The Definitive Guide to Article SEO (2021)
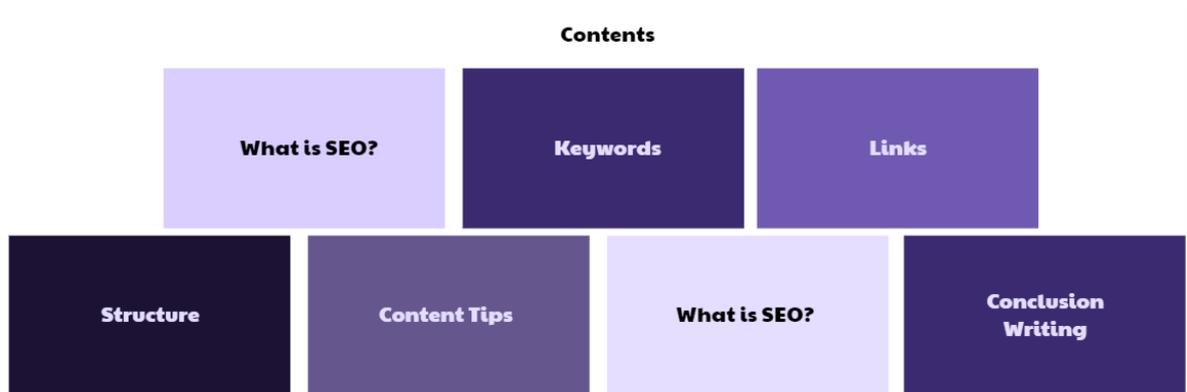
The world of SEO can be difficult to understand. But we have your back, here is our definitive guide to help you improve your article SEO.

Contents

What is SEO?

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), is the practice of applying strategies and approaches to webpages, to improve the likelihood that a search engine (like Google) will see them and show them to more people.

It sounds like voodoo at first, but it really is important in order to get your articles seen. The proof is in the pudding. Like **here** where two different websites with the same content ranked differently because of the way they were structured.
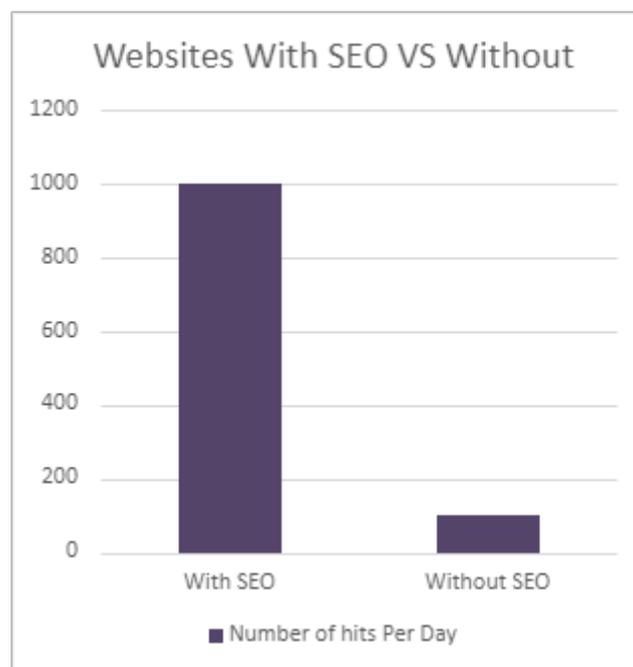
So where do we start?

Intent Optimisation

Intent optimisation sounds like a big industry keyword. It's fortunately rather simple – yet your biggest focus while writing articles.

You see millions of articles are published to Google every day, so in order to sort that pile, Google checks key information within your article to see how relevant you are answering a user's search query.

In general, when people enter something in search (search queries), they want to do one of these things:

1. **Find** – Something they already know about but want to locate. A location, or a website for a product.
2. **Buy** - Buy a product or service online
3. **Learn** - Find out more about a topic, learn something new, or get purchasing advice.

This is great to know, but in order to make the most of your article SEO, you need to know how to use this to your advantage!

Before you write anything, ask yourself, what user search query am I answering with this article? Are they finding, buying or learning?

Then apply this handy guide to help you structure your content – **Find** is not normally relevant to articles.

	Lists	Guides	Long Form Articles	Reviews	Short Form Articles
Buy	✔			✔	✔
Find					
Learn		✔	✔		✔

As an example, when I started this article, I wanted to answer the potential question - **"how to improve article SEO"**.

Realising that this is a **"learn"** question, I chose to write this article as a guide, breaking down the elements of SEO that only pertain to the writing of articles. This allowed me to be very precise about what language I use in the article.

Within the first line I have stated the point of the article and linked it back to the expected user question – as this will help prove to Google the intent of the article.

Keywords

Gosh, keywords, the most used term in article SEO and Digital Marketing in general.

They can get thrown around so much that you may doubt you ever understood what a keyword was in the first place!

So, let's keep it simple. - Within this article I have colour coded certain Keywords and Keyphrases to help indicate their frequency

Google plays "connect the dots" - it scans what words were used in the search query, then sees if you have the same words in your article.

You are competing to be shown as a result to someone's Google search, and as such – you will probably not be targeting keywords, but keyphrases!

Article and SEO are both Keywords, together they make the keyphrase "Article SEO"

Take this article then, and look for the keyphrase "Article SEO". That's the relevant keyphrase I wanted to compete for – it's short and sweet, but featured in a lot of search queries.

