

# Optimising your website

This is an educational guide provided by Spiral.

At Spiral we optimise websites as we build them, from the ground up, resulting in a website that's easy for Google to index.

Ask us about how we can help with your success.



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Simple guidance on improving your websites  
performance

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***Getting started with Search Engine Optimisation can be difficult but with the brief guidance in this booklet you will be able to undertake simple SEO tasks in no time at all.***

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) improves the findability, usability and overall performance of your website. Good SEO creates a search friendly website which has increased visibility thus attracting more traffic/visitors from the search engines.

Search queries, the words that users type into the search box which contain terms and phrases best suited to your site carry extraordinary value. Search engine traffic can make a huge contribution to an organizations success. Targeted visitors to a website can provide publicity, revenue and exposure like no other. Investing in SEO, whether through time or finances, can have an exceptional rate of return.



## Other factors

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Google tends to prefer established websites over new websites. Measured by the age of the domain name.

Don't try and trick the search engines, play nice with them and help them to better understand your site and what you have to offer.

Take care, good luck with attracting more visitors to you website and ultimately more customers to your organisation.

there is no support for that page.

Google assigns a numeric weighting from 0-10 for each webpage on the Internet; this PageRank denotes a site's importance in the eyes of Google. The PageRank is derived from a theoretical probability value on a logarithmic scale like the Richter Scale. The PageRank of a particular page is roughly based upon the quantity of inbound links as well as the PageRank of the pages providing the links. In order to prevent manipulation, spoofing and spamdexing, Google provides no specific details about how other factors influence PageRank.

#### INBOUND LINKING TIPS

When soliciting for inbound links, ask your contacts to use your search phrase as the text for their link to your website. This will increase your perceived importance. i.e. If your search phrase for a page is "alpine strawberry plants" and a gardening site has agreed to list your website on their directory give them the link to use like this `<a href="www.alpine.co.nz/plants/astrawberry.htm">Order alpine strawberry plants online</a>`.

The relevance of the text surrounding the link is also a factor and the longer the link has been in place the higher priority Google places on it.

#### SHOULD I LINK OUT TO OTHER WEBSITES?

The web is built on links and not linking out of your website is a bit like shutting yourself in a cupboard—highly anti-social—it makes sense to link out to website that may be of use to your customers.

A long list of possibly useful links is no use to anyone and makes extra work for you in updating it. Linking to a few trusted partners is a way of demonstrating that you are part of a bigger community.

*Remember a link into your website from another website which has a higher PageRank will help boost your listing.*

## Relevance and Popularity

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Modern search engines rely on the science of information retrieval (IR) which incorporates two critical components:

**Relevance** - the degree to which the content of a document or page returned in a search matched the user's query. Search engines look at whether the search terms are found in important areas of the document - the title, the meta data, the heading tags and the body of text content. They also attempt to automatically measure the quality of the document through complex systems beyond the scope of this guide.

**Popularity** - the relative importance, measured via citation. The popularity of a given page increases with every other page that references it. Search engines measure not only who is linking to a site or page, but what they are saying about that page/site. They also have a good grasp on who is affiliated with whom, who is worthy of being trusted (links from .edu and .gov pages are generally more valuable for this reason) and contextual data about the site the page is hosted on (who links to that site, what they say about the site, etc.).

Relevance and popularity combine with hundreds of factors that can be individually measured and filtered through the search engine algorithms where they then determine scoring and ideally list the results for any search in decreasing order of importance (rankings).

#### SEO Tip

**Google is the search engine to target—it has 67% of the market based on US internet usage.**

## The 3 disciplines

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Good SEO comprises 3 disciplines:

1. The underlying technology used to create the website
2. Optimising each page using keywords appropriately (relevance)
3. A holistic approach to the web - your whole of web interaction – especially your inbound links (popularity)

### 1. The technology behind a search friendly website

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Many websites don't incorporate good SEO practices. Adding these later is harder and less effective so your website should be built to be search engine friendly right from the start using:

- ✓ Content management software (if appropriate)
- ✓ Cascading style sheets (CSS) which minimise the formatting required in the HTML
- ✓ Text based navigation. Search engines can't follow image links or clever animated links like Flash, they like their navigation plain and simple and so do many visitors
- ✓ Google Sitemaps. Sitemaps offer easier navigation, better visibility, an opportunity to inform Google about changes on your site and have those changes indexed faster
- ✓ Pages that avoid frames

## 3. A holistic approach to the web - inbound links

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### **Quality and quantity**

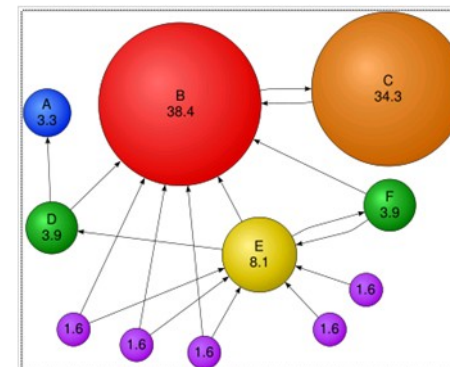
Google places a priority on websites and pages that other websites link to. An orphaned website with no inbound links is far less important to Google than one with many inbound links. Google also measures this importance by the quality of your inbound links.

