SEO - What is it and how to optimise it

What is SEO

SEO, or Search Engine Optimization, is a set of practices and strategies aimed at improving a website's visibility and ranking in search engine results pages.

The primary goal of SEO is to increase organic (non-paid) traffic to a website. It involves various techniques to make a website more attractive to search engines like Google, Bing, and Yahoo, thus improving its chances of ranking higher when users search for relevant keywords or phrases.

Key SEO strategies:

- Keyword Research   [Link](#)

- On-Page SEO   [Link](#)

- Off-Page SEO   [Link](#)

- Local SEO   [Link](#)

- Sitemap.xml   [Link](#)

- Robots.txt   [Link](#)

Keyword Research

This is the foundation of SEO. It involves identifying the keywords and phrases that users are likely to enter into search engines when looking for information related to your website's content or products.

Short Tail Keywords

- Typically short phrases or single words that are broad and general.

- Often consist of one to three words.

- Usually have a high search volume because they are commonly used. For example, "shoes," "smartphones,".

- Due to their broad and general nature, they tend to have high competition, making it challenging to achieve a high ranking.

Long Tail Keywords

- Longer phrases or sentences that are highly specific and often more detailed.
- Typically consist of three or more words.
- Have a lower search volume because they are more niche and cater to a specific audience. Examples include "best running shoes for flat feet" or "affordable smartphones for seniors."
- Due to their specificity, long tail keywords have lower competition.

Here's a comparison to help illustrate the difference:

Short Tail Keyword:

"Laptops"

- Broad and generic
- High search volume
- High competition

Long Tail Keyword:

"Best gaming laptops under $1000 for 2023"

- Specific and detailed
- Lower search volume
- Lower competition

Key words

When it comes to SEO and content marketing, both short tail and long tail keywords have their uses. Short tail keywords are important for capturing a broad audience and can be useful for brand visibility, but they are more competitive. Long tail keywords, on the other hand, can attract a more targeted audience and may result in higher conversion rates because they match the specific intent of users. Using a combination of both short tail and long tail keywords in your content strategy is often a balanced approach to attract a wide range of visitors while also catering to more specific user needs.

Relevant LMS tab
wordtracker

"Don't let your age hold you back"
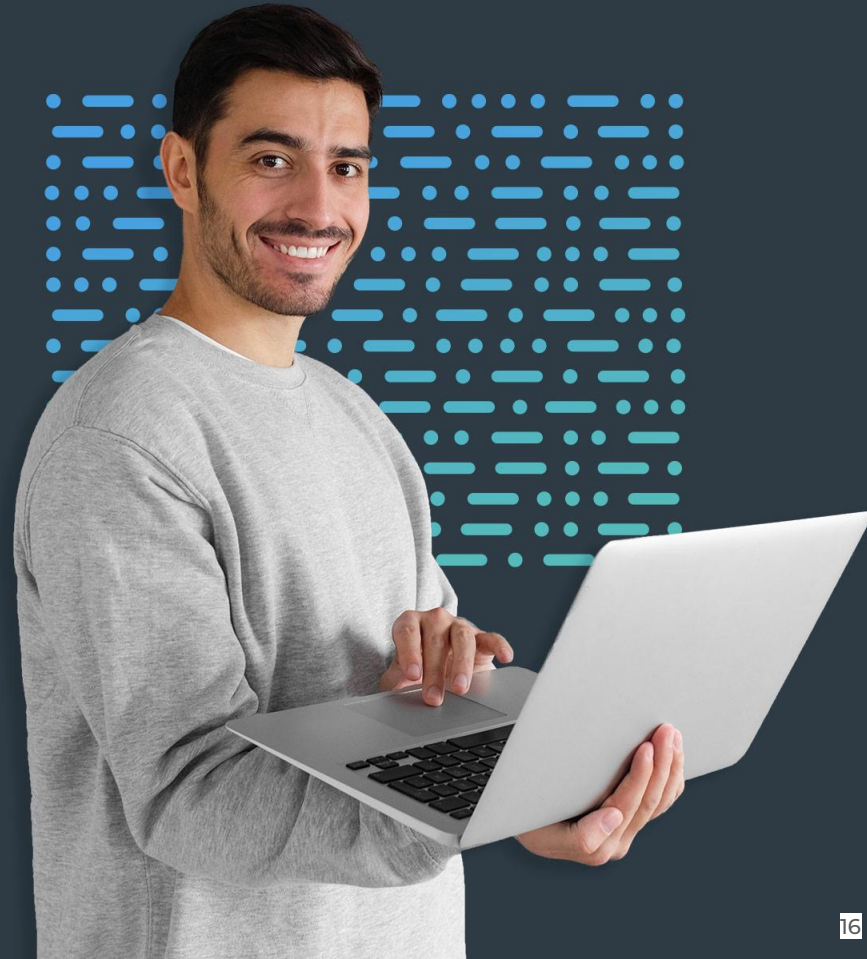
On-Page SEO

