

Best Practices for WordPress and SEO



Original Presentation

This presentation was originally given by live,
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Presentation Materials

To send others this presentation, and to obtain the resource materials that go along with it – visit my official page for

Best Practices for Wordpress and SEO

(click the link above)

The complete Wordpress SEO video that accompanies this presentation is an hour and ten minutes, is available there as well.

What is “SEO”?

The logo for Bing, featuring the word "bing" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. A small orange dot is positioned above the letter 'i'. A small "TM" trademark symbol is located to the upper right of the word.The logo for Google, featuring the word "Google" in its signature multi-colored font (blue, red, yellow, blue, green, red). A small "TM" trademark symbol is located to the upper right of the word.The logo for Yahoo!, featuring the word "YAHOO!" in a bold, red, uppercase, sans-serif font. A small registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the lower right of the word.The logo for jtpratt Media, featuring the name "jtpratt" in a large, black, stylized script font, with "Media" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font directly below it. At the bottom, the website address "www.jtprattmedia.com" is written in a small, black, sans-serif font.

Search Engine Optimization is...

- Keyword Research
- Competitive Analysis
- WordPress Web Site Configuration
- On-site Content Optimization
- Link Building and Online Promotion

In Other Words, SEO is...

Ensuring people can find you online



Keyword Research

- Finding the best target keywords to use
- Comparing traffic and competition
- Using match types: broad, exact, and phrase

Without basic research to find the best target keywords, all SEO efforts are pretty much useless.

Competitive Analysis

- Who's ranking for the keyword I want to use?
- What's their online authority?
- What will it take to compete?

If you don't know who your competition is and what it will take to rank with them on the first page of google – you're just treading water.

WordPress Web Site Configuration

- SEO plugins
- Sitemap plugins
- Search Engine Registration
- Sitemap Submission
- Commenting Plugins
- Internal Linking

Setting up your WordPress site for SEO is the foundation for good rankings

Wordpress Web Site Configuration: SEO Plugins

- There are many SEO Plugins for Wordpress
- Some are free, some are paid (premium)
- Some work well, others are snake oil (useless)
- The 3 Most popular Wordpress SEO plugins:
 - All in One SEO Pack
 - Platinum SEO Pack
 - Wordpress SEO

Wordpress Web Site Configuration: SEO Plugins: All in One SEO Pack

- 7 million downloads in 4+ years
- Easiest for most users – works out of the box
- Automatically creates meta tags
- Quickly set home page HTML title and meta
- Easily noindex tag, category, or archive pages

Wordpress Web Site Configuration: SEO Plugins: Platinum SEO Pack

- 471,000 downloads in 3+ years
- This plugin is a copy of All in One SEO (fork)
- Some additional noindex / nofollow features
- Has the unique ability to automatically redirect all pages after permalink changes (301 redirect)
- Nearly all other features same as All in One SEO Pack

Wordpress Web Site Configuration:

SEO Plugins: Wordpress SEO

- 51,000 downloads in last 3 months (popular)
- Suited for advanced users (LOTS of setup)
- Has breadcrumb feature (requires code editing)
- Embedded .htaccess file editor
- Unique search snippet preview on edit pages
- Keyword suggestion tool on edit pages
- Checks for keyword focus when editing

Wordpress Web Site Configuration: SEO Plugins: When is it Snake Oil?

- When it hypes high rankings and doesn't show exactly what it does up front
- When it uses techniques or factors that are no longer relevant – like keyword density
- When it appears to game the search engines into giving you better rankings by fooling them in some way or using a “loophole”
- Any time it sounds too good to be true...

Wordpress Web Site Configuration: Sitemap Plugins

- Search crawlers look for your XML sitemap in the root of your web site (/sitemap.xml)
- The XML sitemap lists what pages to index, order of importance, and last updated date
- XML is a coding language – these XML sitemaps are not web pages for people to view
- Search crawlers now also accept additional XML sitemap formats: image sitemap, video sitemap, and mobile sitemap

Wordpress Web Site Configuration: Sitemap Plugins

- “Google XML Sitemaps” plugin downloaded 4.8 millions times – the #1 XML sitemap plugin
- Works out of the box, creating a sitemap of all posts, pages, tags, categories, and archives
- Checkboxes to leave out what you don't want indexed
- Automatically notifies the big search engines your sitemap is updated for new posts and updates

Wordpress Web Site Configuration: Sitemap Plugins

- Plugins for specific formats (video, images, mobile) aren't mature yet
- Use the ones in the Wordpress repository that are available for now – watching for better ones as they become available

Wordpress Web Site Configuration: Search Engine Registration

- All 3 big search engines have a “webmaster” panel you can register an account for
 - google.com/webmasters
 - bing.com/webmaster
 - siteexplorer.search.yahoo.com/
- Once registered, submit your XML sitemap and other sitemap URLs to be crawled
- Yahoo! And Bing still have separate webmaster panels, even though they now use the same index for search results

Wordpress Web Site Configuration: Google Webmaster Tools

- Google Webmaster Tools is the most helpful
- Gives you analytics about keywords and queries
- Detects malware and hacked sites – can alert you
- Troubleshoot crawling errors
- Check site performance (speed)
- Get HTML suggestions for better indexing

Wordpress Web Site Configuration: Comments

- By default Wordpress comments are “nofollow”
- You can install plugins to remove the nofollow
- Nofollow was invented to prevent blog spam
- Spam comments mean bad rankings for you
- For most sites removing nofollow is not a good idea without an active community and site admin to moderate the comments

Wordpress Web Site Configuration:

What is a Spam Comment?

