



SEARCH ENGINE CONTENT OPTIMIZATION

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Everyone is searching for something. Search engines attempt to match the billions of requests every day with the most suitable content to meet each of these requests. Somewhere there's a business or individual who has the best solution to your requirements.

And somewhere is a business or individual searching for something you may be able to provide. But when you're online, having the best solution is as good as having no solution, if you can't be found. How search engines view your content will determine where your solutions show up.

With most search queries returning millions of hits, it's easy even for good content to drown in the swath of information. To rank in search results is to prepare all your content for accuracy. When a user types in a query, the user expects to get the best match.

Search engines have evolved over the last twenty years to become incredibly accurate in placing the most relevant content high on page one. This sweet spot is reserved for content that's highly useful. This guide will help you make content highly useful for humans and for bots.

1

Create your content for people. Search robots will congregate wherever people gather to share content.

4

Pick the right social media channels to help your content get found, and not because that social platform is popular.

2

Teach search engines to recognise you by appropriately labelling, describing, and tagging your content.

5

Build semantically relevant content that clarifies your content's meaning to both human beings and search robots.

3

Leverage useful syntax that allows a search bot to get a more meaningful snapshot of your content.

6

Search is evolving every day and so are the resources and content platforms that are tracking this evolution.

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CREATE CONTENT FOR PEOPLE



Build a robust (not robot) presence online to engage with people. That includes user-relatable content, rich media experiences, and shareable social information. You'll find the bots wherever people gather.

A robust online presence is much more than talking to robots. This is what search engine providers want for the web — to rank content that is getting engagement from real human beings.

Search robots follow people. Where crowds of people gather to interact, so too will bots.

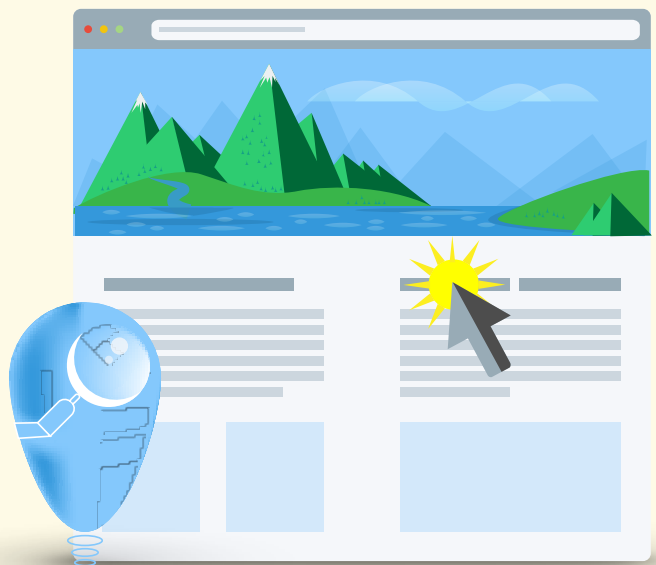
In other words, start a conversation that invites people to become active participants in a dialogue, instead of passive recipients of a monologue. Online gaming is a great example of massively popular social activities.



What started as a computer-vs-human experiment in the late 1970s and 1980s, has evolved into a powerful humans-vs-humans phenomena that stimulates communities, interactions, and transactions well beyond the boundaries of the game-play itself.

Gaming harnesses the inherent ability of the web to create online communities comprising human beings. Approach search as an online gaming engineer would.

By doing so you're creating a community of people who inherently gravitate towards richer humanised experiences that include agreements, arguments, criticism, and collaboration.



Create content to create community. If your content inspires natural human urges, you win.

TEACH SEARCH ENGINES TO RECOGNIZE YOU

Search engines are smart by robot standards. But they still need you to guide them when reading your content. Machines don't learn the way people do, as yet. Humans learn instructions, then subsequently we adapt to them through context and inferred meaning.

Machines, on the other hand, need everything spelled out for them, every single time, as if it were the first time. That's how we teach our tech to understand us. Search engines are programs. Teach them to learn in the way they're designed to learn.

Each piece of content on your website must have a markup that robots fully understand.



< How robots see websites

How humans see websites >

The disparity between how we see websites and the way robots do is closing, but robots still need precise markups to index our content, and understand our meanings.



