# Google SEO Fundamentals: Week 1

## Overall Goal

- select keywords based in relevancy, intent and competitiveness

- analyze keyword competitiveness

- identify potential opportunities for websites

## Introduction to On-page SEO

### Key Areas on SEO

### Learning Objectives

☐ Define key areas of SEO

☐ Understand how these contribute to website optimization

**Copy of 3 Key Areas of SEO**

| Aa Name | ☰ Focus | ☰ Contribution to website optimization |
|---|---|---|
| On-page Optimization | content, keyword choice meta data | improve the quality of the content, graphic design etc. to improve the SEO as a whole |
| Technical SEO/On-site Optimization | code, structure and more | looks at how the site is seen and understood by the search engine. No matter how informative or aesthetic your websites are if the search engines don't see it, then it wont make a difference if search engines cannot find or understand the improvements that you made |

| Aa Name | ≡ Focus | ≡ Contribution to website optimization |
|---|---|---|
| Off-site Optimization | developing good relationship with webmasters | refers to what action you can take outside to improve optimization on your website such as *acquiring inbound links, engaging in social media, and writing link-worth content* |
| Untitled | | |

**Question: True/False** On-page Optimization includes focusing on various elements in the code of the page. Technical SEO optimizes the content of your site.

**Answer: False**. On-page optimization refers to the content on the page, keyword choice for the page, and optimizing the page's metadata. Technical SEO refers to the structure and code of your website.
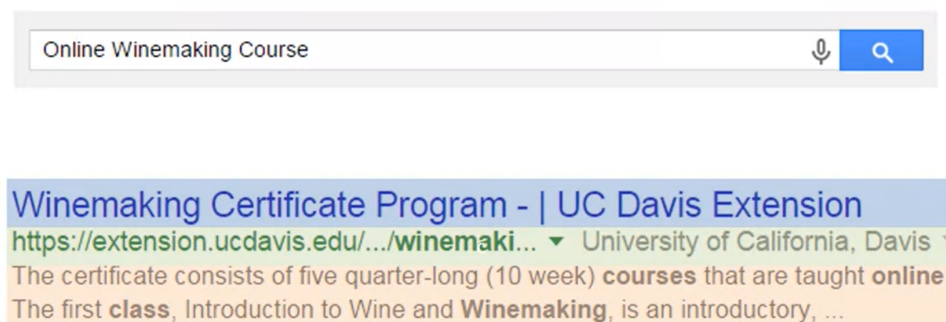
# On-Page SEO: Anatomy of a Perfectly Optimized Page

**On-Page SEO: The Definitive Guide**, Backlinko, 2021

A guide to getting on-page SEO right, looking at the basics as well as the other essentials you need to ensure are in place if you want to outrank your competitors: https://backlinko.com/on-page-seo

# Meta Data and Meta Tags

Anatomy of a search result

All together they are known as the sites **metadata (*basically means data that describe other data*),** but each individual area have its own name.

The individual area are known as **metatags.**

- metatags are small snippets of text that *helps search engines identify important information about the page,* such as what the page is about or whether or now search engine robots should ignore the page

- found in source code → not viewable unless inspected

**Blue: Title Tag**

- describes the title or name the web master gave to this specific page

**Green: Website address or URL**

- non-definable. not actually part of the metadata that you can define rather search engine will pull the URL from the page it is analyzing the text

**Orange: meta description**

- block of text describing the content you will find in the page

- **bolded** words match the words we used in our search query → **keywords**

  - other words that are bolded → words that are semantically related to keywords

- keywords do not need to appear together

# Title Tags 101

Where can you find the title tag

- search results

- browser tab

- view source → source code → find <title> .... </title>

- browser add on like MozBar

**Question:** True/False The title tag is the most important on-page element.

**Answer: False.** Though the title tag is of high importance, the content of your page is actually the most important element.

> 💡 Title tag should accurately and concisely describe your page while containing keywords users are likely to search for

## Best Practices

- It should accurately and concisely describe your page while containing keywords users are likely to search for

- keywords should be placed at the front of the title tag and the brand name at the end of the title tag → google places more importance at the beginning of the title tag than at the end → helps boost site rankings

- Place **brand name first** if you want to leverage branding.

