



Purdue University - College of Agriculture

SEO - Web Content Best Practices

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HOW TO MAKE YOUR WEBSITE CONTENT MORE SEO AND USER FRIENDLY

Without good content, it's nearly impossible for a website to rank in Google organic search results. Not only is content a top SEO factor, but it also accounts for so much of a prospect's user experience on your site. When you are writing a piece of website content, keep the following in mind:

+ HAVE AT LEAST 500 WORDS PER PAGE

The more content you have on a webpage, the more likely you are to increase your search engine visibility. Not only that, when you have more content on your webpages, you're answering more questions. When prospective students land on your website, you want them to be able to find the information they are looking for. This is also why it's important that your on-page content matches your metadata. That way, when someone clicks on a result for your website in Google, the page they are taken to matches the information presented in that search engine result.

+ USE HEADERS

While more content is better, you want that content to be easy to digest. Having 500 words all crowded into one paragraph would not be ideal. That's why you should break up content with section headers. This will also make it easy for users to find what they are looking for, as many will first scan through the headers on the page. Not only that, headers are important for search engine visibility. Your section headers should always be tagged as H2s, while your main page header should be tagged as an H1. (Note: there should only be one H1 per page, though there can be multiple

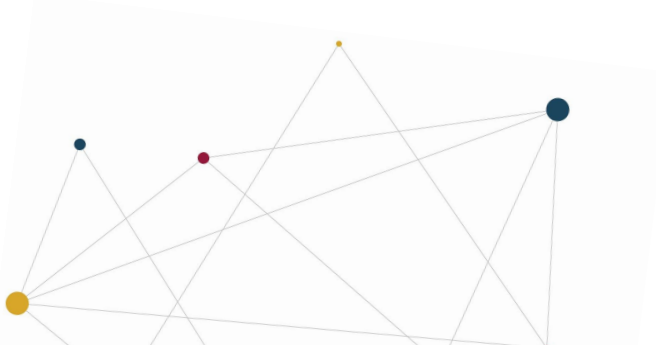
H2s on a page.) These headers are part of Google’s ranking algorithm, which is why it is also important that your headers contain keywords.

+ WEAVE KEYWORDS INTO YOUR CONTENT

Not only should your keywords be present in your headers and your metadata, but also in your on-page content. This helps from both an SEO and a user experience standpoint. Prospective students want the content on your website to match the search query that got them there, which is why aligning metadata with on-page content is so important. However, be sure not to keyword stuff. In other words, don’t make your content sound unnatural so that you can get more keywords in. A user should be able to read a webpage and not think that it sounds strange. Use natural language, but weave your keywords in where appropriate. It’s also good to start the first and last paragraph of a webpage with your top keyword.

+ AIM FOR THE HIGHEST QUALITY

Plain and simple: Google can tell good writing from bad writing. Google’s algorithm can detect sentence structure, spelling errors, comma splices, punctuation issues, and more. That’s why it’s always best to have someone with professional writing experience creating your content or an editor looking over your content. Furthermore, each web page should have focused information. For example, if your institution offers an MBA with three different specializations, you would want to have a page for each specialization. After all, you don’t want a prospective student looking for an MBA



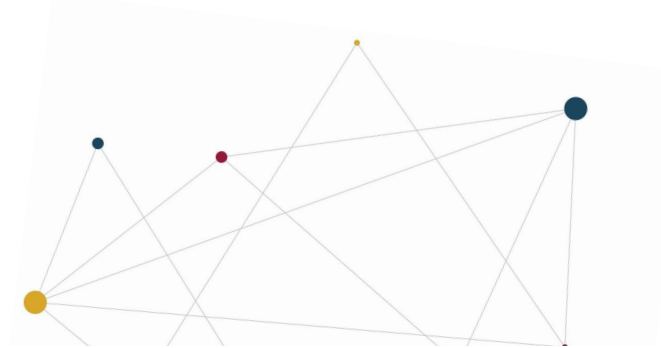
with a specialization in engineering to pass your school by because they could only find a general MBA page on your website.

+ **CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE**

Furthermore, think about the fact that you have a lot of different audiences to speak to. For example, the way you present information to a traditional undergraduate is different from the way you speak to a graduate student or an online adult learner. Your website is filled with pages that are aimed at unique audiences and you need to speak to each one's language. You want a prospective student to find the information that is important to them on your site. Content has the power to create that "sense of belonging" that prospective students are looking for. If you're not speaking your prospective students' language and not providing the information that they're looking for, then they're bound to leave your website.

+ **USE INTERNAL LINKS**

Internal links are a key component of on-page content. They give you the opportunity to promote other pages on your site and they also create a positive user experience by making it easy for visitors to learn more about a certain topic. That being said, you don't want to overdo it. We recommend using about 2-3 internal links per page. It's important to think about what anchor text you use as well, as Google and other search engines take this into account. You want to be sure that each link's anchor text



contains a keyword. For example, a link with the anchor text of “graduate assistantships and financial aid” is more valuable than “click here.”

+ END WITH A CALL-TO-ACTION

When a user is done reading a webpage, you want to make it easy for them to take the next step. That’s why you should always include a call-to-action at the end of any page’s content. Even if you have a “learn more” button or form in the sidebar, it’s still a good idea to provide a linked call-to-action in your closing paragraph. You might even have multiple call-to-actions to speak to users in different phases of the funnel. For example, you could have a closing paragraph that says, “To learn more about our program, request more information now. Ready to apply? Visit our graduate application to get started!”