

Search Engine Optimization

On-page-factors and Off-page-factors

ON-THE-PAGE FACTORS

These elements are in the direct control of the publisher

CONTENT

Cq	QUALITY	Are pages well written & have substantial quality content?
Cr	RESEARCH	Have you researched the keywords people may use to find your content?
Cw	WORDS	Do pages use words & phrases you hope they'll be found for?
Ce	ENGAGE	Do visitors spend time reading or "bounce" away quickly?
Cf	FRESH	Are pages fresh & about "hot" topics?
Vt	THIN	Is content "thin" or "shallow" & lacking substance?
Va	ADS	Is your content ad-heavy, especially "above the fold?"

HTML

Ht	TITLES	Do HTML title tags contain keywords relevant to page topics?
Hd	DESCRIPTION	Do meta description tags describe what pages are about?
Hh	HEADERS	Do headlines & subheads use header tags with relevant keywords?
Hs	STRUCTURE	Do pages use structured data to enhance listings?
Vs	STUFFING	Do you excessively use words you want pages to be found for?
Vh	HIDDEN	Do colors or design "hide" words you want pages to be found for?

ARCHITECTURE

Ac	CRAWL	Can search engines easily "crawl" pages on site?
Ad	DUPLICATE	Does site manage duplicate content issues well?
As	SPEED	Does site load quickly?
Au	URLS	Are URLs short & contain meaningful keywords to page topics?
Am	MOBILE	Does your site work well for mobile visitors, on smartphones and tablets?
Vc	CLOAKING	Do you show search engines different pages than humans?

THE PERIODIC TABLE OF SEO SUCCESS FACTORS

Search engine optimization — SEO — seems like alchemy to the uninitiated. But there's a science to it. Below are some important "ranking factors" and best practices that can lead to success with both search engines and searchers.

ON-THE-PAGE SEO

CONTENT	HTML	ARCHITECTURE	LINKS	TRUST	SOCIAL	PERSONAL
Cq ⁺³ Quality	Ht ⁺³ Titles	Ac ⁺³ Crawl	Lq ⁺³ Quality	Ta ⁺³ Authority	Sr ⁺² Reputation	Pc ⁺³ Country
Cr ⁺³ Research	Hd ⁺² Description	Ad ⁺² Duplicate	Lt ⁺² Text	Th ⁺¹ History	Ss ⁺¹ Shares	Pl ⁺³ Locality
Cw ⁺² Words	Hh ⁺¹ Headers	As ⁺¹ Speed	Ln ⁺¹ Numbers	Ti ⁺¹ Identity		Ph ⁺³ History
Ce ⁺² Engage	Hs ⁺¹ Structure	Au ⁺¹ URLs	Vp ⁻³ Paid	Vd ⁻¹ Piracy		Ps ⁺² Social
Cf ⁺² Fresh	Vs ⁻¹ Stuffing	Am ⁺¹ Mobile	VI ⁻² Spam			
Vt ⁻² Thin	Vh ⁻¹ Hidden	Vc ⁻³ Cloaking				
Va ⁻¹ Ads						

FACTORS WORK TOGETHER

All factors on the table are important, but those marked 3 carry more weight than 1 or 2. No single factor guarantees top rankings or success, but having several favorable ones increases the odds. Negative "violation" factors shown in red harm your chances.

OFF-THE-PAGE FACTORS

Elements influenced by readers, visitors & other publishers

LINKS

Lq	QUALITY	Are links from trusted, quality or respected web sites?
Lt	TEXT	Do links pointing at pages use words you hope they'll be found for?
Ln	NUMBER	Do many links point at your web pages?
Vp	PAID	Have you purchased links in hopes of better rankings?
VI	SPAM	Have you created many links by spamming blogs, forums or other places?

TRUST

Ta	AUTHORITY	Do links, shares & other factors make site a trusted authority?
Th	HISTORY	Has site or its domain been around a long time, operating in same way?
Ti	IDENTITY	Does site use means to verify its identity & that of authors?
Vd	PIRACY	Has site been flagged for hosting pirated content?

SOCIAL

Sr	REPUTATION	Do those respected on social networks share your content?
Ss	SHARES	Do many share your content on social networks?

PERSONAL

Pc	COUNTRY	What country is someone located in?
Pl	LOCALITY	What city or local area is someone located in?
Ph	HISTORY	Has someone regularly visited your site or socially favored it?
Ps	SOCIAL	Have your friends socially favored the site?

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Note:
White Hat
(in green)
vs.
Black Hat
(in red)

On-the-page: content quality



- Are pages well written and have substantial quality content?
- The main reason search engines want to rank websites highly: *good content*
- E.g.: a search for “octopus facts” → National Geographic website

On-the-page: content research



- Have you researched the keywords people may use to find your content?
- Understand the target audience – whatever words they use, even if incorrect (including misspelled), must be understood
- E.g. “Eastman Gelatine” (everyone searches for “kodak gelatin”)
- E.g. “web designer rochester ny” (even though Professor Kostin is a web “developer”)

On-the-page: content words



- Do pages use words and phrases you hope they'll be found for?
- Helps: liberal use of keywords in titles, headings a paragraphs
- E.g. "...Kostin is a **web developer** who has been **designing websites**..."

