion links, only to be kicked out of the search engines).

To hear me talk a bit more about exercising caution when link building, please refer to Video #24.

MONETIZATION OPTIMIZATION

Once you start getting traffic pouring into your site, you will definitely want to do everything that you can to maximize the money that you make. Often times, people start making money and they fail to continue to analyze their site. Simple tweaks to things like ad copy and the products you are offering can easily double and triple your sales, which is very significant! I call this "monetization optimization".

Here are a few things to keep in mind when optimizing your sales:

Monetization Optimization

- Find out what your visitors want
- Test, test, and test!
- Make sure you offer quality products
- Build a list when possible
- Develop a relationship and establish credibility

To hear me talk a bit more about each of these points, please review Video #25.

BUILDING A LIST

If you aren't building a list on your website, you are missing out on a huge opportunity. When visitors come to your site and just see an ad, you have a chance to sell to them right then and there, and often times you will never see them again. If you were able to capture the person's email address, you could market to this person many times over. Statistics have shown that often times sales increase when someone is repeatedly offered something.

I don't know about you, but I don't tend to hand out my email address to just about anyone. This means that you need to be creative. I would strongly suggest that you create some sort of valuable product that you can give away for free, in exchange for people signing up for your list. This could be something like a free ebook, a free newsletter, and so forth. Once you have a person's email address, you can start to build a relationship with them as you send them emails on a regular basis. Before you know it, you will have a targeted list containing tons of

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people that actually value what you have to say, and are more likely to trust you when you recommend products to them.

To hear me talk more about building a list, please refer to Video #26.

CONCLUSION

I hope you have enjoyed learning about search engine optimization. Once you have an optimized website, the sky is the limit! Good luck and see you at the top!

Take care,

Matt Bush

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