Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

A comprehensive look at Search Engine Optimization (SEO) in GW Drupal and beyond
What is SEO?

SEO

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of affecting the visibility of a website or a web page in a search engine's "natural" or un-paid ("organic") search results.

Search engine optimization - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
What is SEO today?

The new definition of SEO is user-focused with two primary goals that encompass all strategies:

1. Create targeted and valuable experiences and content to earn high-value traffic.

2. Increase conversions and user satisfaction by creating an environment that allows the user to connect directly with the content that best matches their intent.

- LinchpinSEO.com
What that means for you

• Understand your users
• Understand how they search & what they search for
• Do your keyword research
• Optimize your metadata
• Provide valuable & keyword-optimized content
• Use brand-focused & keyword-optimized content on social media
What that means for you

Before:

The "Perfectly" Optimized Page
(for the example keyword phrase "chocolate donuts")

**Page Title:** Chocolate Donuts | Mary's Bakery

**Meta Description:** Mary's Bakery's chocolate donuts are possibly the most delicious, perfectly formed, flawlessly chocolatey donuts ever made.

**H1 Headline:** Chocolate Donuts from Mary's Bakery

**Image Filename:** chocolate-donuts.jpg

**Body Text:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chocolate donuts</th>
<th>donuts, chocolate donuts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Photo of Donuts (with Alt Attribute):** Chocolate Donuts

**Page URL:** http://marysbakery.com/chocolate-donuts
What that means for you

Today:

The "Perfectly Optimized" Page

- Title & Meta Elements
  - Title: Chocolate Donuts from Mary's Bakery
  - Meta Description: Learn the 3 secrets to Mary's award-winning chocolate donuts, get times & locations for availability, and learn how to make your own donuts at home.
  - URL: http://marysbakery.com/chocolate-donuts

LOGO | Navigation Menu

Chocolate Donuts from Mary's Bakery

There are 3 secrets that explain why our chocolate donuts have won awards, generated hour-long lines, & even inspired hip-hop tracks. They are:

#1: Our Ingredients
   XYZ
#2: The Baking Process
   ABC
#3: Timing
   DEF

There are no impediments to search crawlers reaching this page for determining it's the canonical version.

Uniquely Valuable

Built to be Shared

Boo Accessible

Phenomenal UX

Clear layout, solid visuals, a beautiful, simple design make the page easy to use & enjoy.

Endorsements (including one from Homer!)

NOTE: Perhaps sadly, there’s no “perfect optimization.” This graphic’s sauce is to highlight areas that may be worthy of mention.

Keyword Targeted

Primary and secondary keyword phrases appear in prominent positions in the headline, title, & content.

Multi-Device Ready

Thanks to fluidly-sized, responsive design, this page looks great on any device, screen size, and browser.
What that means for you

**Keyword-Targeted**

- Page targets a single searcher intent (and associated keyword phrases)
- Primary keyword phrase is the first words of the title element
- Primary keyword phrase appears in page URL
- Content is logical & comprehensive, employing related terms/phrases
- Keyword phrases are highlighted with bold/italic/sizing/etc as appropriate
- Primary keywords are used prominently in the page headline
- Primary keyword is found in the body content 2X+
- Secondary keywords appear in headline(s)/title/body as appropriate
- Images on the page employ descriptive, keyword-rich alt attributes
- Descriptive anchor text is used in links pointing to the page
What that means for you

Uniquely Valuable

→ Page provides authentic, obvious value beyond self-promotion of the host site/author

→ Content quality stands apart from the crowd by a significant margin

→ Text, images, & multimedia are remarkable

→ Page would be described by 80%+ of visitors as useful, high quality, & unique

→ Searchers who visit would be unlikely to go "back" from the page to choose a different result
What that means for you

Provides Phenomenal UX

→ Content and navigation elements are easily consumed/understood by users

→ Design is aesthetically polished, high quality, and fit authentically with the brand

→ Page layout makes scanning easy & important content elements obvious

→ Page renders fast (<0.5 secs to first response; <4 secs to primary content loaded)