When it comes down to it, just linking back to your point should be enough to put keywords in your article naturally – not too much though! A little spice goes a long way in the SEO recipe – speaking of, have you seen our Newton Day **recipe book**?

Which leads me onto another important element of article SEO…

Links

That segue was pretty smooth, and it's necessary. As even though we have a recipe book, the link doesn't work. Neither do any of the ones above. In the real world this is bad for other reasons.

So why? They are there in order to show you the sorts of links which could make your content appear as more "valuable". Allowing me to give you a foundational example of what links mean to you. (look for green)

Outbound
The first link links to a study which proves my case. This shows Google that this is a well-researched guide – particularly if the links are to established site or a scientific case study.

Internal
The second, links to a page on our site – which hopefully has more "authority" by Google. Helping support our fresh baked article on its journey – and helps potential customers navigate our sales funnel!

Inbound
This is another form of link – it's a link from another website linking to your article. But in order for that to happen, we have to have some pretty top-notch content that people want to talk about!

So, don't worry about it for now.

Structure

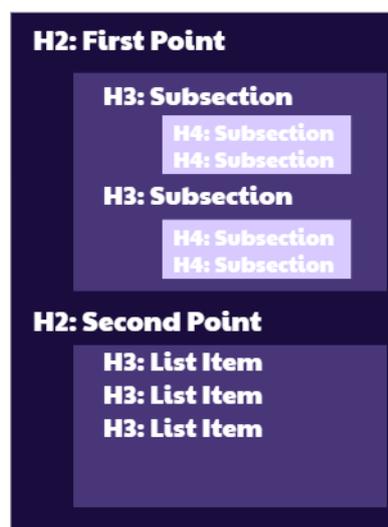In order for you to get a hang of what to put where and get started improving your article SEO, I need to unfortunately inform you about some boring "back end" page structure stuff – but hang in there, it will pay off.

Heading tags

Have you ever read from right to left? Unless you speak another language, the answer is probably no and this is a very direct way of explaining how Google looks at your article.

Heading (H) tags like H1, H2 and H3 indicate the structure of your website to Google, but don't think of it as a filing system. It's more of a way to help Google "scan read" your page. Like this graphic shows:

H1 - The Title and BIG IDEA of the Post

H2: First Point

H3: Subsection

H4: Subsection
H4: Subsection

H3: Subsection

H4: Subsection
H4: Subsection

H2: Second Point

H3: List Item
H3: List Item
H3: List Item

You see how I have labelled the H2 tags as point 1 and point 2?

Your most relevant and important information should always come first, followed by supporting points. This is called "above the fold content", as this is a separate point let's use a H3 title and make it official!

Above-the-fold content

Take a piece of A4 paper and fold it in half. That top half is where your most important information for the user query should be. As Google sees what comes first as the most important.

There isn't much point then in making an article answering something right at the end with less relevant information at the top.

So be as different as you can, put your own spin on things – and try not to repeat information that's found in older articles.

The writing has to be natural too – *which reminds me...*

Title Writing

This has been brought up a few times, and rightly so. It is an important factor within article SEO. We can talk meta-descriptions all day. However, the penultimate factor as to whether somebody clicks on your work – is what it says on the tin.

It can be a headscratcher – you may have an article that is very functional and business-like in it's conduct. "Her husband left her for another man" titles won't work here. So, to draw people in, you have to add some authority to your title.

On top of that, you have google to consider and it's persistence on checking for keywords.

Try to sprinkle in some intriguing or authority quantifying words into your title like:

- Definitive
- Ultimate
- Top
- Tips
- Great
- (current year)

Saying "Our Guide" or "Our top tips" is perfectly suitable, it shows some collaboration and weight to the article, while instilling a personal touch.

Top tip: "how to" titles are best left to guides which fully explain the process very specifically (think wikihow)

As for Keywords?

Don't sweat too much – the closer to the start of the sentence the better, however being natural is 100% more important.

For example:

My title is "the definitive guide to article SEO 2021"

If you were thinking strictly keywords it would be "Article SEO 2021 the definitive guide"

Which isn't the worst, and it certainly could be saved with a dash

"Article SEO 2021 - the definitive guide"

But it's not a movie, so the natural way to say it contradicts the google "keyword importance" rules.

Thusly, the name I have chosen remains suitable.

I also want to highlight the importance of picking the right title by relevance to what you have written. So, If I had called this "how to write an article 2021"

Is it a *good* or a *bad* name?

It's not a *bad* name, it's just *unsuitable*. As even though I have discussed the article creation process, I have not written about *how to* write an article.

This really confuses Google, and turns away readers who were looking for something else. Which in turn tells Google that the article is no good because people are clicking off the page again.

It can be a headache, but just think – if I were a reader, what title would I click on?

Conclusion writing

I hope this article has helped you expand your understanding of a few of the things that affect article SEO. It can be quite detailed and complex, so if you have any questions, be sure to send them to me and I will be sure to answer them ASAP. *There is still quite a lot to cover.*

If you are looking for free training on SEO, Google has a few free courses including analytics and SEO (I believe).

But what is really important? It's that you recognise that I have summed up the article and linked it back to the user query, then went on to offer suggestions on the next actions.

Other than that, take a sip of your *now cold* tea.

You've earned it.

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