

1. Recap

In our last session, we looked at Google and its tools, today we are going to look at SEO.

How did you find your last session?

Give me one thing you took from the session.

2. Today's to-do list

We will look at SEO from a content point of view, **what it is, how to do it and how to structure your pages.**

3. Learning objectives:

By the end of this session, you will

Understand how to structure a web page for SEO.

Understand the terminology.

Know what SEO is and why it's important.

4. Whip Round

Show of hands who does any SEO already?

5. SEO

We talk about SEO a lot in this Skills Bootcamp. It's a core part of most things we do in digital marketing and Web Dev. We could spend half the Skills Bootcamp talking about SEO, but we are going to just ease you in gently and do two sessions. To make it a bit easier to digest we are going to split it into two halves. Content and Performance.

Today we are going to look at the content half. You have a content creation session later in the week where we will introduce you to writing SEO-friendly copy and some of the tools you can use. Today we are going to think about how you should write, how you should format it and some of the terminology.

We are going to look at:

What SEO is

Terminology

Keywords

Organising your content with Htags

Let's start at the beginning.

What is it?

SEO content is the optimised wordage we put into our pages and posts with the aim of getting better rankings on Google or Bing.

According to Moz.com (an authority in SEO):

"SEO stands for search engine optimisation, which is a set of practices designed to improve the appearance and positioning of web pages in organic search results. Because organic

search is the most prominent way for people to discover and access online content, a good SEO strategy is essential for improving the quality and quantity of traffic to your website."

When you type in your search you will get a set of results. The top results will normally have SPONSORED against them. Those are your paid ads (SEM). Everything underneath is your organic results (SEO). How high you rank in the organic results will be down to how much effort you put in to get there. I'm sorry, I would love to tell you that you will create a new website and be at the top of page one after two days, but you won't. It doesn't work like that.

Organic search results are unpaid listings on a search engine results page (SERP). These are the results that the search engine has determined are most relevant to the keyword/query that the user has typed in. When you view the results page, you will see that the top places on every page are taken up by the paid ads. The organic results which are what we are looking at today, are displayed in an order of relevance based on the search engines' organic ranking algorithms rather than a paid bid. You can't pay for a high page ranking, but you will have to work for it.

Your position in the rankings will depend on how good and relevant your content is on your website. You can attract all the visitors in the world, but if they're coming to your site because Google tells them you're a retailer of Apple computers when really, you're a farmer selling apples, those visitors are likely to leave your site pretty quickly.

High-quality SEO capitalises on the search engine's effort to match a user's search intent to the web pages listed in the SERP. Users are far more likely to click on search results that appear near the top of the SERP, which is why it's important to use your SEO strategy to rank relevant pages as high as you can.

The more high-quality visitors you attract to your site, the more likely you are to see an increase in valuable conversions.

How it works

Search engines like Google and Bing use crawlers, often referred to as bots or spiders, to gather information about all the content they can on the internet. The crawler starts from a known web page and follows internal links to pages within the site as well as external links to pages on other sites. The content on those pages, plus the context of the links it has followed, help the crawler understand what each page is about and how it's semantically connected to all the other pages in the search engines, massive database.

When a user types a query into the search box, the search engine uses complex algorithms to pull out what it believes to be the most accurate and useful list of results for that query. These organic results can include web pages full of text, news articles, images, videos, local business listings and other more niche types of content.

There are lots of factors that go into the search engines algorithms and those factors are constantly evolving to keep up with changing user behaviour and advances in machine learning.

Before we go much further let's just break down some of this terminology. As with all things tech, SEO has its own language that can sound like total gibberish if you don't know what it all means. It's easy to get your PPC confused with your SERP, and your long-tail keywords mixed up with your snippets if you have never come across any of them before.

Terminology – a quick breakdown of some terms.

SERP - Search Engine Results Pages – the list of results we get when we ask Google for something.

SEM – Search Engine Marketing – our strategy to improve our rankings in the SERPs

HTML - HyperText Markup Language – the language that our website is built-in

Conversions – a website visitor completing an action, buying a product or sign up for something

Rank – your position in the SERP

High-quality visitors – these are the people that are going to our site to do something. They are genuinely interested in our products or content

PPC – Pay Per Click, our Google or paid ads

CPC – Cost Per Click, how much a keyword would cost per click in a paid ad

Snippets – The description of the page in the SERP.