PAGES / CHAPTERS / TITLES / HEADINGS / INDEX /
AUTHOR / STRUCTURE / VERSIONS / SYNTAX /
CONTENT / IMAGES / CAPTIONS / FOOTNOTES

Looking at the terms on the left, it is easy to see how a website and a search engine are a lot like a book and its reader. Every website requires a structure that's quick to reference, easy to look up, fast to reach, and intuitively laid out to aid natural reading flows and habits.

Instead of doing this...

Web URLs

domain.name/postid3?/%20printing%ways.asp

Image Descriptions

img3.jpg

Keyword Intelligence

print + print + print + print + print

URL Separators

domain.name/digital_printing_techniques

Site Description

Printing Supplies

Do this.

Web URLs

domain.name/20-ways-to-print-san-francisco

Image Descriptions

Printing-Stationery-Store-San-Francisco

Keyword Intelligence

print + digital + offset + output + paper

URL Separators

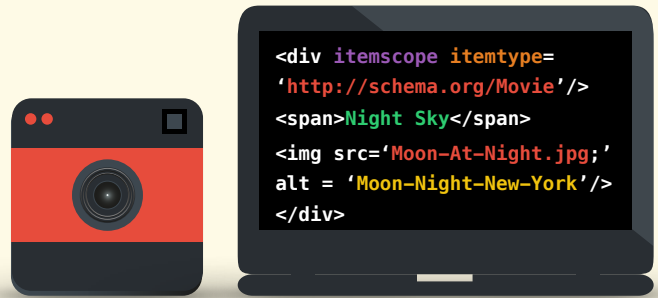
domain.name/digital-printing-techniques

Site Description

Printing and Stationery Supplies San Francisco

LEVERAGE USEFUL SYNTAX

Schema.org is a collection of vocabularies that are shared by Google, Bing, Yahoo! and Yandex. The markups allow webmasters to clarify content meanings for all these search engines. Because search engines cannot infer from context like humans can, these markups provide an additional layer of meaning for search engines to display relevant results. The complete markup list is on [Schema.org](https://schema.org)



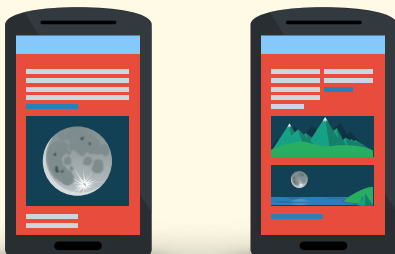
With [Schema.org](https://schema.org) search engines can tell whether 'Avatar' refers to a profile, or to the movie.



A few of the Schema.org markups to help bots understand your content:

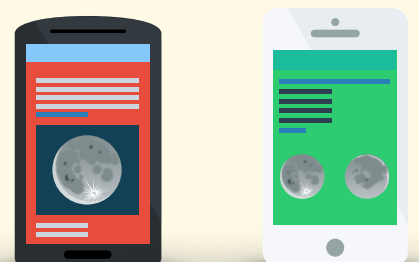
ANSWER / ARTICLE / NEWSARTICLE / RADIOCLIP / TVCLIP / TVEPISODE /
BOOK / MAP / EMAILMESSAGE / TVSERIES / SALESEVENT /
SOCIALEVENT / SPORTSEVENT / DAY / WEEK / MONTH / MOVIE /
ADDRESS / FLIGHT / SEAT / SERVICE / JOBPOSTING /
GEOCOORDINATES / POSTALADDRESS / TAXI

Hello WordPress. Take advantage of the world's (arguably) best content management system. WordPress not only has a rock-solid core to serve up content, but is maintained by a close community that makes some of the best plugins and themes for search engine optimisation. Most are free.

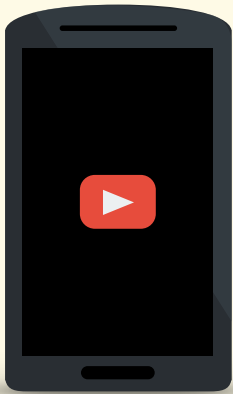


Internal linkage helps search engines better understand your website's structure and the type of content it specialises in. Use WordPress's great internal links-building plugins. There are quite a few options — some free and some paid. But don't assume the paid ones are always better.

External linkage takes readers out of your domain into another website but the content thread continues. Because search engines rank you for the nature of your content, they like to see your pages connecting to similar articles, images and videos across the web. Build an ecosystem for your content topics that go beyond your own website.



