



THE

SEO

SOLUTION

A Complete Beginners' Guide to SEO in 2018



Remove the guesswork from SEO with this easy-to-follow guide designed to make your content search-engine-friendly in 2018.

What you'll learn in this guide:

- What SEO is and why it's important
- General tips before you begin optimizing
- How to create a crawlable URL and why
- How to create a keyword research strategy
- The best way to optimize on-page content for users and search engines

Let's get started!

What is SEO and why should I care?

The overall goal of a search engine is to give a user the most relevant, accurate answers to their questions via search results. To do this, the search engine uses algorithms to read websites and attempts to process the information as a human would. Your goal is to optimize your website to make it easy for a search engine to "read."

The primary focus for SEO in 2018 is to drive more leads to your site that convert to customers with the help of your sales team. By implementing honest SEO strategies, your brand will become a valuable and informative source of industry tips for others like you.

"There aren't any quick magical tricks that SEO will provide so that your site ranks number one. It's important to note that any SEO potential is only as high as the quality of your business or website so successful SEO helps your website put your best foot forward." - Maile Ohye, Google 2017

These guidelines are your SEO solution.



Some suggestions before you get started...

Get a mobile responsive website.

This is more important in 2018 than it ever has been before. People are searching for local businesses with their mobile phones, and if your site isn't optimized for mobile, you'll miss out on a load of customers!

Have a blog or news page on your site.

To establish yourself as an idea-leader in your industry, you need to have valuable and informative content included on your website. The best way to accomplish this is to start a blog, resources, or announcements section. Doing this will also help your SEO efforts immensely.

Install Google Analytics or similar analytics tools

Analytics tools will help you measure the results of your SEO strategy and provide next steps for improved optimization.

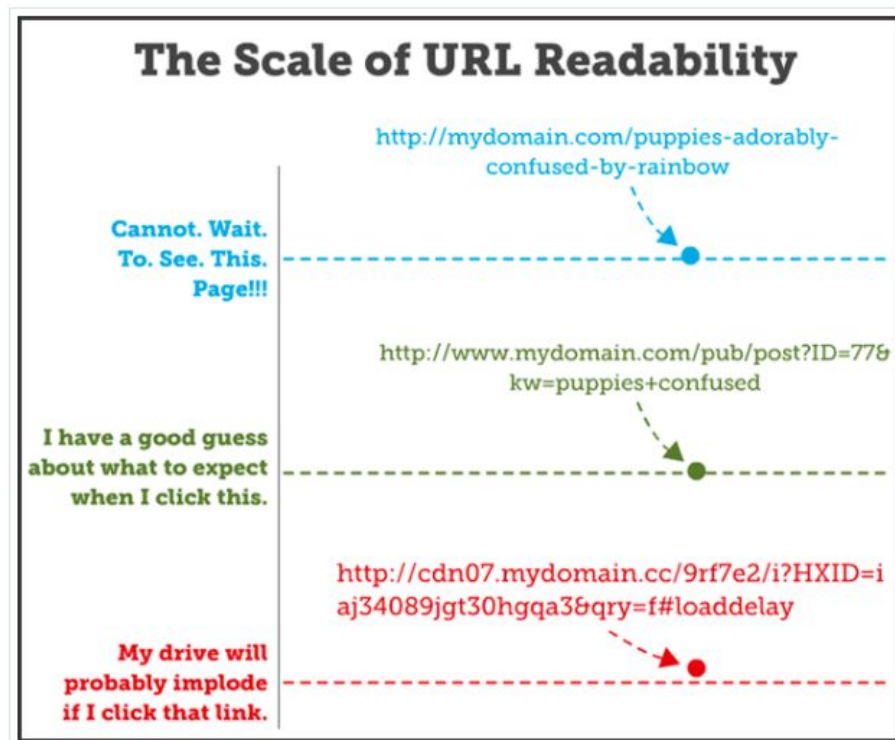
If you're using Wordpress, install [Yoast SEO](#).

Yoast SEO is the original plugin for WordPress SEO, and is used by small and large businesses alike to improve search rankings.



Make crawlable URL structures

Having crawlable URL structures means that search engines and users can more easily read and understand your website's URLs. Take [Moz's simple diagram](#) for instance:



A concise and readable URL majorly improves the user experience. Well-structured URLs will drive more clicks, and search engines will take notice, causing your listings to rise in ranking. [One study](#) found that only .194 percent of top ranking websites use weird characters in their URLs, like `#?=%&`. So, that is something you should *not* do.

What you *should* do is:

- 1) Use keywords in your URLs, because they tell searchers what they can expect from the link.
- 2) Keep your URLs short and concise. URLs with 100 characters or less normally perform the best.

Additionally, it's 2018 and people are constantly sharing cool, funny, or interesting links with their friends. It's discouraging when you find good, shareable content, but the URL looks like it might give your device malware. Shortening up your site's URLs is super easy and will allow for more sharing between users.



