SEO CHECKLIST

82 GOOGLE RANKING FACTORS TO RANK #1 (2020)

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INTRODUCTION

The core of what Google is about is bringing information to people. And AI is probably the most important thing humanity has ever worked on.

~ Sundar Pichai

The Blue Oceans Group published the most comprehensive guide on Google ranking factor and SEO checklist on the web search engine.

Any blogger, YouTuber and marketer will find the complete **SEO checklist** useful that is working in 2020 after Google's algorithm updates. You will know why SEO is important for your online success.

Now, we will study the critical Google ranking factors and SEO checklist that can help your site to rank on #1 on Google.

SEO is a long race, not a sprint. If you are trying to grow your qualified search traffic, you have to combine your content marketing with your SEO efforts.

~Neil Patel, Co-Founder of Crazy Egg, Hello Bar, and KISSmetrics

CHAPTER 1:

SEO Basic Background Checklist

1. Set up Google Search Console:

Install this program on your site as it improves the efficiency of indexing your website and webpages. The Google Search console hooks your ranking by giving you the specific data about index status, crawl status, HTML improvements, structured data, sitemap submission, Site errors, links to your site, search analytics and more.

2. Install Bing Webmaster Tools

If someone talks about ranking, traffic or SEO, then Google is the most common search engine that comes in our mind.

If you also think about it, it's not wrong! It drives enormous traffic than any other search engine on the web. Most of the marketers even do not think and use any other search engine beyond Google.

But here you go to get extra benefits. Bing is also open for you, it has more than 20% market share in the USA and more than 9% market share worldwide.

As per Microsoft, Bing has an astonishing 33% market share which is around 5 billion searches on the web.

Hence, you can install Bing Webmaster Tools, do indexing and improve your site's performance on search. It would add traffic to your site just like a cherry on the cake.

3. Set up Google Analytics

Google Analytics is free, and one of the most powerful data analytics software. It gives you access to analyze the data in detail and you get valuable insights.

You can track the performance of your site such as session time, bounce rate, traffic, behaviors, demographic, geographic and many other things.

You can also know the age, gender, interest, device and location of your audience coming on your site. To improve the performance of organic searches and marketing campaigns, marketers often use Google Analytics for their search analysis.

4.   Install Yoast SEO or All in One SEO (WordPress users only)

It is for WordPress Users Only. You can install Yoast SEO to do On-Page and technical SEO. If you want to do SEO without Yoast, install All in One SEO plugin that can help you in doing On-Page SEO along with necessary pre-built plugins (Schema markups etc).

5.   Short Tail and Long Tail SEO Keyword Research

Many companies and even more prominent brands struggle for the perfect keyword for SEO and PPC. Choosing a wrong SEO keyword can take your site into marshland. It results in either very less traffic or zero traffic.

Apart from it, if your site is new into space, then selecting a short tail SEO keyword such as BUSINESS, MARKETING, ADVERTISING, MONEY can be super competitive, and it may take more than a year to rank.

Instead of selecting a highly competitive short tail SEO keyword, you can choose a long-tail SEO keyword such as "how to make money", "how to make money online from home", or "how to make money on social media". Selecting such keywords that are less competitive with decent search volume is accessible to the rank and can drive enough traffic on your website.
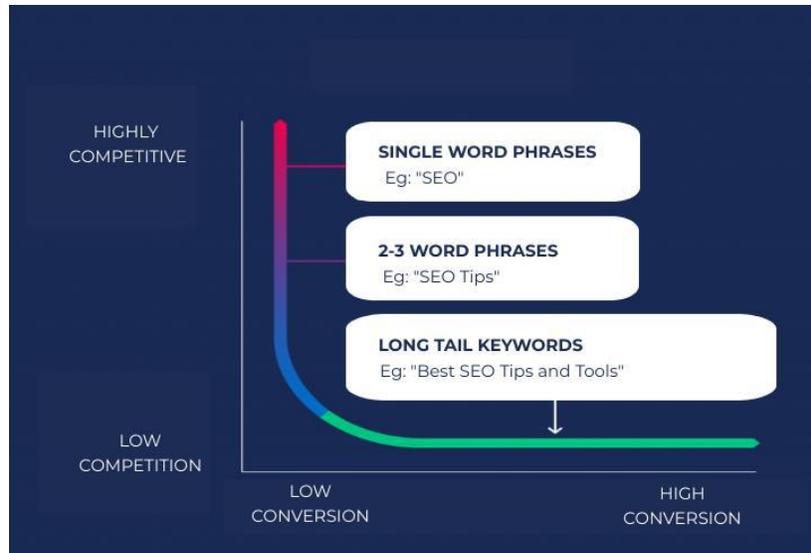
6. **Best SEO Keyword Tool to find the right keywords**:

You can use SEO keyword research tools such as SEMrush, Serpstat**,** Ahrefs, UberSuggest, Google Keyword Planner or Moz to analyze Search volume Keyword difficulty, CPC, Trends, Estimated visits, Rank difficulty and more.

Other Excellent Platforms to find the right keywords:

Wikipedia, Amazon, Reddit, Quora, forums and other online communities are excellent places from where you can select the appropriate keywords for your blog posts.

SEO isn't about 'how do I get keywords into Google; it's about understanding how many people search for information and finding a way to get in front of them.
~Danny Sullivan, Co-Founder of Search Engine Land & Advisor to Third Door Media

7. **Create Profiles on Social Media Accounts**

For the presence of Brand across different channels, it is important to create profiles on Social Media accounts. With an increase in shares, comments, pins, tweets etc, your ranking will also improve across search engines.

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Chapter 2:

Content Front (SEO and Content Marketing)

The best successful SEO is to prefer 100 % Quality over Quantity. And Longer content helps you rank better for your target keyword and brings in more long-tail traffic … a win-win!
~Brian Dean, Founder of Backlinko and Exploding Topics

1. Create Amazing and hybrid Content

Along with text, if your blog post contains **screenshots, graphs, Interactive polls and quizzes, visuals, infographics audio and videos content**, then such posts are known as hybrid content. They create a fantastic appeal to the audience with maximum user engagement.

If you create such a nice blog post, then there is a higher possibility you will get better ranking, more clicks and more social traction and shares.

2.   Chunk Your Content to Maximize Readability

Do not clutter the sentences without breathing space. Also, you should not use complicated words to impress the audience, as it can backfire.

Always use short, readable and straightforward words by which the majority of the people can understand without pulling their hairs.

Write in active voice only by keeping your sentences short. One sentence must not exceed more than 20 words or 2-3 lines.

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Use subheading after 150-300 words where you can place the visuals after every 100 words. Also, you should try to put quotes, Call To Action to bring the credibility in your content.

3.   Create an In-Depth SEO Blog Post (Long Content):

Google prefers those pages to rank on the top, which have covered every aspect in-depth than which has partially covered the topic.

