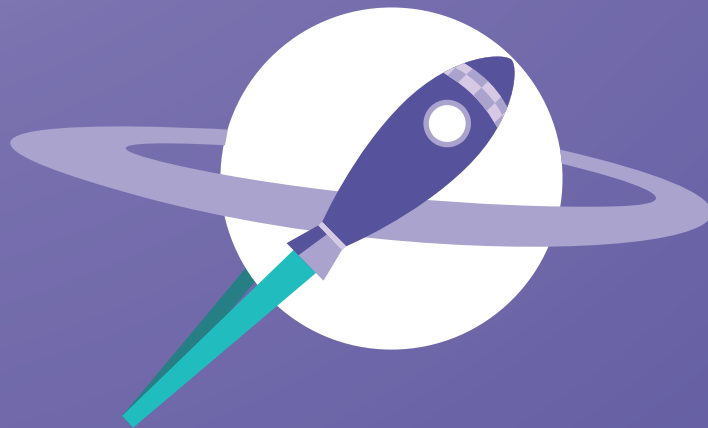


stockashOp

HELPING YOUR ONLINE BUSINESS GROW.



Search Engine Optimisation

A guide to rocket science

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Before you launch

Finding the appropriate name for your site and submitting it to Google is the first step on your way to an optimised site.

The domain name for example, www.yourwebsite.co.uk, is the identity of your website. It is therefore important to have a professional sounding, relevant and dedicated domain name for your website. Your Search Engine Optimisation will be based on this domain, choose an appropriate, available domain. Google looks favourably on domain names that are registered over several years rather than on an annual basis.

As soon as your site is completed and launched on the internet, it will be yet another star in a vast universe. How will the rest of the world find you? Search Engine Optimisation is not rocket science it's mainly common sense, logic and some clever thinking. This guide won't teach you how to build a rocket, but it will show you how to make search engines and potential customers notice you.

The aim of your website is to attract as many new customers as possible to visit.

In order to do this you need to communicate with search engines. Then you need to choose words and phrases that are relevant to your business in order to capture visitors. As soon as a visitor lands on your website you have to grab their interest within the first 20 seconds.

Do not let your website become stagnant and expect to attract visitors. You have to drive the visitors to your site, attract them when they are there and excite them with your products and services. Keep the information up to date, add new information, free samples and examples, testimonials, news, blogs etc.

Natural SEO or Pay Per Click

There are two ways to get visitors from search engines; organic search engine optimisation and paid for advertising, which will get your website onto page one instantly in the short term but will cost you for every visitor clicking onto your link. Organic search engine optimisation will eventually get your site onto page one. It will however, take longer to get there, and will remain around this position for a long term and cost you nothing when a visitor clicks onto your link. If your site is in position one to nine on the first page of Google for a keyword, and your advert appears for the same keyword, you should consider the benefits of paying per click. It may be a waste of money.

** Pay per click advertising is not covered by this document.*

People searching for your products and services are unlikely to read beyond the first two or three pages of results on search engines. If your website does not appear in these 30 organic results or adword adverts, then you should be considering search engine optimisation.

Expert Advice

www.google.com and www.google.co.uk received a combined total of 84 percent of search volume in the UK. The next most used search engine is Bing which now includes Yahoo.

REF: Experian Hitwise January 2013

There are several search engines but none are as popular as Google. The next most popular are Bing, Yahoo and Ask.

** This guide focuses on Google search engine techniques only.*

Register with Google

When you are ready to launch your website on the internet, you need to register yourself with Google and submit your website. To register yourself, go to www.google.co.uk.

Click on the link 'create an account for free'. Once you have an account you will need to add 'Webmaster tools' to it.

Type the search term "webmaster tools" into Google search engine and press return, sign in with your new password and click on the icon for webmaster tools. Follow the instructions to add your website. You will require the FTP details for your website in order to verify it.

Once verified you will be required to generate a sitemap and upload it. A Sitemap file is the structure of your website. It contains all the URLs (addresses) of every page of your site. This will give Google data about your website structure. If you are running adword campaigns in Google and tracking your progress, this can be connected to your webmaster tools.



If you have a Stockashop website this will be done automatically for you. Stockashop websites generate a sitemap each time a site is edited or each day. This it is then submitted automatically to Google saving you the time and worry.

Expert Advice

The goal of any search engine algorithm update is to help get the end user good information that matches their needs. Some websites were hurt by Google's Panda update because the content on their site was too thin, which ultimately created a poor user experience. Avoid any tricks that are intended to improve your website rankings, such as keyword stuffing a page or using hidden text or links.

REF: Brooke Snow on Google Panda and Penguin updates

Accounts

Google has more to offer when you sign in to your Google Account.

