

Chapter 9: The New Definition of Search Engine Optimization



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I wish I had a nickel for every person who has come to me and said, “I paid someone X (always 4+ figures) number of dollars to do optimization for my site, but I really can’t see any change.” Or, “I am paying X (always in the hundreds) number of dollars monthly to keep my site optimized and I really don’t know what they are doing.”

There are two levels of foolishness going on here – the people who are paying for something they don’t know or understand and the shysters who are charging people for something they just pretend to do.

When your SEO tells you they can’t go in to detail about what they are doing on you site because it’s a ‘trade secret’ – RUN! If you are bent on throwing your money away anyway, please contact me. I’d be happy to take it.

Thankfully, “doing” search engine optimization to a website is changing.

Defining Search Engine Optimization

I ask “What is search engine optimization?” often when I give talks. Most of the time I get stares in response. Some people try but give up soon enough. What would you answer? Tell me in the comments BEFORE reading on.

I have a new definition for the term:

Search Engine Optimization is creating good content on a web site in the form of pages and posts that real people want to read, which satisfies the query AND can be found by a search engine. In that order. Readers first!

Search Engine Optimization is NOT About:

1. Link hierarchy within a site.
2. The number of backlinks to a site.
3. Using perfect grammar.
4. Hitting on all the social signals.
5. Writing longer articles.

SEOs and Search Engines Keep Missing One Another

There are SEOs sitting in offices throughout the country, the world for that matter, brainstorming, writing on white boards or yellow legal pads trying to figure out what the search engine algorithm writers are thinking to determine what the search engines are going to do next.

There are also groups of people (the algorithm writers) sitting in offices within the confines of the search engine companies brainstorming, writing on white boards or yellow legal pads as well trying to figure out how real people read, write, search, and find what they are looking for.

The two groups keep missing one another. However, to their credit, the search engine algorithm writers are getting closer to understanding real people than SEOs are to understanding search engines.

Doing Search Engine Optimization

Question: How do you 'do' this new search engine optimization?

Answer: Create solid content, short, long or otherwise...but do it with a sensitivity that there is a little robot sitting on your shoulder who will need to find your content. And remember, that robot is getting smaller and smaller.

If you write something good but nobody can find it, you might as well leave it on your computer. If you write something that is garbage but still very findable, you might as well leave that on your computer as well. Write good stuff.



There is an ideal balance of good content that is also findable. Another word for ideal balance = optimization.

Defining Good Findable Content

Good Content:

1. is served up with a title that promises to satisfy a query.
2. is original and delivers early on the promise of the title.
3. has images that are relevant to the query and are also searchable.
4. is consistently on topic within the site where it is found as evidenced by internal links.
5. appeals to other like-minded sources with relevant external links.
6. is recognized as such by other credible sites as evidenced by backlinks.
7. is sometimes timely.
8. is sometimes timeless.

Chapter Conclusion

A site with good search engine optimization has good content that real people love to read, will engage with via the comments, want to share when appropriate, AND can be found. In that order.

Write well. Get read.