

SEO Mistakes

Firstly it should be noted that Search Engine Optimization is not something performed with a blanket approach - it is an individual set of actions performed page by page to suit that page's particular goals. Websites should be researched and broken into specific and important pages based on keyword terms and then write the first few pages to suit those terms. Associate the page titles, page file names, H1 tags, description and keyword Meta tags and in page content to tell the story that match those identified keywords. It is also important to ensure pages are W3 compliant and have no errors.

The following are the top ten mistakes made by people trying to self-optimize their websites.

1. Bad Titles: Titles are the most important thing about a webpage. Search engine spiders see the title on your page first and they make a general assessment about it based upon this. They scan the page and make sure the content of the page matches the title and then assign rankings based upon these matches and how they best fit. The title tag is the best way to inform the search engine what your page is about, and it plays an important part in ranking if used properly. Placing your main identified keywords in the title and ensuring to obey the rule of leftward and stemming is vital - leftward rule, the closer the word to the left of the sentence the more important it is; stemming is where words can be associated but with words in-between. It is important to ensure your title matches your page content, description and Meta keywords and is unique for your website. Every page title and content should be unique otherwise it will be ranked supplemental.

2. Filename of the Page: It is important if you are using dynamic websites that a search engine friendly URL translator is installed. Installing a search engine friendly URL component will change these pages to something more meaningful and also including your keywords in these page names can help with SEO. If you do not have a dynamic website, then ensure your page name is short, to the point and contains your main keywords for that page.

3. Duplicate or Bad Content: Ensuring your content is unique and relevant is vital in SEO success. Often websites just duplicate content or bring in plagiarized content from other websites. Write unique content and make it good so that people will want to link to. If you are listed in the supplemental index

of Google, then making sure your titles, descriptions, Meta keywords and on page content is unique, is the only way to drag them out of the supplemental index.

4. No Links: For each person or website that links to your website it is a vote for your site. If the website that links to yours has a high pagerank itself then it carries more weight. Simply having good keywords, titles and text on your page is only part of SEO. Just because you created a unique and perfectly optimized webpage does not mean you will automatically gain a decent pagerank for that page. In order to ensure SEO success you have to create incoming links - this is probably the hardest part of search engine optimization because you are effectively selling your pages all over the Internet. One way to gain instant (within a few weeks) links is to pay for text advertising - A search on Google will uncover some of the best text linking services. Link exchanges are bad because for every vote you get you are giving one away and, if you happen to link to a "black listed" site, then Google will penalize you significantly. One way links are the ultimate in SEO link campaigns so seek out directories, post in forums, write articles and submit them and ask other friendly webmasters if they can help you out with a link. The best way to gain links is to have unique content that other people actually want to link to.

5. Incoming Link Anchor Text: The text should be targeted at your main keywords and the page they point to should have those keywords as relevant and prominent. The website you link from should be relevant to your website. Use professional common sense when gaining links.

6. Bad Internal Page Links: It is important to make sure that the anchor text linking to pages within your own website is relevant to the target page. Make sure the title tag is filled in also for each link. Make sure links are relevant and that the link title and the on page copy match the main keywords of the target page.

7. Live Links: Harness as many tools as you can to ensure all of the links on your website are live, working and not sending people to 404 error pages. It is also important to ensure your page markup (html, xhtml) is valid.

8. Impatience: Search Engine Optimization is not a short term task. It is one of an ongoing refinement. Producing unique content, checking it, validating, listing and checking the search engines and making

sure they have it listed correctly. Optimize your site once and receiving the desired results does not guarantee that it will indefinitely stay that way. Search Engine Companies are always changing their ranking and rating systems and coupled with this there are always other people out there gunning for your top spot. Be proactive, seek out new content, links and keep ahead of the curve.

9. Keyword Selection: This is proving to be a very common mistake among beginners to SEO. It is an important step to do the correct keyword research and ensure you have the right keyword list before you optimize any pages with them. Using Overture, Google Adwords and some other paid keyword tools like WordTracker (the default standard in Keyword Finding) are vital to success in finding good keywords. It is important to localize your target market and figure out what they are actually searching on when they are looking for products or services that you offer. Do the research and be as specific as possible while still being broad enough to capture some high keyword traffic.

10. Keyword Spamming and Stuffing: Try and be objective and analyze your website. Focus pages on a specific group of keywords you have identified from the keyword list. Sometimes finding niche markets locally first can be best. - *Chris Diprose*

