

Search engine optimisation

Copywriting

Selecting key phrases

The first step with search engine optimisation is to select the key phrases that are both relevant to your business, and worthwhile targeting. The phrases you select should be based on the volume of searches and your chances of achieving a good result. As it can be very difficult and costly to rank highly for single words or popular phrases, you'll most likely be looking for a number of less popular phrases where the competition is not too strong. For example, a phrase with a relatively high number of searches, but where competitors have a low page rank, poor code or content, or very few inbound links. Open can help with this research.

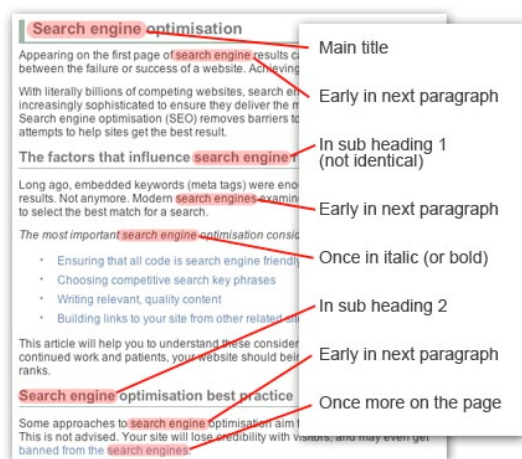
The next step is to optimise your content for the selected phrases. It's not possible to optimise every page for every phrase, so you will need to select a primary phrase for your home page, and several other phrases for the other pages of your site. You can then optimise each page for its own phrase, the aim being to get as many visitors for as many phrases as possible, regardless of their entry page. As your home page is the most important page, this should be targeted to your most important phrase. Ideally, all other phrases would be related the same subject matter, and all linked to the home page to get the best results.

Writing your copy

Search engines analyse every aspect of your content. This includes headings and sub-headings, formatting, placement of words, even spelling, grammar and sentence structure. All are important. The use of short sentences can help, as can breaks – and dashes. Search engines are increasing clever, so don't try to trick them. Never duplicate the content of other sites, and write relevant, honest and clear content that works for your audience. This will give the best long term search engine results.

Key phrase placement

Key phrase placement makes a huge difference to the relevance of your page in a search. The copy for each page of your website should be written carefully to contain its selected key phrase in the right places. The example below shows good key phrase placement.



- The first heading on the page must include your key phrase.
- Your key phrase should be included early in the first paragraph.
- Sub-headings should contain your key phrase.
- Making one (and only one) instance bold or italic will also help.
- The key phrase should be used again a couple of times on the page.
- Use other related words within the same copy.
- Put the most important copy within the first 100 words.
- Don't duplicate headings, sentences, paragraphs or entire pages.
- Don't duplicate the content of other sites.
- Write clear content that makes sense to your audience.

Going too far

Search engine optimising website copy sometimes can be taken too far. Whilst achieving a high search engine ranking is important, this must be balanced with consideration for your audience. Your copy should clearly describe your products and services. Copy written solely to achieve a high search engine ranking will not result in a good user experience. Get the website right for the audience and other sites will link to yours. This in turn will improve your search engine ranking.