Comprehensive blog posts have a direct correlation with Google's ranking. That is why you should focus on content formats that are working right now. Long content (more than 2000 words) are preferred by Google more than short content. An industry study found that content length is also one of the most important ranking factors.
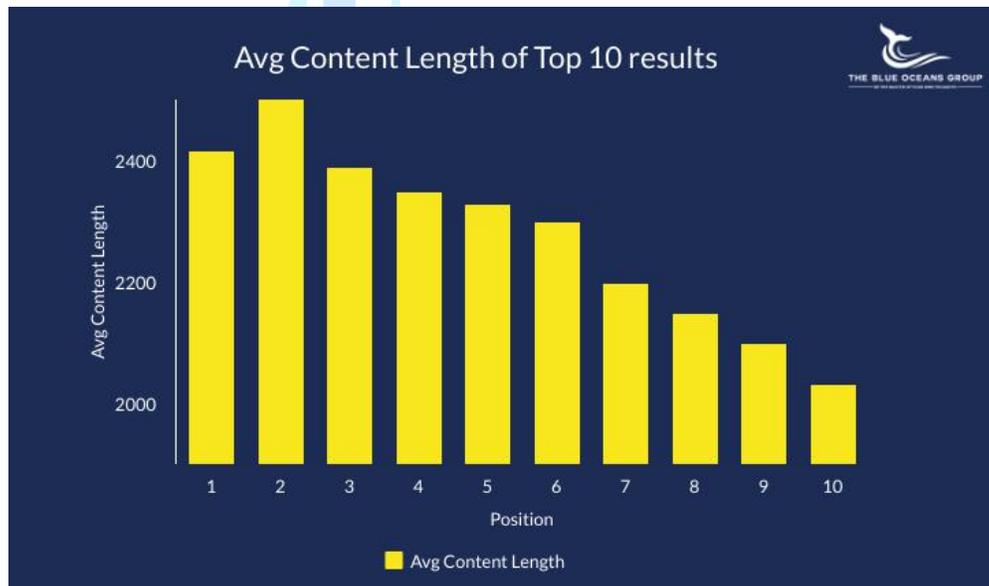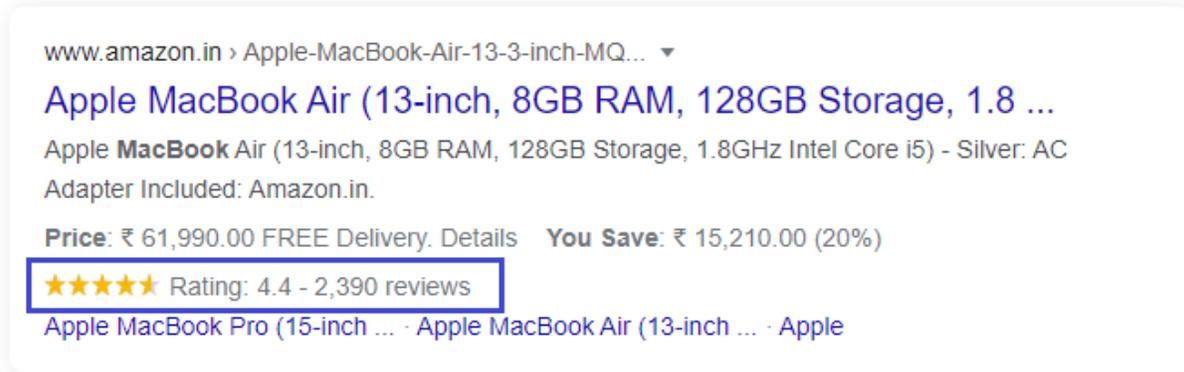

Long Content gets more backlinks and social shares, thus also helping in giving signals to search engines to help it rank higher.

4.   Use Schema Markup

Schema Markup is among the most powerful evolutions in SEO. Schema markup uses a unique semantic vocabulary in microdata format that you can add to your HTML to boost your website rankings in higher SERPs.

5.   Improve Your Site's Dwell Time

Dwell time is the amount of time that passes between the moment you click a search result and subsequently return to the SERPs. Google measures how long people are spending time on your webpage. Dwell time is a factor of Google's ranking.

6.   Update your Outdated Content:

If your website has enough content and you have a decent library in your blog post, then how many pieces of content a blogger or marketers should produce in a week? 5, 7 or more than that?

Actually, producing one content in a week is enough for your site.

Globally recognized bloggers and marketers like Niel Patel and Brian Dean also advise to produce one new content in a week and update at least three old and outdated content. It will give you super engagement and traffic on search engines such as Google, Bing and others.

Updated on March 5th, 2020

27 Eye-Opening Website Statistics: Is Your Website Costing You Clients?

7. Delete Zombie Pages

Zombie pages are those dead pages which are driving zero traffic and slow down your page speed. Also, if a few blog posts are having thin content and not driving any results, delete all these pages as soon as possible.

For example, e-commerce product pages with zero sales, Archive pages, Thin content or boilerplate content and old services pages are also considered as Zombie Pages. Keeping these pages on your site can hurt your ranking badly.

Always remember, Google prefers one strong page in place of 100 thin pages.

In one experiment and data analysis by Proven.com, they have deleted 40,000 zombie pages from their site and as a result, their traffic boomed by 88.3%.

8. Do Noindex for the category and tag pages:

If you are on WordPress, to avoid the duplicate issue, I highly recommend you not to index the category and tag pages. As these tags do not bring a significant amount of relevancy to the readers, so you can Noindex them easily.

So, Noindex the right strategy for category pages that add little or no value to your website.

Use noindex for Categories ✓

Use noindex for Date Archives ✓

Use noindex for Author Archives ✓

Use noindex for Tag Archives ✓

Use noindex for the Search page ✓

Use noindex for the 404 page ✓

9.   Engagement, comment and Bounce Rate

If your content is getting more comments, and having a low bounce rate, then Google receives positive signals that this particular content is super engaging and people like it. So, let's rank it better.

Therefore, yes! Getting more comments and engagement can hook your web page's ranking.

SEO is not just about the webpage anymore; it's about the content within the apps and content within your featured snippets like the structured data.