→ A minimal number of browser requests are required to fully load the page

→ Page is browser & device responsive (or specifically optimized to each as appropriate)
What that means for you

Drupal’s Got it Covered:

- **Crawler/Bot Accessible**
- **Multi-Device Ready**

Drupal + Your SEO Work:

- **Authorship, Meta Data, Schema & Rich Snippets**
- **Built to be Shared through Social Networks**
What that means for you

*Built to be Shared through Social Networks*

→ URL is descriptive and makes the page's topic obvious

→ Includes sharing options to the optimal social networks for the page's audience

→ Page has inherent sharing value (i.e. those who share it will be praised by their audiences, and additional amplification is likely)

→ As appropriate, employ tags for Facebook Open Graph, Twitter Cards, etc
What that means for you

**Authorship, Meta Data, Schema & Rich Snippets**

Your SEO Work:

- Employs primary & secondary keywords in the meta description
- Meta description inspires interest & click-through from SERPs/social
- Generally avoids meta keywords (unless used for internal search)
What that means for you

**Authorship, Meta Data, Schema & Rich Snippets**

**Your SEO Work:**
- Employs primary & secondary keywords in the meta description
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- Generally avoids meta keywords (unless used for internal search)

**Drupal has it covered:**
- Page content is associated with the author/publisher in the markup via Google+ rel="author" or rel="publisher" attribution
- As appropriate to the content/topic/vertical, page includes schema.org microdata markup options
- As appropriate to the content/topic/vertical, page includes Google's rich snippets markup options
The EDU Landscape

From Google’s Education Search Analysis for Q1 2014:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Y/Y Growth by Quarter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 2013</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 2013</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 2013</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 2013</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 2014</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The EDU Landscape

From Google’s Education Search Analysis for Q1 2014:

• For the first time in a year, there was ZERO growth in education-related searches year-over-year
The EDU Landscape

EDU Brands 0% y/y

EDU Non-Brand +2% y/y
The EDU Landscape

Program: +2%
General: +2%
Degree: +1%
The EDU Landscape

+16%

- How to pay for college?
- Why is college so expensive?
- How much does online college cost?

+9%

- How long does it take to get a masters degree?
- How many years is a masters degree?
- How long does it take to get a bachelors degree online?
How to do keyword research

- Create an office Gmail Account

- Bookmark three useful Google Tools
  1. Google Trends
  2. Google Keyword Planner
  3. Google Analytics
How to do keyword research

Google Trends

Topics

- dc colleges
- universiti...
- washingt...
- washingt...
- college i...

Interest over time

Regional interest
How to do keyword research

Google Keyword Planner

What would you like to do?

- Search for new keyword and ad group ideas

Enter one or more of the following:
Your product or service
- college in dc

Your landing page
- www.gwu.edu

Your product category
- Colleges, Universities & Post-Secondary Education

Keyword Planner Tips

Find new keywords related to a phrase, website, or category

All Categories
- Jobs & Education
  - Education & Training
    - Colleges, Universities & Post-Secondary Education
- All
  - Graduate Programs
  - Undergraduate Programs
  - Negative keywords
    - Hide keywords in my account
    - Hide keywords in my plan

Date range
- Show avg. monthly searches for: Last 12 months

Include/Exclude

Get ideas
How to do keyword research

Google Keyword Planner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad group (by relevance)</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Avg. monthly searches</th>
<th>Competition</th>
<th>Suggested bid</th>
<th>Ad impr. share</th>
<th>Add to plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Washington (50)</td>
<td>colleges in washington dc, was...</td>
<td>12,760</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>$7.32</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dc Community (10)</td>
<td>community colleges in dc, was...</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>$10.15</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Dc (36)</td>
<td>universities in dc, universities i...</td>
<td>9,980</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>$3.30</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Colleges (5)</td>
<td>colleges in dc area, colleges in ...</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>$6.68</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dc Schools (0)</td>
<td>schools in washington dc, scho...</td>
<td>3,640</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>$7.39</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Online (52)</td>
<td>online masters programs, onlin...</td>
<td>40,690</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>$38.38</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Colleges (15)</td>
<td>best online colleges, online coll...</td>
<td>23,170</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>$53.77</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Online (13)</td>
<td>washington state university onli...</td>
<td>2,860</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>$26.34</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# How to do keyword research