On-Page SEO:

This refers to optimizing individual web pages to make them more search engine-friendly. It involves optimizing meta tags (title, description), using relevant keywords, improving content quality, and ensuring proper formatting.

Examples include:

- Optimize Title Tags
- Meta Description
- High-quality content
- Keyword placements
- Internal Links

- Image optimization
- Mobile-Friendly Design
- Page loading speed
- Accessibility
- User experience
- Regularly updated
- Social sharing

On-Page SEO:

Optimize Title Tags:

Craft compelling and concise title tags (around 60 characters) that include your primary keyword. The title tag should accurately describe the content of the page.

Meta Descriptions:

Write unique and engaging meta descriptions (around 150-160 characters) for each page. A well-crafted meta description can encourage more clicks from search engine results pages.

Header Tags (H1, H2, H3, etc.):

Use header tags to structure your content. The H1 tag should include the main keyword and describe the page's primary topic. Subheadings (H2, H3, etc.) help organize and improve readability.

On-Page SEO:

High-Quality Content:

Create valuable, informative, and engaging content that meets the needs of your target audience. Content should be well-researched, original, and free from spelling and grammatical errors.

Keyword Placement:

Place your target keywords naturally throughout the content, including in the first paragraph, headings, and within the body text. Avoid keyword stuffing, which can lead to penalization by search engines.

Internal Links:

Add internal links to relevant pages within your website. This can improve user experience and help search engines understand the structure of your site.

On-Page SEO:

Image Optimization:
Compress images to reduce load times and use descriptive alt tags for images. Search engines can't "read" images, so alt tags help them understand the content.

Mobile-Friendly Design:
Ensure your website is responsive and mobile-friendly, as mobile usability is a significant factor in search engine rankings.

Page Loading Speed:
Improve page loading speed by optimizing images, using a content delivery network (CDN), and minimizing unnecessary scripts and plugins.

On-Page SEO:

Secure and Accessible Website:

Implement HTTPS for your website to ensure data security. Also, make sure your website is accessible to all users, including those with disabilities.

User Experience (UX):

Focus on creating a positive user experience. High bounce rates and low time spent on a page can negatively impact your SEO. Easy navigation and clear calls to action are essential.

Regularly update:

Keep your content fresh by regularly updating and adding new information. Search engines prefer sites that are regularly maintained.

Social Sharing:

Encourage social sharing by adding social sharing buttons to your content. This can increase your content's visibility and traffic.

Off-Page SEO

Off-Page SEO:

Off-site SEO, also known as off-page SEO, involves optimizing factors outside your website to improve its search engine rankings. These external factors play a significant role in determining your website's authority and credibility in the eyes of search engines. Here are some tips to help you improve off-site SEO:

Examples include:
- External links to website
- Social media engagement
- Online reputation management
- Content marketing
- Influencer marketing
- Guest Blogging

Off-Page SEO:

Link Building:

High-quality backlinks from authoritative websites are crucial for off-site SEO. Acquire backlinks naturally by creating valuable and shareable content. You can also do guest posting, broken link building, and reach out to industry influencers for collaborations.

Social Media Engagement:

Active participation on social media platforms can help you build brand awareness, engage with your audience, and even acquire backlinks when your content gets shared. Social signals may also indirectly impact your search rankings

Online Reputation Management:

Monitor and manage your online reputation by addressing customer reviews and feedback. Positive reviews can improve your credibility, while addressing negative feedback can mitigate their impact.