*~Barry Schwartz, Founder of Search Engine Roundtable*

Chapter-3:

On-Page SEO Checklist

Now, the question is how to optimize your content and SEO where to place keywords

1. Include Keywords in the URL

Now, in on-page SEO, where to place keywords is critically essential. Including the focus keywords of the blog post in the respective URL is another way to optimize your content with keywords. Though Google verified, it is a minimal factor in Google's ranking. But still, it provides the right information to Google about your blog posts and more credibility in the eyes of searchers and the search engines.
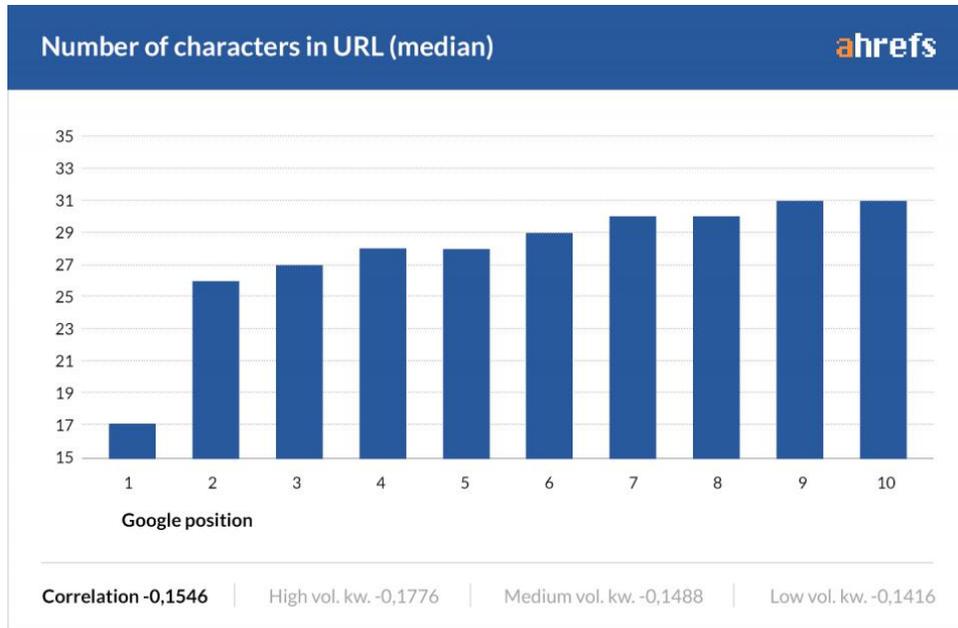
Also, adding a keyword in subdomain boosts ranking related to that keyword.
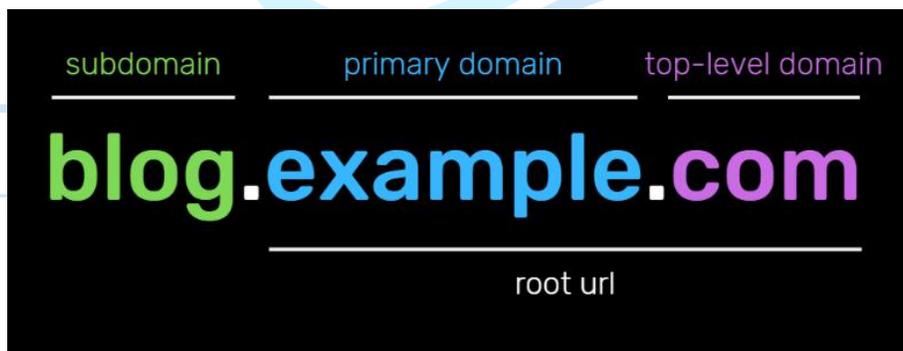
2. Use Short URLs

The URLs of your blog posts play a very crucial role in Google ranking. Google officially verifies that the short URLs do well.

Try to mention your pillar page and keyword in your URL. The ideal length of URL limit should be 75 characters long.

3. Front-Load Your Keyword In Your Title Tag

Putting your keywords in the title is directly responsible for your searches and SEO. Suppose you want to write a blog post on LinkedIn Marketing, and your keyword is- LinkedIn Marketing Strategy.

Suggested Title is: LinkedIn Marketing Strategy for B2B- Complete Guide (2020) **(Here you front-loaded your keyword in your title tag)**

Title (with comparatively slow search results): A Complete Guide on LinkedIn Marketing Strategy for B2B in 2020

4. Embed Title Tag Modifiers

If you are embedding modifiers like Top, Best, Guide, Checklist, Review, it helps to boost your ranking for long-tail keywords.

Example: Best SEO Tools for Keyword Analysis, SEO Backlinks and Domain Authority

Few brands also use Date, Numbers, Call To Actions and Questions in their title to get more clicks. It is also another way of SEO to drive traffic.

Other Examples:

- How to do Email Marketing: Step by Step Beginner's Guide
- Best Actor Oscar Nominee 2019
- 26 Weight Loss Tips That Are Evidence-Based

5.   Include the Keywords in the first paragraph or first 150 Words:

Google crawls the content at the top on your webpage the most. So try to optimize your focus keywords and synonyms in the first paragraph or first 150 words.

6.   Optimize H1, H2 or H3 heading with Keywords:

Google considers H-1 as a second title tag and secondary relevancy signal to understand your page.

As per John Mueller- a Senior Webmaster Trends Analyst, says, if you insert your keyword in your H2 and H3 subheading, it helps Google to understand the structure of the page and consider it as a relevant factor.

Therefore, try to optimize H1, H2 or H3 heading with your keywords to boost ranking and traffic on your web pages.

Also, most CMS like Wordpress automatically wrap H1 to your blog post Title, so check your site's code to ensure that H1 tag is wrapped with your Title tag.

7.   Optimize SEO Images

Google has a dedicated section of the image in its search result. Hence, images are vital for an SEO perspective to impress Google and make a presence on the web.

Most of the time, users search for something, and they hover the mouse into the image section of Google, especially the sites which are based on Travel, Fashion, Food, Design, Quotes and the like.

Therefore, optimize the images well with descriptive file names, helpful alt text. You should also include a caption, image description and describe content that talks about the image for better search engine optimization. You should make sure that you have an image sitemap. Also, make sure the size of the image is compressed so as to optimize the load speed of the page simultaneously.

8.   Use Synonyms and Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI) Keywords:

You should sprinkle the LSI keywords in the title, SEO description length, and in your blog content to optimize your site's SEO at advance level.

Also, you can use tools such as LSIGraph and Answer The Public. It will show the most relevant keywords based on searches. You should use at least 100 LSI keywords of your focus keywords.

9.   Use External Links

External links are the hyperlinks that are linked to the pages which are on the other domains. If you are mentioning some facts and figures which are referring to some authentic reports or research paper, then link your text with that referring document. It brings more authenticity and quality to your blog post where people can verify those particular facts on the spot, and you can establish the trust in the eyes of viewers.

Do not make hundreds of SEO backlinks as it can increase your bounce rate. Because when somebody clicks on these external outbound links, it will drive him away from your web page. Also, Google said, they do not use external links as a ranking factor.

10.   Use Internal Links

Internal links are hyperlinks that refer to those pages which are having the same domain.

Using internal links gives the signal to Google about the structure of your site because it connects your content pages and boosts your site's SEO.

It shows the relevancy of your page to the other related pages. If the internal links are from high authority pages, then it creates a higher impact on ranking than those pages which do not have internal links or low ranking pages.

11.   Use Unique Meta Description:

Meta Description is a very short summary that talks about your webpage and increases Click Through Rate (CTR). Google displays meta description in the search results. Most of the webpages use 160 characters snippets as it is ideal for Google.

