Search Engine Optimization
“Content is Key”
Search Engine Optimization
“Content is Key”

1. Search Engines and SEO
2. Terms & Definitions
3. What SEO does Emerald apply?
4. What SEO can you do?
5. Common SEO Myths

Search Engines and SEO

Search Engines use keywords from content, site traffic, backlinks, as well as other unknown criteria to determine a website’s relevance when it comes to ranking.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of tuning a website or web page to increase its ranking with search engines. Updating elements and content within a site will affect its ranking. Using “SEO Best Practices” will give your site its best chance at being found in search engines.

Terms & Definitions

**Spiders**: Scripts that are used for indexing content. Search engines use them to crawl through sites and their associated pages.

**Ranking**: This is the order in which a search engine displays results to a query made by a user. The first result is the most relevant.

**Keyword**: A word that is used to describe the content it is associated with. Many keywords may describe the content.

**Heading**: These are tags that create a hierarchy within content. Heading 1 or “h1” is the highest heading tag, followed by “h2”, “h3”, and so on to “h6”.

**Backlink**: A link on one site that references another site. This is a one way link.
What SEO Does Emerald Apply?

Search engine friendly URLs
URLs are indexed by search engines and show in search results. Keywords appearing in a URL that are related to its content will increase the rankings of that page. URLs that display unrelated content such as query strings or page stubs that don’t describe the page content do not positively impact that page’s rankings.

XML Sitemaps
XML Sitemaps help spiders crawl your site more efficiently because they are able to have a road map of where to navigate to and know the hierarchy of the pages. The more pages a spider can crawl, the more it can index, thus showing more value to your site. Users can also supply the link of their site’s XML Sitemap to spidering utilities like Google Webmaster Tools. The link can be found by adding “sitemap.xml” to the end of your URL. (http://yourdomain.com/sitemap.xml)

Correct heading tag use
Emerald has designed pages with consideration to how heading tags are used and which elements have certain heading declarations. The main content area title is labeled with an “h1”. Search engines view this as the most important item on the page. Emerald’s Header Title is an “h3”. Search engines weigh this with less importance than an “h1”.

Text navigation
Text-based navigation elements can be crawled by spiders. Image-based navigations can’t be crawled because the spider can’t read the text embedded in the image.

Microformats
Microformats can be described as code snippets added to valuable types of information on a web site. They are commonly used for contact information. Currently microformats do not affect search engine rankings.
What SEO Can You Do?

Keyword-rich content

Having content that has relevant keywords will increase rankings with search engines. Relevant keywords would be words that may be industry terms or it could be something that common users and clients use. It is not necessary to duplicate keywords in your content over and over in hopes to achieve better rankings. If done too much it can negatively impact a page’s rank.

Page title

The page title is the text that is displayed at the very top of your browser. The page title is also displayed in search results. Having relevant keywords in your page title will help increase rankings for that page.

Emerald applies the text from your content title as your page title. Doing this helps achieve consistent keywords for indexing and also decreases confusion with users navigating your site.

Descriptive anchor text

Using descriptive anchor or “link” text helps users know where it is that they are linking to. Typically you can use the page title that you are linking to if you are ever in doubt.

Having links that read “click here” or something similar that is not descriptive confuses users. It is also not very helpful to spiders indexing your site content as there are no potential keywords to describe the location that the link will be sending users to.
Heading tags

Heading tags show the importance and hierarchy of your content to users reading your pages. They also contain your content so that it is easier for users to read and understand as they stand out as topics.

Additional sections headers within your page content should have an “h2” or even “h3” if they become nested within the content of an “h2”.

This hierarchy shows importance to spiders as it allows them to index content properly.

Backlinks

Backlinks provide valuable info to spiders as they show the popularity of another page. As more backlinks exist for a certain page or site, the more popular it will be and show higher in search rankings.

Registering your site with local directories or something like Google Places will create a backlink. Other ways of creating backlinks is through leaving relevant comments with links back to your site or page on blogs, forums and other social networking utilities (Facebook or Twitter).

Fresh and unique content

Creating compelling and useful content will do more for your site than any other SEO Best Practice. Create content primarily to reach your target audience but make the content organized to be easily accessible to search engines. Freshly created content affects a page’s/site’s ranking as it is seen to be new info. Good content that is updated on a regular basis will bring users back to your site and provide the ability for search engines to consistently crawl the site. A page that never gets updated is seen by spiders as stale or old and can negatively affect its ranking.
Common SEO Myths

*Myth:* *Meta keywords are important for rankings.*

*Fact:* Major search engines do not use Meta keywords for rankings. (Google, Bing)

Google is protective of their search engine algorithm but even Google has stated clearly that the contents of the Description and Keywords fields are not considered at all in their ranking formula. [http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2009/09/google-does-not-use-keywords-meta-tag.html](http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2009/09/google-does-not-use-keywords-meta-tag.html)

*Myth:* *Use the same set of Meta keywords across your site.*

*Fact:* A Meta keyword for a page that does not have the content to support it, will negatively affect that pages rankings.

*Myth:* *Submit your site to search engines for indexing.*

*Fact:* Search engine spiders are so efficient now, it is unnecessary to submit sites to search engines.

*Myth:* *SEO Best Practices will ensure you show up as #1 in Google.*

*Fact:* There is no guarantee your site will be #1 in a search.