Higher Rankings with WordPress SEO

WordPress is one of the best, if not the best content management systems when it comes to SEO. That being said, spending time on your WordPress SEO might seem like a waste of time, it most definitely is not. Optimizing your site to the best practices outlined in this article will help you improve your rankings, gain more subscribers and have a better website in general.

Basic WordPress SEO

Out of the box, WordPress is a pretty well optimized system, and does a far better job at allowing every single page to be indexed than every other CMS. But there are a few things you should do to make it a lot easier still to work with, including: PermaLink Structure, WWW v. non-WWW, Stop Words, Optimized Titles, Controlling Titles, Optimizing Posts, Optimizing Descriptions, Image Optimization, XML Sitemaps, Breadcrumbs, Headings, Clean Code, Speed, Sidebars, HTML Sitemaps, Author Highlights,

Advanced WordPress SEO

Once you've done all the basic stuff, you'll find that the rest of the problems amount to one simple thing: duplicate content. Loads of it in fact. Out of the box, WordPress comes with a few different types of taxonomy: 1. date based; 2. category based; and 3.tag based

Next to that, it seems to think you actually need to be able to click on from page to page starting at the frontpage, way back to the first post you ever did. Last but not least, each author has his own archive too, under /author/<author-name>/, resulting in completely duplicate content on single author blogs.

In essence that means that, worst case scenario, a post is available on 5 pages outside of the single page where it should be available. We're going to get rid of all those duplicate content pools, by still allowing them to be spidered, but not indexed, and fixing the pagination issues that come with these things. And don't forget: Prevent Indexing and Archiving, Sitewide Meta Tags, Pagination, Canonical.

A Site Structure for High Rankings

Blogs are spidered so easily due to their structure of categories, tags etc.: all articles are well linked, and usually the markup is nice and clean. However, all this comes at a price: your ranking strength is diluted. They're diluted by one simple thing: comments.

Don't forget: Pages - Not Posts, Links to Related Posts, and Easy on Tags.

Conversion Optimization

A lot of bloggers still think that because their blog is a blog, they don't have to optimize anything. Wrong. To get people to link to you, they have to read your blog. And what do you think is easier: getting someone who is already visiting your blog to visit regularly and then link to your blog, or getting someone who visits your blog for the first time to link to your blog immediately? Right.

That's why conversion optimization is so vitally important to bloggers as well: they need to learn how to test their call to actions on their blog so that more people will subscribe, either by e-mail or by RSS. (Ow btw, if you haven't subscribed to this blog yet, do it now!)

A big RSS subscribe button is very important, as is offering a way to subscribe by e-mail. I even offer daily and weekly e-mail subscribe options, using MailChimp, and have found that people tend to really like those options too.

Another thing to be very aware of is when people might want to subscribe to your blog. If they've just finished reading an article of yours, and really liked it, that would be the ideal time to reach them, right? That's why more and more people are adding lines like this to the end of their posts: "Liked this post? Subscribe to my RSS feed and get loads more!"

Another great time to get people to subscribe is when people have just commented on your blog for the first time, for which purpose I use my own comment redirect plugin.

Comment Optimization

Get those readers involved -comments are one of the most important aspects of blogs. As Wikipedia states:

The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.

Comments are not only nice because people tell you how special you are, or that you made a mistake, or whatever else they have to tell you. Most of all they're nice, because they show engagement. And engagement is one of the most important factors of getting people to link to you: they show you they care, and they open the conversation, now all you have to do is respond, and you're building a relationship!

Off Site Blog SEO

If you've followed all of the above WordPress SEO advice, you've got a big chance of becoming successfull, both as a blogger and in the search engines. Now the last step sounds easy, but isn't. Go out there, and talk to people online. Follow your commenters using Twitter and Related Blogs.

Measuring Results

A good SEO campaign relies on not only implementing changes but also measuring the impact of those changes, seeing what works and doing more of that. Two great Analytics packages to measure results are Google Analytics and getClicky. For both of these Analytics packages I've written plugins, my Google Analytics for WordPress plugin and my getClicky plugin.

You can also measure results by tracking rankings, the problem with rank tracking though is that it's hard to determine "real" rankings because of personalized and localized search results. Really the best outcome of being great at WordPress SEO is to get more traffic.

Another great source of data is Google Webmaster Tools. One of the relatively simple tricks I always give people is the following: 1. go into Webmaster Tools; 2. go to "Your site on the web", then "Search queries"; 3. Click on "Download this table"; 4. Open the CSV file you get in Excel; 5. Replace all the instances of "<10″ in the Clicks column with 9; 5. Select the entire first row and click the filter button, usually the icon is a funnel: For the average position column, choose "greater than 5″, sort Ascending; and 7. Then for the "Clicks" column, sort Descending.

You now have the keywords people are finding you for in the results pages where you rank below #6 The fact that they clicked on your result proves that they found your result interesting: see if you can optimize any of those terms so you'll rank higher than a #6 average rank: use the Page Analysis in my SEO plugin to improve the page, improve the copy, ask others to link to you, etc. Be sure to read my article about cornerstone content as well.

if you want to rank for highly competitive terms, you'll have to actually do most of it and create great and compelling content in the process.- Joost de Valk