  - if its a well known brand then we might see a higher clickthrough if brand name appears first

  - if its a less well known brand the best solution is to keep it at the end

  - use pipe symbol | to differentiate brand name and keywords

- Shorten brand names if its too long

  - UC Davis Extension → UC Davis Ext

  - But always remember to ask client about branding guidelines because all too often there's a proper guideline for shortening brand names

  - educate client about shortening brand names

- Use individual keywords rather than a descriptive phrase

  - goal: want to optimize YOUR PAGE which sold blue widgets

    - use individual keywords instead

    - separate your keywords with hyphens (e.g Blue Widgets For Sale - Buy Blue Widgets | Midget Mart ) → format: key word 1 - key word 2 | Brand name

- title tag should be no longer than 55-60 characters

- search engine can read more than 60 characters but additional characters will be cut off in search results → poor user experience

- Eg   *Sustainability and the built environment certificate program*

  - name of the course

  - leads to an unappealing search result and can impact clickthrough to the site

- only use important keywords


- use only 2 keywords  for tight focus → making it more relevant to the keyword and easier to rank

- Avoid using any special characters → stick to alpha numeric characters


▼ **Assignment: Create a better title tag**

Title tag:  **Website Design Professional Concentration | UC Davis Extension**

1. Create a better title tag for this page, explain <u>why</u> you made the page changes.

   - Web Design and Development Course | UC Davis Extension

   - Explanation: Professional Concentration is a mouthful and can be replaced by a more relevant and more commonly used word such as course. Web short for website. Design and development to emphasize the may focus of the page.

   - 

2. Create your own title tag for another website or company and provide the link to the page you created the title tag for, and explain <u>why</u> you made the changes you did.

   - Original: Course: Complete Data Analyst Bootcamp 2021 | Udemy

   - New: Udemy Data Analyst Bootcamp 2021- Enroll now

   - Explanation: The title tag is already good as it is so there's a minimal improvement. Bootcamp and complete course, in this context, are quite synonymous so it's better to drop one. It has less character and direct to

the point. Udemy, like Coursera, are very well known so it's reasonable to place it at the front to gain more clickthrough.

3. Please help provide feedback to your peers, using the criteria outlined in the assignment portion of the video.

Evaluation:

1. is the title tag different than the initial title tag?

2. Is the entire title tag including brand name, less than 60 characters in length

3. does it include the brand name

4. pipe symbol

5. does the title tag contain a phase or keyword?

6. Is there a hyphen for title tags with more than 1 keywords?

## Meta Descriptions

- Unlike the title tab, meta description cannot be seen on the page or within the browser

- This is hidden to the viewer and only displays publicly in the search results

- view source code → meta name == description | content = " "

- If google believes this area is not well optimized for example, maybe its irrelevant to the content topic, or maybe its too long. Google may choose their own meta description to show users

  - Search engines usually scrape snippets of the content that users most likely search for

Keywords within meta descriptions do not help in site rank. Meta  description DOES help SEO strategy by increasing clickthrough to your website. Remember the keywords used in the queries were bolded within the meta description, this then help draw the eye to that particular result

What to do?

- Make sure that meta description contain information about the page that entices a user to click well or

- also naturally incorporating keywords they might use while performing a search

- limit characters under 160 characters. But still, use as many characters as possible 150-160

▼ Question: Meta-descriptions can be more than 160 characters. T/F

Yes, a meta-description can be more than 160 characters, but it shouldn't be. Meta descriptions need to be less than 160 characters, so they are not cut-off.

Search engines usually scrape snippets of the content that users most likely search for. This can be advantageous since the scraped block of content could be unappealing so...

- take control

- let google choose when ...
  - your topic is too broad and focuses on multiple keywords
  - when you aren't sure what to include
  - its a blog post
  - but for status content → write your own

- You know your content more than the search engine do, so be proactive and write your own meta descriptions to better capture and deliver the essence of the content

## Calls to Action

- This means you are basically requesting the user to perform a certain action
  - increases click through rate to site
  - Eg learn more, read our article to discover, find out, download here

- Eg winemaking course: Click here to learn the art of making wine or enroll in our online winemaking certification course

▼ Question:  Calls to action in the meta-description can increase website visits. T/F

When website visitors are faced with calls to action telling them exactly what you want them to do, they are more inclined to take that action. Including words like 'learn more,' 'read our article to discover,' 'find out,' or 'download here,' or 'watch our video,' can help get that visit.

Another reason to optimize this area is that social networks use this as a description of the page when you or another user post that page is linked to a social network

Avoid quotations or special characters as it can cause the meta data to be cut off

# Meta Keywords

- no longer a focus of SEO.
  - Before, search engine could not analyze the content automatically so they resort on meta keywords. webmasters dont use it responsibly by adding a lot of keywords in the metadata → no longer in use
  - algorithms improved meta keywords were unnecessray
  - not seen by users

# URL Optimization

URL - address that loa ds a particular site or document

- it describe a page

### Best Practices

- It should be relevant and contain important keywords while remaining brief

- place important keywords at the beginning of URL

- They no longer play a large role in SEO strategy since it was over-optimized before

  - But its still important to consider it from an off page SEO perspective → if people are linking to particular page using the URL as the link, the URL can serve as its own anchor text

  - Course/Winemaking/WinemakingCourse

- search engine may include subdirectories if they are keywords too

## Parameters

- long list of characters, numbers, and letters

https://www.danmurphys.com.au/liquor-library/wine/more-about-wine/how-to-make-wine.jsp;jsessionid=EC44183CD962C662058CE86781C8F722.ncdlmorasp1303?bmUID=l2Ta3.i

