

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Best Practices for Huntsman Cancer Institute

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Agenda

- What is SEO?
- Why SEO Matters
- How SEO Works
- Keyword Research
- Beyond the Page
- SEO for Public Affairs
- SEO Strategy
- SEMrush Overview



What is SEO?

WHAT: A set of processes aimed at improving your website's visibility in search engines (such as Google)

WHY: To get more organic search traffic to your website

HOW: By fulfilling users' search needs

- Relevance
- Content quality
- User experience (UX)

BASICS: The higher our results rank, the more visitors we will get to our website

What is SEO?

Three types of SEO to focus on:

- **On-page:** The content on your site and keywords you use
- **Off-page:** Backlinks directed to your website from other domains
- **Technical:** Site architecture and code

On-page vs Off-page vs Technical SEO

On-page SEO

- Site Content
 - Title tag and meta tag optimization
 - Heading tag optimization
 - Image optimization
- and more

Off-page SEO

- Link Building
 - Content Marketing
 - Social Media
 - Podcasts
 - Reviews
- and more

Technical SEO

- Site Speed
 - Structured Data
 - XML Sitemaps
 - Hreflang
 - Canonicalization
- and more

What is SEO?

E-A-T: Principle used by Google to determine quality of search results using Quality raters (real people); feedback influences Google's algorithm

- **Expertise:** High level of knowledge in a particular field, measured at the content level
- **Authority:** Reputation as a go-to source by other experts (relative concept)
- **Trustworthiness:** Legitimacy and accuracy of content (relative concept)

E-A-T Signals

- Author credentials, links, brand mentions, press releases, secure website

Why SEO Matters



TARGETED



FREE



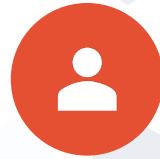
CREDIBILITY
AND VISIBILITY



LONGEVITY



IMPACT



USER
EXPERIENCE

How SEO Works

1. Keyword-based

- Use **terms, phrases, or questions**
- Avoid **cannibalization**—use keyword mapping to optimize single page for 2-4 target phrases, but those selected keywords should be limited to that page and not be targeted on other pages
- Avoid **keyword stuffing**, meaning using target keyword(s) unnaturally and more than necessary

2. Uses algorithm

- Adhere to **formula** used by search engines, but it can change (multiple times per day!)

3. Technically sound

- Clean up website code, use alt text for images, and **fix errors** (broken links, pages, or images)
- Improve **load speed** (e.g. time to interactive 3.7 seconds or less)

How SEO Works

4. Great content

- Write content that people care about that goes **more in-depth than the competition**
- **Repurpose content** for blogs, social media, and videos

5. User experience

- **Create content for people** vs. creating content using keywords alone (provides no real "value")
- **Understand user intent** and **keyword intent** to improve user experience

6. Third-party vouching

- **Monitor backlinks** from external sites (total number, separate domains, quality sites, to interior pages) and social media referral traffic
- **Monitor brand mentions** (mentioned but not linked to) on external sites and on social media

Keyword Research

Optimize pages for individual keyword(s), phrases, or questions. Ability to rank will depend on intent, difficulty, website authority/quality (technical SEO), and more.

What makes a good keyword?

- Relevancy
- Volume vs. difficulty (KD)
- Trending up or steady
- Head term vs. long-tail
- Questions make awesome keywords!
- We aren't already optimizing for it

All keywords: 175 Total volume: 1,100 Average KD: 67%

[+ Add to keyword list](#) [Update metrics](#) [0/1,000](#)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword	Intent	Volume	Trend	KD %	CPC (USD)	Com.	SERP Features	Results
<input type="checkbox"/>	how to find good keywords for seo >>	I	70		80	0.00	0.02	👑 ? ±2	41M
<input type="checkbox"/>	how to find good keywords >>	I	50		90	4.67	0.09	👑 ? ±3	510M
<input type="checkbox"/>	what is a good keyword search volume >>	I	50		68	9.51	0.05	👑 ? ±3	225M
<input type="checkbox"/>	how to find good seo keywords >>	I	40		88	7.33	0.10	👑 ? ±4	42.4M
<input type="checkbox"/>	how to pick good keywords for seo >>	I	40		75	0.00	0.04	👑 ? ±3	22.3M
<input type="checkbox"/>	what are good seo keywords >>	I	40		58	1.92	0.27	👑 ? ±2	34.6M
<input type="checkbox"/>	what is a good keyword difficulty >>	I	40		58	12.14	0.02	👑 ? ±2	23M
<input type="checkbox"/>	what makes a good keyword >>	I	40		36	2.30	0.10	👑 ? ±2	492M
<input type="checkbox"/>	how much keyword density is good for seo >>	I	30		46	0.00	0.00	👑 ? ±3	21M
<input type="checkbox"/>	what is a good keyword density >>	I	30		44	0.00	0.01	👑 ? ±3	27.3M
<input type="checkbox"/>	what is a good search volume for a keyword >>	I	30		67	8.66	0.08	👑 ? ±3	299M
<input type="checkbox"/>	how to find good keywords >>	I	30		75	0.00	0.10	👑 ? ±3	299M

Keyword Research

Where can I find keywords?

- Semrush
- Google search and autofill
- Google Keyword Planner in Google Ads (free)
 - Customizable allows for negative keywords (e.g. "Huntsman basketball")
- Ahrefs
- Serpstat
- Moz

Keyword Magic Tool
Find millions of keyword suggestions for your SEO.

