How to earn $1,000's a day with Search Engine Optimization and Joomla.

An Incomplete Guide to SEO

"How you can profit from the <u>EXACT SAME</u> search engine optimization strategies that I used to charge clients $3,590 a day to implement!"

In this web-based, no-hype guide, I'll reveal my simple step-by-step search engine optimization strategy that I have been using for 2 years on over 350 clients and that anyone can use to get a front page ranking on Google:

Do you want:

- More web site traffic?
- More orders?
- A healthier Internet business?
- A front-page ranking on Google and all major search engines?
- More money than you thought humanly possible?

... if so, keep reading. Get ready to become a **search engine optimization "insider"**. What I'm about to teach you are the actual secrets that I have used to get *unlimited daily traffic* for over 350 of my clients from Google. For the sake of your business, you can't afford not to read my search engine optimization guide!

Used without permission as an example of how web marketing consultants get a bad name!

This is an example that I found on a website:
http://www.google-search-engine-optimization.com/

There are millions (literally) of these sites on the web. The real truth about search engine optimization is that there is no "silver bullet" any more. It used to be true that you could stuff a few keywords into some metatags and you get lots of traffic. Now, search engines are much smarter. Google recently released its patent #20050071741 on its "Information Retrieval Based on Historical Data" (that's that little search page to you and me). In the document were over 118 factors that effected a web site's position in the search engine's rankings!

This is the real truth about SEO…….

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There is no such thing as Search Engine Optimization any more.

The only reality now is having a long term web marketing strategy and a commitment to building a site full of quality information.

Having said that, assuming that your site is one of the ones with the quality content, SEO still has its place.

On an average day, about 68 million Americans will go online."
"More than half of them, over 38 million people, will use a search engine."

Source: Pew Internet & American Life Project, January 2005.

There are a lot of people out there, and why shouldn't they come to your site? Especially if all the "other guys" are still just stuffing metatags. In this ebook, I will explain some of the things you can do to increase your traffic and visibility, and make specific references to how this is implemented in Joomla. I will be looking at the steps in a roughly chronological order that you might take as you launch a new site. Follow this guide and some time in the next 6 months, you might be getting that traffic you wanted.

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1. Start at the beginning: Site Goals

Why do you want traffic?

Take notes on some of the tasks outlined in this guide.

Your Web Site:

What is your web site about?

_____

_____

Who Will visit it?

_____

_____

What will they gain?

_____

_____

What will you gain?

_____

_____

Before you go anywhere you need to answer this question. You can break it down into:

- What is your web site about?
- Who will visit it?
- What will they gain?
- What will you gain?

Write the answers on a piece of paper… no really!

Unless you have a clear idea of what you are building your site for, you'll struggle to make decisions later in the process of designing and publishing it. Especially important is thinking about what your viewers will be gaining from visiting your site. The answer to this question will form the underpinnings of your search engine optimization efforts.

Now you have thought some what about who is going to visit your site, we can talk about the how.

Publishing your site is only a very small step in the path to having it get traffic. Unless you do something else, your site will just sit there and no-one will know it exists. Unfortunately, unlike Kevin Costner's "Field of Dreams" Build it and They Will Come is not true on the web.

So, how can you get visitors to your site?

Well, there are several ways to get the word out to tell people that you exist.

1. Submit your site to directories
2. Post links on other sites
3. Have your site appear in search engines

Now, the reality is that to have any significant traffic, you need to do all three of these. They are all inter-related from the perspective of SEO. In this guide we will look at a rough process starting from

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a brand new site to try and achieve the SEO results you want. First a little word about some software called "Information Retrieval Based on Historical Data" (that's Google to you and me).

An Introduction to Google

Google is "the" Internet search engine. Over 150 million searches are conducted daily. Between Google, Yahoo and MSN, these three account for about 90% of all searches made on the web.

As stated in the first paragraph, over 150 million searches are conducted every day with Google. Even if your business or product is currently listed on Google, do you think that a boost in ranking to the 1st or 2nd page would increase the number of potential customers coming to your web site?...

How Does Google Calculate Page Relevance?

Although I don't know how the Google algorithm works exactly, no-one does, it's a closely guarded secret, I do know that Google relies on 118 different calculations to workout the relevancy of any particular page for a search, the big one is link popularity.

Link Popularity

If you have downloaded the Google toolbar, then you will have seen the green bar that Google uses to rank every site you visit. This ranking is Google's PageRank, and is indicated on a scale of 1 to 10. Generally, sites with a PageRank of 7-10 are considered excellent in terms of quality and popularity.

But how is this rank calculated? Quite simply actually. Google's main criteria for the calculation of relevancy for a page is based on the number of web sites that link back to that particular site.

However, having 100,000 web sites linking back to your site will not necessarily mean that you will attain a PageRank of 10. Each site that links back to you must in itself contain quality content and have a high (7-10) PageRank for it to impact positively on the PageRank of your web site. Yes, sites with a poor PageRank can bring your sites PageRank down.

If Google's PageRank technology sounds confusing, just try and remember that Google's PageRank is the #1 criterion for calculating the relevancy of any web page in relation to the specified search term. We will come back to link popularity later.

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Now, there are supposedly over 118 factors involved in exactly how Google calculates your Search Engine Rank Position (SERP), as mentioned above, Google places more emphasis on PageRank than other engines. We'll also be looking at some of the other main factors in a later chapter.

What is your Web Site about: Keywords

It's critical to know exactly why you are building your site and who for.

Remember this question? We'll talk now about the first step in using this information, Keywords.

Keywords are what drives search engines. The idea is that a search engine wants to return a page in a search about something that the searcher is looking for. It's doing this by looking at what was entered into the search box (the keywords) and then trying to match those keywords with pages in its database.

A **Key Phrase** is just a few keywords together. Researchers tell us that very few people just use one word to search any more and are getting more sophisticated.

Imagine you are a potential visitor to your site. What keywords or phrases will you type in to find it? Take a blank piece of paper. Now, on your piece of paper, write down as many words or phrases as you can that you as a potential visitor would search for to find a site like yours in a search engine.