Off-Page SEO:

Content Marketing:

Create and promote high-quality, shareable content to attract natural backlinks. This could include blog posts, infographics, videos, and other content that your target audience finds valuable.

Influencer Marketing:

Collaborate with influencers in your niche to promote your content or products. Influencers can help you reach a wider audience and gain credibility.

Guest Blogging:

Contribute guest posts to authoritative websites in your industry. Ensure that your guest posts are informative and relevant. This can help you build relationships and acquire backlinks.

Local SEO
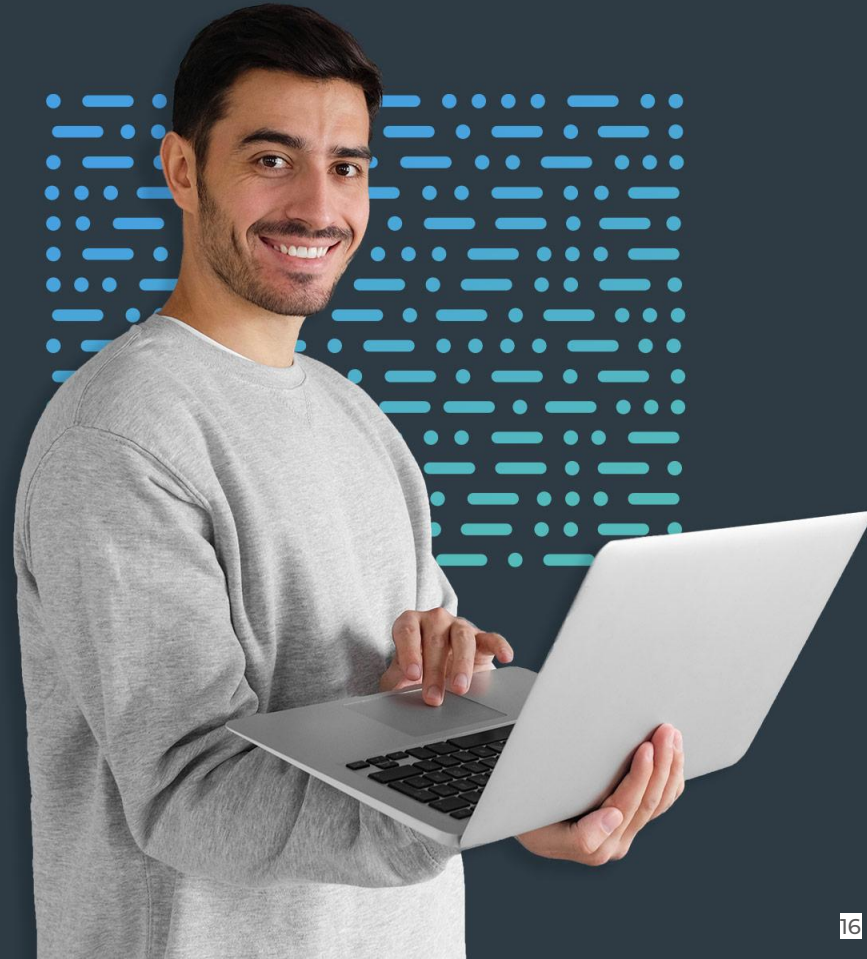
Local SEO:

If you have a local business, optimize your website for local SEO. This includes creating and verifying your Google My Business profile, getting listed in local directories, and obtaining reviews from satisfied customers.

Examples include:
- Social bookmarking
- Forum Participation
- Brand Mentions
- Press Releases
- Email Outreach
- Directory Submissions
- Monitor Competitors

Local SEO:

Press Releases:

Publish press releases about noteworthy events or updates related to your business. These press releases can be distributed through various online channels.

Email Outreach:

Conduct outreach to other website owners or bloggers in your niche. Politely ask for backlinks, guest post opportunities, or collaboration.

Directory Submission:

Submit your website to authoritative and niche-specific directories. Avoid low-quality or spammy directories, as they can have a negative impact on your SEO.

Monitor Competitors:

Analyze the backlink profiles of your competitors to identify potential link-building opportunities. Tools like Ahrefs and Moz can be helpful for this.

