

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) - General Information

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About Google Results

When a user enters a search word or term into Google, it firstly discards all web pages that don't contain the word(s) in any of the following:

1. **THE URL (WEB ADDRESS)**
2. **THE PAGE TITLE**
3. **ON THE ACTUAL PAGE CONTENT ITSELF**
4. **IN THE META TAGS***

The remaining results are sorted by the frequency, or focus, of the search word(s) entered, with a weighted order of importance based on the above list 1-4. Lastly, **these results are then re-shuffled** based on their **PAGE RANKING**.

About Page Titles

THE PAGE TITLE is the text that appears at the very top of the browser window, over the navigation buttons, and it also appears in various other places like bookmarks, history lists etc. This should be short and clear, but ideally should also contain one or two or your target keywords. eg. Mine says "Fuel. Web Solutions & Design Consultancy". This should also change on different pages to be relevant to that page content and to hit other target keywords.

The page titles should be less than 100 characters (including spaces) but always ensuring that the most important keywords are within the first 67 characters.

About Meta Tags

META KEYWORDS are a list of the search terms and words that you wish to target. These are the words and terms that you wish to display as a result for. The more concise you can make this list the better, as it will mean you are more focused on those words rather than dispersing your focus between dozens of words. Keep it less than 256 characters in length, listed in order of importance, and avoid repeating keywords more than 3 times.

THE META DESCRIPTION is the text that will sometimes appear with the search result. This should be two sentences in plain English (but should also contain some of your most important keywords).

THE META TITLE is sometimes used as the main link text for your site that appears in the search results, although in most cases the Page Title will be used here. The Meta title on each page can simply be exactly the same as your targeted Page Title.

** Update: Google have stated that they no longer include META tags in their algorithms, however the other leading Search Engines (Bing, Yahoo!) have not stated this so we would still advise using them.*

About Page Ranking

Google awards every website a 'page ranking' which is basically a measure of your incoming links, and their importance.

Google will place a high ranking site over a low ranking one when ordering their search results, so the higher you can get this ranking (by getting incoming links) the better.

Incoming links are simply any website's that link to you. The links to your website should use relevant wording or contain one of your keywords.

The 'importance' of these incoming links is judged by their own page rank, so every website that links to your site will help to increase your page ranking, and the higher their ranking the better.

SEO 'Best Practice' advice

Built using XHTML & CSS

Ideally, a search engine friendly website should be coded to the latest web standards in xhtml and uses CSS (cascading style sheets) for layout and styling control, resulting in very clean and accessible code for both search engines and screen readers.

Page Titles

All pages should feature relevant page titles on every page, and ideally these should also contain different keywords so as to target different search terms on each page.

Page Content

Most importantly, ensure that your target keywords are included in the textual content of your website, and that all content is written in plain English (random lists of words will be penalised)

H1 & H2 tags

All headings and section titles on the website should use the H1 and H2 html tags (which are apparently given more importance to search engines than regular text)

META tags

Include META tags (non-displaying) with your chosen Title, Description, and Keywords

Incoming Links (Increasing Page rank)

Perhaps most importantly, you should try to get as many incoming links as possible, by requesting link exchanges with other businesses as well as registering with as many online business directories and listings as possible.

You should submit your website with the major search engines to start: Google, Yahoo & MSN (these feed most other results) as well as with online directories such as DMOZ.ORG (Open Directory Project) and any relevant Irish directories or site's relevant to your business, including Blogs that might cover relevant topics.

Alternative ways to increase website traffic

While it is not possible to ensure your placement in search engine results through monetary means (you cannot buy your way to the top), there are a number of other ways that can increase web traffic:

1. Traditional marketing & advertising

Such as Print, Radio and TV advertising.

2. Online advertising

Paid 'banner adverts' on popular, relevant, websites.

3. Google Adwords campaign (pay per click)

These are 'Sponsored links' that appear at the top and the box adverts that appear on the right of Google result pages. You only pay when people click on your ad and you set your own budget so you can't get overcharged. You write your own advert text and choose keywords that will trigger the ads.

AD TEXT: Headline (Max 25 characters); Description Line 1 & line 2 (Max 35 characters each) + Web address (URL)

KEYWORDS: The search words triggering when the above advert should appear - the fewer the keywords, the more 'targeted' it will be.

Visit www.google.ie/adwords for more info.