Do not copy and paste the description. It is spam and can confuse Google. Always use a unique and articulate description for each blog page by including focus keyword into it.

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Chapter 4:

Off-Page SEO Checklist

Most common and often asked question in off-page SEO is where to get backlinks?

1. Build Powerful SEO Backlinks With Guest Posting

There is no SEO without backlinks. A backlink is the top 3 ranking factors of Google. Creating powerful backlinks through guest posting is the best SEO practice and a part of white hat SEO. You can reach out to those websites which allow guest posting related to your niche and post content as per their guidelines.

Most of the websites allow do-follow SEO backlinks. If you do it in the long run, it can increase the authority of your website and drive massive traffic.

If you are a beginner and your website has less than 20 DA, then try to approach those websites which are having DA in between 20-70. If you are a brand, then you can reach out to the market players as well who are having more than 70+ DA.

The content you share with the world needs to offer a distinct benefit, otherwise, no one will care. As far as making backlinks are concerned- don't build links. Build relationships.
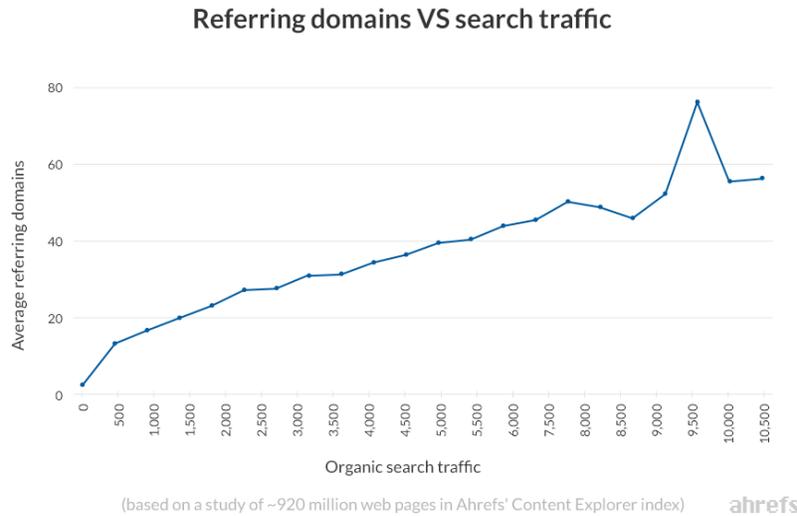*~Rand Fishkin, CEO & Co-Founder of Moz*

2. Number of Referring Domains

The number of referring domains or the lining root domains is one of the most important factors of ranking as per Google ranking algorithm.

The total number of linking pages also determines your ranking even from the same domain.

Research by **Ahrefs:**

Referring domains VS search traffic

(based on a study of ~920 million web pages in Ahrefs' Content Explorer index) ahrefs

3. Do-follow vs No-follow

Google officially announces we do not count no-follow links. As it is the most controversial topic in SEO, but having a certain percentage of no-follow links is okay. But, a higher rate can put a negative impact and affect your ranking too.

4. Participate in Interviews and events as a speaker

Building relationships and your presence is an integral part of personal brand building. As a blogger or marketer, you should keep looking for opportunities in an event or appear in interviews.

As you get SEO backlinks, social shares and apart from all these you have an opportunity to be recognized yourself as a blogger or marketers and can easily share about your brands. People search organically and there are unpredictable growth and an increase in traffic on your website.

5. Boost your Brand being Podcast Guest:

If you are doing a podcast, the people who are listening to you may not visit your site via a given link; preferably they search for your website on Google.

That's all you need. It helps to boost your brand searches on search engines. And very soon, you will notice an enormous growth in your organic traffic.

6. Mention Influencers in your Blog Posts

If you mention influencers related to your niche in your blog post, then tag them and outreach via email/social media channels. Then, you can ask for social shares or link back to their site.

It is also a fantastic backlink building tip. But keep in mind that if your brand is not that big, try to mention small or medium influences, as they are highly responsive. Try to avoid mentioning famous influencers, as they will generally ignore your email because they are already getting colossal publicity from big media giants.

7. Social reputation shares, likes and links

You should have a business account at least social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Reddit, Pinterest, Instagram and Quora. It increases your content's credibility, likes and social shares. The post reaches the maximum people where few of them link your blog in their upcoming blog posts.

By regularly participating over some time (after 2-5 years) you can drive massive traffic and bring more sales from social media.

The best way to get engagement on social media is to be engaging on social media. And 99.9% of great bloggers are not awesome on day 1. Their awesomeness is the accumulation of the value they create over time.

~Darren Rowse, Founder of ProBlogger and DigitalPS

8. Email outreach as an external influencing ranking factor:

Email marketing is one of the most prominent marketing channels across all digital platforms. Through email marketing, you own your subscriber list and have a direct connection to your audience.

Also, when you reach out to your audience through email marketing, they click on the web page links provided by you (in mail/signature) then it gives the external signal to Google, that this post is getting more engagement, let's rank it higher.

9. Bookmarking and listing:

Social Bookmarking and Business listings are types of off-page techniques. Business listings are the contact details of your practice or business listed online. It helps Google know that your business is authentic. Social Bookmarking is easy and helps you to not only improve your site's traffic but also provides you with the opportunity to make your content go viral and helps you to acquire quality backlinks from authority sites. If both are **done correctly** you get benefited with faster indexing by the search engine, targeted traffic and lead generation, generating high DA Backlinks, increased DA and improving keyword ranking on SERP.

10. YouTube Channels:

Video content is the most engaging form of content marketing, and people like to watch videos. And YouTube is the king of video marketing.

After watching a branded video, 65% of business decision-makers decide to visit the marketer's site. The number is so impressive that it can give a tremendous reach and organic growth of your website by driving traffic to your homepage.

You should invest in YouTube and boost your site's Brand Signals by doing SEO for Youtube Marketing.

(Especially branded searches)

11. Featured Snippets:

Featured Snippets designed to answer the search queries. It appears on Google's search results, and the content is automatically pulled from web pages in Google's index AT #0 position as it appears above the # spot.

In one study of Search Engine Land, a Featured Snippet gets 8% of clicks. And I think this number is enormous to get organic CTR.

Chapter 5:

Technical SEO Checklist

1.   Identify Crawl Errors

A "Crawl Error" means a search engine tries to reach a page on your website but fails at it. Google divides crawl errors into two groups i.e site errors and URL errors. So, it means when search engines cannot view your page, then the page cannot rank anywhere. You can easily find Crawl errors in the Google Search Console's Coverage report. Google recommends using the URL inspection tool in Google Search Console to debug your page.

You may need to discuss Crawl errors with your developers to determine the cause.

2.   Find Out How Google Views Your Page

Check whether your web pages have the title, H1, H2, H3 tags and description which includes primary focus keyword or not.

