

An introduction to SEO

Search engine optimisation best practices are constantly evolving however applying these 10 simple rules will significantly improve your Google ranking.

1. Use consistent URLs

Use a consistent URL scheme across your site. In other words, don't mix `http://mysite.com` with `http://www.mysite.com/`.

2. Use search friendly URLs

Create URLs that make sense to the human eye, not ones that use random strings of numbers or meaningless words. Never use underscores in URLs or for file naming, always use hyphens.

3. Use relevant and unique META tags

All META tags, keywords, description, and most specifically title, must be unique on each page and describe the content on the page. Don't leave the title of your page as "New page 1"!

4. Use semantically correct code

What does this mean? It means using HTML or XHTML tags (the language sites are written in) for the use they are intended. For example, `<H1>` should be the main heading of the page, `<p>` should only be used for paragraphs and tables should ONLY be used for tabular data – not page layout.

5. Name your logo correctly

Don't name your logo image `logo.jpg`. Instead name it something relevant to the site – for example for The Green Pea our logo is called `thegreenpea.png`.

6. Provide alternative text for all graphical elements

All images, especially graphic titles, should have ALT attributes, primarily to describe the image for screenreaders, but they also have an SEO benefit by including site keywords.

7. Don't use frames!

Simply because the content within a frame isn't accessible to search engines.

8. Write valid website code that is W3C compliant

This is part of web design best practice and has a positive benefit for SEO.

9. Keep your stylesheets and your javascript files external

The less clutter there is in the page, the less code search engines have to sift through before coming to the important text on your pages. Also, avoid inline styles and inline javascript for the same reason.

10. Don't try and cheat!

Google doesn't like people who put loads of fake keywords or hidden text in their sites, so don't!

For a more in-depth guide to search engine optimisation and other useful guides, make sure you visit <http://thegreenpea.org/guides>