

# Maintaining a Search Engine Friendly Website

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DEAD LINK CHECKER



# Beginner's Guide to Maintaining a Search Engine Friendly Website

It's simple – if your site isn't search engine friendly, no one will be able to find it. But what does the term mean? Essentially, a 'search engine friendly site' is one that's designed, written and programmed to appear high-up in search engine results. And, in today's online world that basically means one thing – you need to keep Google happy.

However, you only need to read [Google's Webmaster Guidelines](#) to know that doing this successfully is about more than carrying out keyword optimisation (although that's important too).

First and foremost, you should be creating pages for people. If they're happy the search engines should be happy as well. Here's what you need to check on a monthly basis.



## Optimise with the Right Keywords

Optimisation is an essential part of creating a search engine friendly site. And whilst it might feel like you're only doing it for Google, the underlying purpose is to help the user.

Good keyword research gives you an insight into the phrases people are searching for within your niche. So for example, if you run a dog grooming business, people might be searching for terms like 'dog grooming services' or 'dog grooming at home'.

Using similar language in your page titles, page descriptions and content makes it easier for the right people to find your site, as well as helping you rank (appear higher in search results) for the phrases.

Here's what you need to check on a monthly basis.

### What should you be doing each month?

You should monitor keywords in your niche to ensure that you are consistently targeting the best phrases. Search volumes change over time, so content should be updated accordingly – your page titles and meta-descriptions (the information that appears for a page in the search results) are particularly important. You can find out more about keyword optimisation from [Google's Search Engine Optimisation Starter Guide](#).

### What should be in your toolkit?



#### UBERSUGGEST

A handy, free keyword tool, which targets long-tail phrases



#### WORDTRACKER

An industry standard key word tool with a simple, intuitive interface



## Maintain Your Site's Structure



You guessed it – a good site structure is, first and foremost, one that delivers a great user experience. A bad site structure is one that causes visitors to leave, which ultimately will damage your rankings for the reasons discussed above.

Your site's structure should be logical and easy for users to navigate. Key characteristics include a clear hierarchy of pages, a URL structure that follows your navigation hierarchies and a comprehensive internal linking structure.

You can find out more from the [Kissmetrics blog](#).

### What should you be doing each month?

You should regularly test your site, so that you can quickly identify and fix any structural problems – from site speed to accessibility and duplicate content.

### What should be in your toolkit?



#### XML SITEMAPS

A handy tool that helps you to build site maps from scratch and informs you of any problems before you submit it to search engines



## Monitor How People Interact with Your Site

As we've mentioned, you should be designing your site first and foremost for people. Search engines want to provide the best possible results to their users – and they have a very good idea of the types of site that satisfy visitors.

To determine whether your site is offering a good experience, search engines analyse how people are interacting with your pages. Factors such as a high bounce rate (when people enter a page and then leave without interacting with it) or people not returning, sharing or linking to your site all indicate a lack of quality – which will have a negative impact on your rankings.

### What should you be doing each month?

You should be consistently monitoring your site and making changes to improve its usability. For example, a page with a high bounce rate may have a title that the content doesn't deliver on, whilst a lack of visits to a page could mean that it's difficult to locate on your site.

### What should be in your toolkit?



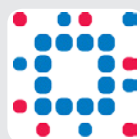
#### CRAZY EGG

An incredibly useful tool that shows you how visitors interact with your site, such as where they click and how far down they scroll



#### CLICKTALE

A great tool that tracks how users interact with your website, with features including data-rich heat maps that allow you to visualise visitor's every mouse move



#### EXPERIAN HITWISE

A tool that measures online consumer behaviour, offering a comprehensive overview of your industry sector, as well as competitor analysis



## Regularly Update Your Site with Great Content



A huge number of commercial sites regularly produce content – and there’s good reason for this. Aside from the benefits of building your brand and your relationship with customers, a blog will improve your site’s rankings. But why is this? Great content drives traffic, gets links and keeps visitors coming back – all of which signals to the search engine that your site offers a good experience. Every time you publish a post, it’s one more indexed page on your site and a clear cue to Google that your site is active.

### What should you be doing each month?

You should update your blog with a post every month. However, the post has to be high quality and appeal to the right audience. If you create low quality content it won’t get clicked on or get any links – and as a result you’ll be wasting your time. Equally, create content that appeals to the wrong audience and you’ll find that visitors won’t stick around long, resulting in a high bounce rate.

### What should be in your toolkit?



#### CONTENT GEMS

A content curation tool that helps you to easily find the best content around topics you want to monitor – either to give you ideas for your own content or to provide content to share on your social networks



#### FEEDLY

A great content curation tool, Feedly gathers content from your favourite site and blogs for you to read later



#### BUZZSUMO

A handy tool that allows you to discover the most shared content within a topic or industry. It gives you an insight into the type of content your audience will love



## Monitor and Repair Broken Links

The online world is constantly changing and as a result, sometimes links will get broken. On the surface it might not seem like a couple of 404 errors on your site is a big problem – but they can do some serious hidden damage.

A large number of broken links can result in search engines having trouble indexing and ranking your site. First and foremost however, broken links are frustrating for visitors, impacting the usability of your site and resulting in people bouncing off and not coming back.

As discussed above, search engines pick up on this behaviour and interpret it as a sign that your site is not offering a good experience – and this will negatively affect your rankings.

### What should you be doing each month?

You should regularly scan your site, so that you can find and fix dead links.

#### What should be in your toolkit?



##### DEAD LINK CHECKER

Our tool offers a hassle-free solution to the problem of dead links. Dead Link Checker crawls your site, identifying broken links for you to correct



Our **Auto-Check** tool will automatically scan your site daily, weekly or monthly – leaving you to sit back and relax

If your site isn't search engine friendly, no one will be able to find it – and that's bad news for business. However, maintaining a search engine friendly site is about more than just sticking in some keywords (although that's important too).

From your site's structure to dead links, there are a number of checks you need to carry out on a monthly basis and a range of tools that can help you do this. The main goal, however, is to ensure your site is user friendly. If people love it, Google will love it too.



[www.deadlinkchecker.com](http://www.deadlinkchecker.com)