What not to do:

Stay away from practices like link farms, keyword stuffing, and other unethical tactics, as they can lead to penalties from search engines.

Remember that building a strong off-site SEO strategy takes time and effort. Focus on earning high-quality backlinks, engaging with your target audience, and creating valuable content that naturally attracts attention and shares. Consistency and patience are key when it comes to off-site SEO.

Algorithm Updates:

Search engines regularly update their algorithms to deliver better search results. SEO professionals need to stay informed about these changes and adjust their strategies accordingly.

Sitemap.xml and robot.txt files

sitemap.xml:

An xml sitemap is a file that lists a website's important page urls, making sure that search engines can crawl, or navigate, through them. It also helps search engines understand your website structure.

A sitemap file ensures search engines will crawl every essential page on your website.

This is especially useful if there are pages of your site that don't have any internal links pointing to them. It can help speed up content discovery for search engines when they crawl and index your web applications.

Helpful resources:
[LMS Intro to SEO](#)

To create a sitemap.xml file

- In the www.xml-sitemaps.com website paste in your website url and click start.
- Download the file that is generated and drag and drop it into your projects root folder in your workspace.
- After you create the robot.txt file you add in your url.
(Please continue with slides to see)

Robots.txt

A simple text file that tells search engines where they are not allowed to go on a website.

It is seen as a sign of quality and improves your SEO ranking.

Your in-demand skills will fast track your career & earnings

Career Service users employed within one year of graduation

Creating a robots.txt file

- Create a robots.txt file in your root directory.
- In the file add the following lines
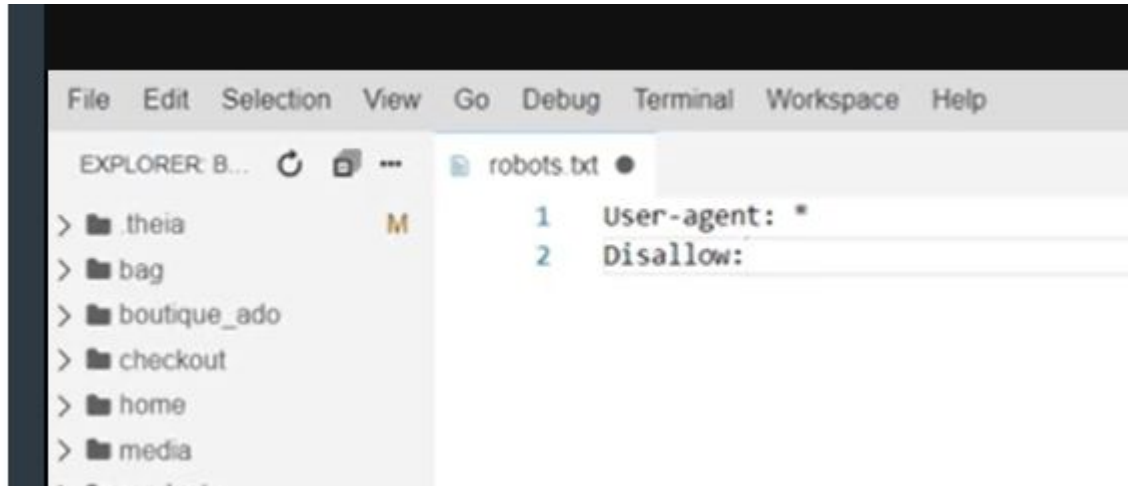
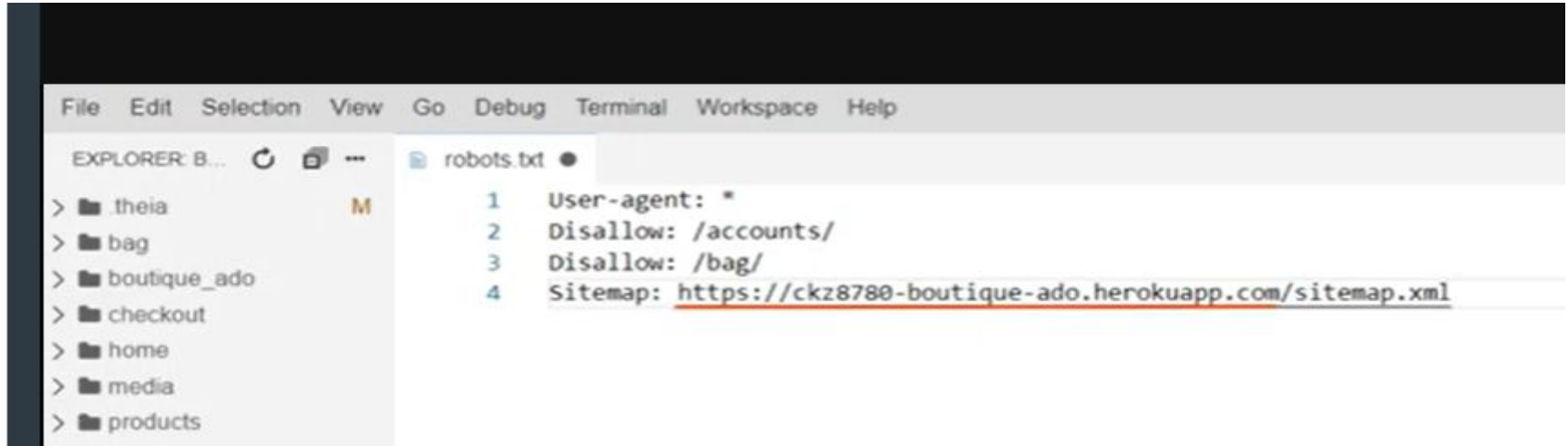# Creating a robots.txt file