Here's an example. For a site about baby names you might have:

- Baby names
- Popular baby names
- Most popular baby names

Notice how I didn't use "baby". People that are searching on that term might be looking for who knows. At this point we don't want to be too general.

Try to write 20 to 30 keywords or phrases on your piece of paper. If you're having trouble coming up with keywords, ask your partner, friends or family members which keywords they would use to find your site. At this point you should have a list of no less than 20 keywords or phrases at your disposal.

Keywords for your site

Advanced SEO:
Now these tools will only tell you how many searches are being made. Another piece of information is how many sites you are competing against. Even of there are a lot of searches for that term, if there are also a lot of competing web sites, then getting a high SERP will be challenging. This is where Wordtracker shines. It also gives a factor called the KEI, the Keyword Effectiveness Index. Basically a measure of how effective (easy in terms of competition and profitable in terms of number of searches) a particular key phrase will be.

Right, now we need to do some research. **We need to find out how many people are searching for our keywords and phrases**.

What we need now is a tool to tell us this information. The big gun here is something called Wordtracker. It costs just under $10 for a 3 day subscription, but the information it gives is worth it. If your site depends on traffic, then I recommend this tool.

Two other free tools work also, but just don't give the detail.

http://www.digitalpoint.com/tools/suggestion/
http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion

I use these almost on a daily basis. It allows you to find out which keywords people are using in their searches, which as I'm sure you will agree is very valuable information!

The digitalpoint tool actual includes data from Overture, so if you are only going to use one tool, use that one.

Start at the top of your keyword list that you wrote earlier and enter each one into the text box. As you can see, the term suggestion tool returns a list of keywords and how many times they were searched for during the last day. As you type each of your keywords into the text box and see the number of searches, write that number down next to your keyword on the page.

As you are doing this, you'll also come across key phrases that people are searching on that you didn't think of. Include them too.

Keywords for your site	
Key Phrase	Count

You should now have a list of keywords with the number of searches for that keyword from last month on your page. To get the 5 most popular keywords, simply take the 5 keywords with the highest number of searches. Write them down in order of most to least popular. You should now have your list of 5 popular keywords, maybe something like this:

778231	baby name
68325	baby girl name
63222	baby boy name
38285	odd baby name
33583	top 100 baby name

Advanced SEO:
"odd baby name", how odd is that for a search term? At this point, its worth being creative on your search terms. Who would have thought this would be getting almost 40,000 searches a month!

Next we need to get an idea of the competition. Go to Google and enter in your first key phrase in quotes. Like this..

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> "baby name"

Advanced SEO:
Its possible to optimize your pages for both single and plural. Some engines differentiate between the two. Again, if you depend on traffic for your site, optimize for both.

Looking at the right of the Google search, you'll see what the competition is:

Results **1 - 100** of about **3,380,000** for "baby name". (0.61 seconds)

Not bad, only 3.8 million sites we have to beat. Well, you didn't think this would be easy did you?
Take your search terms and for the ones you have narrowed down to find out your competition and add that as a 3rd column. Make sure you remember to search in quotes, that looks for these word as a phase rather than just anywhere.

These keywords are going to form the basis for all of your site optimization strategies. Keep your keyword list with you as you read through the rest of these articles.

Keywords and Domain Name

Engines use your domain name as a factor in the Search Engine Results Page (SERP). Now there is a lot of debate here, some think that branding for the viewers is more important than having a keyword in the URL, its google.com not searchengine.com! But, if you can combine both, then great! Notice my domain is www.compass**design**s.net. This will get me a little boost if someone searches for "web **design**", but still retains some branding.

You can't easily change your domain after you have made your site, so this is why we are thinking about SEO before we have even started on the site design. If we can use a keyword in the domain, go for it.

Chapter 1 Summary:

1. **Ask yourself who will visit your site, why, and what will you get out of it.**

2. **Research your keywords.**

3. **Pay for Wordtracker if traffic is critical**

4. **Domain name; branding or keyword?**

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2: Designing your Site

Ready for the techie stuff? OK, grab your coffee/beer/herbal chai.

As I mentioned before, designing your site for traffic, both human and search engine spider is very different than a few years ago. It's now about what is on the page that people can see. No more having a 200 keyword list that is set to the same color as the background at the bottom of the page.

Web Standards and Accessibility

Joomla! Notes:
Most content management systems, Joomla included, have challenges when trying to get their sites to validate for web standards and accessibility. The problem is complicated; content is generated dynamically through php (for Joomla) so sometimes either the php code or the content itself can cause issues.

Compass Design, of course, works hard to build valid sites. We even have an in-depth tutorial about it.

Now, it may seem like I am going off topic here, but I am going to talk about two things seemingly unrelated to SEO; designing to web standards and accessibly.

Designing a web site to **standards** means having a site that will benefit the greatest number of web users while ensuring the long-term viability of the site itself. This means that a site can be viewed in an array of browsers, or other Internet devices such as PDA's. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is the international organization that develops web standards, directed by Tim Berners-Lee the inventor of the World Wide Web.

Specifically, meeting web standards for design essentially means using separating content from presentation with Cascading Style Sheets. One advantage of the CSS-based layout is its flexibility — the content can be accessed regardless of the type of browser that is being used. It allows sites to work on many kinds of devices instead of just the personal computer.

Other advantages include:

- smaller file sizes and faster page loads,
- less bandwidth usage,
- faster development and maintenance,
- easier to redesign.

It is worth noting that the design principles contained within web standards also lead to sites that are more usable (along with credibility, usability is a major factor in why viewers return to a site).

Accessibility, sometimes mistakenly called usability, is an attempt for a page to be accessible to all possible viewers. Usually this is chosen to mean such examples as someone that is blind (uses a screen reader) or old (struggles with small fonts/delicate mouse based navigation). I use these two as examples as they are the ones quoted most often (don't shoot the messenger!).

OK, so why did I bring those up?