Sign in on the right or [create an account for free](#).



Gmail

Chat with friends and never miss an important email.



Personalized Search

Get more relevant results based on your past searches.



Like Google?

[Make Google your homepage](#).

See [more benefits](#) of a Google Account.

How to prepare your website

Choose your keywords...

Now choose at least 12 keywords and phrases that relate to your products and services. A keyword phrase is 2 or 3 words. For example let us suppose you are selling model steam trains, and you designate the word 'train' as a main keyword. You will attract everyone looking for; train times, train information, training courses, wedding train, in fact anything related to train. These visitors will come to your site and leave within seconds because there is no relevant information. They will literally 'bounce' on and off. Whereas if you choose a phrase that explains more about the trains you sell, for example : model train, steam train, or toy train then you are more likely to get an interested visitor who may look further into your website as it will be of interest. The phrase you choose should be a popular term, it is pointless to work on a term that no one requests.

The term train is searched for in the UK on a monthly basis, 13,600,000 times.

Model train and steam train are both searched for 135,000 times a month in the UK.

Toy train is searched for 12000 times in the UK monthly.

It is worth pointing out that the plural of a word is not the same as the singular, so trains is searched for 6,120,000 times a month in the UK.

Log onto <http://adwords.google.co.uk> and try the keyword tool for yourself and identify your most promising key phrases.

Now you can start to create optimised, good quality content on your website's home page using the 4 main phrases your have chosen. Don't try to cheat Google by using the same words endlessly in every sentence. This will deter visitors and Google will not rate you highly.

Expert Advice

The main aim of your site is to provide visitors with interesting and unique information, products and services. The main aim of search engines is to provide lists of genuine high quality results in response to visitors requests for information. It isn't rocket science!

How to prepare your website

Google analyses the text content of your website, it is unable to analyse images, video and flash animation. Search engines require 'live' text to properly analyse a page, not text in an image or a graphic banner, but text generated from your keyboard. It is important to write in complete sentences containing your key phrases, with no spelling mistakes.

There is a hierarchy to the importance of text on a web page. Some important data are embedded in the HTML code called Meta Tags. Google looks for 'the website name', 'The website title' and 'the website description.' Google will only display 156 characters in the meta description so do not exceed this. The description appears in the google results below your website title.

HTML tags content optimisation

Site meta title

Avoid meta Titles such as “Welcome to my website”, which provides no information about the content of your page. “Buy Model Steam Trains” is more descriptive of our website and will enable search engine crawlers to catalogue the site in the correct category. The title can contain 70 characters and should consist of your key words for that page. The Title appears in the Google search results in Blue text.

This is only an example for the purposes of this document. Model steam trains are usually optimised as steam engines and not as trains.

[Buy Model Steam Trains](http://uk.toyssale.com/Model+Steam+Trains)
uk.toyssale.com/Model+Steam+Trains
Model Steam Trains for less

Site Meta Description

The description tag is used by Google for the short description of your site, and appears in black below the title in the Google search results. Use text that will entice the reader to click on your site. For the description, you can have up to 156 characters. Google will display as many whole words as possible and the rest are replaced with a row of dots.

Page Meta Titles

The “Meta Title” tag must be specific to each of your pages. It can contain up to 70 characters consisting of your focus keywords. The tag should be a summary of the page, written in the style of a slogan. You can, if necessary repeat a keyword up to two times in the title to give it more weight in regards to the rest of the text.

“Meta Title” Tag: “GWR Model Steam Trains, ‘O’ Gauge”



If you have a Stockashop website every page you create has 2 title fields. One is for the menu item and should be short, and the second field is for displaying as a heading H1 on the page and is also the meta title.

HTML tags content optimisation

Headings are classed in each website and have search optimisation value. There should be one H1 on each page – This is the title for the page.

Subheadings should be contained within the content of the pages and classed as H2. You can decide what you class as H3, it could be a quote, or testimonial, a strap line, an offer etc. The aim of h1 to h3 tags is to describe the editorial content of your page. By browsing these tags, Google should immediately understand the main content of your page.

The tags are interpreted in order of importance by Google. The H1 tag is the most important and H6 the least important. We recommend that you use only one H1 tag, a maximum of two H2 tags, and as many H3 tags as you want without going overboard. H1 tags should contain a maximum of fifteen words made up of your keyword phrases, and briefly describe the content of your page. It is recommended not to put an entire paragraph in an H tag. Put your paragraph into <p> tags.

