

Glossary: General Terms

Alt Text / Attributes: What is Alt text? Alt text make it feasible to enter an alternative description in the HTML code for all images on a site. This text appears when your image is not displayed. Search engines' ability to recognize contents of images is still minimal, which is why they rely on the alt text to determine what the contents of the image.

Anchor Texts: Anchors texts are the texts displayed on a website for a given link. Users click on the anchor text in order to get to the associated website. Links like "here" or "next" are not suitable because they do not provide any information about their destination. A visitor is not very likely to click on links like these.

Backlines: Backlinks (incoming links) refer to all links on other websites that refer to your website. Search engines are geared towards sorting search results according to "recommendations". The stronger your site, the more "recommendations" you get which are interpreted by search engines.

Business directory: A business directory is like an online version of the Yellow Pages. Every business directory contains an index of companies listed alphabetically by industry. The individual entries are then often linked to the corresponding company's website. The business directory helps users search for companies, services or products in their area in a more targeted way. From the point of view of search engine optimization an entry in a business directory is important; it makes the website in question easier to find and creates an additional backlink.

Competition: In the world of SEO competitors are any websites that are found using the same search terms as yours. For example, a hotel in Patagonia offers advice on places to visit in the area via their website blog. Their website will be found by typing in "Things to do in Patagonia". The same search term may give results for other hotels in Patagonia too. Both businesses are competing for the same search term.

Domain Popularity: Domain Popularity refers to the number of backlinks (incoming links) from other websites that refer back to your website. No more than one backlink will be counted per domain. For example, in a blog about horticulture there are 10 different entries that have links to the website of seed providers. In this case only one backlink would be counted for the blog.

Duplicate Content: Duplicate content refers to several websites with the same or very similar content. Search engines aim to give the user the best search results for a particular search term and consider it to be unhelpful when exactly the same content appears in several places. For this reason, search engines check for duplicate content and give less consideration to websites that have duplicate information.

Frame: Frames can be placed in HTML code to create simple structures for a website's content. Search engines may often encounter problems when attempting to gather content from frames. To make it simpler for search engines to find your website, try avoid using frames.

HTML: HTML is the code that search engines read. Make sure your HTML code is as clean as possible so that search engines can read your site easily and frequently.

Index: An index contains information on all the websites the search engine was able to find. If a website is not in a search engine's index, users will not be able to find it using that search engine.

Javascript: This is one of the scripting languages that allows website admins to apply numerous effects or changes to the content of their website while users browse it.

Keyword Density: Keyword density informs you how often a search term appears in a text in relation to the total number of words it contains. So, for example, if a keyword appears five times in a 100-word text the keyword density would be 5%. If a keyword appears too often in a website, search engines may consider it spammy and may downgrade the website, which means it will appear lower down in the search results.

Keyword Proximity: A search term can be made up of a combination of keywords. The keyword proximity refers to the distance between the search term's individual keywords. For example: a website contains the keywords that make up the search term "dentist Boston implant" in the heading "Your professional dentist in Boston; dental practice for minimally invasive implants". The search term proximity between "dentist" and "Boston" is one word, between "Boston" and "implant" it is five words. The smaller the distance between a search term's individual keywords, the more relevant it will be from a search engine's point of view.

Keyword Stuffing: Keyword stuffing is when someone attempts to manipulate their position in the search results by concentrating relevant keywords. Search engines can tell when keywords are abnormally distributed throughout the text or in a website's meta tags. If the same keywords follow one another too closely, the search engine will downgrade the website and it will then appear lower down in search results.

Link Popularity: Link popularity refers to the number of backlinks (incoming links) that direct to a website. In contrast to domain popularity, every backlink is counted separately. For example, in a blog about real estate properties in a specific area there are 10 different entries that have links to the website of a real estate broker, you would count a total of 10 backlinks.