Create a keyword research strategy

Create a list of potential keywords. Start your keyword research by creating a list of words and phrases you think your ideal customer would search. Take those keywords and type them into a search engine. At the bottom of the search results page, you'll notice a list of related search terms. This is the easiest way to get a baseline list of keywords.

Use free keyword tools. Use free tools such as [Google Keyword Planner](#), [Explore Google Trends](#), [Moz Keyword Explorer](#), or [Keyword Tool](#) to refine your list.

Choose keywords in the “sweet spot.” As you're doing research, pay close attention to a few key analytics. Keywords that fit into the “sweet spot” have:

- Keyword search volume = medium to high
- Keyword competition rank = low to medium
- Keyword search frequency = 30 or higher (this means there's at least one search per day for the term)
- Relevancy and directly reflect the business





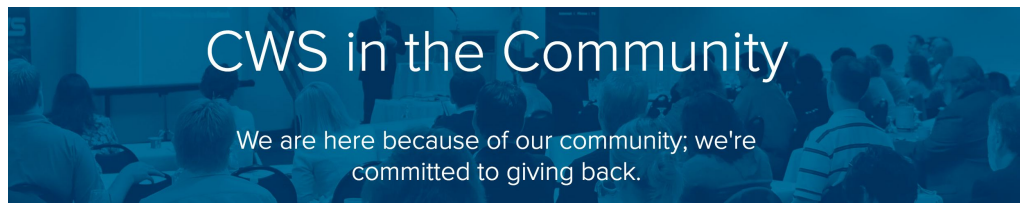
Optimize your on-page content for users and search engines

On-page SEO consists of anything on your website pages that you can most easily control to improve search rankings. These things may include page titles, internal linking, meta titles and descriptions, blog posts, etc.

Heading 1



Heading 2



Web Page Content

It is helpful to use a spreadsheet to lay out your website page-by-page. Use your list of keywords and attach appropriate keywords to each page. Take the keywords you assigned to your pages and turn them into page content using the below criteria:

Headings and Titles

- When it comes to your page headings and titles, make sure the most relevant keywords for the specific page are in the title (the <H1> header tag).
- Also, make certain that there are keywords in at least one subheading (the <H2> or <H3> header tags).

Body Copy

- In the body of your page, the most important key phrases should appear in the first 100 words.
- The first few sentences of the content are short and to the point.
- Use relevant keywords 2-4 times throughout the content.
- Use 2-5 relevant links to other pages on your website to create a helpful web of information.
- DO NOT use the same keyword or phrase more than FOUR times on one page.



Blog Post SEO

Conditioning your blog posts for SEO is very similar to web page content, but there are a few more tricks:

- Make certain there is a keyword or phrase in the title.
- Include a key phrase in the first 100 words of your blog content.
- Use a keyword in at least one of the subtitles.
- Benefits and data should be included in at least 25 percent of subtitles.
- Use 2-4 relevant outbound links to credible sources.
- Use 2-5 relevant inbound links to helpful content on your site.
- The word count of your blog post should be between 800 and 1200 to be the most successful in organic search in 2018. The most successful word count can also vary from industry to industry.
- Make sure the [Bucket Brigade Tactic](#) was used.
- Write your content in [the APP format](#).
- Body copy includes [Latent Semantic Indexing \(LSI\) keywords](#).

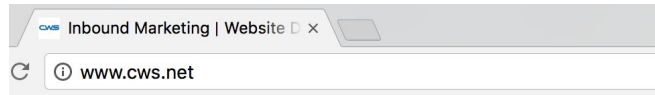




Attaching Meta Titles and Descriptions to Each of Your Web Pages and Blog Posts

The meta titles and descriptions act as a summary for your web pages and blog posts. Search engines refer to them as a quick reference for what information is on the page and these are what will appear on the search engine results.

Meta Title



Make sure...

- The meta title is between 60 and 70 characters.
- There is a keyword at the beginning of the meta title.
- The company name is included in the meta title.
- The meta title is click friendly, and looks something like this:
 - Primary Keyword | Secondary Keyword | Brand Name

CWS, Inc

www.cws.net/ ▼

Meta Description

CWS is a web development and marketing agency focused on improving your business marketing ROI. Custom applications, inbound marketing, and digital ...
[Blog](#) · [The CWS Team](#) · [Library](#) · [Our Process](#)

Make sure...

- The meta description is between 300 and 320 characters.
- There are appropriate keywords included.
- The meta description includes the business name.
- There is a call-to-action included towards the end of the description.

SEO is extremely important, but it doesn't have to be complicated. While it's definitely not a set-it-and-forget-it operation, using this guide as a process and being consistent in your practices will get you that much closer to the coveted, first page search result.