Example of structure on the home page or sub pages:

<H1>Your site title or page title - maximum 15 words</H1>

<p>Paragraph of text content or image + text.</p>

<H2>Category title or subtitle</H2>

<p>Paragraph of text content or image + text.</p>

<H3>Product name (or phrase containing relevant keywords)</H3>

<p>Paragraph of text content or image + text.</p>

Alternative Text : description of images, videos and animations should be descriptive and include key words. Links and Anchors (links within one page) and specify the “name” using relevant keywords. To further optimise your text content, you can create internal links so that you link from one page of your website to another.

HTML tags content optimisation

Anchor text is the title of a link that you click to be redirected to the destination page. The anchor text must give clear information as to the content of the landing page. Do not put too many links (200 maximum) on your most important pages (home page, topic pages, etc.). The more links you have the more diluted the importance of each link becomes. With fewer links you give each link more prominence. To write good quality anchor text, describe the page you are linking to and do not use generic terms that give no useful information to the search engine (for example, the text "click here").

The navigation action, or actual link, should not be placed on an entire paragraph of text, but use a short keyword expression.

```
<a href="http://www.yoursite.com/GWE-model-steam-trains.html"/>GWE trains</a>.
```

'H1', 'H2', 'H3', 'bold text', 'links and anchors', 'plain text', 'Menu items', 'footer links'. Google will index each top level page, each product category page, and all sub pages.

To check if this is the case, try using the Keyword tool Kgen. This is an add-on for Mozilla Firefox. Once installed, you can launch the "document scanner" which analyses the page you are on, highlights how often keywords are repeated on the page and indicates their weight or importance.

You can draw attention to paragraphs and important notes by using bold and italic text. It is usual to use `<i>` for Italic and `` for bold however, these tags are not interpreted by Google so use `` and ``.



If you have a Stockashop website and you select the I Italic or B Bold style from your text editor it will use the `` and `` tags. You can select the Format Heading 2, Heading 3, for `<H2>` and `<H3>` tags. Helping to further optimise your website and saving you the worry.

Optimisation of the URL

The URL or address of a page is very important. Very often you will notice the address in the navigator address bar seems to be a string of number and characters and make no sense at all. If you have a database in your website you may see URLs like this. They mean nothing you or I and nothing of interest to the search engines.

http://www.yoursite.co.uk/dp/B001CU3XV0/ref=sr_1_16?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1360241316&sr=1-16

They could be rewritten as:

<http://www.yoursite.co.uk/products/books/Simple-Model-Locomotive-Building>

This immediately optimises this with our keywords. URL rewriting is a specialist job and should be done by a programmer.



If you have a Stockashop website this is done for you, saving time and money. The title you use in the page or product creates the URL for you.

Alternative text for images

Before inserting images on your site, remember to give your pictures a name that describes the content. Avoid file names like: [025815-photo.jpg](#).

A picture with the name such as [GWR-steam-train.jpg](#) is much more relevant and you will get indexed on Google Images on these keywords. Google cannot interpret images. Therefore, to enable the analysis of your image by search engines, you must fill in the «Alternative text» field with a short text description of your image.

Example:

```

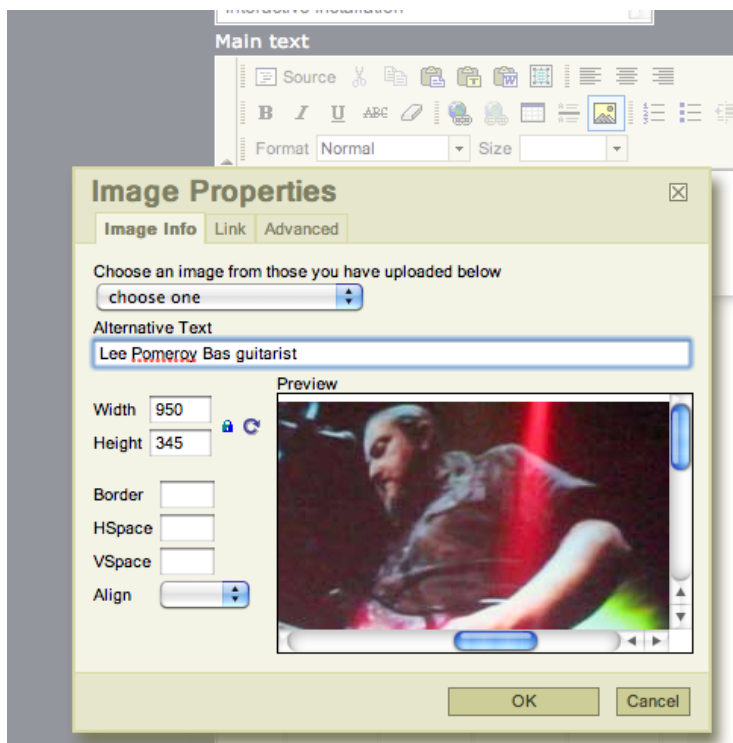
```



If you have a Stockashop website you can add the alt tags to your images using the image editor. This will allow you to give a title to your image. The title should be relatively short and include one or two keywords. The alternate

text will display on your website when a visitor hovers over the image. This is very useful for people with disabilities who may use a screen reader to describe the image.

