

# Basic SEO Glossary

## Search Engine

Google, along with any other **search engines**, solely exists to help users find the most relevant answers to their questions.

## Algorithm

An **algorithm**, in simple terms, is a step-by-step process that analyzes data to solve a specific problem. In this case, a search engine will use an algorithm to connect its user with the best answer to their question.

## Search Query

When a user types a keyword or phrase into their search bar, it's called a **search query**.

## Inbound Marketing

**Inbound marketing** is the process of attracting new leads and business through your own content creation. This can be through [blog posts](#), [podcast episodes](#), [social media marketing](#), [video creation](#), and more.

## SERP

When a user types in a keyword or question, the search engine will present top results for the user to browse through in what's called a search engine results page, commonly abbreviated to **SERP**. Your main goal is to organically get to the top of the SERP for relevant keywords in your industry.

## Keywords

A **keyword** is a term or phrase that tells search engines what your content is about.

## Search Intent

Instead of only performing a keyword search,, we also want to consider the "why" behind the user's search query.

What is the reasoning behind their search?

Search engines like Google are becoming better at understanding search intent, which means it needs to be a part of your search optimization strategy.

## Black hat SEO vs. white hat SEO

**White hat SEO** refers to sustainable and organic tactics for ranking in search engines, while **black hat SEO** practices are aggressive and don't follow search engine guidelines.

# On-Page SEO glossary for small businesses

On-page SEO refers to the practice of optimizing specific pages within your own website in order to rank well in search engines.

## Site Speed

**Site speed** is the speed at which your website loads. Site speed is incredibly important to your user as attention spans continue to shrink, meaning it's also important to search engines. [Google's PageSpeed Insights](#) can help you check your site speed.

## Search Volume

**Search volume** refers to the number of people who are searching for a specific keyword within a given timeline. Search volume can change over time, so it's important to do ongoing keyword research to understand how it fluctuates.

## Keyword Difficulty

If a keyword has a high **keyword difficulty** score, that usually means there is more competition for ranking organically for the keyword.

## Site Crawler

When a search engine analyzes your site, they will use a **site crawler** (or search engine spider) to read and assess your content. Site crawlers also provide up-to-date data, meaning consistent and quality content publishing is key.

## Sitemap

As defined by Google, a **sitemap** is "an XML file where you can list the web pages of your site to tell Google and other search engines about the organization of your site content." By having a list of all the pages of your website, it helps site crawlers more easily read the file so it can intelligently crawl your site.

## Title Tag

**Title tag** tells search engines what that page is specifically about. It's smart to put specific keywords in your title tags in order to rank better for those keywords.

## Meta Description

**Meta descriptions** are meant to summarize your page's content in 320 characters or less. It shows up frequently in SERPs underneath your highlighted blue title tag.

## Header Tag

Within your page content, you can break up your text with **header tags** that tell search engines and users what your content will cover. You'll improve your SEO value for keywords you place in the header tag. This will also create extra visual appeal because you will be using optimal formatting techniques.

## Alt-text

Site crawlers can only read text, so they rely on your image's alt-text excerpt to read your images. **Alt-text** should include keywords for that page.

## Canonical Tag

**Canonical tags** prevent duplicate content issues on your site. If you have multiple versions of similar content, you'll want to pick one "canonical" version and point search engines to that. Using the canonical tag will improve your SEO while allowing you to highlight content from third party websites or other pages without your ranking taking a hit.

## Nofollow

**Nofollow links** tell search engines not to follow a certain page. This means that if you put a "nofollow" label at the end of your third-party sourced link, you aren't passing any of the SEO value to their website. Can nofollow links still be good for your SEO? Yes, and [Moz breaks down why](#).

## Readability Score

If you create content that includes dozens of random keywords, your **readability score** will be very low. Search engines want to promote content that users will enjoy, so creating content that is accessible and easily readable is important to SEO.

## Duplicate Content

**Duplicating content** is black hat SEO. Copy and pasting the same content from multiple pages of your website hurts your search engine ranking.

This also goes for content that has been duplicated from other websites. Not only is this bad for your SEO, but you'll also run into some legal trouble if you are copying content from other people's websites.

## 301 Redirect

If you have a page on your website that you have since changed the permalink (which means its URL structure) or have another page you would like redirect all its traffic to, you will want to set up a **301 redirect**.

## Keyword stuffing

**Keyword stuffing** happens when a blog post has dozens of keywords listed at the top of the page. This is a bad black hat SEO tactic.

## Rich Snippets

A **rich snippet** is a highlighted box with an answer in a search query that shows up before organic traffic.

Google has a special algorithm for assessing the quality, traffic, and overall relevancy of the answer you provide through your content. If the site crawler deems the page as having the right answer, Google will promote it as the rich snippet for answering that specific question.

# Off-Page SEO glossary for professional bloggers

Off-page SEO are the ranking factors that fall outside of your own website

## Domain Authority

Your domain is simply your web address.

Your **domain authority** is a search engine ranking score that helps you understand how well your domain can rank in SERPs. If your domain has a high domain authority, it means that it is trusted by users and search engines to provide quality content. This has a very positive effect on your SEO.

## Page Authority

Much like domain authority, your **page authority** score assesses how likely your page is to rank in search engines. Page authority scores range from one to 100. The higher your score, the stronger your chances of ranking.

## Broken Links

**Broken links** are a common culprit of poor SEO. If you delete a website page and don't include a 301 redirect link (like we talked about above), this will result in a broken link.

## Backlinks

**Backlinks** are earned links that are placed in another website that point back to your domain. This tells search engines that your content is of high quality because other sources are sharing and linking to your original content.

## Outreach

On the topic of earning backlinks, doing **outreach** can help you organically grow your SEO if it's done in the right way.

When you decide to do outreach, make sure you personalize your emails and include why it would be relevant to their brand and audience. If you make it all about you, your email will end up in the trash can.

It's even better if you can build a relationship with the person you are reaching out to, either through commenting on their blog, connecting with them on social media, or replying to their email newsletters. The less spammy the request, the better!