Keyword – The search term we want to be found/ranked for

So now you know what I'm talking about, let's move on to keywords. The different types, research, and long-tail.

What are they?

Keywords are your search query; what your user is putting into their search bar to find what they are looking for. Despite the singular name, they are very rarely just one word.

Usually, 2-5. Longer phrases are easier to optimise for but lower your search volume.

A keyword will include a “head” keyword which will be the main word that is most important so for example “coconut”. The head keyword will get a massive amount of search results. It will include everything that incorporates that word. **We can then start to narrow it down and be a bit more specific by adding in other words.** We will reduce our search results but are more likely to get better conversions because we are sending people off in the right direction, so based on our example we might use “coconut milk” or “coconut skincare”.

Long-tail keywords

People often mistake long-tail keywords for very long keyword phrases. It's not about their character count, it's about their search volume compared to the search volume of the head keyword. A long-tail keyword would be something like “coconut milk skin care”. We are asking a more specific question so the number of results we are going to get is going to be significantly lower. We use long-tail keywords because as a rule, they are a lot less competitive. Our example “coconut” will be incredibly hard to rank for because there is so much competition. If our user is asking specific questions and our long-tail keyword is picking up on that, it is more likely that we will get a better ranking and a better conversion if

our content addresses the topic. There is a really useful article in your useful download doc from Ahrefs about long-tail keywords that goes into more detail about different types and how to use them so well worth a read.

So now we know what they are, we need to know what to use. Don't be tempted to dive straight in, we need to do a few things first.

Keyword research

You might think you know what your potential customers are looking for, but you would be surprised how different the searches can be. Business owners fall into the trap of assuming that everyone knows about their product, that they understand the terminology and that they know all the brand names.

As an example: a metalwork company is looking for a specific supplier for some finishing they want. The office manager is given the task of looking for potential companies. She has a basic knowledge of the business but isn't a Metal Finisher so what she is going to look for is going to be different than what the Finisher would look for. She is very unlikely to use a search term like "substrate ultraviolet coatings" for example, she's going to be looking for a more generic search like "powder coating for steel". If you don't know what you are optimising for, you can't optimise for it. Keyword research is a VITAL part of the process.

We want to be able to generate traffic to our site using the right keywords that suit our product or service but are also relevant to what people are looking for. You have looked at using Google Trends in your Google Tools session and how to research what keywords are trending and what search terms people are using. Sites like Ahrefs, SEMRush, Moz and SERanking all have keyword research tools to help you get the best results. We can see in our example here we have a breakdown of search volumes, related searches, CPC values and the top-ranking results for that keyword. So, using our example "powder coating" we can get a good overview of our keyword. We can also use the information in Search Console and Google ads if you have that setup or just ask the question on your social media.

If you are not in a position to pay for these kinds of sites, then you can use Google itself. If you start to type your query into the search bar Google will give you the most popular searches as suggestions. Remember it won't be so great for researching long-tail keywords as Google is all based around the highest volume and most popular search.

When we are doing our keyword research it is worth bearing in mind the intent of the searcher. We want to make sure that we are not only picking the right keywords, but they will get the right people and for the right reasons. **The intent is what we call our users reason for visiting our site. The intent assigned to a keyword can tell you if a searcher is looking to buy something soon, shop around, or gather information.** There are four main types of keywords to classify intent:

- **Informational** — looking for information or an answer to a question.
- **Navigational** — looking for a specific site or page.

- **Commercial** —looking to find out more about brands or services.
- **Transactional** — looking to complete a purchase or complete an action.

Looking at each of these in more detail will help you get a better idea of what your audience is looking for and at what point you should use those keywords. Think back to our market research session and your buyer persona. We know that people search for information in different ways and that their overall requirements are different. Think about our analysis session, where we looked at Hotjar and how people move around our sites. Making sure we understand the intent behind the searches means we can use those keywords in the right place at the right time.

Informational keywords

These are usually the ones that have a high search volume. Users who are at the start of their buying cycle and are looking for information. At this point, we probably won't get many conversions because this is the point where they are window shopping. Getting ideas and learning more. We need to make sure that we optimise for these keywords to encourage sales or sign-ups. We need to make sure we give them all the information they need so they don't need to go off anywhere else. Informational keywords are often question-based. What, will, how. These keywords are not as valuable from an action point of view as commercial or transactional but are a vital starting point in the journey, building brand awareness and educating the searcher so they shouldn't be overlooked.

