**Google guidelines**

* **Descriptive:** Think about the name of your company and the content you’ll put on your site. The domain name is one of the first things people notice about a site so it should provide a good idea what your site’s about at a glance.
* **Easy to remember:** Keep the domain name short and simple. If it’s long and complicated, it’ll be hard for people to remember.
* **Adaptable:** A domain name is likely be tied to your site for a long time so choose one that will work if your site’s content changes over time. If Brandon eventually plans to include other collectibles, brandonscollectibles.com would be a better domain name than brandonsbaseballcards.com.

**Once identified your audience start creating content with them in mind.**

As you begin creating content, make sure your website is:

* **Useful and informative:** If you’re launching a site for a restaurant, you can include the location, hours of operation, contact information, menu and a blog to share upcoming events.
* **More valuable and useful than other sites:** If you write about how to train a dog, make sure your article provides more value or a different perspective than the numerous articles on the web on dog training.
* **Credible:** Show your site’s credibility by using original research, citations, links, reviews and testimonials. An author biography or testimonials from real customers can help boost your site’s trustworthiness and reputation.
* **High quality:** Your site’s content should be unique, specific and high quality. It should not be mass-produced or outsourced on a large number of other sites. Keep in mind that your content should be created primarily to give visitors a good user experience, not to rank well in search engines.
* **Engaging:** Bring color and life to your site by adding images of your products, your team, or yourself. Make sure visitors are not distracted by spelling, stylistic, and factual errors. An excessive amount of ads can also be distracting for visitors. Engage visitors by interacting with them through regular updates, comment boxes, or social media widgets.

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Be careful of things that can make visitors not trust your site or leave:

* Errors such as broken links or wrong information
* Grammar or spelling mistakes
* Excessive amount of ads
* Spam such as comment or forum spam

Remember, it's about creating high quality content and providing a good experience for your audience!

### Use informative URLs

When users search for a term or phrase, the URL (also called the web address) can help them determine if there is relevant content on that particular page.

Write different titles for different pages on your site to help users and search engines know which page would be the most useful for a particular search query.

Write good meta descriptions is generally used by search engines to show a descriptive snippet of your site to users in search results. Unlike a title, which should be concise, a good meta description can be a couple sentences long. The sentences should accurately summarize a page's content. They should not be generic, filled with keywords, or contain an entire page’s content. If Google thinks the meta description of your page is relevant, it will often use it as the search result description found below the title.

### Annotate images with descriptive "alt" attributes

( Webmaster Guidelines is divided into 3 sections:

* Design and content guidelines
* Technical guidelines
* Quality guidelines )

**Design and content guidelines**

It’s good practice to use text instead of images to display important names, content, or links on your site. Google and other search engines focus on text that can be found and read on pages. The words on a page help search engines understand what a page is about and the context in which it might be useful to a potential searcher. If you use images for textual content, consider using the "alt" attribute to include a few words of descriptive text since Googlebot doesn't recognize text contained in images. Also think about the words users would type to find your pages and make sure that your site actually includes those words. As always, check for broken links and correct HTML. Broken links or pages that don’t show up correctly can frustrate visitors to your site.

**Technical guidelines**

A [robots.txt file](https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/156449?utm_source=webmasteracademy&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=webmasteracademy" \t "_blank) gives instructions to search engine crawlers about what pages to crawl or not crawl. If you don't have pages that need to be blocked from crawling, you don't need a robots.txt file. We recommend that you use a robots.txt file to prevent crawling of pages that don’t add much value for visitors, such as search results pages or other auto-generated pages. Sometimes webmasters accidentally tell search engines not to crawl their sites with a misconfigured robots.txt file. Make sure this doesn’t happen to your site! You can test if Google can access pages on your site by using the [robots.txt Tester](https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/robots-testing-tool" \t "_blank) tool. Browsers sometimes do things differently so you should also test your site in different browsers to make sure that it appears correctly.

**Quality guidelines**

Our guidelines are important if you want your site appearing and ranking well in Google search. The quality guidelines are especially important because they outline some of the illicit practices that could result in your site being removed from Google’s index.

