

Understanding the Ever-Changing World of SEO

<https://jbmediagroupllc.com/ab-tech/>

Co-founder and Lead
Instructor of
JB Media Institute + President
of Creative Original, Inc.

www.JBMediaInstitute.com

sarah@jbmediagroupllc.com

@SarahDBenoit on Twitter and
Instagram

Sarah Deborah Benoit on
Facebook



Search Engine Optimization is:

the art of increasing organic, local and mobile search traffic to a website through a variety of regularly executed, keyword-focused content strategies, as well as consistently increasing local citations and backlinks.

SEO can include:

keyword architecture ~ online PR ~ blogging
social media ~ content development ~ earned
link building ~ and more.



Web Accessibility and the Origin of SEO

Many best practices for structural SEO, which relates to the basic structure of your website and some aspects of the design, are inspired by the rules of web accessibility.

This is because Google's mission is to make the world's information available to all people, regardless of their physical capability.

Following these best practices means more people who use screen readers and other tools can clearly experience and use your website.

The Anatomy of a Search Engine

Search engine **spiders** follow links on the web to request pages that are not yet indexed or have been updated since they were last indexed. These pages are crawled and added to the...

...**search engine index**, or catalog. When you search you are not actually searching the web, but a slightly outdated index of content.

The **search interface and relevancy software** accept queries, check to match it with any advanced syntax, check to for relevant vertical search databases, and then deliver relevant results.

What is Semantic Search?

Semantic search seeks to improve accuracy by understanding the searcher's intent and the contextual meaning of terms as they appear in the searchable dataspace, whether on the Web or within a closed system, to generate more relevant results.

According to [Moz.com](https://moz.com), “search engines now have a good idea of what words statistically occur together and make semantic correlations, which can be used in the war against spam. Using semantics and entity-based search, engines can gain a better understanding of what users may want.”

What is RankBrain?

RankBrain is an artificial intelligence (AI) program used to process Google search queries. It embeds vast amounts of written language into mathematical entities called vectors that the computer understands. If RankBrain sees a word or phrase it isn't familiar with, the machine can make a guess as to what words or phrases might have similar meaning and filter the results accordingly, making it more effective at handling never-before-seen queries. Overall RankBrain is capable of learning and recognizing new patterns and then revising search engine results based on its new knowledge. ([taken from monfort.io](https://monfort.io))

According to Rand Fishkin, founder of [Moz.com](https://moz.com), "If you've been stressing about how to optimize your SEO for RankBrain, here's good news: you can't."

[Watch Rand Explain RankBrain and How it Works!](#)

What is Machine Learning?

“Machine learning is a method of data analysis that automates analytical model building. Using algorithms that iteratively learn from data, machine learning allows computers to find hidden insights without being explicitly programmed where to look.” ~ [sas.com](https://www.sas.com)

The world is quietly being reshaped by machine learning. We no longer need to teach computers how to perform complex tasks like image recognition or text translation: instead, we build systems that let them learn how to do it themselves. ‘It’s not magic,’ says Greg Corrado, a senior research scientist at [Google](https://www.google.com). ‘It’s just a tool. But it’s a really important tool.’ The most powerful form of machine learning being used today, called ‘deep learning’, builds a complex mathematical structure called a neural network based on vast quantities of data. Designed to be analogous to how a human brain works, neural networks themselves were first described in the 1930s. But it’s only in the last three or four years that computers have become powerful enough to use them effectively.” ~ [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com)

What is Google's Mobile First Index?

In November of 2016 Google began testing its new Mobile First Index. “[This means Google will create and rank its search listings based on the mobile version of the content, even for listings shown to desktop users.](#)”

Mobile searches are the majority now. Instead of crawling the web from a desktop browser point of view it now crawls from the mobile browser point of view. This makes responsive design even more important because you want to avoid having a mobile version of your website that is much smaller and has less content than the desktop version in order to maintain or gain Google rankings. Expandable content like tab and accordions will get more weight than it did on desktops when used correctly to improve user experience.

So let's take a look at search engine results...



The Foundations of SEO

- Keyword Research
- Content Strategy
- Link building
- Usability
- Tracking & Reporting

Keyword Research

A woman with dark hair and glasses is sitting at a desk in a modern office, working on a laptop. She is wearing a dark blue t-shirt and a necklace. On the desk in front of her is a small, colorful figurine of a cow. To her right, a man with long hair and glasses is sitting at another desk, looking at a laptop. The office has large windows and modern furniture.

Keyword Research

- ★ Imagine you are the visitor, customer, or client. What do you think they would search for? How would they look for your products and services.
- ★ Think about individual product and service terms, as well as broader product/service groups and categories.
- ★ Be consistent, use keyword terms when they naturally occur and make sense, in all aspects of your online marketing, not just on your website.

