



Basic SEO Terms

A Glossary for Beginners

Authority

Page and domain authority is the value search engines assign to pages and sites. The higher the value, the higher the content will rank in search results. Authority is also passed via backlinks. A high authority site to another site will pass authority to the linked site.

Backlink

A link from another website that points to yours.

Black hat

SEO practices that violate search engine quality guidelines for optimization. For example, buying backlinks or using a private blog network. These practices can result in de-indexing (removal from Google search results altogether).

Crawling

The process that allows search engines to index the content on your site. This is how your site ends up listed on a search engine.

Deep Link

A link that points to a specific page or content and not the main or home page of a site.

De-indexed

When a web page or website is removed from a search engine's index. This means it will no longer appear in searches. A very bad thing.

Keywords

Keywords are words or phrases that are of particular importance for a web page or site. If your site is about gardening then garden would be an important keyword for your site.

Keyword Density

A number that expresses how many times a keyword or phrase appears in a piece of text.

Keyword Stuffing

An attempt to manipulate results by repeating a keyword or phrase.

Linkbait

Viral content that naturally gets linked to. Creating linkbait content is simple in concept, though difficult to execute.

Link building

The process of getting links to your site or page. This is an important element in any SEO strategy. High-quality backlinks will enhance search rankings.

Featured snippets

A summary of an answer to a user's search, displayed at the top of search results. It's extracted from a webpage and includes the page's title and URL

Google My Business listing

A free listing available to local businesses. Only available to businesses with a physical location.

Image carousel

Image results in SERPs that are scrollable from left to right.

Indexing

The storing and indexing of website contents so that they are searchable.

Intent

For SEO, intent means what information users want to know based on their query.

Internal linking

Links from one page on your site to another, commonly used in the main navigation. Used for helping the user navigate the site, establishing information hierarchy, and spreading link equity.

Linkbait

A viral piece of content that attracts lots of natural links.

Link equity

Also known as Link Juice. Describes the way links can pass authority from one page to another.

KPI

Key Performance Indicator. A measurable value that indicates how well a particular activity is achieving a goal.

Local pack

Three local business listings that appear for local-intent searches. Usually searches such as “restaurants near me.”

Meta description

A short description of a web page used by search engines. The meta description is usually displayed below the page title in search results.

Mobile friendly

A quick loading site that is usable and displays properly on a mobile device (phone, tablet, etc.)

Off-page SEO

Things done outside your page or site to increase ranking. Link building is an example.

On-page SEO

Things done on the page to increase ranking. Well written title tags and meta descriptions as well as having a fast site, good internal linking, etc are examples of on-page SEO.

Organic search results

Search engine results based on the content and user intent and not paid ads.

PageRank

The original Google algorithm that estimated a website's importance. The term is still used to generally describe Google ranking factors.

People Also Ask

A box in some SERPs featuring a list of questions related to the query and their answers.

Query

The words typed into a search engine to find a result.

Ranking

Search result placement determined by the relevance of the indexed content to the query. The best matches will rank higher.

Robots.txt

A text file that tells web robots (most often search engines) which pages on your site to crawl and index. It also tells web robots which pages not to crawl.

Search engine

A program that indexes and searches web pages for specified keywords. A list of documents matching their query is then returned to the user. Examples: Google, Bing, and Yahoo.

SERP features

Search results displayed in a non-traditional format. Featured Snippets are an example of a SERP feature.

SERP

Stands for “search engine results page” — the page you see after conducting a search.

Spider (Bot, Crawler, Robot)

For SEO, a program that browses the web and indexes the results for the search engine.

Traffic

Visits to a website.

Webmaster Guidelines

These are guidelines for webmasters to make it easier for search engines to find and index sites. They also outline prohibited activities to manipulate results.

White hat

Search engine optimization practices that follow webmaster quality guidelines.

XML Sitemap

A file that provides search engines a map of all the pages on your website to speed up indexing.