

SEO guide for PlanningTank Team

What is SEO?

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization. This is a process of making your content (article, image, quiz, pictures, portfolio, and quiz) search engine friendly. SEO is very hyped terms & no one exactly knows how search engines works. To put it better words, no one exactly knows which all parameters (200+) search engines uses and how much importance is given to a particular parameter.

Where & when SEO actually happens?

It happens on the website and outside the website. Basically it's a long & continuous process something similar to planning. With uncountable parameters which keep on changing. Some of the key factors are:

1. Website age
2. **Quality & quantity, word count of articles**
3. Author's credibility & reputation
4. Number of authors
5. Website credibility
6. Links to that particular website from other "reputed" websites (preferably covering similar topics"
7. **Social followers & activity**
8. On page & Off Page optimisation
9. Tech stuff
10. Existing competition for a keyword or term

What you need to focus on?

"Quality & quantity, word count of articles" and if possible "social shares" 😊

So how to go about SEO stuff on Article?

First – The purpose of making content (any type) is to provide it to user. So the top most priority is to make it user friendly and then search engine friendly.

Everything Else – There are few guidelines & "best practices" which are time to time provided by search engines giants themselves to ease their own work. In return it helps users to get their content found on internet and reach more audience/ clients/ customers.

Doing Research

Do a thorough research, while searching on internet use www.google.com instead of your country specific google search such as www.google.in or www.google.uk etc. By default on opening google.com you will be redirected to your country specific google home page, watch for “use google.com” at right bottom of google homepage.

Logout from your google account while doing research as the search results are heavily influenced by your location, search history, interests & Google+ circles! So, to get unbiased result kindly make sure that you logout from your google account before performing any search.

Once you decide the topic on which you wish to write, look for the “titles” which came up while you were searching on that topic. You will find some words repeating in most of the titles. Those are called “**keywords**”. Those results will rank for different queries with that “**Keyword**”

Note 1: Not every article has keyword and not everything can be optimized for search engines. Extent of optimization depends on content type. Some articles are opinions, blog posts and simply article! People enjoy reading them that’s the reason “humans” i.e. your readers should be made priority.

Note 2: “keyword” need not be a single word! It can be 2 words, phrases or even a short sentence! In most of the cases it will be 1-4 words. Keywords with 4-5 words are referred to as “long tail” keywords and it is relatively easier to rank for those. This is so because of simple logic, the keyword will be about something specific. A single word is broad! Another simple thing is to focus on the particular “words” being used.

Simple Ex. To understand the number of words & ease of ranking:

1. “Planning” - 1 Word (very very broad meaning)
2. “Urban Planning” – 2 words (slightly specific as compared to “Planning”)
3. “Urban Planning Colleges” – 3 Words (even more specific)
4. “Urban Planning Colleges in India” – 4 words (something particular to country)
5. “Urban Planning Colleges in Amsterdam” – 4 words (still more specific than the above example, use of different word i.e. city instead of country)
6. “M.Plan colleges in Amsterdam” – 4 words yet more specific than above example.

Apart from this, competition & search volume has direct impact on ranking of a website/article. A keyword being searched 1 million times will be difficult to rank for as it would have already been covered by many reputed websites and will have lot of competition. We do not discourage anyone from covering those topics but explain this from “SEO” point of view (this is something which must be known). Something with

few hundred of searches will be relatively easy to rank and not many people are willing to cover that topic because of no or negligible gains by writing on them. So less competition.

Good practice – Start with long tail keywords and slowly move to broader terms.

So before writing the article decide if that article needs “keyword” and the whole optimization stuff.

If NO, then simply try to write as per these guidelines:

1. Choose a good topic which will get users interested
2. Write a catchy title!
3. Try to complete your point in single article while keeping it 800-1000 words. (Longer articles usually gets boring & shorter articles does not satisfy the readers)
4. Use 3-4 sub headings to make it easy to read and understand. Form paragraphs of 6-8 lines.
5. Add relevant images which keeps user’s interest and make them read complete article till end. Especially about the awesome author who wrote the fantastic piece of content!
6. Use a shocking/ though provoking yet relevant image which will be used as “featured image” for that article. (For ex. the images shown by Facebook for any article are “featured image”) Shocking / interesting images (which are at times inappropriate) gets more people to click on them.
7. **Share your awesomeness anywhere & everywhere!**

If yes, then some serious work needs to be done!