Meta Tags: Meta tags are usually 160 characters or less in your website's HTML code that contains information about your page or post. The information is not displayed on the website itself. It is displayed under your page title in the search results.

Nofollow: This is when a link from one site does not pass SEO credit to another. It is recommended that you use Nofollow attributes when linking to external pages that you don't wish to endorse.

Offpage Optimization: Offpage optimization refers to all the measures that can be taken outside of the actual website in order to improve its position in search rankings. These are measures that help create as many high-quality backlinks (incoming links) as possible.

Onpage Optimization: Onpage optimization refers to all measures that can be taken directly within the website in order to improve its position in the search rankings. Examples of this include measures to optimize the content or improve the meta tags.

Page Content: Page content refers to all the information contained in a webpage. Page content can be displayed as text, links, images, audio, animation or videos among other things. Search engines have a limited ability to recognize images, animation, video and audio. In these instances, search engines use file names or alt attributes to determine the contents of a page. Therefore, important information needs to be given in text-form to make it accessible to search engines.

Page Description: It is possible to give a short description of the content of any given webpage (e.g. homepage, subpage). This page description is laid down in HTML code and does not appear on the website. Search engines display the page description in their search results (directly underneath the page title). If a webpage does not have a page description, text from the page will often appear instead. In the search results, the search term should be emphasized in bold. Ideally the page description should contain the search term for which the website has been optimized.

Page Title: Every webpage has a page title. This title is part of the HTML code and appears in the title bar of the browser. Search engines display page titles in their search results and use page titles to recognize the information contained on the website.

Rankings: Rankings refers to a website's position in search engine results. Rankings depend partly on the search term that is entered into the search engine. There are various factors that influence whether a website appears far up in the search results and therefore has a high ranking; how relevant the content is for example, or the quality of backlinks. At the same time every search engine gives different weight to these factors. If you enter the same search term in different search engines you will generally get different results.

Relevance: When dealing with search engines, the term 'relevance' describes the extent to which the content of a website corresponds to the search term used. The relevance of a website's content is particularly important for search engines; it affects how high a website will appear in the search results for a given search term.

Robots.txt: Robots.txt file is a text file that can be saved to a website's server. It determines if and when the search engine crawlers can visit a website's subpages and include them in their index. In doing this, certain subpages can be excluded from the search results.

RSS Feed: RSS stands for 'really simple syndication.' It is a subscription-based method for users on your website to receive updates on new content you publish. Make sure you set up a RSS feed for your website or blog to help your visitors be informed when you publish new content.

Search Engine: A search engine is a website through which users can search internet content. To do this, users enter the desired search term into the search field. The search engine then looks through its index for relevant websites and displays them in the form of a list. The search engine's internal evaluation algorithm determines which position a website will get in the search results. Google, Bing and Yahoo are examples of popular search engines.

Search Engine Optimization: Search engine optimization refers to measures that aim to improve a website's position in a search engine's natural search results. This requires experience and ongoing work. Even if you manage to get your website to appear at the top of search results you will likely need to continue monitoring of results and measures, especially if your competition is also making use of search engine optimization. If your competition improves its position in the search results, it could be at your expense.

Search Result: Search results refer to the list created by search engines in response to a query.

Search Term: A search term is what users type into a search engine when they are looking for something of interest to them. A search term can be made up of a single keyword or a combination of words, e.g. "social media" or "latest trends in social media marketing".

Sitemap.xml: The sitemap.xml file in an XML file that is saved to a website's server. It contains a list of all the subpages belonging to the website. These files help search engines to learn more about the structure of a website. This speeds up the crawl process and reduces the likelihood that the crawler will overlook subpages.

Traffic Rank: This is the ranking of the amount of traffic your site is getting in comparison to all other sites on the internet. A good tool to check your current traffic rank is Alexa.

Website Structure: Website structure refers to how your website is set up and how the pages on your site are linked to one another. It is essential that crawlers can find all the pages on your website efficiently.