



# List of terms mentioned in the Multilingual SEO course

We mention a lot of terms in this course which you might not be familiar with yet. Although we will explain these terms carefully in the course, it's easy to lose track of which term serves what purpose. Below, we have compiled an overview of terms mentioned in this course, with short descriptions of what they entail. They are listed alphabetically.

### **Affiliate sites:**

sites which mainly exist to link to other pages. Affiliate sites will receive a commission if the visitor they send makes a purchase on the website they linked to.

### **Algorithm:**

aspect of a search engine that decides which pages (that have been saved in the index) are shown in the search results, and in which order. How Google's algorithm works is a secret and the factors that determine the ordering change regularly.

### **Canonical:**

the canonical link element lets search engines know which variation of a collection of similar or identical pages you want Google to index. A canonical consists of two elements: the link rel=, which specifies that we're dealing with a canonical link, and the href, which points to the canonical page. An example of a canonical link element is:

```
<link rel="canonical" href="http://example.com/es" />
```

### **Conversions:**

conversion happens every time a visitor completes a desired action on your website, like clicking-through to the next page, subscribing to a newsletter or buying your product.

### **Country code TLD (ccTLD):**

a country specific top-level domain (TLD). Each country has its own TLD. For example, the ccTLD of The Netherlands is .nl and the ccTLD of France is .fr.



**Crawler (also: spider, bot, robot):**

aspect of a search engine that goes around the internet 24/7, following links from one web page to another and saving the HTML-version of all pages in a gigantic database (the index). Pages that are saved in the index could appear in the search results.

**Domain name:**

a convenient way to point people to that specific spot on the internet where you've built your website. Domain names are, generally, used to identify one or more IP addresses. So for Yoast, that domain name is `yoast.com`.

**Findability:**

the ease with which your content is findable for search engines. Findability has to do with maximizing the likelihood Google picks up your content in the search engines.

**Generic TLD (gTLD):**

basically all domains other than country code top-level domains (ccTLDs). Examples of gTLDs are `.com`, `.info`, `.net`, `.edu` and `.gov`.

**Geotargeting:**

telling Google which country you want to target. Geotargeting is important, because Google emphasizes local results for local searches, so you'll gain an edge if you target locally.

**Head keywords:**

your most generic keywords. They form the basis of your keyword research sheet and keyword strategy. After identifying your head keywords, you can start coming up with longer tail keywords.

*Note:* head keywords can consist of several words.

**hreflang:**

an HTML attribute aimed specifically at multilingual and multiregional implementations. It is a piece of code that you show to the search engines and it is supported by Google and Yandex. hreflang tells the search engine what variations of a page are available. The search engine uses this information to determine what variation of a page fits the user best.

**Holistic SEO approach:**

an SEO approach where you focus on making every aspect of your site as good as possible in order to improve your ranking in the search results. Google's mission is to build the perfect search engine that helps people find the best results for what they are looking for. At Yoast, we believe that making your website fit this goal is the way to go, and that this can be accomplished by using a holistic SEO approach.

**HTTP header:**

the code that transfers data between a web server and a browser. HTTP headers are mainly intended for the communication between the server and client in both directions.

**Hummingbird update:**

a Google update that laid down the groundwork for voice-search. It pays more attention to each word in a query, ensuring that the whole search phrase is taken into account, rather than just particular words. The Hummingbird update was released in 2013.

**Index:**

aspect of a search engine; a gigantic database where the HTML-versions of pages that the crawler has found are saved. Pages that are saved in the index could appear in the search results, depending on the algorithm of the search engine.

**Infrastructure TLD:**

a domain under .arpa. You can't register an infrastructure TLD; it is used only for technical infrastructure purposes.

**Keyword:**

word or phrase you would like your website to rank for, so when people search for that keyword or phrase in a search engine, they should find your site.

**Key phrase:**

a keyword which consists of multiple words. We at Yoast tend to use the word keyword for key phrases as well; a keyword isn't necessarily only one word.

**Keyword research:**

the activity you undertake to come up with an extensive list of keywords you would like to rank for.

**Keyword strategy:**

all the decisions you make based on your keyword research.

**Language code:**

part of the value of the hreflang attribute, used to specify the language the alternate page is written in. The hreflang language code is in ISO-639-1, which is a standardized two-letter code. Every hreflang tag should have a language code for hreflang to work. You can review all the language codes here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_ISO\\_639-1\\_codes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ISO_639-1_codes)

**Long tail keywords:**

even more specific and less common keywords than mid tail keywords. They often focus on a niche. The longer (and more specific) search terms are, the easier it will be to rank for the term. The length of long tail keywords is relative: they may consist of three or four words for big companies, they may consist of six or more words for smaller companies.

**Mid tail keywords:**

more specific and longer keywords than head keywords, derived from the head keyword they tie into. The length of mid tail keywords is relative: they may be very short for big companies, they may be quite long for smaller companies.

**Mobile indexing first algorithm:**

a Google algorithm that has been announced for 2018. This algorithm will make sure Google creates and ranks its search listings based on the mobile version of a site, even for listings that are shown to desktop users.

**Mobilegeddon update:**

a Google update that boosts sites that have mobile friendly pages in Google's mobile search results. The Mobilegeddon update was introduced in 2015.

**Multilingual keyword research:**

the activity you undertake to come up with an extensive list of keywords you would like to rank for, for a multilingual site.

**Multilingual SEO:**

an SEO approach for when you are offering optimized content for multiple languages or multiple locations.

**Organic search results:**

the non-paid search results. Google's search engine results page (SERP) shows seven to ten organic links which fit your search the best.

**Paid search results:**

the paid search results, which are shown above the organic (non-paid) links. These links are ads; people have paid Google to put these links at the top of the site when people search for a specific term.

**Panda update:**

a Google update that tries to diminish those websites which are purely created to rank in the search engines. The first Panda update was released in 2011 and Google has re-run this update periodically.

**Penguin update:**

a Google update that judges the links websites got from other sites. If the links turn out to be artificial (e.g. created by buying or exchanging), Google no longer assigns link value. The first Penguin update was rolled out in 2012. Google has re-run this update several times and it is now said to be run continuously.

**Possum update:**

a Google update that was released in 2016. After Possum, Google has shown more varied results depending on the physical location of the searcher and the phrasing of the query.

**RankBrain:**

a Google algorithm; a machine learning system that helps Google better decipher the meaning behind queries, and serve best-matching search results in response to those queries. RankBrain has a query processing and a ranking component.

**Ranking:**

getting your website in a high position in the search results of a search engine, like Google. The algorithm of a search engine determines the position your site gets in the search engine.

**Readability:**

the ease with which a reader can understand a written text. Readability is not only important for your audience, but also for SEO. At Yoast, we believe that readable content leads to higher rankings and more traffic.

**Regional code:**

part of the value of the hreflang attribute, used to specify the region the alternate page is aimed at. The hreflang regional code is in ISO 3166-1 Alpha 2, which is a standardized two-letter code. The regional code is optional. You can review all the regional codes here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO\\_3166-1\\_alpha-2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_3166-1_alpha-2)

**Relative URL:**

a URL that does not contain a fully qualified domain name and path, but instead just the path or a portion of a path. For example, you could be linking to your contact page from your home page like this:

```
<a href="contact.html">Contact</a>
```

**Return link:**

an hreflang attribute that links to another page. Return links are necessary because the hreflang implementation is only valid if each page in the implementation points to all other pages in the implementation.

**Robots.txt file:**

a text file that is telling a search engine where it can and cannot go on your website. The robots.txt file is read by search engine crawlers (also called robots, hence the name).

**Robots meta tag:**

a meta tag that tells Google if and how a specific page needs to be indexed and shown in the search results. The robots meta tag is placed in the <head>-section of a page.

### **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):**

the practice of optimizing websites to make them reach a high position in Google's – or another search engine's – organic search results.

### **Search Engine Results Page (SERP):**

page of the search engine that shows the (organic and paid) search results that fit your search the best.

### **Self link:**

an hreflang attribute that points to itself. Self links are necessary because for hreflang each page needs to link to itself. Confusingly, you still need to use the rel="alternate" attribute for this. So a self link on the Spanish page would look like this: `<link rel="alternate" href="http://example.com/es" hreflang="es" />`

### **SEO copywriting:**

the process of writing articles that are readable and SEO-friendly, so that they help you getting a high position in the search results of a search engine.

### **Subdirectories (also: subfolders):**

one of the domain structure possibilities for when your website is available in multiple languages. Subdirectories are placed after the TLD, for example: *'example.com/es/'* or *'example.com/de/'*. You mostly use subdirectories with gTLDs.

### **Subdomains:**

one of the domain structure possibilities for when your website is available in multiple languages. Subdomains are part of a larger domain. *En.example.com* and *nl.example.com* are subdomains of *example.com*. They can replace the *www.* part of the domain structure, but this is not necessarily the case. For example, in *'www.example.co.uk'*, *'co'* is a subdomain of the *'uk'* TLD.

### **Top-level domain (TLD):**

the last part of the domain name. So for example, where *'yoast'* is obviously our brand, the *.com* bit of our domain name is called a TLD.

### **Transcreation:**

an option for creating content in a new language, where you combine the two strategies of translating content and writing new content. You can take an article you wrote in one language as inspiration for a new article in a different language. However, keyword research and cultural differences are taken into account. The content will not be translated literally, but in the end, the articles will pretty much have the same message.

### **Universal search:**

a method Google is using in delivering search results. In the universal search results, Google not only delivers links to sites that best match your search; it also embeds other digital content, such as news items, pictures and videos.

### **X-default:**

an hreflang implementation option for when there is no viable alternative in the hreflang implementation. The X-default tells Google what page it should send the user to if none of the examples fit the user. This requires nothing more than linking to the dedicated page as the X-default:

```
<link rel="alternate" href="http://example.com/lang/lego"
hreflang="x-default" />
```

### **XML sitemap:**

a roadmap to all important pages of a website. This roadmap guides search engines to all main content on a website. Having an XML sitemap can be beneficial for SEO, as search engines can retrieve essential pages of a website very fast, even if the internal linking of a site isn't flawless.