If possible, leave them out of your URLs because

- it makes URL excessively long

- The parameters can change based on a variety of factors

- if the figure above the highlighted characters are the session ID

  - so it changes based on user

## Changing URL

- URLs are set in design stage

- can change URL later

- page is already ranking under existing URL

- page may lose authority

- after the url is changed it is best to ensure it is redirected using a **301 or permanent redirect**

  - it takes time for google to remove old URL and index to the old one to the new one

- changing URL for SEO is not always best option

- better to optimize page and leave URL as is

- But when creating a new page whether for a client or your own, always follow the bets practices enumerated above

▼ Why shouldn't you change a URL for SEO?

1. **Important keywords are not at the beginning of a URL.**

2. **The webpage may lose the history and authority it has already built up.**

3. **It needs less parameters in the URL.**

4. **The keywords and subdirectories are not as accurate as they should be.**

Answer: **The webpage may lose the history and authority it has already built up.**

Explanation: While you can always change the URL after the fact, remember, that page is likely already ranking under the existing URL. Changing it later would mean it would lose some of the history and authority it has built up.

# Heading tags

- H1, H2, H3, and so forth

- breaks up the page

- it helps search engine to determine what the page is about and the page structure

- H1 and H2 is the most important

## Best practices

- optimize heading tags with keywords

  - make it sound natural and not written for robots

- reinforce the title tag or leave out

- focus on H1 and H2

  - H1: One per page

  - H2 as needed

- Don't include multiple heading tags just to include keywords as this can be seen as spammy

- To access it → view source code or use browser ad-on like Moz

- Review page and make recommendation on where to put the heading tags

Demo

- H! is the site name → same for other site → making duplicate content and isn't providing any value

  - recommendation: remove the site name in H1

- H2 = secondary menu →

  - recommendation: remove H2 tag, incorporate keyword

## Assignment

From the video, **How to Use Heading Tags**, you were prompted to do an assignment. Use this discussion prompt to post your recommendations for discussion with your peers.

1. Select two different websites and provide the URLs.

2. While viewing the homepage of those websites, find the H1 and H2 tags.

3. List those tags for each website.

4. Make your recommendations.

Answer:

URL1 : https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/9237-how-to-start-food-truck-business.html

- H1: How to Start a Food Truck Business

- H2:
    - The food truck business can be rewarding. If you've ever thought about making good meals on the go, this guide on launching a food truck business is for you.
    - Food truck startup costs
    - Food truck funding options
    - Create a food truck business plan
    - How to find food trucks for sale
    - Mobile POS options
    - The advantages of a food truck business
    - The challenges of a food truck business
    - Food truck permits and regulations

Reccomendation

- The keyword "food truck" is used for almost all tags since we are under the pretext that the page is about starting a food truck business I think its better to remove the word "food truck" to the H2s.
- The first H2 is too long, I think its better to drop it and use paragraph tags instead

# Creating and Optimizing Unique Content

> Content is King. Quality content focuses around the topic or theme of your page of your page

## Best practices

- Content should include focus and related keyword
- make keyword fit naturally into the copy

- every site is different, so there's various ways to improve the quality of your content. In essence, it's situational.

- Relevance. make content relevant to the theme

  - match content to topics

  - content should be well organized in subdirectories → easy to locate topics

- Unique Content

  - create your own unique content

  - copied content does not help rank → may sometimes result to penalty

  - quoting text is fine but surround it with your own content

  - for duplicated content, google gives rank to site that first published content

  - copying and changing words does not make it unique

  - dont copy content and just change location

  - duplicate pages (within a site) will compete in a search and can cannibalize your effort

- Add value

  - include new information

  - add video or images

- Resources

  - google like results that are useful

- keyword use

  - - break out keyword throughout the article

  - use synonyms too

  - change up your wording

  - use topic associations

- Linking

  - links to other relevant pages on the site helps search engines to crawl the site

- link to other content using anchor text

- Example: When linking movies, you should use anchor text like "Movie reviews" instead of using "click here"

▼ Question: Reusing a keyword too much in your content can lead to an over-optimization penalty. T/F

True. Instead of using the same word, try to think of synonyms that can expand the keywords for your results.

# Analyzing a Website Using a Web Crawler or Spider

Goal: Use a web crawler effectively

Web crawlers or spider are a tool that crawls your site like a search engine and it shows you what data the site has extracted

▼ Question: A crawler is the best way to get a large scale view of the meta-data for on-page SEO.T/F

True. Crawling a website allows you to get all of the elements without being too time-consuming in your SEO.

**Screaming Frog SEO Spider**

# Readings

**The Basics of Search Engine Friendly Design & Development**, Arvin Tampus, Coffeebot Solutions, 2019

https://caffeinerobot.com/the-basics-of-search-engine-friendly-design-devolpment/