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Generate UK[™]
The Next Generation In Marketing

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[The Basic Principles of Search Engine Optimisation]

This document is aimed at individuals who are new to building web sites and have limited search engine optimisation skills.

Introduction

When I speak to friends, families, colleagues and strangers about the Internet I have to constantly remind myself about just how little is known about the way search engines work. In my line of work, it is easy to assume that everyone must know why and how a web site is indexed by a search engine. It's not the case at all, why should it be?

What is interesting; is that of these friends, families, colleagues and strangers, many of them will either create their own web site or be involved with a web site during the next twelve months. So the very basic element of how their web site is seen by their potential visitors is alien to them.

That is the motivation behind this document; it is aimed at individuals new to building web sites and with limited search engine optimisation skills. By the end of this document, you should have a basic understanding of what is common on popular web sites and how to optimise your site so that it is indexed by search engines. If you're an experienced web designer and already have in-depth knowledge of SEO, we suggest a more detailed document or for you to call one of our consultants on 0845 388 9185 or info@generateuk.co.uk.

I hope this document proves useful, in an ideal world it would be great if you had the time to print it off and refer to it when you make changes to your web site. In an even greater ideal world, if this document proves useful perhaps you'll consider calling one of our consultants to see how the next level of digital marketing can help accelerate your business goals even further.

In the meantime, happy reading!

Michael Robinson

Before you think about Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Probably the most important factor of building a web site is to build so that it grabs the attention of your visitors. Whatever the topic of your web site, the content is of paramount importance. The site should be simple to use and easy to navigate, it is a bonus if your site is pleasing on the eye. In the first instance, we recommend that you concentrate on content, content that is well written, grammatically correct and includes the use of headlines, bullet points and pictures etc

At this juncture, search engine optimisation should be the furthest thought from your mind. Your main consideration is better spent improving your content and putting yourself in the shoes of your visitor. Think about what phrases your visitors might use to find the information that is on your site, then check that you have included those phrases in your content.

In terms of content, it cannot be emphasised enough how important it is to create **unique content**. The reason for this is because the major search engines tend to penalise duplicate content. So if you run a retail site for example, it is worth checking your product descriptions are not the same as other sites, as this may harm your ranking if that is the case.

The key to creating content is to concentrate on providing material that your visitors would like to read about. Do not be tempted to fall into the trap of writing pages that you think might appeal to the search engines.

Think about how your website communicates with the outside world, at Generate UK we have seen the traditional boundaries between the marketing department and the "web guys" disappear in recent years. This is because public relations campaign can have a massive impact on search engine optimisation, both good and bad.

If you're beginning to look at your web site as a strategic asset or considering leveraging next generation technologies to accelerate your business opportunities, contact [Generate UK](#) to see how we have helped other clients in similar situations.

Basics Rules of Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

Listed below are the most basic rules to follow for SEO purposes. We recommend that you follow these simple rules for each page of your web site.

- Search engines feed on keywords; these are the phrases that users type in when they are looking for a web site about a specific topic. It is important that you research what keywords or phrases are being used by your potential visitors. Decide what your primary keyword or phrase for each page is, then also have 10-20 secondary keywords.
- Use your primary keyword for your title tag; many web sites do not use this function properly. The title of the page is what is shown in search engine results and when people bookmark your site. Use the keywords carefully, if your page is about horses but your title is the name of your company K C Willows Ltd, the chances of you being found under your chosen keyword is reduced.
- The Meta description is what comes under the main title (usually in bold) in search engine results. This is affectively a short summary of your site or page and a great opportunity for you to reaffirm your keywords and secondary keywords. It's main aim should be to tell the visitor what they are likely to find on your site if they click through.
- You may hear people talk about Meta keywords, this used to be an important part of SEO and an opportunity to solidify your primary and secondary keywords. Unfortunately, Meta keywords were open to abuse (known as keyword stuffing), so most of the major search engines pay little attention to them now.
- There are two types of search engine optimisation, on page and off page. On page optimisation means using headlines to introduce your content, using bullet points correctly and generally making good use of paragraphs etc. If you use images on your site, ensure that these pictures are named, ideally as one of your main keywords.
- We have already mentioned the importance of creating unique content. It is so important that we have to mention it again. If you pay a copywriter, do not be afraid to check their work via www.copyscape.com and insist on guarantees that their work is original. If you have an ecommerce site and sell similar products to other sites, take the time to make sure your product descriptions are different.
- Think about your keywords and make sure they are included as part of the content, being careful not to overdo it. Too many keywords on a site can look bad and be perceived as keyword stuffing.
- Unless you are using it as an example, we recommend that you stay away from
- "text speak". It is not unusual for this type of writing to be used on some of the more popular social networking sites; however it is not good as search engine fodder.
- Work hard to ensure that spelling and grammar are correct and in order, if you're writing yourself then take time out before proof reading, as it is easy to go word blind when you have been working on a

- document for a while.
- Do not be fooled by the kind offers of unknown companies to submit your site URL to directories on behalf of payment. The basic premise of this is that the more links you have the greater your site will rank in the search engines. This is not true, it does count to some degree, however hundreds of links from useless directories that no one visits will not help you.
 - Similarly, be wary of who you exchange links with. Historically, exchanging links used to add to your search engine juice, not any more. Some senior Google staff has gone as far as hinting that there are no benefits at all from reciprocal links.
 - Do not buy links unless they are for advertising purposes and traffic generation purposes only. Buying links for an SEO purpose is no longer valid and a waste of your money.
 - Take advantage of the major search engine web master tools, this involves submitting an up to date site map and following their web master guidelines.

Summary

As promised, these are the basics or fundamentals of SEO. If you do not want to be an expert but you want to give your site every chance to rank well for your keywords, follow our advice.

Remember that SEO takes time and is a long term commitment; this is especially true if you have a new web site or domain name.

Good luck on your SEO journey, remember to keep it simple. Don't be tempted by offers that promise to get your site to number one in the search engines within ten days, no one can guarantee this and corners can not be cut. Visit the case study section on www.generateuk.co.uk, to see how one well known company lost their entire search engine listing because they were unaware of what tricks their SEO agency were using... don't let the same thing happen to you.

Generate UK offer SEO site audits to allow you to understand where you can make improvements to your site and ongoing SEO services that will help your company reach its SEO heights! Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further information.

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