PICK THE RIGHT SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS



Social media is all about content and is nothing without it. Because content is so varied, different social media channels are built specifically for varied types of content. Pick the social platform that is purpose-built to share your content type.

Avoid picking based on what's popular and choose what will work. There are certain sites and pages on Facebook, which Google has no access to and which does not appear in search results.

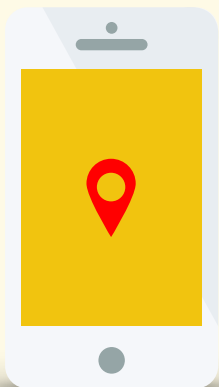
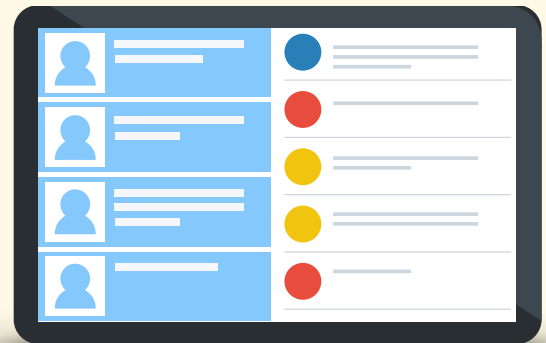
Likewise, there are specific countries, demographics, and web cultures that favour certain social media platforms over others. Facebook is huge, but in China your content needs Weibo. For Russia, you'll definitely want a VK presence.

Like an investment basket, spread your content across social media channels — a tweet to invite viewers to watch your video on YouTube is better than just dropping everything onto just one social platform.

Pick a social media platform that fits into your content plan, and not the other way round.

Google dominates many parts of the search landscape so experiment with Google's social media platforms. This includes Google +, YouTube, and Google Maps. Each platform deals with specific content types, and each is great at integrating with Google Search.

Don't overlook writing a product review on Amazon, posting a question on Quora, and tagging all of your website's images. All of these appear in search results and all of these will increase your online prominence.



Mobile is already the preferred medium through which we consume all our digital content. Google is considering placing an icon next to its search results that display whether or not a website is mobile friendly, and consequently ranks mobile-friendly sites higher. It's not surprising when more than half the world's internet users will access the web through mobile-enabled devices. This means your site needs to be mobile-ready. And that means your content needs to be mobile-ready for the next wave of user and search bots.

Smaller screens means fewer but much more targeted content elements. This is the realm of quality, not quantity. Don't use seven words when four will do. Tag every image and video with clear descriptions. Site hierarchy is important because mobile content flows tend to cascade. Have more pages with less content on each page — less scrolling, more reading means more time on your site, which is what bots want.

Start prioritising mobile content structures. Desktops can handle both layouts quite easily.

Do we even need a website for search purposes? Everyone seems to be on social media platforms and there is a growing consensus that companies should instead build a Facebook page and a YouTube channel.

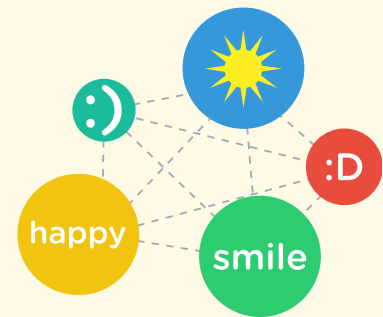
The fact is websites still form the cornerstone of online content. The question isn't if a website is required, but how a website affects your search goals. If a website does a better job than social media, in meeting these goals, then get one.