Adding a list of disallowed files may look like the following
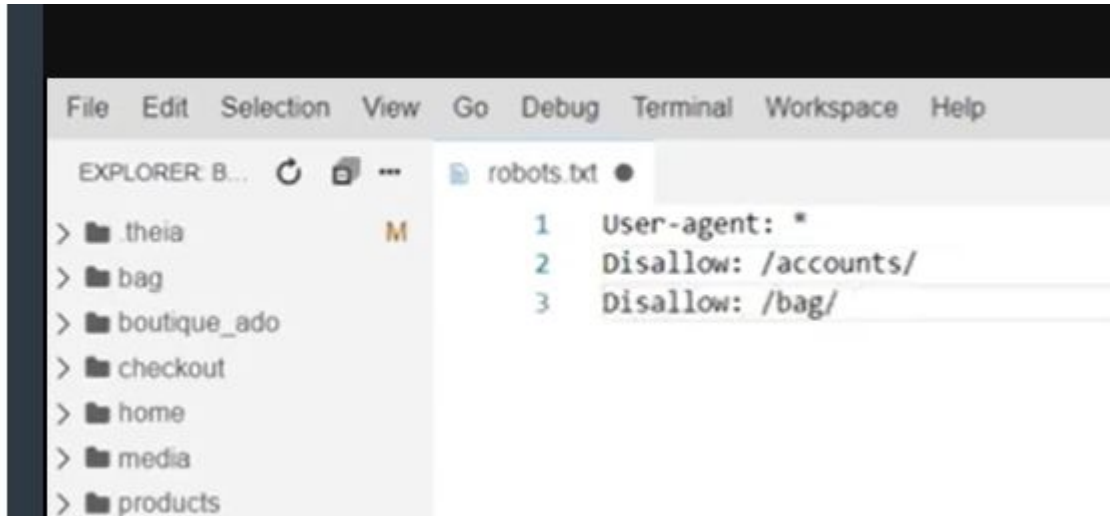
Add the site map to the robots file.

Add the link to our deployed site and with the /sitemap.xml filename at the end.

Make sure to commit changes.

Finally (These final steps are not required for projects)

The final steps for working with a sitemap and robots files can only be implemented for web applications that have a DNS certificate.

Creating a DNS certificate is part of the process of deploying a web application to a custom domain.

The steps involved in registering and wiring up a custom domain

A sitemap should be registered with Google which can be done on the Google Search console.

These links are just here for you to reference when you are working on real-world, custom domain projects in your development career.

Creating and submitting a sitemap

Managing your sitemaps and using sitemaps reports

Google search console

Testing your robots.txt file