### **PAGERANK**

Google describes PageRank as:

*“PageRank relies on the uniquely democratic nature of the web by using its vast link structure as an indicator of an individual page's value. In essence, Google interprets a link from page A to page B as a vote, by page A, for page B. But, Google looks at more than the sheer volume of votes, or links a page receives; it also analyzes the page that casts the vote. Votes cast by pages that are themselves “important” weigh more heavily and help to make other pages “important” . “*

In other words, a PageRank results from a "ballot" among all the other pages on the World Wide Web about how important a page is. A hyperlink to a page counts as a vote of support. The PageRank of a page is defined recursively and depends on the number and PageRank metric of all pages that link to it ("incoming links"). A page that is linked to by many pages with high PageRank receives a high rank itself. If there are no links to a web page



## CONTENT IS KING!

Relevant, unique content will give you a great Google listing. Ask yourself :

- \* does my content accurately reflect our organisation?
- \* Is my content on topic for this page?
- \* Is my content unique?

Take the time to write you own content or hire someone to write it for you. Use your search phrase in he first paragraph and the last paragraph of your page.

Have someone proof read for you and read your text out loud to hear if it makes sense. Check for spelling mistakes and grammatical errors, both will are the faster way to depreciate the professional appearance of your page.

### 3 Secrets to improving your Google ranking

1. Select appropriate phrases that your target market are actually using.
2. Place your search phrase in your <title> and <heading> tags.
3. Place your search phrase in the first sentence or paragraph of your page text.

## 2. Optimising each page using keywords

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Keywords are words or phrases that people type in to search engines to find your site. Keywords also tell search engine bots what words on your site are most important.

### Choosing the right keywords

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Choosing keywords and phrases is a central part of using content to help your search engine rankings. Begin by asking what your customers and potential customers are actually searching for on the internet.

Think about the kind of language they may use, what search phrases they are likely to type into Google. Make sure your website also shares that vocabulary.

Brainstorm possibilities then select multiple keywords and construct a phrase for that page. Include in your possibilities:

- \* geographical search words i.e. wellington electrician
- \* misspellings i.e. Conferances, confirences, confrences
- \* synonyms i.e. motorbike hire and motorcycle hire
- \* english/american words & spelling i.e. diaper vs nappy, color vs colour

There are online tools you can use to help in determining your keywords plus you can use a thesaurus or dictionary and ask even ask your customers. Some of the free online tools you can use are:

- \* Google's Keyword Tool - generates potential keywords for your website
- \* Google Suggest - as you type, Google will offer suggestions
- \* Good Keywords - a free Windows software download for finding the perfect set of keywords for your web pages

More is not always better and just 3 key phrases is a good starting point. Match each key phrase to a page on your website.

## Using your keywords in the right places

Starting at the top, use your keywords in your meta tags. Meta tags are a collection of information placed in the header of a web page providing information that is not visible to browsers. Your title and description tags are visible on the Google search results.

[mailRoom - Email marketing you can measure](#) ← Title tag shows here  
mailRoom is an **email marketing** and promotional tool that allows organisations to manage their own **email marketing**, **email** newsletters and **email** promotions. ← Description shows here  
[www.mailroom.co.nz/ - 17k - Cached - Similar pages - Note this](#)

Your key phrase should be used in the following places to improve your Google rankings:

### TITLE TAG

The title tag looks like this <TITLE></TITLE>. You will place the title of your page within these tags. This tells the search engines what to name your page and how it should appear in their results. You can also add in a keyword here.

<title>keyphrase here</title>.

*Nautilus Tip:* For those using our content management software (Nautilus) place your key phrase in the "Page Title" box on the admin page.

Page Title	Email marketing you can measure
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### DESCRIPTION TAG

The description tag is used by almost all search engines to explain briefly what your page is about. The description tag looks like this <META name="description" content="mailroom is an email etc">. You will place your description between the content quotes. You can put keywords in here too.

<META name="description" content="Description of your website or this page and include keywords.">

### KEYWORDS TAG

The keywords tag is ignored by Google but used by some of the other search engines. Put your keywords directly into this tag and separate each phrase with a comma.

### HEADINGS

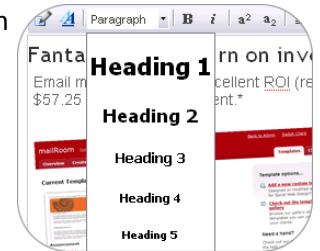
Your headings are regarded as important by Google. Putting your key phrases into header tags tell Google they are important

<h3> This text is important.</h3>

<h2> This text is very important. </h2>

<h1> This text is most important. </h1>

*Nautilus Tip:* Making your text into a heading with the Nautilus drop down adds an HTML heading tag to your text which is recognised by Google. Making text look like a heading without using the drop down has no effect on your Google rankings.



### WRAP YOUR KEYWORD TEXT IN BOLD TAGS

Bold tags look like this <b>KEYWORDS</b>. The result looks like this **KEYWORDS**.

If you are using Nautilus simply highlight your text and click on the "B" icon.