Think about the topic. To what extent you wish to cover it. If it has already been covered widely then will your article add to the existing value to that topic? If you are simply explaining that in your words without substantial improvement then consider writing it as a normal article without focusing on SEO and with no intention of it being ranked when searched for a particular keyword. (A great article might rank but it depends on its quality & how search engines takes it!)

Once you decide that your article is worth ranking & should rank, look for a keyword!

1. Do a “keyword research”. It includes keyword volume, competition & other relevant/similar keywords. (try this <https://moz.com/explorer> , 5 searches/ day)
2. Finalize the “keyword” on which you wish to write.
3. Come up with a title
 - a. In case of long tail keywords your keyword alone might form a complete title. For. Ex. Searching for “Urban Planning Colleges in India” ranks our website on 1st page of google. The title for the page being ranked is same as keyword itself. (approx. 60 characters)
 - b. If keyword is relatively small, use it in the title.
 - c. Make an interesting but sensible title using the keyword. For example “**Central Place Theory**” is the keyword for our article <https://planningtank.com/settlement->

[geography/central-place-theory-walter-christaller](#) . Title for this article is **“Central Place Theory (CPT) by Walter Christaller (1933)”**

- d. In above example **“Central Place Theory”** is used in article title along with other relevant information. Including **“Walter Christaller”** and **“1933”** makes it more sensible. For a user it will be an assurance that the article is actually about **“Central Place Theory”** which was given by Christaller and not something related or from some other field.
- e. Check our other existing articles and this will start making more sense. After that check almost any article when you search, things will be more clear 😊
4. After deciding the keyword & title start writing the content with following points in mind
 - a. It should add quality to existing information over the internet, this is a good enough reason of why anything should at all be written again on that topic, isn't it?!
 - b. Start with general introduction (4-7 lines) or a sub heading. Ex. Taking the previous example of central place theory, **“Introduction to Christaller's Central Place Theory (CPT) – a locational theory”** we started with a sub heading In which we used our keyword **“central place theory”** and added bit more information **“a locational theory”**.
 - c. These starting line/sub heading should provide user with some idea of what to expect in the article and what all will be covered.
 - d. Give some relevant sub headings & have paragraphs with 7-8 lines.
5. Make sure to use the **“keyword”** in some of the sub heading and within paragraphs. Again taking previous example you will notice that **“Central Place Theory”** has been used several time. As a thumb rule you can use keyword once for every 80-100 words. How many times a keyword has been used is referred to **“keyword density”** in field of SEO. There are few softwares which calculates it and helps you prevent over using or under using the keyword. Overusing the keyword is referred as **“keyword stuffing”** which should be avoided.
6. Give a quick read to the complete article from reader's perspective. Use of keyword should look natural and not something out of context. Ideally keyword should blend with your article and should not draw unwanted attention once the reader has reached your article thought search engine/ social media/ or by any source. So this should be kept in mind while writing & is the responsibility of writer. Reader should be given priority over search engine.
7. Have 2-3 relevant images. (Preferably in landscape mode as portrait mode images becomes annoying when reading the article over mobile phones). A box shape looks ugly on desktop but fits well on mobile screen. So try to use more of landscape pics as the gets resized to fit mobile screens and looks good on desktop too!
8. Give link to existing content on website. (This is called as **“inter linking”**). Best example of interlinking is Wikipedia. They have almost everything linked for every word. Usually websites are not as large as Wikipedia so have 3-6 links to existing content on website is good. This can be avoided and many times done using softwares. Interlinking manually is very tiring and time consuming process but helps in SEO!
9. Give references if required at end of article.
- 10. Share your awesomeness anywhere & everywhere!**

Just to conclude

Everything explained above is relevant for a person while writing an article for any website. This is a basic understanding of how search engine work. This is good enough to write good articles with chances of getting ranked on first or second page of search engines (depending on competition!) You can always dive deeper and learn about almost infinite parameters and the 10 key factors which we mentioned in the starting!

Just to satisfy your curiosity (we believe you would find this interesting and be keen on understanding the beauty of how search engines work) we would recommend Google's SEO guide (<https://static.googleusercontent.com/media/www.google.com/en//webmasters/docs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf>). Having read everything we wrote above will make it easier to go to some greater details (including technical stuff!). This guide is nicely drafted by google for anyone who wish to learn about SEO.

What next??

Feel free to ask us anything and we will try to answer that satisfactorily. (We are not SEO wizards but will definitely share what we know from our experience). If this seems to be tedious, boring and unworthy of your time then just focus on writing a good article as a normal person without thinking much about the SEO & we will do the rest as and when required 😊