

List of terms mentioned in the SEO for beginners 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.

Algorithm (of a search engine):

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.

Answer box (in Google):

element of the search result that appears somewhere between the organic search results. Answer boxes give suggestions for questions that relate to the search query you typed in.

Bounce rate:

a metric that measures the percentage of people who land on your website, and do completely nothing on the page they entered. So they don't click a menu item, a 'read more' link, or any other internal links on the page. A user bounces when there has been no engagement with the landing page, and the visit ends with a single-page visit. You can use bounce rate as a metric that indicates the quality of a webpage and/or the 'quality' of your audience.

Breadcrumbs:

a small text path, often located at the top of a page. On yoast.com, for instance, the path to our Yoast SEO plugin page is Home > Yoast Plugins > Yoast SEO for WordPress. This breadcrumb immediately shows you

where you are. Every part of that path is clickable, all the way back to the homepage.

Canonical:

the canonical link element lets search engines know which variation of a collection of similar or identical pages you want Google to put into the search results.

Categories in WordPress:

Categories allow for a broad grouping of post or page topics. They can be arranged in a hierarchy, so you can have subcategories. Each post must be attached to at least one category. For example, categories for a blog can be 'Books', 'Food', 'Music', and 'Travel'. In this example, the category 'Books' could be subdivided into the subcategories 'Fiction books' and 'Nonfiction books'.

Copywriting:

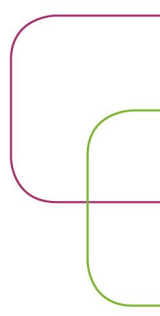
the act of writing text for the purpose of advertising of other forms of marketing.

Cornerstone content:

cornerstone content pieces are those articles on your website you're most proud of. They reflect your business, communicate your mission and are extremely well written. These are the articles you would like to rank high in the search engines. Cornerstone articles are usually explainers; these articles combine insights from different blog posts. If you mark an article as cornerstone content in the Yoast SEO plugin, the content and SEO analyses become a little stricter.

Crawlability:

has to do with the possibilities Google has to crawl your site. Crawlers can be blocked from your site. There are a few ways to block a crawler from your website: in the robots.txt file, in the HTTP header or in the robots meta tag. If your website or a page on your website is blocked, you're saying to Google's crawler: 'do not come here'. Your site or the respective page won't turn up in the search results in most of these cases.

**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.

Featured results (in Google):

a highlighted search box that answers the question you type in the Google search bar. These featured results often appear as a paragraph or a bulleted list, accompanied by an image, and are situated above the regular organic search results.

Flesch Reading Ease test:

measures textual difficulty of a text and grades texts on a scale from 1-100. The lower the score, the more difficult to read the text is. Texts with a high Flesch reading ease score are easy to read. Usually, a reading ease score of 60-70 is believed to be acceptable/normal for web copy. The Flesch Reading Ease test is implemented in the Yoast SEO plugin, and provides reliable scores for English, Dutch, and German.

Google:

the world's most popular search engine. Google's mission is to 'organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful'.

Google Search Console:

a web service by Google for webmasters. It allows webmasters to check their site's indexability and optimize visibility of their websites.

Head keyword:

your most important 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.

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.

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. Whether they do depends on how the algorithm of the search engine ranks it.

Indexability:

the search engine's ability to add a page to its index.

Internal link:

a type of link on a webpage to another page or resource (e.g. an image or document), on the same website or domain. Internal links connect your content and give Google an idea of the structure of your website. They can establish hierarchy on your site, which enables you to give the most important pages and posts more link value than other, less valuable, pages.

JSON-LD:

JSON-LD is one of the markups of Schema.org. A markup is a way to write code. On Schema.org, you'll also find other markups like Microdata or RDFa. At Yoast, we'll advise you always to use JSON-LD, because it does not break your site as easily as other markups do, and it's relatively easy to add to your site.

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.

Keyword research:

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

Keyword stuffing:

manipulating the ranking of a site in the search results by filling pages with (unrelated) keywords or numbers.

Knowledge Graph Card:

a block, usually on the right-hand side of the search results page, containing relevant, context-specific information regarding your search (e.g. a company or a person).

Link building:

there's white-hat link building, where you build an engaged community and promote your website to relevant people, but there are black-hat strategies of link building as well. Some sites try to rank higher by buying links. This includes exchanging money for links, but also sending someone a free product in exchange for a link.

Long tail keyword:

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 keyword:

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.

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.

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.

Nofollow tag:

a robots meta tag that tells the search engines robots to not follow any links on the page at all.

Noindex tag:

a robots meta tag that disallows search engines from showing this page in their results.

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.

Page swapping:

a trick for getting ranked for one page, and then, after the page has attained a good position in the search results, replacing that page for another.

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.

Passive voice:

a grammatical construction where the noun or noun phrase that would be the object of an active sentence (such as 'Yoast SEO calculates your SEO score') appears as the subject of a sentence with passive voice ('The SEO score is calculated by Yoast SEO'). You should try to avoid passive

voice in your articles, because text using a lot of passive voice tends to be hard and unattractive to read.

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.

Redirection (of URLs):

a technique for making a web page available under more than one URL address. When a web browser attempts to open a URL that has been redirected, a page with a different URL is opened. There are different types of redirect, depending on the purpose of the redirect, for example when you delete a post or page, or when you change a slug or URL.

Rich snippet:

snippets that show more than just the title, slug, and meta description. They could show an image, a rating, and whether or not a product is in stock. Rich snippets stand out from other snippets, and thus they have a higher click-through rate.

Rich card:

a sort of follow-up, or extension, of rich snippets. On mobile, a card is the basic presentation unit of a search result. And just like there are rich snippets, there are rich mobile cards as well. Rich cards also have extra information attached to it, which could be aggregate ratings, prices or availability. The end result is a well-structured presentation that is easy to grasp and quick to act upon.

Robots meta tag:

a meta tag that tells Google 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.

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).

Schema.org:

a project developed by the big search engines, where you can find all the structured data markup supported by the search engines. You can use schema.org to find the markup you need for your particular 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.

Snippet:

a result Google shows to the user in the search results. A snippet consists of a SEO title (in blue), the slug (in green), and the meta description (in black).

Structured data:

a piece of code that you can put on your website. It's code in a specific format, written in such a way that search engines understand it. Search engines read the code and use it to display search results in a specific way. Structured data can be used to enable Google to display rich results for your site.

Tags in WordPress:

allow for grouping of posts or pages. Tags are similar to categories, but tags are generally used to describe your post in more detail. Tags exist in their own right and have no set relationship to anything else, so they can't be arranged in a hierarchy. The use of tags is entirely optional.

Transition words:

words like 'most importantly', 'because', 'therefore', or 'besides that'. Using transition words well makes your text much more readable, as these words give direction to your readers. Using them is like pouring cement between your sentences: the relation between two sentences becomes apparent by the use of transition words.

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.

User eXperience (UX):

how a person experiences using a product, such as a website, a mobile phone, or an app, especially in terms of how easy or pleasing it is to use. It's all about how someone feels when using a particular product: does the product make you feel excited or happy, is it a joy to use it, does it help you effortlessly achieve what you've been aiming for? UX is

important for SEO, because search engines want to provide people with the best result for their query.

Voice search:

a search method that allows a user to use a voice command to search the internet.

.htaccess file:

a configuration file for use on web servers running the Apache Web Server software.

