

How Search Engines Rank Web Pages

1. Many external incoming links from pages which themselves have a high ranking.
2. As exact match as possible for the query phrase:
 - a. Primarily in the title.
 - b. Also in text in links pointing to this page.
 - c. Also elswewhere in readable text in the body, repeated 2-3 times, if the phrase is repeated more than 2-3 times, there is a risk that the search engine will regard it as spamming.
 - d. Some engines also look at meta-description and meta-keywords.
3. Manual classification for the most common search phrases.

Search Engine Optimization

Method	Why it works	How we used it
High quality web site	Search engine rank web sites	Our main goal
Get links from external sites	Search engines count links to web site.	We asked a number of high quality sites to set links to our site.
Submission to search engines and portals	Users come from them, and search engines rank by them.	Yahoo, The Open Directory, the Sunet Directory.
Search phrase optimization	Search engines ranks by count of phrases, especially in titles.	We found popular search phrases for 78 of our best FAQs, and optimized them.
Relevant internal linking	More relevant key words refer to a page.	Yes, a lot.

Dubious/Unethical Methods of SEO

Method	Why it works	How we used it
Doorway pages	More links, links with different texts	A little
Cloaking	Giving search engine spiders different pages	No
White text on white background	Does not work, search engines have learned to recognize it	No
Lots of lots of keywords	Does not work, search engines have learned to recognize it	A little
Link farms	Does not work, because farms get low ranking	No

Example of phrase optimization

FAQ identifier	child-trauma-symptoms
Original title	How children react to trauma
Optimized title 1	Effects of child abuse
Optimized title 2	How children react to trauma and effects of child abuse

No.	Keyword	KEI Analysis	Count	24Hrs	Competing
1	"effects of child abuse"	51.124	187	70	684
2	"child abuse statistics"	43.210	402	150	3740
3	"child sexual abuse trauma symptoms"	16.000	4	1	0
4	"signs of child molestation"	9.846	16	6	26
5	"articles on child abuse"	9.074	82	31	741
6	"symptoms of child molestation"	6.750	18	7	48
7	"child molestation law"	4.500	15	6	50
8	"information on child abuse"	3.531	161	60	7340
9	"child abuse laws"	3.522	127	47	4580
10	"child molestation statistics"	3.411	18	7	95
11	"child molestation"	0.671	213	80	67600
12	"child abuse prevention"	0.564	241	90	103000
13	"child abuse cases"	0.445	112	42	28200
14	"child sexual abuse"	0.431	373	139	323000
15	"child abuse and neglect"	0.109	168	63	258000
16	"molestation"	0.058	121	45	252000
17	"child trauma"	0.002	3	1	5900

How people find answers in our site	Approximate percentage
Browsing our static pages	60 %
Using Google and other search engines fromewhere outside our site to get directly to one of our answers	25 %
Browsing our forums and ask-the-expert areas	8 %
Using our own natural-language question-answering system	5 %
Other methods	2 %

Note: The reason for this is of course that many more people use Google than our natural-language question-answering system as a web search tool, because they do not know of our system and do not have bookmarks to it. Probably also that people do not understand how good our natural-language question-answering system is.

Ethics of Search Engine Optimization

White text on white background

Obviously unethical

Cloaking = showing special page to search engines

Dangerous, ethics depend on how you use it

Doorway pages = special pages to attract visitors

Depends how you use it, we have one or two such pages

By Jacob Palme,
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