Navigational keywords

These are more specific, **if a searcher has seen a brand in a shop or on an ad and knows the product or the company name then these are the searches that send them off to the company's website or shopping portal.** We have gone past the initial information gathering stage as they already know about the company or product and now want to find the right place to buy whether that is online or a physical location.

Commercial keywords

These searches happen when someone wants to find out more about a specific product. They may be looking to compare similar products or be looking for demos, discounts or offers. These are the kinds of keywords that we want to target with comparison articles, listicles, reviews, or how-to articles. Commercial keywords are a step closer in our journey, our searcher is interested in our product or service. These are our opportunities to convert our audience.

Transactional keywords

These are our final steps in the process, they show the strongest intent to buy or take action. These are the kinds of keywords we might use in paid ads or product pages where we want our viewers to take instant action. They are more likely to be longer and more specific, "coconut milk face cream" for example. Transactional keywords will include buy, subscribe or sign-up. These keywords are right at the end of our buying funnel, so they are the most valuable when we are looking at our research and SEO or PPC strategy. And of

course, just to confuse you a bit more, a keyword can have more than one intent so that's why you need to make sure you use it correctly and in the right place at the right time.

Understanding how you can use these keywords and how they all fit together will help you improve your customer journey. Informational keywords to attract users who are researching a topic. Navigational keywords to attract users who are looking for a specific website. Commercial keywords to attract users who are ready to make a purchase. And transactional keywords to guide users towards taking a specific action.

Whichever type of keyword we are going to use we want to make sure it has:

Good search volumes of 1000+ searches a month

Low competition

Naturally, describe your business or product.

You don't want to be trying to shoehorn your content into a keyword, they should be giving you inspiration, not headaches. We also want to make sure we are where our competitors are. When you are doing your research pop a few of your most important keywords into Google and see where your competitors are in the SERPS. Look at their content and how they structure their funnel. Are there things that they are missing that you could add, are there questions or solutions they don't offer that you could? We want to make sure we know where and when to use our keywords in our content for maximum impact. We don't want to flood the page with gibberish just to fit our keywords in, it needs to be readable and understandable.

6. Activity one

Scenario

That website for the "Digital Marketing Masterclass" you finished last week looks great! We need to start and look at the SEO now, got to get them on page one! We have a meeting with them next week to plan out our strategy. It's going to be a full site plan so can you take a look at these couple of things for me for next week?

Think about the keywords this company would want to rank for and how you could use the four types of intent to draw customers to and through their site. Create a plan of at least 10 keywords and identify where they would fit into the buying cycle/ which intent they would apply to.

Time for this activity: 20mins

7. Quick Fire Quiz

Using the quiz pop up answer the question on the screen

Question: SEM stands for

A Search Experience Marketing

B Social Experience Marketing

C Search Engine Marketing

Well done everyone, the correct answer is: C Search Engine Marketing

8. Organisation

So, we have done our research, we have our keywords. Now we need to organise our content in a logical way that is SEO-friendly but also reader-friendly. We want to keep them on our site as long as possible so the easier it is to find things the better.

We know we have different types of website pages, no matter what platform we use.

***Product/information pages* - these tell people useful stuff, and important facts and sell our products and services. You would normally optimise these pages for your most important keywords.** For example, RTE with their conservatories, windows and doors. Our main site pages will reflect these keywords: Composite Doors, PVCu Windows, Conservatories etc.

***Then we have our posts and articles* - these are more in-depth, more engaging and can go at the concept from a different angle. Solve problems and offer solutions.** We want to use these posts to cover more of those keywords that people are searching so RTE might be talking about specific designs. The main site page is optimised for Conservatories but then we can use our blogs to cover Pavilion Conservatory, Edwardian Conservatory, Georgian Conservatory and so on. And of course, we can reference all these posts on our site page, spreading the love between the pages, and linking everything together.

We need to make sure we organise our content in a readable and accessible way. Because of the way the Crawlers read site content, it helps if we can give them signposts. These are where H tags come in.