On-the-page: content engagement



- Do visitors spent time reading, or do they “bounce” away quickly?
- Content presented in an engaging, novel ways keeps website visitors on the website longer
- More time on-site = search engines assume the content is relevant

On-the-page: content freshness



- Are pages fresh, and are they about hot topics?
- Content that changes from time to time suggests it is more relevant
- News websites, bulletin boards, blogs rank better than static sites

On-the-page: content thinness/shallowness



- Is content thin or shallow – lacking substance?
- Websites are penalized if they have very little content
- Noted: Are sites with strong imagery but few words penalized?

On-the-page: content ad heaviness



- Is your content ad-heavy, especially above-the-fold?
- Websites are penalized if they're suspected of having more ads than relevant content



On-the-page: HTML title tags



- Do HTML title tags contain keywords relevant to the page topic?
- E.g. `<title>Octopus - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia</title>`
- Note: specificity goes left-to-right

On-the-page: HTML description tags



- Do meta description tags describe what the page is about?
- Whatever is in the meta description, is added to the SERP
- Better than leaving it to chance (the search engine will pick the first plain text it finds)

```
<meta charset="utf-8">
<title>Robert Kostin Web Developer | Web Designer | Rochester, NY - New York</title>
<meta name="description" content="Robert Kostin is a Master Web Developer in the Upstate New York area.">
```

SERP

Robert Kostin Web Developer | Web Designer | Rochester, ...
www.rkostin.com/ ▼
Robert Kostin is a Master Web Developer in the Upstate New York area.



On-the-page: HTML heading tags



- Do headlines and subheadings use header tags with relevant keywords?
- Headings: `<h1>`, `<h2>`, `<h3>`
- Words are highly indexed; must be relevant
- “Lead-in” text is not relevant; e.g.:
`<h1>Octopi in the Wild</h1>`
`<h2>It’s really interesting!</h2>` ← *this isn’t helping*
`<p>The story of octopi begins with...`

On-the-page: HTML structure/outline



- Are pages structured with heading tags to describe the content in a logical manner?
- Well structured documents are indexed better than loose text
- Note: don't use an H2 without an H1 above it; don't use an H3 without an H2 above it; et cetera
- <http://gsnedders.html5.org/outliner>

On-the-page: HTML stuffing



- Do you excessively use words you want pages to be found for?
- Gratuitous use of keywords in HTML is penalized
- I.e. using keywords in a way that doesn't enhance the content

On-the-page: HTML hiding



- Do colors or design styles hide words you want pages to be found for?
- Tricks to stuff HTML with keywords are penalized
- E.g.

```
<div style="background-color: #333333; color: #333333;">  
    keyword, keyword, keyword, keyword, keyword, keyword  
</div>
```

On-the-page: architecture, crawling



- Can search engines easily find and crawl pages on the site?
- XML Sitemaps
- www.xml-sitemaps.com

On-the-page: architecture, duplicate management



- Does site manage duplicate content issues well?
- Reduce how often blocks of content are replicated across multiple pages in one website
- Mostly an issue for very large, content management system (CMS) driven websites

On-the-page: architecture, speed



- Does the site load quickly?

On-the-page: architecture, URLs



- Are URLs short and do they contain meaningful keywords to page topics?

On-the-page: architecture, mobile



- Does your site work well for mobile visitors, on smartphones and tablets?

On-the-page: architecture, cloaking



- Do you show search engines different pages than humans?

Off-the-page: link quality



- Are links from trusted, quality or respected web sites?

Off-the-page: link text



- Do links point at your webpages use words you hope they'll be found for?

Off-the-page: link number



- Do many links point at your web pages?

Off-the-page: paid links



- Have you purchased links in hopes of better rankings?

Off-the-page: link spam



- Have you created many links by spamming blogs, forums or other places?

Off-the-page: trust authority



- Do links, shares and other factors make site a trusted authority?

Off-the-page: trust history



- Has site or its domain been around a long time, operating in the same way?

Off-the-page: trust identify



- Does site use means to verify its identify and that of authors?

Off-the-page: trust, pirated



- Has site been flagged for hosting pirated content?

Off-the-page: social reputation



- Do those respected on social networks share your content?

Off-the-page: social shares



- Do many share your content on social networks?

Off-the-page: personal country



- What country is someone located in?

Off-the-page: personal locality



- What city or local area is someone located in?

Off-the-page: personal history



- Has someone regularly visited your site or socially favored it?

Off-the-page: personal social



- Have your friends socially favored the site?