Enter keyword US Search

Examples: [loans](#) [movies](#) [how to buy audible books](#)

Enter a topic and get your list of best keywords for you

Keyword: custom t shirts

All	Questions	Broad Match	Phrase Match	Exact Match	Related						
By topical groups											
All keywords	1,262,354	custom t shirts	5,400	89	0.73	+2					
> men	50,209	t shirt design	5,400	89	0.81	+4					
> print	23,848	private t shirts	5,400	89	0.50	+4					
> sleeve	34,489	funny t shirts	2,400	73	0.26	+3					
> design	32,895	t shirt printing near me	2,400	77	0.66	+4					

Get fresh data
Semrush database shows you the most recent data and trends at all times.

Work with topical groups
Research keywords in thematic subgroups and exclude irrelevant groups from your search.

Keyword Research

Where do I use keywords?

- Copy
- Headlines
- Title
- URLs
- Image and video file names
- Alt text
- Meta descriptions



Keyword Research

Keyword Cannibalization

What is it?

- Means multiple pages on your site are targeting the **same keywords and intent**
- Happens when new content is published over time without considering what already exists
- Bad for SEO because it means you are competing with yourself in SERP

How can I avoid it?

- Scan for existing content that has same purpose and intent
- Consider updating rather than creating new

Beyond the Page

- **Images**

- File name
- Keywords in alt text

- **Videos**

- Optimize title
- Include links in description
- Captions
- Include transcript on a webpage
- Schema markup
- Create derivative content (lift quotes for graphics, write blog with takeaways, etc.)

- **Local SEO**

- Google Business Profile
- Map sites
- Name, address, phone number (NAP) consistency (e.g. “St.” vs. “Street”)

- **Google Search Console**

- Pages that are indexing and top queries

- **Reviews**

- Google business profiles with high number of reviews appear higher in SERP
- Ask for reviews, monitor, and respond

SEO for Public Affairs

- **Newsires help with SEO**
 - Backlinks are a critical part of an effective SEO strategy
 - If there isn't a backlink to our website, it's OK to ask!
 - Especially to interior pages that we want to rank for
 - Mentions (even without backlinks) are still good for SEO and our credibility
- **Use keywords naturally**
 - Headline
 - Leads
 - Subhead
 - Copy

SEO for Public Affairs



- Use hyperlinks **strategically** in newswires
 - Focus on link quality instead of link quantity
 - Use links sparingly—aim for 2-3 hyperlinks per press release
 - Link phrases and CTAs that point to relevant content and ensure links are useful for end user
 - Link to interior pages that you want to rank for
 - Press releases are a great opportunity to drive traffic to more relevant webpages beyond the home page
 - Avoid keyword-only anchor text (hyperlink placement strategy is different for newswires than webpages)
 - **Do this:** [Kids have embraced BMX bicycle racing since the 1970s](#)
 - **Avoid:** Kids have embraced BMX [bicycle racing](#) since the 1970s

SEO for Public Affairs

- **Include multimedia in press releases**
 - Include images and video in press releases
 - Press releases with multimedia are shared two times more than text-only releases
- **Publishing tips for SEO**
 - Post content on owned website first (if it is relevant to our audience)
 - Example: [MD Anderson Newsroom story](#) and [Newswise](#) release
 - On owned website, links CAN be on keyword anchor-text only
 - Share press releases picked up by big news stations on owned social media channels
- **Earned media SEO ideas**
 - New: Curate news posts where HCI is covered in the news on our site, separate from press releases
 - Be mindful of reciprocal links—backlink is valued higher than a reciprocal link

SEO Strategy

- Focus on technical SEO first (website health)
- Identify and implement an effective keyword mapping strategy
- Build high-level overview pillar pages for each topic (e.g. “lung cancer”)
- Write blogs posts around more detailed subtopics (“how I knew I had lung cancer”)
- Create an effective link-building plan to 1) gain high-quality backlinks and 2) manage internal links when needed:
 - Include tags or anchor text that links related blog or webpage back to pillar page
 - Link to relevant blog posts on pillar as it fits into content on page (helps define a clear linking structure to Google)
- Define metrics, measure and track success, and identify areas of improvement

Measuring Results

- Define goals to help inform strategy to assess if content team is furthering business goals and objectives
 - **“What content outcomes contribute towards HCI’s broader goals?”**
- Identify intermediary goals or performance goals to help track and monitor short-term results define the metrics that will be used for assessment
 - **“What short-term wins will most likely get us to our outcome goal?”**
 - **“What metric(s) do I need to track and monitor in Google Analytics?”**
- Define process goals (tactics) that will help us achieve performance goals
 - **“What do I need to do to achieve my performance goals?”**
- Monitor progress and share with stakeholders; adjust plan if not working

Semrush Overview

Selected Project Tools

- **Site Audit:** Evaluates health of website and quality of content, links, and code
- **On-Page SEO Checker:** Collects ideas for strategy, content, and backlinks
- **Keyword Overview and Magic Tool:** Identifies keywords, volume, KD, and more
- **Keyword Gap:** Find keywords competitors are ranking for that we aren't
- **Organic Research:** View keywords we are ranking for and on what pages
- **Topic Research:** Generate new content ideas
- **SEO Writing Assistant:** Real-time SEO analysis of your content
 - Doesn't factor in cannibalization, so use carefully

Semrush Overview—Keyword Research

1. Once you know your topic, find existing related content on website and decide if you should refresh or create new*
2. Create a new list in "Keyword Manager" tool
3. If you have a seed keyword in mind, view stats in "Keyword Magic Tool"
4. View "All" for keyword variations AND questions that include seed keyword
5. Select "Related" to view additional keywords that don't contain seed keyword
6. Decide what ones to add to list based on intent, volume, difficulty, and trend
7. To add to your list, click the "+" icon and select your list
8. Navigate to "Keyword Manager" to review and export to Excel

*This depends on several factors such as **intent** of existing content, **traffic** current URLs are getting, **keywords** the existing content is ranking for, and other nuances.

Semrush resources and knowledge base:

www.semrush.com/kb