Here are some basic principles of our quality guidelines:

* **Make pages for users, not for search engines:** When you make changes to your site, make sure you’re doing so to enhance the user experience, not to try to rank better in search results. A useful question is, "Does this help my users? Would I do this if search engines didn't exist?"
* **Don't deceive your users:** Don’t do anything sneaky that your users won’t appreciate, such as automatically redirecting your users to pages or sites they did not intend to visit.
* **Avoid tricks intended to improve search engine rankings:** Would you feel comfortable explaining what you've done to a website that competes with you or to a Google employee?
* **Create high quality and original content** Syndicated content is content copied from another website and they don’t add value. Other sites copy randomly to increase their search traffic. Scraped content alone even high quality is not provided any added value to users. If you participate in affiliate programs make sure it adds value and gives the user a reason to visit your site (an high quality affiliate will be a bicicle blog with reviews of each product, a low quality a blog that only copies product descriptions accompanied with affiliate notes). Doorway sites are created purely to drive users to another website this provides a user with a poor experience. Our primary goal is to serve our users with high quality relevant information and a good user experience.

SEO

SEO stands for either the process of “search engine optimization” or a person who performs this process, a “search engine optimizer.”

While there are many legitimate ways to optimize a site for search engines, some webmasters may utilize deceptive techniques to try and trick search engines and users. Legitimate SEO is often referred to as "whitehat," while the more unsavory, illicit techniques are often called "blackhat." It’s important to distinguish between the two methods since blackhat SEO actually damages your site and reputation, instead of improving its ranking in organic search results.

Best practices: Whitehat SEO

These techniques aim to improve a site by focusing on the visitors instead of on ranking higher. Examples of good, whitehat techniques include creating organic, high-quality content and adding good descriptive tags covered in the previous module.

Bad practices: Blackhat SEO

Illicit techniques that manipulate search engines to try to rank a site higher are considered blackhat techniques that violate our Webmaster Guidelines. Do not pay for links pointing to your site to be placed on the internet with the intent of passing PageRank and manipulating Google Search. These links may be called sponsored links or paid advertising, hidden in HTML, or inserted as optimized anchors in articles, comments, and footers.

Spam

You can also set up a [Google Alert](http://www.google.com/alerts" \t "_blank) for your site such as [site:example.com (viagra|cialis|casino|payday loans)] to be notified when these types of spam-related keywords are detected on your site.

User generated spam – comments spam on blogs (including an url in the message body), spam post on form threads and spammy accounts on free host. The most obvious form is automatically self-generated content with links to sites that have nothing to do with the article of the form thread. Another one is friendly comments including external links to unrelated sites. Keep an eye on any suspicious activity in your host and have clear spam policies early on

You can use the Webmaster Help Forum to:

* View answers to common questions from other people
* Ask others to take a look at your site and offer feedback
* Post questions specific to your site

People usually ask what they can do to help user find all of their site’s hosted content; use a sitemap, which is a list of all the pages of a site and is designed to help search engines to discover and better understand your content. And improve the future indexes. Help to locate the content and what is about

Common mobile mistake redirect users to wrong URL destinations, having videos that are unplayable.

Webmaster tools do not support how long visitors stay on your page but does support HTML improve suggestions and list of links pointing to your site.

Google recognizes different configurations for building mobile sites.

1. [Responsive web design](https://developers.google.com/webmasters/mobile-sites/mobile-seo/configurations/responsive-design.html): Serves the same HTML code on the same URL regardless of the users’ device (desktop, tablet, mobile, non-visual browser), but can render the display differently (i.e., “respond”) based on the screen size. **Responsive design is Google’s recommended design pattern**.
2. [Dynamic serving](https://developers.google.com/webmasters/mobile-sites/mobile-seo/configurations/dynamic-serving.html): Uses the same URL regardless of device, but generates a different version of HTML for different device types based on what the server knows about the user’s browser.
3. [Separate URLs](https://developers.google.com/webmasters/mobile-sites/mobile-seo/configurations/separate-urls.html): Serves different code to each device, and on separate URLs. This configuration tries to detect the users’ device, then redirects to the appropriate page using HTTP redirects] along with the Vary HTTP header.

Google does not favor any particular URL format as long as the page(s) and all page assets are accessible to all [Googlebot user-agents](https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/182072).