Use your image editor to add an alternative text for the image.



Connect your site with quality backlinks

Create a professional network and generate visibility with help from external sites. Backlinks will allow you to quickly and efficiently generate other sources of qualified traffic. This is not going to happen overnight and is really about talking to your partner businesses, experts, and associate suppliers. You do not want to conflict with the interest of the other businesses so make your links relevant to something you or they can offer that compliments your products and services as well as theirs.

A backlink is a hyperlink from an external site which points to your website. The aim is that the external sites mention your site. The traffic that goes through the external site is going to add credos to your traffic. The more backlinks your site has, the more importance Google will give to your site. This popularity that you gain is called the Google "PageRank".

Since the update of its Penguin algorithm, Google gives more importance to the quality of your backlinks.

To ensure quality backlinks, we recommend the following:

- Establish backlinks from sites in the same industry as you.
- Select backlinks from serious, professional sites that you know, because if the site you are partnering with is blacklisted by Google, your site will also be penalised.
- Make backlinks with an anchor text containing the keywords of your site.
- Try to get links from the editorial content of your partner sites and not links on the sidebar or footer, for example.
- Avoid backlinks in directories, forums or blogs that are unpopular or badly indexed.

Connect your site with quality backlinks

Note: It is better to have ten backlinks from good, serious websites than a hundred links from unpopular or irrelevant sites to yours. An example of a website link to our example site could be as follows:

For more information, please visit our [MODEL STEAM TRAIN EXPERT](#).

For search engines, your site gains the reputation providing good quality information and links to experts in the industry who also have a reputation. If the partner set up the following backlink on their site: For more information, click here then search engines will consider your site has the reputation for "click here", which is obviously irrelevant. Supply the relevant link text to your reciprocal partner to add to his site. In our example : [Buy model steam trains online.](#)"

Optimising your site

Google Webmaster Tools

Now that your site is well optimised for SEO, you should monitor your progress. Once you see what is working and what is not, you can further optimise your site and keep ahead of your competitors. Google Webmaster tools are essential for tracking your site because they allow you to submit your sitemap to Google to let them know you exist and provide a map of your site. It will allow you among other things to:

- Know the number of internal and external links for your site.
- Know the keyword terms most used on your site.
- Know the keywords used to find your site.
- Submit your Sitemap file.
- Have information about your site's performance.
- Check if you have any indexing problems.
- Check duplications for Title and Description tags.
- And much more.

You can create your Google Webmaster tools account from the link:

<http://www.google.co.uk/intl/en/webmasters/>

Analysing with Google Analytics

Google Webmaster Tools

Google Analytics is a website analytics service offered by Google for free. This is the tool most used by webmasters. It gives you valuable information on the number of visitors, keywords used and statistical graphs showing your traffic by day, month or year. Google Analytics will allow you to measure the quality of your SEO by analysing the traffic generated by search engines and other sources to your site.

The analysis can also give you valuable information on the rate of conversion, keywords generating visits and the pages of your site which are the most popular. In short, these are essential tools for any webmaster who is interested in organic SEO.

You can create your Google Analytics account from the link:

<http://www.google.co.uk/analytics>

These are the principles of organic search engine optimisation. You should now be effectively optimising your website. You must however keep on top of your website SEO as the requirements are constantly changing and your competition is constantly changing.

It is important to follow the latest updates and news from Google and keep up to date and informed of any evolutions in the SEO sector. As Google changes its algorithms – the search results can change dramatically. But if you have followed the basic principles and have a high quality website then you should see it bounce back easily. Also remember to update your site regularly so that Google records that your site is “alive” and relevant.

We told you it wasn't rocket science!

SEO Checklist

Description of SEO Task	Completed
Choose domain name	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choose keyword and phrases	<input type="checkbox"/>
Register the website	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verify the website	<input type="checkbox"/>
Submit the site map	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connect web analytics to webmaster tools	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write site titles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write site descriptions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write page titles H1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write page descriptions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organise page content	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check image file names	<input type="checkbox"/>
Add alternative descriptions on images	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check anchor text	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check page URLs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generate quality back links	<input type="checkbox"/>
Link up Webmaster tools with Analytics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitor website using server stats, analytics, Pay Per Click campaigns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write new content regularly to keep content fresh and relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>