Keyword Research Tips

- Don't look for the most popular terms, look for more qualified terms that have less monthly search volume and less competition, make these short terms goals. Terms between 100 and 10,000 monthly searches are the best for small business.
- Choose terms that speak to different target markets.
- Explore regional terms and see what really has value.
- Save spreadsheets of terms you feel have value.
- Identify your top long and short term goals.
- Think about what terms will “convert”.

Keyword Research

- ★ Variations and synonyms of specific keyword terms leads to more diverse traffic. There are always multiple ways to talk about a service or product.
- ★ Keyword terms can be used in text naturally, as well as to describe and identify video, audio, graphics, and photos.
- ★ Compare your ideas against the actual keyword research data to find out how often individual terms are searched each month. Choose keywords wisely.

Keyword Research Tools

KEYWORDTOOL.io

<https://keywordtool.io/>

- Use the free tool to research search terms
- To view search volume sign up for 30 days and cancel

Google Keyword Planner

<https://www.google.com/adwords/>

- Sign up for Google Adwords
- Complete all relevant information as if you are signing up to advertise
- Set a budget and add in your billing information
- Once your account is set up click the Campaigns tab and then in the left hand column pause the campaign
- Go to Tools and then to Keyword Planner

Moz.com Keyword Explorer

<https://moz.com/explorer>

- Sign up for Moz for 30 days and cancel or get a free trial
- Use the free version and research one keyword topic per day.

ANSWER THE PUBLIC

<http://answerthepublic.com/>

- Use the free tool to research search terms
- Research as many topics as you like

SERPS

<https://serps.com/tools/keyword-research/>

- Use the free tool to research search terms
- Research as many topics as you like

Content Strategy

It's not about how much content you create...it's about the quality and value of the content and whether or not it is getting in front of people who care about the message.

"If content is **king**,
then conversion
is **queen**."

-John Munsell

Website Architecture

Web site architecture (On Page SEO) is the structure of the information on the web site. This structure must be built with keywords and usability in mind, this includes:

- menu items (site navigation)
- build pages as entryways to the site or “alternative homepages”
- the site map (text + XML)
- Meta Data (title tags, descriptions, and keywords)
- all front end content (body text, keyword anchor text, formatting like bold, headings, ALT tags, etc)

This structure must communicate a cohesive message + the purpose of each page.

Website Architecture Tips

- Have keyword friendly or SEF URLs
- Use keyword terms in Headers/H tags/Headings, as well as subheadings and bolds. H1, H2, and H3 are most valuable
- Use keyword terms in ALT tags for photos
- Use keyword terms in blog titles, subheads, and body text
- Use keywords phrases to link site posts and pages to other posts and pages on the site - this is called internal linking
- Use important keywords on social media profiles, in posts and updates, in e-newsletters, and other places online - be consistent - choose your top 5 or 10

Blogging

Blogging has become one of the Internet's most valuable tools. It is a powerful, simple way to communicate your message to potential customers and to provide up to date, fresh, valuable information site visitors are looking for. It is the perfect companion for SEO, social media, and e-newsletter strategies. Blogging every month:

- establishes expertise and authority on different topics
- houses and provides easy to navigate, useful content
- helps create content that can be easily linked to from other places, like SM or newsletters
- provides more “up to date” info on products and services that can be linked to static pages to build internal links

How to Set Up Your Blogging

Make your blog part of your website:

Best option (fully integrated)

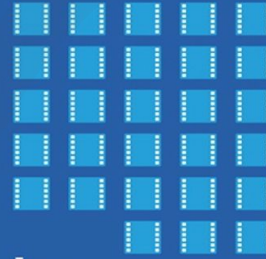
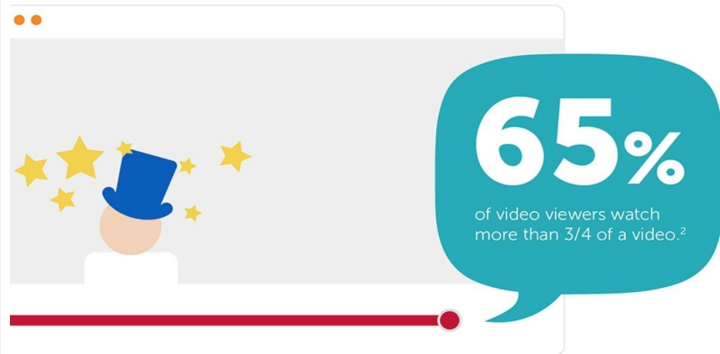
- <http://www.mywebsite.com/blog>

This is the best option because then your website gets the credit for all of the content on the blog.

Second best option (subdomain)

- <http://www.blog.mywebsite.com>

Video



In

2015

experts believe that video will take up

57%

of consumer internet traffic, that's the equivalent of almost 4x as much as web browsing and email

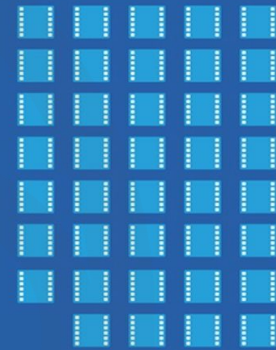


By

2017

this will have risen to

69%



By

2018

this will have risen to

79%³

Video

78%

of people watch videos
online every week.

