

SEO ADVANCED CHECKLIST (TECHNICAL EDITION v1.0)



Author:
Jon P Rognerud / Microsaw, LLC
<http://www.microsaw.com/>

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Author's Note:

This is a technical guide for the SEO programmer.

Learn how to optimally organize your code, architect layouts and navigation for optimum usability and ultimately creating "search engine food". The SEO advanced checklist is a must-do for all your SEO work.

At the end of the guide, look for bonus tips and contact information if/when you need it.

Thanks for your time, have fun.

- Jon Rognerud

Tip: Navigation is seen as the first content.

The search engines usually look at many page attributes, i.e., title, description, and at least the first 200 words of your content after your opening <body> tag.

We call this the 'table trick'. Basically, the search engines read the table layouts in a specific manner. They will find the first <TR> table row and start to read each <TD> table data column. Search engines need to find out if your content is relevant within 200 words of your body text. So, if it's wasted on "bad" table layouts, you'll lose ranking possibilities. Plus, the "bad" data might just be navigational elements, and you'll never be properly read by Search Engines.

You will need to design and code like this:



(Bad)

(Correct)

Figure 1: How search engines read table layouts. (Picture on the right shows "optimized" version)

FRAMES:

Non-frames sites are recommended for search engines. Also consider for printing and bookmarking, it's not optimum either. If you must use them, we recommend frames usage only for Intranets, ie. running inside the company firewalls, search engines will (and should not) find you there. If you are using frames and include content from other sites on your website, you don't get any credit for content. If used outside your system, you can at least add this code to prevent hi-jacking:

```
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
function chgPage() {
if (self.parent.frames.length == 0)
self.parent.location="http://urdomain/index.htm";
}
chgPage();
</SCRIPT>
```

Keyword Density:

Making sure that the TITLE, META tags, ALT tags are in check are important, but content rules - and having the right distribution of keywords, phrases - essentially the keyword density throughout your BODY context is paramount.

We use tools that check keyword density on your pages, and interestingly enough - it follows an "hour-glass" approach: more keywords in the beginning of the body text, less sprinkled through-out in the middle, and more again at the end. However, it should ultimately be a natural content flow, and not spam at any level. Think natural, write natural and the content/ranking will follow.

Go to <http://www.microsaw.com/microsaw-about.htm>
(scroll down to see tools)

Also, you should use tools to gauge your competition link popularity. How many sites are linking to the competition? Who is linking to the competition - and why?

In summary - you have to look at areas that search engines analyze. They are: title tags, image/alt tags, input tags, link structure, directory structure, keyword density, relevancy, prominence, proximity, total words on a page, word repetitions, total words in specific areas, Java Script comment lines,

domain name, directory name, filenames, etc. It can get quite complex to keep track.

SEO - Advanced Checklist:

1. www or not - try to use www in the domain, but if you don't - stick to one of them
2. Sub directories - try to not go too deep in your subdirectory structure. It's better if you are closer to the "top"
3. Directories and filenames should contain keywords. For example, if it's about cowboy boots, filename might be 'cowboy-boots.htm'
4. Static vs dynamic. Be careful about dynamic URLs, Google and others do not like them, and will not be able to keep track, and you'll not get a vote for that content
5. Page speed/load. Make sure your pages are quick to load. Spiders do not want to crash your server, and if it doesn't load quickly, it will get off your site quickly, and not get all your content
6. Sitemap. Ensure a good sitemap, Google even has a sitemap (XML) generator you can use
7. Navigation - consistent, natural navigation, reflecting the table layouts described above is key to success, both from simplicity/user perspective to the search engines.
8. Title. Every page should have a title associated with it. It should have all the keywords associated with the page, and contain about 5-8 keywords.
9. Description meta tag. Not used as much as before, but search engines still count these. Make sure you have them tied into your title, and form more natural (short) sentences.
10. Keyword meta tag. Listing of keywords that appear in the page. This feature was used a lot in the old days, but still counts.
11. Heading tags (h2,h2). Make sure you list these in order, one after the other, and use them in concert with CSS to format them into your page. Don't always follow a h2 after an h1. It's good to place some text or graphic in-between.
12. Title href tag. This improves usability for the site, but some of the search engines do not count these. Make sure to not overuse, you could get penalized. (example: `this link with keywords`)

13. Alt tag. This is used in IMAGE SRC tags. It's a description of the image/graphic, and should be used to relate to content on the page(s).
14. Anchor text. When using linking (href), make sure to use your keywords. This includes standard links, but also your navigation. This is also something you should use in the "link to us" page. It's also important for interior pages. Link to appropriate subpages from a related subpage.
15. Content. Make sure to have fresh content, update often. This is the real deal for the search engines. For CNN for example, the search engines may revisit every 15 minutes!
16. Keyword density. Make sure it's sprinkled throughout your page. See above for more detailed information.
17. robots.txt. Use this, but be careful. It's very powerful. One trick: make sure any 404 page doesn't get spidered! Exclude the directories you don't want included. Read more [here](#).
18. Html validation. Do not launch a page until you have run an HTML validator. Firefox has a really nice extension you can use.
19. More tools. Use tools to check link popularity, analyze traffic and logs often
20. No tricks, spamming, frames and no broken links! Use 'white hat strategies' when implementing, no cloaking, hidden text, etc.

BONUS TIPS:

21. 301 redirects - very important when pages or sites are being moved. Different for Apache than IIS.
22. Webserver and service provider. Make sure you don't have an IP# that is block-listed. Also, get a reliable hosting partner and corresponding SLA.
23. Bold. Use vs. in your HTML code. has been overused, and put out by many HTML generators.
24. Themes. Most major search engines focus on themes - one theme at a time. If your site is about white marbles, talk about that. If you want to introduce black marbles, then do so carefully. If there are more black marbles, create a whole new site structure about black marbles.
25. Clicks. You lose 50% of each visitor for each click they make. Try to have most all pages a few clicks away from the homepage.
26. Use stemming on your pages. Use singular, plural, past forms, etc.
27. Keyword proximity. Closer words, appear to rank better, so apply it as a rule where you can.
28. Create unique content!

LAST ONE:

Never say "Welcome to my site" or "Under Construction" - EVER!

When all is said and done - you MUST convert visitors into sales and use your backend processes, autoresponders, etc. There are many programs available for this, we can show you how - easy.

More questions?

Email us at support@microsaw.com - and we'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Feel free to call us directly at 800 570-5640, 24x7.

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