Also check the keyword frequency, LSI keywords and Synonyms of focus keywords in your blog page. You should also check whether your blog post has proper subheadings and links that are describing the content on the page you are linking to or not.

You can review your blog posts to check whether it is mobile and desktop-friendly or not, before running it live.

### 3.   Make Your Website Mobile-Friendly

Today, more than 58% of searches are done on mobile devices, and every year people are spending more and more time on mobile devices. So, it has a vast audience and market share.

Making your site mobile friendly means you are well optimizing your site for smartphones, iPhones and tablets to have better user experiences for your viewers.

Mobile optimization requires site architecture design, site structure and page speed. You need not block CSS, JavaScript, or images.

Do not use too much, too small CTA or any buttons, as it can be misleading for thin or fat figures. Also, you should not use too many popups, as it can increase the bounce rate on your site. You can check your site's mobile-friendliness from Google's Mobile-Friendly Test Tool.

Tested on: 12 Jun 2020 at 19:16

Page is mobile friendly

This page is easy to use on a mobile device
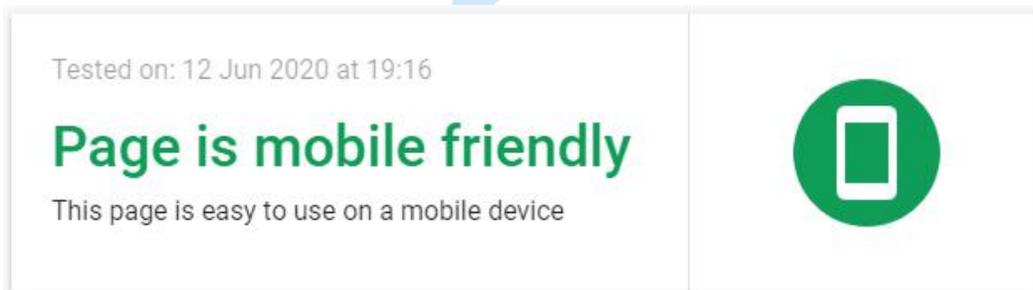
4. Use optimized Robots.txt to control search engine crawlers

The robots.txt file (robots exclusion protocol or standard) is a text file that tells web robots (most often search engines) which pages on your site are to crawl.

The robots.txt plays an essential role from an SEO point of view. It also tells web robots which pages are not to crawl. Using the robots.txt file, you can prevent search engines from accessing certain parts of your website, prevent duplicate content and give search engines helpful tips on how they can crawl your website more efficiently.

5. Find and fix Broken Links

A broken link is a dead link (that no longer works) and it happens while a URL is either deleted or moved to a new location which causes the server to show a 404 error page. The Google Rater Guidelines Document uses broken links to assess a

homepage's quality. So, Broken links can really hurt your SEO, so you definitely need to find and fix them.

You can find Broken Links from SEO Tools like SEMrush, Ahrefs and Google Search Console or Free tool i.e DrLinkCheck.com

6.   Add Breadcrumbs to improve navigation

Breadcrumbs are links that allow users to track their path from the page they are currently viewing to the homepage of your website. They appear close to the top of your page and reflect the structure of your site. If breadcrumbs are properly used, then it can reduce several negative factors that improve the user experience on your site and thus, reduce the bounce rate. Breadcrumbs in search results give users an easy-to-understand overview of where the page sits on your site.
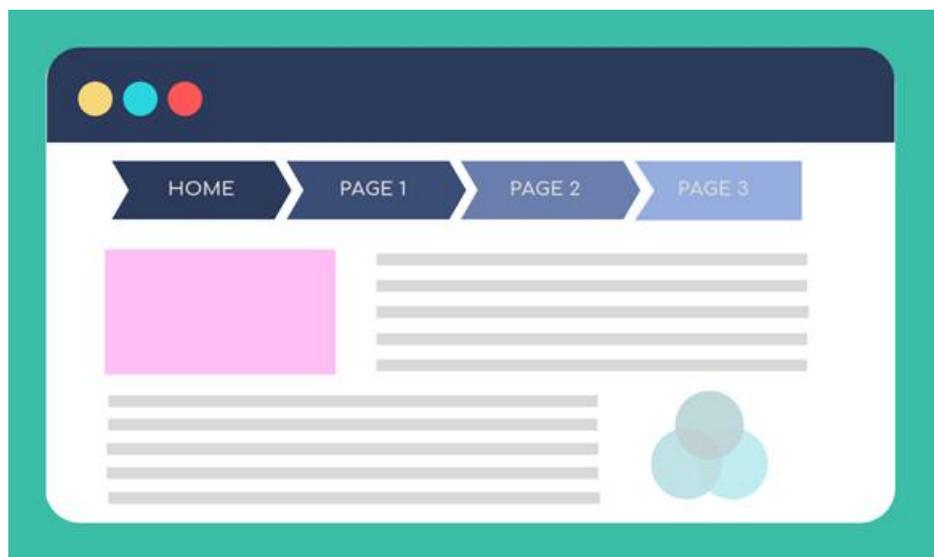
7.   Secure Your Site with HTTPS

Google officially verified that using HTTPS is a ranking factor. So, make sure your website has a secured domain name with SSL Certificate.

The meaning of HTTP is the HyperText Transfer Protocol. It is a virtual process that transfers information from a website to the visitor's browser whereas HTTPS is the secure version of this protocol, where S stands for "**Secure".** It ensures Google that the indexing is safe for the users.

8.   Check and Improve Site's Loading Speed and Uptime:

Jeff Bezos, Founder and CEO of Amazon, says, on every extra second of loading your web page or site, there is a loss of 10% of customers. The reason for losing 10% of customers every spare second is, they get irritated and frustrated as your site has terrible loading speed.

Research by Strange Loop shows, if there is a mere 1-second delay of loading page time, there is a loose 7% loss in conversions.

If a website is having less than 3 seconds of loading time, then it is considered as the fast loading. Furthermore, a site that loads between 3-6 seconds needs improvement and a website that takes more than 6 seconds to load is regarded as a slow site and has horrible user experiences.

To optimize the performance of the loading speed, compress your SEO images (using compressor.io and tinypng.com) before uploading it to your CMS, minify CSS/JavaScript and HTML, leverage browser caching and enable compression (Use GTMetrix or Pingdom to analyse your loading speed).

Also, if there is a regular downtime due to site maintenance or server issues, it can hurt your overall rankings, or even your pages or site can get de-index from Google.

9.   Anchor Text:

The words contained in anchor text (link label or hyperlink on the text) help search engines to determine the ranking that the page will receive. Different browsers will display anchor text differently and **proper use of anchor text can help the page to rank in search engines for those keywords**. Exact-match anchor text strongly influences Google rankings. But try to avoid unnatural or spammy links as Penguin can penalize you.