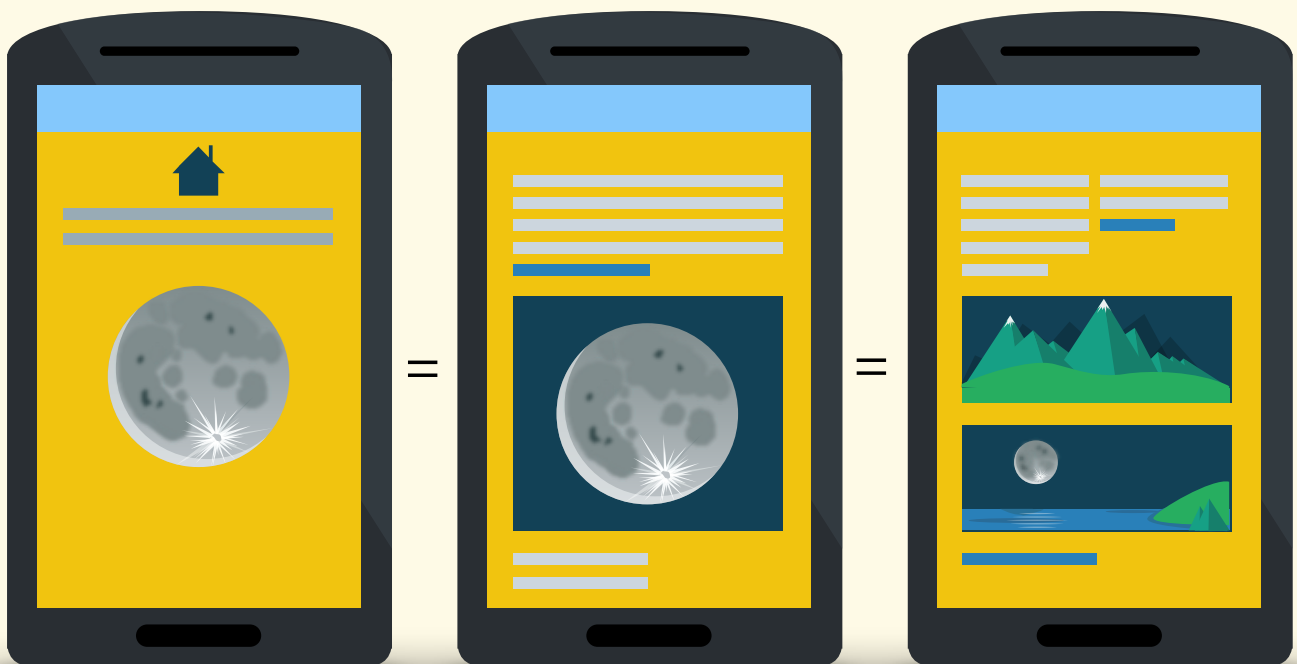
BUILD SEMANTICALLY RELEVANT CONTENT

Semantics is about how we make sense of words and infer meaning. That's also how search engines look at content. A semantically relevant website uses plenty of keywords and also includes their synonyms and related phrases within the context of that site.

A semantically relevant website on happiness will include words like glad, joyful, merry, smile, excited, and cloud nine. Semantics clarifies the meaning of your content to people and to robots. Conversely, poor or semantically null content is often a killer of website rankings.



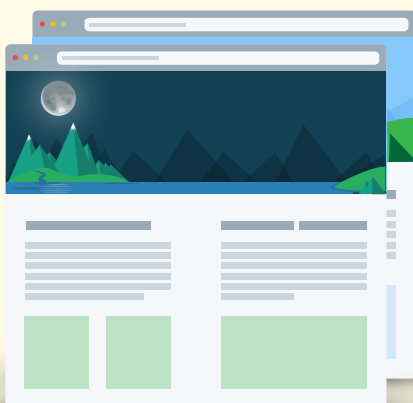
Semantically relevant content reinforces what your website is about to people and to robots.



Cornerstone content is the foundation of semantics. Most websites will build a home page and consider this the front door to the rest of the house. When you organise a website for cornerstone content, you're optimising every page on that website for a specific topic.

This means the backdoor, attic windows, fireplace, and cat hatch are all equally important entry points to your house. So design every page as a landing page. Each page deals with a specific topic of your content. All other pages point to that page for that specific topic.

Every page of your website carries equal importance as the home page.



435 seems to be a magic number when balancing keyword density with semantics with interest with expectations with screen size. If each page has about 435 words ($\pm 10\%$) you'll have sufficient content to be taken seriously by humans and by search bots. Remember, quality still counts over quantity.

RESOURCES

[SCHEMA.ORG](https://schema.org)

[YOAST.COM](https://yoast.com)

[WORDPRESS.COM](https://wordpress.com)

[QC.SG/COPYWRITING-INSIGHTS](https://qc.sg/copywriting-insights)

[QUANTICO.SG/COPYWRITING-INSIGHTS](https://quantico.sg/copywriting-insights)

[FACEBOOK.COM/QUANTICOSG](https://facebook.com/quanticosg)

[HELLO@QUANTICO.COM.SG](mailto:hello@quantico.com.sg)

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