- Any comment generic in nature that doesn't specifically relate to your post such as:
 - I really like your site I'm going to subscribe via RSS
 - Your site doesn't look right in Opera / Mac / etc.
 - Where did you get your theme – I love it!
 - I definitely agree with what you said!
 - I'm having trouble subscribing to your RSS feed
 - Nearly any comment that quotes part of your post content

Wordpress Web Site Configuration: Commenting Plugins

- Dofollow
- CommentLuv / KeywordLuv
- Subscribe to Comments
- SEO Super Comments (bad)
- Disqus, Intense Debate, etc
- Top Commentator widget
- Recent Comments widget

WordPress Web Site Configuration: Internal Linking

- Using internal link plugins helps users, but also helps build up your number of internal links
- Linking to other pages and posts increases relevance in search engines
- Use a theme that has tags and category links and breadcrumbs for relevance
- Use a related posts plugin
- Use a recent posts widget

On-Site Content Optimization: Ranking Factors

- Google uses 200+ ranking 'signals' when indexing web pages
- The ranking signals that are MOST important are contained within your web site and you control them:
 - HTML Title keywords
 - Content heading keywords
 - Keywords in content
 - Keyword in supporting areas

On-Site Content Optimization: HTML Title

- What goes in the `<title>My Site</title>` tag in the HTML code of your web pages
- In WordPress your 'post title' becomes the HTML title, unless you override it with an SEO plugin
- HTML Titles should be 70 characters or less
- HTML Titles should contain keywords people use in search engines

On-Site Content Optimization: HTML Title

- Your HTML Title tag keywords carry the MOST weight of any other SEO factor - PERIOD
- If you did NOTHING more than create better Titles for your pages – you would rank better
- In Wordpress your Post title becomes your HTML title, Content Heading, and page URL (permalink) – making the keywords more effective
- Research keywords for important page titles to get indexed for things people search for

On-Site Content Optimization: Meta Description and Keywords

- “Meta” tags are in the HTML head code of web pages
- A “Meta Description” tag is (sometimes) used as the description of your page in search results
- The “Meta Keywords” tag is no longer used by search engines
- The search engine descriptions of pages are limited to 138 characters, so your meta description content should be too

On-Site Content Optimization: Meta Description and Keywords

- Best Practice: Let an SEO plugin like All in One SEO Pack automatically create meta descriptions with the first 138 characters of your page content
- Using target keywords in the first 100 words of page content boosts rankings
- Make it a habit to make the first few sentences of your pages a “synopsis” of the content, including target keywords for meta descriptions

On-Site Content Optimization: Keywords in Content

- Using target keywords repetitively in content helps crawlers determine relevance
- Keyword density percentage is irrelevant*
- *Provided your usage of keywords is in natural language and doesn't make your site look like a spam directory or link farm
- As a Best Practice it's good to have target keywords at least utilized towards the beginning and end of content

On-Site Content Optimization: Keywords in Filenames

- When uploading images or files use target keywords in the actual file names. Like white-ipod-nano.jpg, etc.
- Using keyword driven filenames will get additional indexing and traffic from image search engines, document search engines, and even main google search, etc.
- Having the images and files linked in web pages increases indexing for them

Link Building and Online Promotion

- The number of sites that link to you determine your online “authority”
- Your authority is comprised of the authority of the sites linking to you and their relevance
- Google uses it's “pagerank” system, in addition to it's algorithm and 200 “ranking signals” to determine the keywords you rank for and your position in search results pages

Link Building and Online Promotion: Google Pagerank Scale

PR	Links for PR3	Links for PR4	Links for PR5	Links for PR6	Links for PR7	Links for PR8
1	560	3.06	16.805	92.416	508.279	2.795.530
2	102	560	3.06	16.805	92.416	508.279
3	18.7	102	560	3.06	16.805	92.416
4	3.6	18.7	102	560	3.06	16.805
5	1	3.6	18.7	102	560	3.06
6	0.6	1	3.6	18.7	102	560
7	0.6	0.6	1	3.6	18.7	102
8	0.6	0.6	0.6	1	3.6	18.7
9	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	1	3.6
10	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	1

Link Building and Online Promotion: Link Anchor Text

- The #1 determinant external ranking factor is “link anchor text”
 - `buy one here`
 - `white ipod nano`
- Followed closely by the authority of the site containing the link
- 30 quality authority external links from 30 different domains count significantly more than 30 quality authority links from the same domain

Link Building and Online Promotion: Google Webmaster Guidelines

- Common sense guidelines for good rankings
 - Write quality content
 - Use good keywords
 - Don't try to “game the engine”
 - Never pay for links
 - <http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer>