

Basic SEO Training

Topics covered in this training:

1. What is SEO?
2. How do search engines create search results?
3. Anatomy of a Search Results page
4. What affects your site's SEO?
5. Writing content with SEO in mind
6. How to monitor your site's performance

What is SEO?

Search Engine Optimization is the process of making a website's pages show higher on search engine results.

How do search engines create their results?

1. **Spider/Bots** crawl sites across the internet and index every site's page content, headings, and links
2. **Search Engine Index** - repository of all sites they've indexed. *It's very important your site is indexed correctly.*
3. **Search Engine Algorithm** - Google wants to every result to get searchers to exactly what they're looking for so Google does everything they can to prioritize high quality content

Anatomy of a Search Results page:

1. Ads at the top: Advertisers (Google AdWords) 33% click on first ad, 17% on second
90% of all clicks on FIRST page of results
2. Individual search results have:
 - a. Title
 - b. URL
 - c. Meta Description



What affects your site's SEO?

1. **Site Performance, Structure and Organization**
 - a. Site loads quickly on desktop and mobile without errors (like 404 pages)
 - b. Has a clear organization structure:
 - i. Clear, persistent menus on every page
 - ii. Navigation shows where a user currently is
 - iii. Sidebars and footer show related content to ease navigation
2. **Quality of your content - is it valuable to those who find it?**
 - a. Well written and concise content that relates to your Focus Keyphrase
 - b. Well organized headlines, lists, quotes and images
 - i. Users should be able to 'scan' every post and page to find the answer they want - headlines, lists, blockquotes, images
 - c. Content should link to other related resources on your site
3. **External linking and referrals - other sites linking to you**

Writing Content with SEO in mind

1. Choose a keyphrase: It must be specific and embody what you're writing about
 - a. Be Specific:
Bad: "schools"
This is too broad a term and will have too much competition
 - b. Good: "Catholic Schools in Kirkland Wa"
This is specific and users will find what they're looking for
 - c. Who is your audience and what are they going to search for?
 - d. Try Googling your keyphrase and see what the search results look like
 - i. What are successful (high ranking) pages doing right?
 - ii. If there are many results, can you make your keyphrase more specific?
 - e. Try to choose unique keyphrases for each post and page
2. Write in a clear, concise writing style. (Yoast plugin)
 - a. Write short paragraphs 3-4 sentences
 - b. Use a headline for almost every paragraph
 - c. Use lists, blockquotes and images to break up text

How to monitor your site's performance:

1. Google tools for knowing how your site is ranking
 - a. Google Analytics and Google Search Console
 - i. Sitemap submission
 - ii. Alerts for site errors and crawl errors
2. Tools on your website:
 - a. Insights plugin for quick overview results/feedback
 - b. Yoast Plugin for individual posts/pages