

Title:

SEO Checklist for Web Designing

Word Count:

1397

Summary:

SEO Checklist for Web Designing is a list of items for every web designers to check while designing their websites to keep the web pages optimized for search engines and achieve high ranking in major search engines.

Keywords:

SEO, Checklist, Web Design, Link

Article Body:

** Domain Name** - Your domain name should be brandable (example: Google, Amazon, Yahoo!, etc.), easy to say, and even easier to remember. Don't worry too much about stuffing keywords into your domain name. Keywords in domain names no longer have the punch they used to.

** www or not www** - The choice is yours, <http://www.KomailNoori.com/> or <http://mysite.com/>, pick one and stick with it. I recommend using the www because the basic Joe Schmoe Web server tends to type in www, anyway.

** Simple Design** - Don't reinvent the wheel. If your design is complex, chances are it will hinder your visitors' ability to navigate and view the site plus it will slow down development. The simpler the better.

** Don't create directories further than three levels down from the root directory** - The closer pages are to the home page in the directory structure the better. Keep things organized but don't overorganize. If you have one file or sub-directory in a directory there should be a VERY valid reason.

** File/Directory Names Using Keywords** - Your filenames and directory names should contain keywords. If your page is about Idaho potatoes then the filename should be idaho-potatoes.

** Static URLs** - Static URLs are URLs that are not dynamically generated. A static URL looks like <http://www.KomailNoori.com/directory/file-name.htm> and dynamic URLs look like <http://www.KomailNoori.com/index.htm?page-name=>. You can make dynamic URLs spiderable by search engines but it's a lot easier to get things indexed with static URLs.

** Think Small** - The smaller your Web pages are, the faster they load. A single page should be less than 15K (unless absolutely necessary) and the entire page including graphics should be less than 50K (unless absolutely necessary). Remember, not everyone is on a high-speed Internet connection; there are still

people without a 56K modem.

** Hyphens** - Use hyphens (-) and not underscores (_) to separate words in directory and file names. Most search engines parse a hyphen like a reader would parse a space. Using underscores makes what_would_you_do look like whatwouldyoudo to most search engines. You should definitely separate words in your URLs.

** Navigation on Every Page** - You should place consistent navigation on every page of your Web site. Your navigation should link to the major sections of your Web site. It would also make sense for every page on your Web site to link back to the home page.

** Site Map** - You should create a site map that links to the major sections and sub-sections of your Web site. The site map should be linked to from your Web site's home page at the very least. Preferably the site map should be linked to from every page. Recommend file names for your site map are "sitemap.html" or "site-map.html."

** Title** - The title of the page should be used in the TITLE tag and at the top of every page. The title should be keyword rich (containing a max of 7 to 10 words) and descriptive.

** Description META Tag** - Some people say META tags are dead but some search engines will actually use them underneath a pages title on search engine result pages (SERPs). Use no more than 150 characters including spaces and punctuation. Your description should be a keyword rich, complete sentence.

** Keyword META Tag** - A listing of keywords that appear in the page. Use a space to separate keywords (not a comma). Arrange keywords how they would be searched for or as close to a complete sentence as possible. This tag is basically dead but by creating it when you create the page it allows you to come back eons later and realize what keywords you were specifically targetting. If the keyword doesn't appear at least twice in the page then it shouldn't go in the Keyword META Tag. Also, try to limit the number of total keywords to under twenty.

** Robots META Tag** - Some search engine crawlers abide by the Robots META Tag. This gives you some control over what appears in a search engine and what doesn't. This isn't an essential aspect of search engine optimization but it doesn't hurt to add it in.

** Heading Tags** - Heading tags should be used wherever possible and should be structured appropriately (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6). You shouldn't start a page with an H2 tag. If H1 by default is too big then use CSS to style it effectively. Remember that most search engines like to see a heading tag then text or graphics; not H1 followed immediately by H2.

** TITLE Attribute** - Use the A HREF TITLE attribute (example:). The TITLE attribute improves usability/accessibility. Be sure to include keywords as you see fit but remember it should tell your visitors

where they will go when they click the link.

** ALT Tags** - Every image should have an ALT tag. Use a keyword rich description of what the image is. If the image contains text use the text in the image. This is also a usability/accessibility tool.

** More text than HTML** - A page should have more text content than markup language.

** Anchor Text** - Anchor text is the text used to link to a page. Using keywords in anchor text is a very good idea and will improve a page's performance in SERPs.

** Use Text Links, Not Images** - If you're going to link to something use text. Text in images can't be read by search engines. The only time this rule doesn't apply is when you're linking to something with a well known logo. Even then it's still better to use a text link. If you must use an image as a link then make sure you give it a good ALT tag.

** Gobs of Content** - The more content, the better. Having pages upon pages of original, relevant content is the best form of search engine optimization.

** Add New Content Often** - If you can add a new page of content every day then your site will stay fresh and give search engine crawlers a reason to keep coming back day in and day out.

** Keyword Density** - This is a touchy topic among Web developers and search engine optimizers. Some say 5% is more than enough. Chris Short says your main keywords shouldn't have a density of more than 30% and should be higher than the densities of other phrases and words.

** Build It, Put It Online** - Your site should be built and in "update mode" once it's uploaded to your Web server. Don't add a page at a time to your Web server when you're first building your Web site. Build your Web site first then upload it. Add new content as needed.

** Use a robots.txt File** - Every good crawler looks for a robots.txt file in your root directory. I would highly recommend creating a valid robots.txt just to appease these search engines and at the very least eliminate 404 errors from building up in your log files.

** Validation** - Every page on your Web site should adhere to W3C standards as closely as possible. Some say page validation can help your ranking in SERPs (the jury is still out on that one). But, standards compliant Web pages do help with cross browser compatibility.

** Link Popularity** - Once your Web site has been well established, it's time to build up your link popularity. The more relevant inbound links a Web site has, the better its rankings will be.

** Analyze Traffic** - Read your log files often. Make sure you're not getting traffic you don't want and getting traffic you do want. Keeping a pulse on your traffic allows you to better optimize your pages.

** NO TRICKS** - If it doesn't seem ethical, then it isn't a good idea. If it doesn't help your visitors, then don't do it.

** NO FRAMES** - Don't use frames, ever.

** NO BROKEN LINKS** - Linking to pages that don't exist is a very bad thing.
Search engines and people alike hate that.