Search Engines, SEO and Metadata

Most search engines use software known as "Spiders" to collect information about your web site and index it in their database. Once a website has been submitted to a Search Engine the "Spiders" will eventually visit the url and gather information about your site that it needs in order to index your page to their database.

Some of the more common search engines are:

> Google, bing, Yahoo, DuckDuckGo, AOL

Check the following like for up-to-date data *http://gs.statcounter.com/*

Optimising a website for search engines is a subject in its own right and there is a wealth of information available on how to get your websites indexed at a higher ranking in search engine results. This topic is known as Search Engine Optimisation otherwise known as SEO.

This is a very useful document published by Google:
https://static.googleusercontent.com/media/www.google.com/en//webmasters/docs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf

Google Webmaster Guidelines
- Best practices to help Google find, crawl, and index your site

https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/35769?hl=en&ref_topic=6002025
https://support.google.com/webmasters/?hl=en#topic=3309469

Important tags for SEO

PAGE TITLES

Title tags are often used on search engine results pages (SERPs) to display preview snippets for a given page, and are important both for **SEO** and social sharing. The **title** element of a web page is meant to be an accurate and concise description of a page's content. Currently it is recommended to have titles no more than 55-70 characters wide but this is variable and for – ever changing – have a read here:
https://moz.com/blog/title-tag-length-guidelines-2016-edition

It is good practice to:

- Use a title that accurately describes page content including critical keywords
- Use unique titles for each page in a site
- Make the title brief but descriptive

PAGE DESCRIPTIONS

The <meta name="description"...> tag is important for every page on the site. It should contain an accurate description/summary of what the page is about. All search engines read the description tag and use it during page ranking. Google is always changing and it is now important to find a way to work the same text into your visible web page content. This description can be used as "snippets" under the url in search engine results.

It is good practice to:
- Accurately summarise the web page content
- Use unique summaries for each page
- Create descriptions that do not exceed 200-250 characters

PAGE CONTENT

Your website will be more search engine friendly if it has "dense" content. This means that the text is very relevant to the website and has a correct amount of keywords included in the content within the <body> of the web page – this is known as "keyword density".

If a website is very graphics heavy it is important to include keywords within ALT tags or No-Script tags.

META KEYWORD TAG

This is essentially useless in today's SEO market, but can be used as a placeholder for the keywords targeted.

URL

The structure of a url is very important. Using descriptive categories and filenames for documents on the website keep the website better organised and meaningful to users.

It is good practice to:
- Use words in the URL's relevant to the site content
- Have a simple directory structure
- Use meaningful names for files and directories/folders

<meta> - Metadata

Meta data is the term used to describe information about data. In HTML the <meta> tag can be used to provide information about the HTML document or web page. The <meta> tag always goes into the <head> section of the web page. The information held in the <meta> tag will not be displayed on the browser but it is read and understood.

The <meta> tag can be used to hold different types of information, the most common uses are for: Character sets, viewport, page descriptions, keyword and author. They can help with SEO is created properly

```
<meta charset="utf-8">
<meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1">
<meta name="author" content="James Sun">
```

Descriptions and Keywords

- Enter the tag into the <head> section of your document.
- Type the name attribute and assign a value of "description" or "keywords" to the attribute.
- Add a content attribute, and add a description of your page.

```
For Example…

<meta name="description" content="This pack is to help you learn and
understand all the essential stuff about standards compliant web
development">

<meta name="keywords" content="HTML5, HTML, CSS, XML, Client Side
Scripting, tags, JavaScript">
```