Well, it's important to look at your site design from a broad perspective. Maybe a diagram would help.
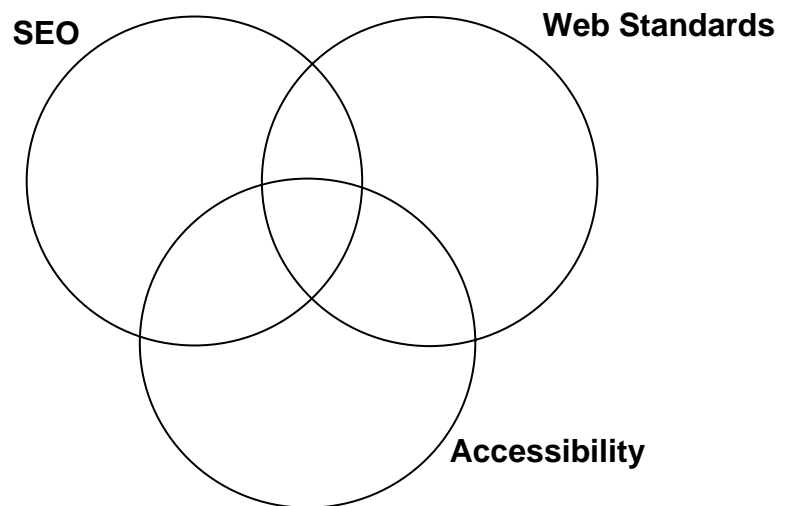
Many of the factors involved in SEO, standards and accessibility overlap. For example, designing a site with CSS makes for leaner, faster pages with will be **indexed by search engines more effectively**. Another example would be designing a site with accessibility in mind so that it can be easily read without graphics works just as well for someone using a screen reader as it does a **search engine spider**.

The implication here is you can get the most effective results by designing a site that meets web standards and is accessible first. Its optimization for search engines will come as a natural consequence. A well designed site will have a large overlap in the middle of these three areas, a poorly designed site may have no overlap at all.

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Outline of Steps for SEO

We will look at some of these steps in more detail in later chapters, but here we will try and get an overview of some of the main factors involved.

First and most important:

You need lots of content, LOTS of it. Before you have even considered site design and such, you should have 100 odd pages of actual content. Yes, there are supposed to be two zero's on the end of that 1… 100, I mean it. A page of content means about 200-500 words.

Of course, no-one does this, I didn't! But, if you are serious of getting gobs of traffic, and you do have lots of rich content to publish, just think how far ahead you will be of poor schmuks like me.

As I mentioned before, designing your site for traffic, both human and search engine spider is very different than a few years ago. It's now about what is on the page that people can see. No more having a 200 keyword list that is set to the same color as the background at the bottom of the page.

If you are impatient, according to the "SEO guys", here are the most important factors in deciding your SERP, along with a number I came up with to show relative value. This shows you the actual relative value between, say, having good anchor text links compared to keywords in the H1 tag. These ten factors add up to 21% of the SERP based on these estimates.

Title Tag – 2.3%

This is what appears in the blue bar at the top of your browser, it comes from a metatag called <title>. As well as being used as a pure factor in SERP, it also boosts rank in other ways. Some engines use "click-through" rates as a factor. Sites where the title closely matches the content tend to get better click-throughs (searchers see its not a spam site). When words in the title are also used as anchor text in a link to the page, you get more benefit.

Joomla! Notes:

Critical note: You MUST have some sort of SEF enabled. Search engines hate dynamically generated pages, and that's the whole point of Joomla! Even if you have just basic enabled, the benefit of the search engine "seeing" static pages is huge, far outweighing the little bonus gained from having keywords in the title too.

Joomla easily allows you to manipulate the title of a page. With built-in SEF enabled, you title will reflect the content of the page. Even better is to install a 3rd party SEF, then you can set the page title to be the title alias of that page. I prefer using the title alias for my page title, then I can have the title on the page and control the one delivered in <title> better.

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Advanced SEO:
There are a number of free tools for checking keyword density. The one I use the most is at www.ranks.nl

Joomla! Note!
Joomla is good and bad here. The good part is it's easy to add keywords to the meta keywords tag for that page. You just go to the meta info when you are editing the content and plop them in. Note that they are added as well as any keywords you have specified in the main **global configuration**. It's good to only have your most important 2-3 words there and put the rest in the pages.

The bad part is linked to the fact that Joomla is dynamic. The code is not very lean, that is, there is a lot of html compared to actual copy text. This in turn reduces your keyword density (indirectly). Using CSS instead of tables means leaner code. It's also possible with CSS to have your page "**source ordered**". This means that the real content (the middle column to you and me) comes before the side columns and/or navigation.

Joomla! Note!
Many things to be careful of here. The most important is go turn on Search Engine Friendly URL's (SEF). It changes your links and pages from dynamic to static. The other important factor is JavaScript menus. They are very popular because the look great. As good as they look to people however, they look equally as bad to spiders. Try using CSS to style you menus, you'll be surprised how good they look. You can even have drop-down sub menus.

Anchor Text of Links – 2.3%

The phrasing, terms, order and length of a link's anchor text is one of the largest factors taken into account by the major search engines for ranking. Specific anchor text links help a site to rank better for that particular term/phrase at the search engines. In other words, it's the actual text that represents the link on a web page.

Keyword Use in Document Text – 2.2%

Your keywords must appear in the actual copy of the page. Supposedly search engines pay more attention to the first and last paragraphs. The way to go about this is have your keywords firmly in your mind as you write your copy. I don't know about you, but I find this really hard. I prefer a different approach.

There is a simple trick here, write your quality content, then use a keyword density tool to find the keyword density. THEN, take the top words and add them to the meta keywords tag for that page. This is somewhat backwards for some maybe, it optimizes a page for what you actually wrote, rather than trying to write a page optimized for certain words. I find I get much better correlation like this and can then tweak my text afterwards.

Sure, if you want to you can further optimize by having the keywords in header tags and bold etc. As a guide, these might contribute only a few percent to the SERP.

Accessibility of Document – 2.2%

We are not talking human accessibility here (as in 508).