10. Submit an XML sitemap to speed up indexing

The presence of sitemap helps your pages to index on Google easily. It improves visibility and also you can index your older pages if it is not indexed. If your webpage is blocked in robots.txt or by meta robots "no-index," then it's better to not be in your XML sitemap.

Use your XML sitemaps as "sleuthing tools" to discover and eliminate indexation problems. If you've got a big site, use dynamic XML sitemaps, it means don't try to manually keep all this in sync between robots.txt, meta robots, and the XML sitemaps.

11. Make your Website Architecture Responsive:

The architecture of your site has a direct correlation with performance and Google's ranking. When you are launching a new website or planning to revamp the old site with the new, you should get the right upfront and well organized with bright settings of Title, Slug, URL.

A nicely structured architecture of your site helps Google to access and index all the pages of your website. It also improves user experience and hence, reduces the bounce rate.

12.   Create SEO-Friendly URLs

Do not put a name, date, or sequence number in your URLs, as it confuses Google and gives the wrong signals. The URL of your blog post should only contain the focus keywords of that particular web page.

For example

https://example.com/topic

https://www.theblueoceansgroup.com/best-wordpress-hosting/

https://www.yourtravellingstory.com/best-places-to-visit-in-india/

The URL length, path, and focus keyword of URL matter a lot in Google ranking. Using 1 to 5 words in your URL is perfectly fine.

The example of a wrong URL is:

http://www.example.com/product.aspx?ID=11526&IT=5f7d3d.

Searchers and Google do not have any clue what this URL is all about. So, try to avoid making these pathetic URLs. It hurts the webpage ranking.

13.   Structured Data especially for Mobile Devices

You should use Schema Structured Data in Mobile SERPs to leave the everlasting impression on your searchers.

A nicely presented data with rating, review stars, recipe images and few other related things can boost your organic click-through rate.

Especially if your company is dealing with food, fashion, or any luxury goods, Structured Data can increase your web traffic.

14.   For Video and Animated Content, Use HTML5

If you want to embed videos or fancy animations in your content to make it more appealing, you can code in HTML5. It will make your web page light and ultra-fast to load.

15.   Fix and Remove Duplicate Content Issues

Duplicate Content means that similar content appears at multiple URLs (locations) on the web due to which search engines get confused about which URL it needs to show in the search results. **Duplicate content is among the top 5 SEO issues** that sites face especially now, Google has put its Panda Update into play. Duplicate content issues can hurt the ranking of a webpage. The problem gets worse when people start linking it to the different versions of the same content. To resolve this issue, one should use a Canonical tag to the original source.

16.   Remove Thin Content

Do not leave your web pages without content or with thin content. Google officially verified that pages having thin content could not rank well on Google.

54% of marketers find difficulty to produce engaging content; 50% of marketers are not able to create content consistently; 49% of the brands are not able to measure and analyze the effectiveness of the content. Beyond these facts, 42% of marketers are not able to produce a variety of content.

As per the data analysis and finding of LinkedIn, Facebook, Pinterest, and twitter, the content which is more than 3000+ words get the maximum engagement and social shares.

Another study from SerpIQ and HubSpot finds that the sweet spot for the blog's post length is from 2,332 to 2450 words.

Though the blog post length varies from industry to industry, the ideal blog post length for finance sector is 2,100 – 2,500 words; Financial Technology needs 2,000 – 2,150 words; Manufacturing needs 1,700 – 1,900 words; Sales industry needs 2,500 – 2,700 words; Retail requires 1,500 – 1,700 words whereas the Real estate requires 1,800 – 1,900 words to get the maximum engagement and social shares.

Apart from these, Home and Garden websites need 1,100 – 1,200 words; Tech sites need 800 – 1,000 words; Gadgets require 300 – 500 words; whereas the blog post length of 2,500 – 3,000 words for a marketing and advertising company like **The Blue Ocean Group**, **HubSpot**, **Neil Patel**, **Backlinko**, **Moz** and the like gets the maximum traction on Google and Social Media.

Other industries such as Healthcare need 2,000 – 2,150 words; fashion needs 800 – 950 words and food – 1,400 – 1,900 words to get better ranking and drive more quality traffic.

Here's another massive industry, i.e., Travel and Tourism. According to **Statista**, the best blog length for travel and tourism is 1,500 – 1,850 words get a considerable engagement and better ranking on search engines. Some of my favourite travel blogging sites are **Your Travelling Story,** **Travel Triangle** and **The Blonde Abroad.** They are doing amazing in their space.

17.   Use HREFLANG for Multilingual Websites

The hreflang tag (rel="alternate" hreflang"x") is a technical solution for websites that have similar content in multiple languages. The website wants search engines to send people to the content in their respective language for better user experience. Also, using the hreflang tag for multilingual websites prevents the problem of duplicate content.

18. Use Rel Canonical Tag to improve link and ranking signals

A canonical tag is a way to inform Search engines that a specific URL represents the master copy of a page. **rel=canonical** element (canonical link) helps webmasters prevent duplicate content issues. It specifies the webpage as the original source. **Choosing a proper canonical URL** for every set of similar URLs improves a site's SEO because the search engine now knows the exact page as the original source (canonical), so it can count all the links pointing at all the different versions as canonical versions. Setting a canonical is similar to a 301 redirect, only without actually redirecting.

19. Resolve 404 Errors and Create effective 404 Pages

404 pages occur on Google when you delete a web page without redirecting it on 301. To resolve 404 errors, either you can permanently delete that URL from Google Search Console or redirect it to 301 code. If you don't redirect links to broken pages on your website to relevant locations, you won't be penalized or anything, but you will miss out on the link equity (link power). However, it's not the actual 404 pages that hurt SEO, but the links that contain URLs pointing to the 404s.

Also, set the default 404 pages in a way that can take back the user to the working pages. For eg, set the menu page display so that users can visit the page according to their requirement or you can show the latest Articles/ Trending Articles on the 404 Page display.

20. Set Correct 301 Redirects

These are the majority of codes you will see throughout your research. 301 redirects are fine as long as there are only one redirect and no redirect loop.

When people change the URLs of their web pages, and they do not want to affect their rankings on Google, then they use 301 redirect error code. 301 redirects move the link permanently to the new specified URL (Recommended for SEO). It passes between 90-99% of link power to the redirected page.

21.   Avoid Using 302

If you want to redirect any Page URL for a short time such as 3 months or less than that, you can use 302 redirect error code. 302 redirects move the link temporarily, so for SEO Websites, you should not use 302 redirects.

You can see 302 error codes quite often on e-commerce websites when a product is out of stock.

22.   Fix the common HTTP Error messages

Fix the common HTTP error messages that ultimately irritates users and results in the bounce of the website to another one. Common HTTP Errors include: Error 401, Error 400, Error 403, Error 404, Error 500, Error 501, Error 502, Error 503.