55%

of people watch videos
online every day.³

75%

of business executives
watch work-related videos
at least weekly.⁴



Video Optimization

- Use keyword research to generate video content ideas
- Answer questions, solve problems, entertain people, be valuable, be trustworthy
- Repurpose videos in other places online
- Create a Youtube channel
- Write a keyword rich, clear video title and description
- Caption videos
- Create clickable calls to action in the mid-roll

Link Building



Link Building

Links that point at your website from other websites, blogs, online publications, media, etc all help build authority and credibility and therefore affect rankings

If the links drive traffic and people visit your site, stay on your site, and convert then the links are even more powerful and increase your authority, rankings, and site traffic even more.

Online PR

Public Relations can be an extremely powerful way to build links.

- Every newspaper, magazine, journal, blog, and any other online publication with a large, engaged following can help build your site's authority when they link to you.
- Guest blogging, influencer reviews, media pitches, link exchanges, etc can potentially increase authority.

ALWAYS ASK FOR THE LINK!

E-newsletters

- Newsletters are a great way to engage and connect with your existing network.
- It is also a great way to create links back to your site surrounded by keyword content that clearly expresses the message and themes of your content.
- Getting links from partner newsletters can create exposure, website traffic, and even conversions.

Social Media

Social media links do not directly affect search engine rankings, but when they drive engagement like click-throughs they can help the search engines understand that you have a following.

Also when your Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, or other social media account is very active and people are commenting, liking, hearting, sharing, crying, getting mad, saving, retweeting, etc. search engines see this activity.

Local SEO

1. Local listings can be created on a wide variety of sites. One of the most important is Google My Business <https://www.google.com/business/>. Others can be found on Moz Local:
<http://moz.com/learn/local/citations-by-category>
<http://moz.com/learn/local/citations-by-city>
2. Make sure your business or organization name, phone number, and physical address (NAP) are consistent and the same on all sites, including your own.
3. Local citations can generate higher mobile results, especially in mobile apps that geo-locate and geo-target results.

Website Usability



Usability

Website usability is a rich topic. There are many different studies and ways you can make your website easier to use. Website usability goes hand in hand with accessibility. Google prioritizes responsive web designs.

You can test your mobile-friendliness here:

<https://search.google.com/search-console/mobile-friendly>

You can also test your site speed here:

<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>

Usability

Website usability is all about making every website visitor's experience AWESOME

Make sure your site is:

easy to use ~ clean and uncluttered ~ built with visible calls to action ~ credible ~ relevant ~ accurate ~ updated regularly ~ consistent ~ valuable ~ human-centered ~ functional ~ visually attractive ~ resonates with your audiences ~ fun ~ reliable

Tracking & Reporting



Tracking & Reporting

Tracking is essential for any marketing campaign.

Google Analytics - what are people doing when they are on your site

GA is free and easy to use. The code they provide must be copied and pasted from Google and added to every page of the site.

Google Search Console - shows you what Google sees about your site and helps you communicate with Google

Search Console is free and it consists of one code that must be placed on your server and verified. It can be verified with your analytics code.

Google Analytics Tracking Tips

Set SEO goals and attach data to them so you can see what you achieve.

- In the Audience Overview review the number of Users, Sessions, and Page Views
- Under Acquisition review Channels > Organic Search Traffic, Referrals, and SEO (the SEO section must be connected to Search Console)
- Set up goals to see if your site performance improves over time and if people are completing certain actions like landing on a specific page, clicking a download, or completing an online form

Website statistics should be reviewed every 3 months.
If something is not working make adjustments accordingly.

Google Search Console Tips

- Submit a XML sitemap.
- Review your keyword Queries, average rankings, number of clicks, and click-through rates.
- Look for any major errors and problems with indexing.
- New sites should use the Fetch tool. Submit all URLs for all pages of the site to the index.
- Don't change your .com/domain name unless you HAVE to.
- Review Meta Data issues.
- Diagnose major site issues like hacking, malware, Google penalties, etc and communicate with them when issues have been fixed.

Upcoming Educational Opportunities



MEDIA INSTITUTE

“You do amazing things.
More people should know.”

- Our next free Digital Drop-in webinar
[REGISTER TODAY](#)
- March 22, 2019 8:30 AM - 1 PM Asheville, NC Target
Locals and Tourists with Social Media Ads Workshop
[GET TICKETS](#)
- Introduction to Content Marketing Course [REGISTER
TODAY](#)

SEO Resources

<http://moz.com/>

<http://ahrefs.com>

<http://searchengineland.com/>

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

<https://www.seroundtable.com>

<http://contentmarketinginstitute.com>

NEVER STOP LEARNING