"Accessibility is anything on the page that impedes a search engine spider's ability to crawl a page. There can be a number of culprits:"

- Avoid Splash Pages: Flash and heavily graphic introductions prohibit engines from crawling your site.
- Avoid Frames: Never use pages with frames. Frames are too complex for the crawlers and too cumbersome to index.
- Avoid Cookies: Never require cookies for Web site access! Search engine crawlers are unable to enter any cookie-required materials.
- Avoid JavaScript when Possible: Though JavaScript menus are very popular, they disable crawlers from accessing those links. Most, well-indexed Web sites incorporate text-based links primarily because they are search engine

friendly. If necessary, JavaScript should be referenced externally.

- Avoid Redirects: Search engines frown upon companies that use numerous Web sites to redirect to a single Web site.
- Avoid Internal Dynamic URLs on the Home page: Though many sites incorporate internal dynamic links, they should not incorporate those links on the home page. Engine crawlers are currently ill-equipped to navigate dynamic links - which often pass numerous parameters using excessive characters.
- Utilize Your Error Pages: Too often companies forget about error pages (such as 404 errors). Error pages should always re-direct "lost" users to valuable, text-based pages. Placing text links to major site pages is an excellent practice. Visit www.cnet.com/error for an example of a well-utilized error page.

Links to Document from Site-Internal Pages - 2.1%

Even more important than the holy grail of external links is internal links. Who knew! Easily the most underrated criteria. But, it's important to make sure you are making good use of anchor text. A well-linked to document is considered more important than an obscure page, even if the links are coming from the site itself.

Primary Subject Matter of Site – 2.1%

What your website is about is determined through analysis of the content. It's critical that it correlates to keywords, anchor text, etc.

One strange off shoot of this is perhaps it's not worth spending much effort trying to build the page rank of the home page. This strange concept is explained in the idea of Search Engine Theme Pyramids.

A related factor is having a good sitemap. Not only is it good spider food, you can also load it with lots of quality anchor text for those internal links as well as relevancy text (that which appears near a link). Also important is the invisible Google sitemap which is an xml file for the Google spider only.

External Links to Linking Pages – 2.0%

These are the links from other sites to you. Note it's much better to have specific pages linked rather than your homepage because of the idea of Search Engine Theme Pyramids. Don't bother with link

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Joomla! Note!
Several Joomla SEF add-ons like SEF Advanced, OpenSEF and 404 SEF allow you to have keywords in the URL. We mentioned this factor earlier. However, these add-ons tend to be unreliable compared to the basic built-in SEF. The SEO benefits you get is quite small, so from a SEO point of view, its not really worth the bother

Joomla! Note!
Thumbs up for Joomla! You can set up sites for the viewers to add their own content, so its effortless to add globs of content quickly and easily. Remember, it's a Content Management System after all. There are also some add-ons for sitemap, though I find it's best to upload a Google sitemap independently.

Joomla! Note!
Don't depend on Docman to help you in your SEO. Content that is in pdf files is harder for search engines to index than straight html.

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farms or anything you see advertised for a link. You are much better off finding links from sites that have similar topics as yourself (see below)

Link Popularity of Site in Topical Community – 2.0%

The search engine is trying to figure out what your page is about, so it can decide if it's relevant to a users search. Links from pages with similar topics add credence to your page. When trying to search out those links you can use something like WebFerret. Or if you just want a quick method, use the "related:" tag in Google, e.g. type "related:www.yahoo.com" in and it will search for sites related to the topic of Yahoo (whatever that is?). Then spend some time emailing webmasters and asking for links. There is software out there that will do this automatically for you.

Global Link Popularity of Site – 1.9%

This means that links from sites that are "important" (i.e. have a high SERP) are more valued than those from a lower SERP. A factor worth considering when searching out links, get the ones from sites with a high page rank first.

Keyword Spamming – 1.9%

Careful, this is a negative factor!! This means having a keyword density in text or tags so high that the engine decides you are stuffing. Your rank will go from #1 to #10000 in a heartbeat. Want to know the best part? No-one actually knows what percent density this is, and it's probably different for different engines! Between you and me, I am not going above 10% on my pages.

Joomla! Note!
Want a neat trick to find other sites to link to you?

Take advantage of other Joomla sites that share your topic. All Joomla sites use the same "Contact Us" page in the CMS. This page has this in the URL:

"option=com_contact"

So, go to Google and do a search for your topic along with this text. For example:

"option=com_contact baby names"

We are using our keywords as we want links from our topical community.

Chapter 2 Summary:

1. **There are many factors that determine search engine page ranking.**

2. **Rather than tweak minor tags, its better to leverage Joomla's true power of being a fully fledged Content Management System to gain rank**

3. **Don't use flash (ok, I admit I am biased)**

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3. Advanced SEO

Boosting Your Sites Keyword Density

Your sites keyword density is one criteria that search engines will judge your site on when deciding where to index you on a per search-term basis. Keyword density refers to the number of times a keyword appears through a particular page on your web site. Using our top 5 keywords from the Overture term suggestion tool, we can boost the keyword density of our web site in 4 ways:

• Keyword placement in the <title> tag
• <h1> and <h2> tags to emphasize keywords
• Naming your web site and pages with keywords
• Incorporating keywords into body text

Let's now take a look at each of these methods in more detail.

Note: Make sure you have your top 5 keywords handy.

Keyword Placement in the <title> Tag

Overall, we are aiming for a 10% keyword density per page on your web site. That means that for every page on your web site, you need to incorporate your top 5 keywords / phrases to achieve a 10% keyword density.

When a web page is chosen by Google as a match to a search term, the title and first few lines of "readable" text are shown from that web site in Google's results. Google also weighs these two pieces of text highly when calculating the relevance of your web site.

We will use your top 5 keywords / phrases to construct your title tags. Notice how I said "title tags" and not title tag. Each page on your web site needs to have a different, slightly reworded title tag that uses some of your top 5 keywords in each one. As you will soon see, each title tag also needs to relate to that pages name and heading tags to create the ideal keyword density.