Chapter: 6:

Local SEO Checklist

The critical factors of local SEO are local SEO backlinks, localized content, consistent NAP, presence on Google My Business, Google Maps star rating for your business and presence on Social Media.

To deal with the local SEO, you can get the top local SEO tools and management tools for your business.

1. Search location of the person:

If a customer is searching for the best products and services near him, then he wants a quick answer.

Google revealed, "near me" have grown by 150% in comparison to the searches that do not include "near me". Also, 74% of customers visit a store that day when they search for something local (Google Mobile Shopping Trend).

Furthermore, as per Google, 20% of all Google searches done on mobile are now voice searches.

Now, the point is- Is your brand prompt to show up when customers search for your category product or service.

2. Name, Address and Phone Number citations

Another, critical local SEO factor and ranking signals are NAP (Name, Address and Phone number) citations.

Google uses NAPs to check information about your business. With correct and consistent NAP citations, Google and users find your business more bonafide and trustworthy.

You need your NAP data to be 100% consistent everywhere such as;

1. On your website,

2. On your GMB profile,

3. On business directories, and

4. On local listings sites.

In short, NAP data should be present across all platforms where you are doing your online business listings.

3.   Google My Business (GMB):

Another essential component of local SEO is GMB. Try to put the exact information that you have mentioned on your website about Name, Address and Phone Number during listing on Google.

But it's a critical red flag to Google if the address listed in their GMB and the website are different.

Also, consistency in your GMB is critically essential. As Google finds it more legitimate with all local info matches up.

To get reviews from Google in a natural way, you can go in the dashboard of GMB; there's a card called **"get more reviews"** with a secure short link. You can forward to the customers. It sends them straight to your business review page!

So, there's no need to worry about going through multiple steps to get your business' place ID in a long URL.

4.   Optimize Google My Business profile

Once you have listed your website on Google My Business Listing, then you should optimize your Google My Business profile with keywords.

Like I mentioned in the last chapter, claiming your business listing in Google is super crucial for ranking in the local results.

5.   Online reviews (another way of SEO to increase traffic)

The sentiment of online reviews plays a critical role in improving CTR. Getting a positive review brings more traffic to your site (As Google ranks it higher). Apart from it, a negative or bad review can hurt your CTR and overall traffic on your website.

In one study of Moz, it was found that replying to a review (either it is positive or negative) by the business owner increases the trust in the consumer's eyes and finally helps the business to drive more traffic by boosting local SEO.

The perfect example is the Hotel Industry. They reply to almost all reviews and get the maximum user engagement.

Even keywords used in online reviews is an effective factor of local SEO.

Another easy way to get reviews is to create a short name after you've claimed your Google My Business listing. All businesses who have requested their short name in Google My Business have a shareable short URL directing customers to leave reviews. (Google)

You can send out the invites to customers with a review link, where you can get maximum reviews on your site and get engagement with your audience. (Can even

create a barcode and paste it in your office so that your customers/clients can easily access your website without making efforts to type the URL)

But another simple and better technique that Google has made for you- all you need to do is send this: https://g.page/(yourgmbshortname)/review.

6.   Several Local Check-ins:

If you have a decent number of local check-ins, then Google receives a signal that this particular business is getting more engagements as there is an increase in footfall. It increases your local SEO ranking.

Chapter 7:

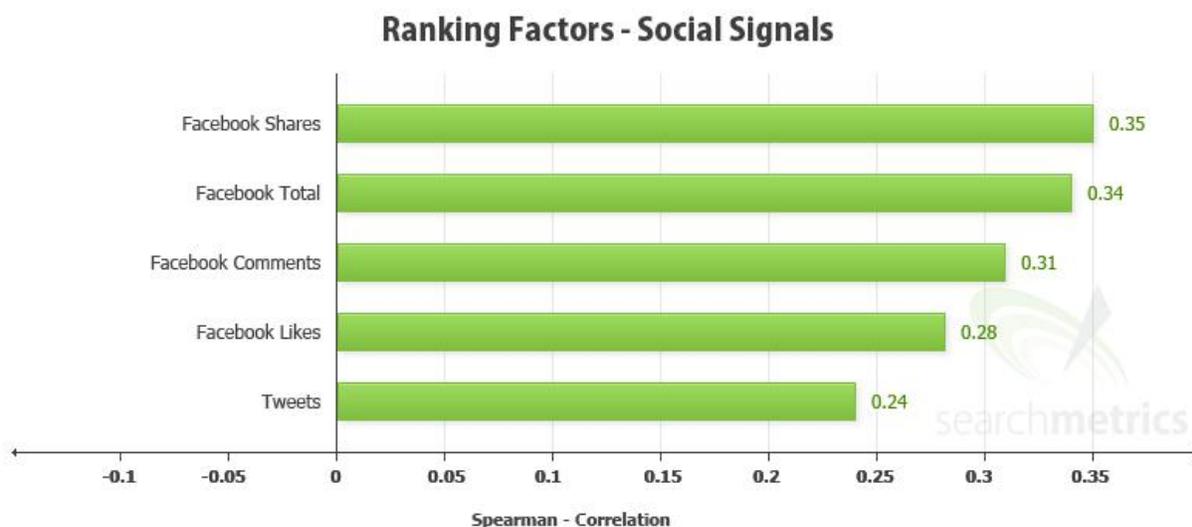# Brand Signals

1. The legitimacy of Social Media Accounts:

If your website has official social media business accounts on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Quora, Reddit, Pinterest, Instagram and the like having decent followers, it may influence your ranking on search engines.

2. Social Media Engagement Signals:

Likes, Retweets and Comments that are coming from the social media platform like Twitter, Facebook and Quora may give the external signals from Google about the web page's engagement and may influence the ranking.

Another factor, if your blog posts are getting Retweets and shares from the twitter or Facebook accounts that are having huge followers and high authority pages, it carries more weight to influence the ranking on search engines.

Analysis from **Searchmetrics**:

Ranking Factors - Social Signals

	Spearman - Correlation
Facebook Shares	0.35
Facebook Total	0.34
Facebook Comments	0.31
Facebook Likes	0.28
Tweets	0.24

3. Official Page on LinkedIn and Employees listing on LinkedIn:

More than 92% of B2B businesses are on LinkedIn. Most of the brands use LinkedIn to leverage the Marketing Strategy.

As per Rand Fishkin, if your employees are partners having a LinkedIn profile, that says they work for your brand, then it is a brand signal.