Htags

Officially they are Heading Elements although most people know them as H tags or Header tags. They are semantic HTML elements that help to organise our website content and pages. They separate subsections of your content, which is particularly important if you're writing longer blogs and articles. Think of it as H standing for Hierarchy. The most important is at the top, leading down to the less important content further down. They run from H1 to H6. A lot of people mistake H tags for formatting tools. In most site themes you can set the style of your Htags, and choose a size, style and colour. Although you can do that, it's not what they are for and not how you want to use them if you are looking at a well-optimised site. They are far more important to our strategy than simply deciding what font size to be.

H1 — The title of a post. They're usually keyword-centric, focused around the "big idea" of a page or post, and crafted to grab a reader's attention. You only want one of these per page. They should always be at the top of your content with everything else sitting beneath.

H2 — These are subheaders that classify the main points of your paragraphs and separate sections. Consider using keywords related to the "big idea" in your H1 while also helping the reader easily find the sections they want to read. Ask questions or make statements.

H3 — These are subsections that clarify the points made in the H2 further. Alternatively, they can be used in formatting lists or bullet points.

H4 —These are subsections that clarify the points made in H3 further. Like the H3, they can be used in formatting lists or bullet points.

H5 and H6 follow on being the least important of the headings. These are often smaller subsections of paragraphs, often used for quotes or content you want to highlight without it being a major section of text.

You need to keep them in order; ideally, you don't want to skip so there is no jumping from H2 to H5. Keep it logical and in sequence. You can use the same number of heading tags throughout your work to indicate that each of these sections is of equal importance. We have discussed keyword intent and it's important to factor that into your Htags. If your H1 doesn't have a keyword or you put irrelevant text in your H2 and H3 then Google will struggle to understand what you are trying to say and your page won't rank as well as it could.

We have a keyword of Conservatory. As an example, you might format a blog like this:

H1: Adding value with a conservatory

H2: Designing a conservatory with RTE

H3: Conservatory designs

H3: Do I need planning permission for a conservatory?

H4: Benefits of a conservatory

When we optimise our pages and look at the organisation of the content, we need to remember that Google can't read but it does recognise words. It won't make sense of full sentences, but it will identify specific words that are used in them. Our titles and copy are important to attract both Bots and viewers. Well-optimised titles for your Google Bots and well-formatted, readable content for our viewers.

To set up the perfect page we need to plan out where our most important elements are going to go. Where do we need to put our keywords for maximum effect?

9. Topic Demo

15-20 minute demonstration of setting up a page with Htags and alt tags

In the URL or the slug.

Mywebsite.co.uk/Edwardian-conservatory

The title of the page – our H1, remember just the one. This is our most important bit of content, our signpost for Google to point viewers in our direction.

Edwardian conservatory designs and benefits.

Notice we are putting our keyword first so it's the first thing in that sentence. Try and keep your H1/title concise, don't ramble on. It should be a short summary of the content on the page. It's about ensuring Google and your viewer understand exactly what is happening on that page.

Then follows our content, neatly formatted with our H2-H6 tags where appropriate. We want to use our keyword an appropriate number of times in our copy. We don't want to over-optimize and make the content hard to read or spammy. Yoast recommends a 10% saturation so in a blog of 300 words we would be looking at using our keyword 3 times. Making sure you mix it up and use it as part of your text or questions makes it more readable and viewer-friendly.

Alt Tags

Next, we want to look at the images on our page. **Each page in our site should have multiple images and they should be optimised for the focus keyword on that page.**

Although like the text, Google can't actually see what's in the image it can help it make sense of what the page is about. We can use the Alt Tags and descriptions to tell the search engine what the image is but also importantly tell screen readers and text-to-speech what the image is for the visually impaired. Alt Tags are always looked on as an SEO tool, that can help your rankings and should be used but you shouldn't overlook the fact that millions of people rely on them to understand what's on a page. American accessibility laws are very particular about what should and shouldn't be on a web page and how accessible the content should be. It's only a matter of time before the UK rules follow suit.

We need to add our keyword but include it as a description of the image. So rather than just putting "Edwardian Conservatory" We should say "An example of an Edwardian Conservatory with a solid roof on a terrace house." We can add more of a description if we want to or add a caption which, depending on the browser and the website theme will normally show when the mouse hovers over the image or shows underneath the image on the page.

10. Activity two

Use the text provided in your workbook, copy it into a new page on your site and format it with Htags. Using the keywords, you listed in task 1, apply a keyword that you think would be appropriate and then divide the text into the various sections within the page. Feel free to add your chosen keyword to the content or titles.