> **Joomla! Note!**
> Here we again need to make use of some sort of SEF in Joomla. With a SEF package operating, a relevant title will be generated from the text of the article. This is important as the keywords in the page title need to match those in the text of the page.
>
> More advanced add-ons actually allow you finer control over the title of a page.
>
> Note: We are talking about the title of the web page here, not to be confused with the title of the article in Joomla.
>
> The section here about the <title> tag is not really applicable if you are using a CMS such as Joomla. In a CMS, titles are generated dynamically in some way.

Let's say that I run a web site about those baby names again. Here were my top 5 keywords / phrases:

baby name
baby girl name
baby boy name
odd baby name
top 100 baby name

Let's also say that my site has 4 pages:

• A home page
• A page about baby names
• A services page
• A "fast facts" page

I would need 4 differently worded page titles. Using my keywords and the "no more than 40 characters in a title" rule, here's what I came up with:

> Title #1: <u>Baby names</u>
> Title #2: <u>baby girl name</u>s and <u>baby boy name</u>s
> Title #3: <u>Baby name</u> services
> Title #4: What are the <u>top 100 baby name</u>s?

In each of the titles I've underlined where my top 5 keywords / phrases are. Notice how every title is different, yet between them they contain a mix and match of every one of my 5 keywords / phrases?

There are two tips which I will stress when creating the content of your title tags:

a. Use every single one of your top 5 keywords in various mix-and-match combinations through each of your web pages title tags
b. Keep the length of each titles text (excluding the <title> and </title> tags) under 40 characters

So, take what I've just told you and write down title descriptions for each page on your web site. Once you've done that, place the descriptions between the <title> and </title> tags in each of your pages.

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For example, if one of my web pages looked like this:
<html>
<head>
<title> My old page title </title>
</head>
<body>
…

… then I would change the highlighted text to reflect my new page title description,
like this:

<html>
<head>
<title> Baby Names </title>
</head>
<body>
…

Joomla! Note!
With Joomla there are some choices to be made when implementing H1 and H2 tags.

Our article title (in a college paper sense rather than a <title> sense) should summarize it in keywords, this is what the H1 tag also does. Joomla has its own dynamic tag generated for the title of an article. You have probably seen settings in the admin backend to turn titles on or off (Joomla article titles). Now, its also possible in the Joomla parameters to make this title a link.

Now, both H1 tags and internal links give a boost to SEO, as we saw in the last section. I couldn't tell which is better, no-one knows.

I do know, however, that you should never have a Joomla title tag that isn't a link. Better to turn titles off and put a H1 tag at the top of your content.

One of the best ways to check the effectiveness of the phrasing of your keywords is to compare them to those of your competitors. Use Google to search for one of your top 5 keywords / phrases. Look at how the top 5 ranked search results word their titles. Are you using your keywords in a similar fashion? Maybe you could rearrange a word or two? Analyze these results and make sure your web page titles are the same -– if not better –– than those of your competitors.

<h1> and <h2> tags to emphasize keywords

Heading tags have been used for years in HTML to improve the formatting of a particular word or sentence on a web page.
Heading tags range from <h1> (bigger text, signifying more importance) to <h2>, <h3>, <h4>, <h5> and <h6> (smaller text, signifying least importance).
Headings tags are generally used to emphasize a page or paragraph heading to search engines for importance. You should stick to only <h1> and <h2> tags. If I had a normal piece of HTML code that looked like this:

<p> Hello Today! </p>

… then the output from this would simply be some bolded text:

Hello Today!

However, if I use a <h1> tag instead, like this:

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```
<p>
 <h1>Hello Today!</h1> </p>
```
… then the text would now look like this:

Hello Today!

Not only is text between heading tags more visually appealing, but if worded correctly it will boost your Google ranking significantly, as Google picks up keywords between headings tags as having a higher relevance than any other text around it.

Let's look at how to do this now.

Firstly, take a look at your web page in a web browser. Do you currently have any page or paragraph headings? If you do, what do they look like? Do they use <h1> and <h2> tags to emphasize importance, or are they simply formatted to look bigger with other formatting tags, such as ?

If your page and paragraph headings aren't using <h1> or <h2> tags, then it's time to get creative. Look through your pages HTML code for the text in your page or paragraph headings. Instead of surrounding your page headings with tags, replace the tag with <h1>, and the tag with </h1>. For paragraph headings, replace tags with <h2>, and tags with </h2>.

For example, here's a page before changing the tags:

```
<html>
<head>
<title> Web site promotion and marketing </title>
</head>
<body bgcolor="#ffffff">

 <font size="4"><b>Welcome to my web site</b></font>
 <br><br>
 <font size="2">About Us</b>
 Welcome to our web site. We specialize in online marketing
 …
```

… and here's that same page with the heading tags used to replace the font tags:

```
<html>
<head>
```

```
<title> Baby Names </title>
</head>
<body bgcolor="#ffffff">

  <h1>Welcome to my web site</h1>
  <h2>About Us</h2>
  <p>Welcome to our web site. We specialize in online
marketing</p>
 …
```

Make these changes to every page on your web site. View one of the updated pages in your web browser. If the text between your <h1> and <h2> tags doesn't look the best, you can use a style sheet to make it look more fancy -– without affecting how Google will rank your pages. If you'd like to learn about style sheets then take a look at these links:

• http://www.htmlhelp.com/reference/css/
• http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide/Style
• http://www.pageresource.com/dhtml/indexcss.htm

Now that you have clearly defined page and paragraph heading tags, you need to optimize the actual text between the heading tags, because this is the text that Google will pick up and use as part of your sites keyword density.

The trick here is keyword density. Using your top 5 keywords / phrases, you should create heading tags for each page that relate to the title of that page. For example, if I had a page title tag that looked like this:

<title> Baby Names </title>

... then I would want to concentrate on including these words throughout my page enough times to produce a 10% keyword density (i.e. for every 10 words on my page, 1 of them would be a word in my page title tag).

Taking this into consideration, I might create a page heading that looks like this:

<h1>Baby Names and more, find out what are the most popular names for your baby</h1>

See how I've used the same keywords, but in a different sentence that makes sense (i.e. conforms to proper grammar standards)? I

could continue this by setting up various headings for my paragraphs with <h2> tags:

• <h2>Girl Baby Names<h2>
• <h2>Boy Baby Names</h2>

Naming Your Web Site and Pages with Keywords

The next thing that you can do to boost your keyword density is to name your web site and web pages effectively. How do you do this? Well, you guessed it –- by using your top 5 keywords / phrases in your actual domain name and file names of our web pages.

Keeping with our earlier example, if one of our phrases was "baby names" and we had a page with these heading tags setup:

<h1>Baby Names and more, find out what are the most popular names for your baby</h1>
<h2>Girl Baby Names<h2>
<h2>Boy Baby Names</h2>

… then we would save this web page as:

"baby-names.html"

Notice how each keyword is now part of the web pages file name as well? Google takes both domain name and web page file names into account when ranking a web site. Your ideal domain name will look like this:

http://www.keyword1-keyword2-keyword3.com
I.e. take 2-3 keywords from your top 5, separate them with hyphens and use this domain name for your web site. Having some/all of your top 5 keywords in your domain name is a sure-fire way to boost your search ranking!
Note: It doesn't matter if you use a dash or an underscore to separate the keywords in your domain name and page names -– Google doesn't care.

Incorporating Keywords into Body Text

We've already seen how to use your top 5 keywords in both the title and headings of your web pages. The last thing that we can do to boost keyword density is to include keywords throughout the actual content of your web page.

Joomla! Note!
Again, and ad-on SEF package will allow you to manipulate the actual URL's of the pages.

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As I've already mentioned, you should aim for a keyword density of 10% -- but where do you put your keywords?

Well, it's quite simple actually. My general rule of thumb is to place keywords in a ratio using this rule:
Number of keywords per paragraph = number of paragraphs / number of keywords

For example, if I have 2 keywords and 4 paragraphs on one of my web pages, then I would include 2 keywords per paragraph. Yes, this totals to 8 keywords (2 keywords x 4 paragraphs), but I can rearrange keywords as well.
Note: If you end up with a "number of keywords per paragraph" value less than 1, then just round it up to 1.

If you use these correctly then your content should have an average keyword density of 10%. It is OK to have 1 paragraph with a keyword density of 13% and another with 7%, just as long as they all average out. When used in combination with the keywords in the title tag and headings on your web site, you now have a perfect keyword density setup for Google, which will produce excellent rankings for your web pages.

Note: Remember that you should choose 2 or 3 of your keywords per page and include them in your title tag, page and paragraph headings, and also the content of your web page. If you run out of keywords, then simply rearrange them to form new phrases.

Link Popularity and Getting Linked

Google's most important criteria for ranking a web site is its link popularity, but what exactly is link popularity and how can you get it working for your web site? Put simply, link popularity represents the number of sites that link back to your web site.

If you have downloaded the Google toolbar, then you will have seen the green bar that Google uses to rank every site you visit. This ranking is Google's PageRank, and is indicated on a scale of 1 to 10. Generally, sites with a PageRank of 7-10 are considered excellent in terms of quality and popularity.

But how is this rank calculated? Quite simply actually. Google's main criteria for the calculation of relevancy for a page is based on the number of web sites that link back to that particular site.

However, having 100,000 web sites linking back to your site will not necessarily mean that you will attain a PageRank of 10. Each site that links back to you must in itself contain quality content and have a high (7-10) PageRank for it to impact positively on the PageRank of your web site. Yes, sites with a poor PageRank can bring your sites PageRank down.

How many sites are currently linking back to your web site? If you don't know, it's easy to find out. Just go to Google.com and type "link:www.yoursite.com" into the search box (replacing www.yoursite.com with the domain name of your web site). When the search results are returned, look at the text in the right-hand side of the blue bar at the top of the page. It should look something like this:

Results **1 - 50** of about **4,320**. Search took **0.35** seconds

In the example above, there are 4,320 web sites linking back to this site. If there are only a handful linking back to your web site then don't worry -– by the end of this section you should be able to increase this number by 5, 10, 20 or even 100 times!

"How many web sites should be linking to my site?" I hear you ask. As a general rule of thumb, you want as many sites linking back to your site as those linking back to the site in position #1 for one of your 5 keywords.

Take one of your 5 keywords / phrases that we worked out earlier and search for it on Google. Take the www part of the URL for the first search result of this keyword and find the number of web sites that link to that web site -– this should be your goal for the number of web sites linking back to yours.

For example, if one of your keywords was "baby names" and the first site that came up when you did a search for this keyword was www.babynames.com then perform a link popularity check on this site by searching for "link: www.babynames.com" in Google.

When the search results page is displayed, look at the number after "about" in the text on the right hand side of the blue bar at the top of this page. That's the number of sites linking back to this web site, and it's also the number that you should be aiming for to link back to your web site.

So how do you go about finding sites to link back to your web site? There is 1 easy method that I will now discuss. It's called "finding web sites using WebFerret".

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Finding Web Sites Using WebFerret
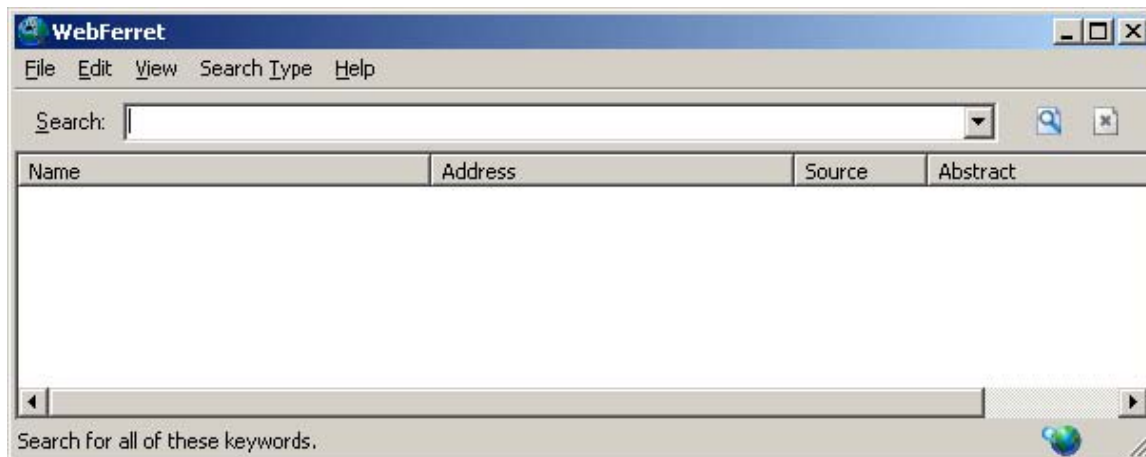