4. Get Mentioned on News Website:

Generally, big brands get featured and mentioned by the new websites. Even, many of the brands have a dedicated page of Google News Feed on the first page for branding.
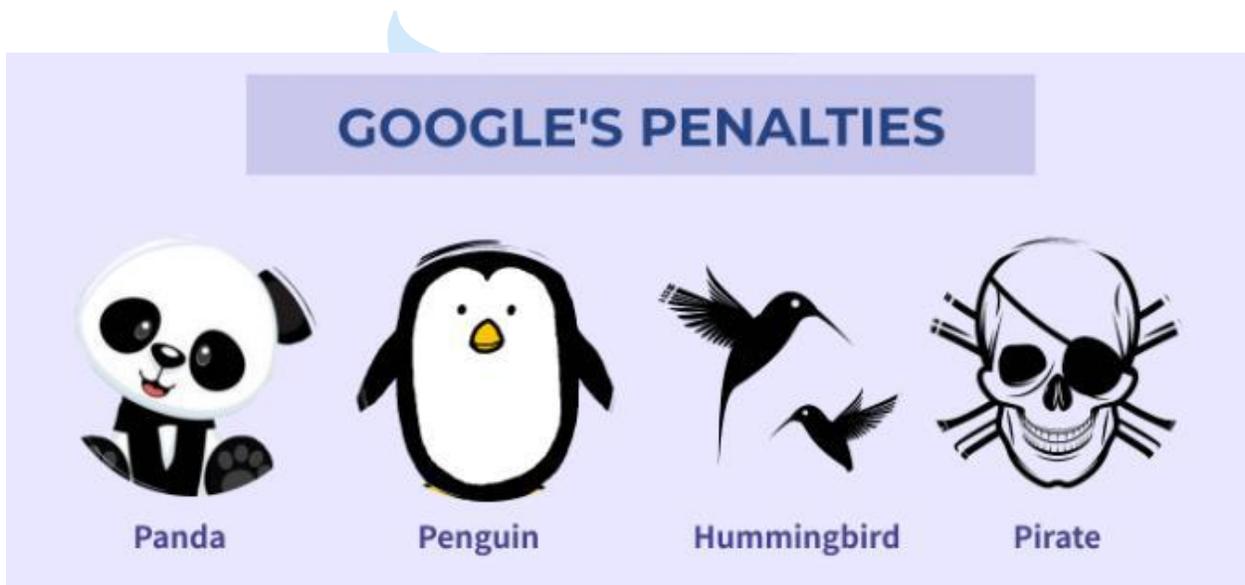
Chapter 8:

Google's Penalties

The high-quality of Google updates like Penguin, Panda and Hummingbird are the algorithms to provide the best user experience to the viewers. Google ranking algorithm works and believes on a specific set of rules and regulations to reward the legitimate working websites and to punish the frauds on search engines.

Google also deployed human intelligence to review and rate the sites and web pages manually. The ultimate aim is to provide value to the bonafide people for the best user experience.

If you are at the wrong side of the Google algorithm, it may act as a penalty. As a result of this, you can lose massive organic traffic.

List of Spams and Blackhat SEO Techniques:

1. Cloaking and Sneaky Redirects:

When you show any webpage to Google that is different from pages that you are showing to your users, is called cloaking. Whereas Sneaky redirects drive users to a separate page than shown to Google. Both the actions are the violation of Google webmaster guidelines.

Another form of Google Guidelines violation through Cloaking is when you show full content to Google but restrict your users to see the full content.

Cloaking applies to images as well in 2 ways.

i) If you are showing different images to Google and serving different images to users.

ii) You are redirecting users away from the displayed image.

In all the cases mentioned above, you can get penalized in two forms. Either Google's algorithm hit the portion of your site, or it can severely affect your whole website.

2. Hacked Site:

Most often, hackers always look to exploit WordPress and other CMS. They inject poison and ill-natured content and links to the websites. Commonly, it is cloaked and challenging to find and fix.

And when Google understands, it notifies that "site is hacked" and affecting the pages. After that, Google penalizes the whole site, and you can see the drastic fall in organic traffic.

3. Hidden Text and Keyword Stuffing:

When you hide some web pages on your site and use keyword stuffing, Google can quickly discover it. Google will penalize a partial or whole site for being guilty of using hidden text or keyword stuffing.

4. Pure Spam:

Many websites aggressively engage with the combination of spammy techniques, like automated gibberish, scraped content, Cloaking, and more. If you practice these SEO techniques, Google's penalties will affect your website either partially or as a whole. Once a penalty is applied, it will take you years to come back to the existing position in terms of ranking and traffic. Over Optimized meta description, using multiple H1 heading, subheadings and content lead into the Keyword Stuffing.

5. Spammy Free Hosts:

Free is ubiquitous and fascinating among us. But we must understand there is no such term that exists like Free. That's why I do not support the concept of "FREE HOSTING".

To save a few bucks you risk your entire site and purchase inadequate hosting services. It generates spam popup ads and other server issues that you can not control. Google flushes these sites that are on spammy hosting, where all your efforts go in vain. You can check the list of web hosting services for your website and purchase the best as per your business need.

6. Spammy Structured Markup:

If you are misleading your content and not following Google's precious snippets guidelines, Google will penalize you partially, or it can affect your whole website.

7. Thin Content:

If the pages on your site have thin content that is providing very less or no value to your audience, it will trigger the penalty. Auto-generated, low quality, shallow pages, thin affiliate pages, spun content will also hook the penalty where your website will be poorly affected by Google.

8. Unnatural Links/Buying Links to your Site:

To boost organic traffic and ranking, if you are involved in selling or buying links or manipulating outbound links, then Google will trigger the penalty, as it is the violation of Google's webmaster guidelines.

Paying for links not only violates Google's guidelines but also violates Bing's instructions. So, practicing these can have dire consequences for your organic visibility.

9. Other Link Manipulation Techniques:

If you are building webrings to boost your traffic on your site from the related websites, it violates the Google algorithm.

Guest posting to the unrelated niches, manipulating link profiles by increasing the number of inbound links using link bait and switch method links, buying reviews by offering free product and services also trigger the Google penalty and affect the site severely.

Google will penalize you if you are doing blog commenting aggressively to get backlinks or using shady 301 redirect code with link exchange.

10. Getting involved in SERP Spam by using Autoboot or Auto Click:

Most of the greedy digital marketers and bloggers want ranking for their sites within a month. They start using Autobots, where they purchase followers for your content on the web and start getting auto-like, auto click and auto comment by the computer.

It is not a click and comment by any human but a machine-based engagement to bluff Google. Your marketing budget is getting consumed by the SEO agency, but you haven't received any actual traffic on your website.

Your results can be fascinating in terms of ranking and traffic, that is also fake. But in a long time, you will land in warm water with a disaster.

With the help of Autobots, if you are auto-linking and auto sending Google queries, then there will be a trigger of Google penalties. It can affect your website severely, and Google can ban you permanent.

Conclusion:

If someone is new to SEO, you can check these 9 excellent SEO tutorial online courses from where you can get expertise on the practical ground to enhance your online digital marketing skills.

You can quickly analyze by going through the above latest updated Google ranking factors and SEO checklist, it is really working in current trends.

We did our work to help you out with the maximum possible efforts. We also warned you about the practices you should avoid on your site (Google spam or black hat SEO technique)

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