Time for this activity: 30 mins

11. Quick Fire Quiz

Using the quiz popup answer the question on the screen

Question: Which Htag should you use for your headline?

A H1

B H2

C H4

Well done everyone, the correct answer is: A H1

All the things we have looked at so far are classed as on-site SEO. We are going to look at some off-site SEO. These are the things we can do outside our website to help our rankings. Our off-site ranking factors involve improving the perception of our site for searchers and search engines. It's about showing relevance, authority and trustworthiness.

12. Off-Site SEO & Backlinks

Backlinks are another often misunderstood term in SEO. Backlinks are an excellent way of creating better rankings when they are used properly. We are not talking about creating pages of links to everyone you know and all your suppliers and your Auntie Shirley's Blog about her cat Sampson. We are talking about **links from an external website with anchor text, that is relevant to your content, linking back to you.**

There are three main link types divided up by how they were earned.

Natural - editorially given without any action on the part of a page owner.

Manual - are acquired through deliberate link-building activities. This might be getting customers to link to your website or asking influencers to share your content.

Self-created – things like adding yourself to an online directory, guest blogging on a collaborator's site or for web designers a 'designed by' link in the site's footer.

In our example, Bambers have a main website and one that is specific to their finance service. Our main site has. Link on the product page to the Finance site.

“Please click the Novuna link below to discover your Personal Finance options.”

Our anchor text (our clickable text which describes what you will see if you click on the link) is in bold. That external link, in the text and the button below, are our backlinks – it links back to another website that is relevant to our content and our users. Google uses the backlink as a thumbs-up for the webpage. It shows that the content is relevant and good quality. It's like a vote of confidence that this page is the authority on this subject, it's where the best information is. Earning backlinks has a positive effect on that's sites ranking.

It can be hard to create backlinks when you first start. They need to be appropriate and relevant and not just links for the sake of links. Using all the tools at your disposal will help you increase your rankings organically. Good quality blogs and content shared on your social media will help you get brand awareness and authority and show people that there is content out there worth linking to.

It's generally harder to get backlinks from medium/top-tier websites however it is positive, and these tend to have the biggest impact on your organic rankings, so it's worth the extra effort. Build a mix of sites to link to as it creates a healthy-looking “backlink profile”.

Get featured online wherever you can at first, and then use these features as “social proof” to get featured on the bigger, more well-known sites - essentially, you're looking to secure media coverage. Look to comment, engage and share your opinions within your niche. Be where your target lives online! Become the authority!

This is an ongoing process and should never end!

Tactics

- Guest Blogging - On Your Website
- Guest Blogging - On Other Websites
- Share Across Social
- Create Infographics (and upload them to infographics websites, and give them to other websites)
- Show niche data in an interesting way
- Run External Competitions (with media/websites)
- Blogger's Outreach Campaigns (Product/service reviews)
- Power of Twitter (#Journorequest hashtags)
- Feature People (Influencers)
- Get Featured In Press (Reach out and ask)
- Help A Reporter (HARO)

13. Show and tell / group feedback

Does anyone have an activity to share?

(Encourage at least one learner to share their activity answers/content and get the group to comment, critique or share ideas)

14. Do's/Don'ts

Do your keyword research

Do structure your page properly

Don't ignore the customer's intent

Don't ignore what your competitors doing

Do take advantage of any appropriate backlinks

15. Any Questions?

16. Coming up soon to extend these skills

Tomorrow we are going to carry on with SEO and look at page performance and tools.

16. Quiz

10 minutes to go off and do today's quiz, once it's submitted you will get a copy and the correct answers. Feel free to share your score in the chat.

17. Final thoughts

Quick whiz around the room, any comments on today, what do you feel you have learnt today?

18. Don't forget

Make sure you complete and submit your workbooks. Once you do you will get a copy of your completed workbook and links to download a copy of today's notes and slides.

Today's session page in your learner dashboard has a useful links document that will cover all the tools, resources and articles we have discussed in the session and some useful guides and articles to take you further.

Make sure you revisit your FABs and set yourself some goals specific to today's session.

19. Extra help

If you need any help with anything from today's session feel free to message in the WhatsApp group. If you have any other issues or problems related to the course or the tools speak to Andrew and Irfana, they are here to help you.

20. Up next

See you tomorrow for SEO part two.