One tool that many webmasters (including myself) use is WebFerret, which is a free tool owned by CNet. WebFerret is an excellent tool that you can use to find sites that have similar interests to your web site –- these are also the perfect web sites to ask to link back to your web site to build your link popularity!

Click here to download WebFerret. Once downloaded, click on your start menu -> programs -> WebFerret -> WebFerret to launch it. It should look like this:

Now, do a search in Google and write down the URL's of the top 10 or 20 sites returned.

Now we will use WebFerret to find what sites are linking to these top 10. We use the same syntax as Google:

link:www.whateverthesiteis.com

Press enter or click on the search button. WebFerret will go off and find all sites that link back to the site that you entered. It should now look something like this, one I did for finding SEO sites:

The sites shown in the list for WebFerret are the sites that you want linking back to your web site. This is where the hard work begins, and if you're serious about getting a top 20 ranking in Google, then you really need to spend a solid 4-5 hours on this next exercise.

For each web site in the WebFerret list, open it up in a new browser window. If its PageRank is 7 or higher, then write down its "address" field either on a piece of paper or in a new Microsoft word document. Repeat this for every site in the WebFerret list.

There could be anywhere from 50 to 5,000 sites in this list, but it's getting these sites to link to your site that will boost both your link popularity and push your PageRank through the roof!

Once you've written each address down, start at the top of your list and visit each site. Search the site for both a contact email address AND a contact name. Write these down next to the web sites address on your list.

If you can't find a contact email for some of the sites, then simply put the contact email down as webmaster@sitename.com (replacing sitename.com with the domain name of the web site, minus the "www" part). If you can't find a contact name, then just write down "webmaster".
You'll now have a list of web sites, contact email addresses and first names that looks something like this:

www.site1.com john@site1.com John
www.site4.com info@site4.com Mary
www.site6.com fsmith@site6.com Fred …

You now need to email each and every contact person on your list and ask them if they would kindly link back to your web site.

Fire up your favorite email program and start at the top of your list. Use an email with a subject line of "request for link swap" that looks similar to the one shown below. Send it to each contact email on your list (replacing the values in triangular brackets where appropriate):

Hi <Contact Name>,
This is <Your Name> from <Your Site Name> (<Your Site URL>). I was just looking around the Internet for sites that share a common theme to my site, and I was wondering if you would be interested in swapping links with me?

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If you would, then please place this link on your site:

<a href="<Your Site URL>"><Your Site Description>

Just email me when you have done that. I will immediately place a link back to your web site on my site.

Thanks for taking them time to read my email :)

Regards,
<Your Name>
<Your Site URL>

Note: Google evaluates links back to your site on the actual description that the link contains, so try and include your sites name as well as 2-3 of your top 5 keywords in the link description, such as "baby-names.com – Get a great baby name for your boy or girl.

Notice how I said "…just email me when you have done that. I will immediately place a link back to your web site on my site."? Nothing in this world is free, and if you want someone to link to your site, then you'll need to show appreciation by linking back to their web site.

Once they reply telling you that they've placed a link from their site to your site, go to their web site and double-check that the link exists and is working. Send them back a reply email along these lines:

Hi <Contact Name>,
Thank you very much for linking to my site! I've placed a link from my site to
yours, and you can see it at <Your Site URL>.

Thanks again!

Regards,
<Your Name>
<Your Site URL>

As you have probably guessed, you will now need to create a page on your site with links to all of the sites that are linking back to you. Call this page "links.html" or something similar and make

sure you include its URL as the <Your Site URL> in the email above.

Lastly, you want to make sure that Google knows about each site that is linking back to you. Go to http://www.google.com/addurl.html and submit the URL of the page that's linking back to you. For example, if http://www.somesite.com/links.html is linking back to you, then submit this page to the Google spider –- this will make sure that Google picks up the link on its next index, thus boosting your link popularity and PageRank quicker!

A Site Map for the Google Spider

Joomla! Note!
There are several add-on components for Joomla that can create a site map from the menus automatically. I strongly encourage you to use one, then you can skip the next part!

OK. So, by this point you've got your page titles, headings and paragraph headings setup. You've got the ideal domain name and lots of sites linking back to your web site. Great! But now it's time to look at building a site map for your site, so that the Google spider knows which pages are on your site and where they can be found.

Put simply, a site map is a web page that links to all other web pages on your site. On this page, you use your top 5 keywords and some simple HTML to make sure every single page on your site is linked together. Once done, you submit the site map to Google and it helps the Google spider (the computers that spider -– or crawl –- your web site for web pages) find every page on your site. If done correctly in correlation with everything else that we've looked at in this article, a site map will help bring you higher rankings in a shorter period of time.

First thing's first. If you've never seen a site map, then take a look at Apple's site map. See how it's simply a mass of plain-text links? Anyone can build a site map, however many forget this one important rule:

Always make sure that the descriptions of the links in your site map contain your top 5 keywords in some form or another!

For example, which link do you think Google will list higher in its index for the keywords "widget features"? This one:

Features

… or this one:

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Widget Features – Size, Shape and Cost

If you're answer was the second one then you're correct.
Remember that you MUST include your top 5 keywords in all links to pages on your web site from your site map.
It's now time to build your site map. Start from your home page and write down the full URL (such as http://www.mysite.com/mypage.html) as well as a 4-10 word description for every page on your web site. Remember to include at least 1 of your keywords in each pages description.

Here's an example for a site that sells widgets:
- http://www.widgetsite.com/default.html
  Home Page for Our Widgets Site, WidgetSite.com
- http://www.widgetsite.com/widgetfeatures.html
  Features of Widgets - Size, Shape, Cost
- http://www.widgetsite.com/widgets.html
  Our List of Widgets Including Popular Blue Widgets and Green Widgets
- http://www.widgetsite.com/articlesonwidgets.html
  Our Articles On Widgets Including How to Install Widgets
- http://www.widgetsite.com/buy_widgets.html
  Buy Our Widgets Online

Once you've made this list, you now need to convert them into links and put them up as a page on your site. Your site map doesn't have to look fancy. It can simply include your logo and each link listed one under another -– Google doesn't care what it looks like. Now, take each link that you have written down and build your site map. Here's an example using the widget links above. I saved this as widget_sitemap.html:

```
<html>
<head>
<title> WidgetSite.com Site Map </title>
</head>
<body>

<h1>Site Map for Our Widget Site, WidgetSite.com</h1>
<ul>
<li>
<a href="http://www.widgetsite.com/default.html">
Home Page for Our Widgets Site, WidgetSite.com</a></li>    <li><a
href="http://www.widgetsite.com/widget_features.html">
Features of Widgets - Size, Shape, Cost</a></li>
<li><a href="http://www.widgetsite.com/widgets.html">
Our List of Widgets Including Popular Blue Widgets and Green
Widgets</a></li>
<li><a href="http://www.widgetsite.com/articles_on_widgets.html">
```

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```
Our Articles On Widgets Including How to Install Widgets</a></li>
<li><a href="http://www.widgetsite.com/buy_widgets.html">
Buy Our Widgets Online</a></li>
</ul>
</body>
</html>
```

Here's how the simple site map for WidgetSite.com would look:

Once you've created your site map, you need to make sure that every page on your site links to it. If you run your site using templates, then it's simply a matter of editing the template that contains your menu and including a link there. If not, you will need to edit each page of your site and include it. Use a link like this:

```
<a href="http://www.yoursite.com/yoursite_sitemap.html">
YourSite Site Map</a>
```

Finally, you need to submit the URL of your site map to Google. Click here to go to the Google "Add URL" page and submit the link to your site map. In the example above, this link is http://www.yoursite.com/yoursite_sitemap.html.

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Appendix: A Quickstart SEO for Joomla

I thought I would provide a **much** shorter version of the main guide. Use this if you already have a site ranked and want to see what you can implement to get your ranking higher.

1. Search Engine Friendly URL's (SEF)
You *have* to get some sort of SEF, either use the one that is built in, or another. Why? Two reasons, one is engines don't like dynamic files. Just the basic SEF will take care of this. Second reason is to get keywords into your page title, you need one of the add-on SEF's for this. Two were mentioned above.
Note: I use openSEF, and use the title alias for my page title, then I can have the title on the page and control the one delivered in <title> better.

2. Keyword density
This is an SEO biggie. There is a simple trick here, write your quality content, then use the tool of your choice to find the keyword density. THEN, take the top three words and add them to the meta keywords in the parameters part of the page (in Joomla admin). This is somewhat backwards for some maybe, it optimizes a page for what you actually wrote, rather than trying to write a page optimized for certain words (which I always find difficult).

3. Page tags:

> h1, h2 etc.
> Drop all the titles, don't use them. THEN simply add relevant h1/h2 tags to all of the content. I have done this for some of my pages at www.compassdesigns.net, you'll have to view the source to see the tags. Some argue that you get an SEO kick from the title keywords being in a link, but hey, why not do both?

> <strong> etc.
> Go through your content and bold/italic your keywords. If you want you can set them not to display in the CSS (I think) and then they still get the SEO kick.

> abbr, etc.
> People forget about these, go through and set the abbreviations and acronyms in your body text with appropriate CSS. Why? Well, it basically repeats keywords from the engines point of view, and looks professional too.

> Links
> Go through and liberally link to your own site from the body text. Here is here setting up the SEF makes it easy. Make sure you are including your keywords in the link rather than just something like read more.

4. Sitemap
Site maps are crucial to improving natural search rankings precisely because they enable engine crawlers to access each of your Web site's pages. Your site map should begin with a brief description of your Web site's purpose or mission and then include text links to all major site pages (maximum of 100 links). You should also include a brief explanation above each subset or

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category of links. Each page within your Web site should provide a text link to your site map. Additionally, your site map should be stored in your root directory - making it easily accessible to all crawlers. Visit WashingtonPost.com's "Site Index" for an excellent example of a site map best practice. Remember, that search engines only crawl the first 100 links on a webpage - including your sitemap. It is important to note that search engine crawlers have difficulty with drop-down menus, JavaScript, and search boxes. Site maps are simple ways to attract crawlers to each page. There are a number of Joomla components that will create a dynamic sitemap on your site.

5. Google sitemap
Its an xml file, use it, love it.

6. Submit to engines
Submit it, then don't bother for 3 months

7. Get some links
Well..... yes...... type "related:www.yoursite.com" into google and contact the top 20 returns for links.

8. Utilize Your Error Pages
Too often companies forget about error pages (such as 404 errors). Error pages should always re-direct "lost" users to valuable, text-based pages. Placing text links to major site pages is an excellent practice. Visit www.cnet.com/error for an example of a well-utilized error page.

9. Page size
Engines tend to weigh content at the start of a document more than content further down. If a page is too long, typically more than 50k in markup only, then it should be broken up into multiple pages.

10. Your homepage isn't that important in SEO. Don't waste time trying to drive traffic to it. It's your pages that are 3-5 levels deep that are you money makers.

11. Create one quality content page per day
Quality content is the most important SEO factor. For a site that will perform well, you eventually need 200 odd pages of content. This is the important point. QUICK SEO IS DEAD. The only way to perform well in SEO now is to have a rich content site. Google has 118 factors that contribute to where a page appears in its rankings. Whether you have x or y is really minor in the big picture.

Follow these steps and you will have oodles of traffic within, well, 6 months-ish.

Enjoy!

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