## Google Analytics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keyword</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>37,772</td>
<td>2.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(not provided)</td>
<td>33,247</td>
<td>88.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw alumni</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>0.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw alumni email</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>0.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alumnigwemail</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw women in philanthropy</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140th kentucky derby logo</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 george washington university reunion</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>address george washington university alumni</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aasha bourouba</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all black everything gwu</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alumni discount tuition gwu</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alumnipix.com/stm/gwu</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bank of america card</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bank of america logo</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>connect gwu site</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cyndi lauper concert gwu</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discounts on kaplan test prep</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>selecting gw board of directors</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>george washington alumni association</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>george washington ambassador</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>george washington university alumni</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>george washington university alumni association</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>george washington university alumni office</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>george washington university alumni portal</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>george washington university audit</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>george washington university mount vernon transcripts</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>george washington university transcripts</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw alumni</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw alumni atlanta</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw alumni calendar</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw alumni career center</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw alumni recent alumni trustee nominations</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw alumni weekend</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gw alumni weekend cindi</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Google Analytics*
How to optimize your metadata

• How to edit the global metatags on your site

• How to edit on each page:
  1. Page Title
  2. Page URL
  3. Page Description
  4. Image Alt Tags
  5. Keywords
How to optimize your metadata
How to optimize your metadata
Growth in Keywords by location

Competitive Landscape: Geo
Q1 y/y growth

- Ads per Query: 11% (All EDU), 4% (Geo)
- Cost per Click: 6% (All EDU), -1% (Geo)
- Clicks: 9% (All EDU), 10% (Geo)
How to optimize your page content

• Write in plain language. Write like your audience writes when they search for you in Google

• Use keywords and keyword phrases in your title, and subheads

• Use keywords throughout your page content

• Use contextual links with keywords. Never link “Click here.” That’s a missed opportunity
How to optimize your page content

Keywords

Metatag Keywords are a comma-separated list of words describing the content on the page. Keywords should be consistent with keywords in your page title and description and should reflect the keywords users search to find your site.

Click here to use Google Analytics to find the keywords people use to discover your site or use Google Trends to do more in-depth keyword research. The keywords in this module should be a guide for all of the rest of your SEO and should appear in your Page Title, Meta Description, Headlines, Subheads, links, and body text.
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How to optimize your page content

"For your site's internal links, make sure you use anchor text and alt text that's informative, compact, and avoids repetition."

-- Google
How social media can help

1. Quality content gets published
2. Content gets shares, links & likes
3. Site gains subscribers while social profile gains fans & followers
4. Thriving community supporting site grows
5. Reputation reinforced through social media & SEO as authoritative brand for the niche
6. Site gains authority in search engines
7. Sustainable stream of users discover site organically

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA SUPPORTS SEO
How social media can help

- Google Business (formerly Google Places)
- Wikipedia
- Google +
How social media can help

Building Links:

• Get students/alumni, others to link to you

• Create a blog, Tumblr or Twitter account and make it valuable to your audience

• Be newsworthy

• Create content that inspires viral sharing
How social media can help

http://gspm.gwu.edu/

Becoming A GLOBAL VISIONARY Starts By SEEING IT For Yourself

The Graduate School of Political Management | The George Washington University

Success throughout the global arena requires not only a wide perspective, but also a deeper level of understanding of how to impact decisions. With a Master’s degree in Advocacy in the Global Environment from the George Washington University, you will...
Key Takeaways

- Know your users
- Write like they talk or search
- Provide content valuable to them
- Sweat the details
Key Resources

- Google Analytics
- Google Trends
- Google Keyword Planner
- Moz.com