

What web developers need to know about SEO

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The main problem with **SEO** is that it is often controlled by marketers. From a web developer's perspective, SEO is about how well a robot can read and understand the content you provide. And as we will see, a robot being able to read and understand a content easily is also useful to humans. In this article, *TipsMake* will discuss the issues that are within the control of developers, so that they can grasp and understand their impacts on humans and bots. This knowledge will always be useful for any of your projects.



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Website speed

Website speed is one of the toughest technical challenges.

1. Resources need to be small enough to deliver well but at the same time maintain high quality.
2. You need to pay attention to how many requests are made each time the page loads.
3. You need to pay attention to the perception of page load speed, to load content onto the screen as quickly as possible.
4. The order in which the elements appear is also important.
5. Just because the internet is global doesn't mean everyone has a broadband connection.
6. Mobile internet means you can't guarantee a transmission will complete even after several cycles.

Why Good Site Speed ??Positively Affects SEO

Site speed is one of **Google's ranking factors**. Of course, the faster your site is, the higher your potential score will be in this part of the algorithm. According to Moz's Analysis of Site Speed and Search Rankings, the core factor is *'Time to First Byte'* (TTFB is the time between when the browser sends the first request and when the first byte is received from the server).

If search engine crawlers can download your site's content quickly, they will do so more often than if it takes a few seconds per request (a few seconds is too long).

When people research topics they're interested in, they tend to use search and read on sites that respond quickly. This means your content is engaging and likely to be linked to by them.

Why we need to care about website speed

Even if you don't care about SEO, you can't argue that a slow site is better, studies have shown that faster page load times are better for everyone. Check out KissMetric's announcement.

Slow speeds can be caused by a query taking too long or a memory leak somewhere, so your website isn't using the resources on your server efficiently and you may be wasting money on something you don't really need.

Redirects

Redirects are when your server jumps to a different address when a browser requests a page at a specific URL but your server knows it exists at a different location. There are a few things to consider:

A redirect is a detour that a server must take when a browser requests a page at a particular URL, which the server determines exists at a different location. A few things to keep in mind:

1. Over the life of your website, thousands of other websites will link to pages of yours that you have long since forgotten about.
2. You can redirect at different levels, but each level comes with maintenance issues.
3. If done wrong it can negatively impact your website.
4. Redirects can be broken for months before anyone notices them.
5. Every redirect comes with a delay.

Why Redirects are Good for SEO

Search engines always want an authoritative place for everything, so if you have two links to the same content it can cause confusion.

If you tell them that whenever someone types <https://www.mysite.com/my-page> you automatically redirect it to <https://mysite.com/my-page> then search engines won't have to worry about multiple addresses.

This becomes even more difficult when all the content is moved between domains. Proper redirection ensures that the old site's position and ranking are transferred to the new address.

Why Should We Care About Redirects?

Nobody likes 'dead links' (links that lead to a non-existent web address), the cause is usually due to changes in the structure of the website (domain name, internal structure).

If a user enters a website and gets a 404 error, they will not try to change the URL to get to the content page, but will go to another website.

Even if the link isn't broken, no one likes having to go through 5-7 different URLs before getting to the content they're looking for. If this isn't handled well, it can add up to a lot of requests without much efficiency.

Status Codes

Status Codes are the codes returned from your server after a request, as a developer you need to make sure your server sends back the correct status code every time.

1. If the server reports a 500 (Internal Server Error) but the content is still displayed fine, will the search engine cache the result? What about other services?
2. Search engines pay close attention to 3xx redirects.
3. If you've used a CMS to build your website, sometimes it's not obvious what code is being used where.

Why Status Codes are Good for SEO

The status codes returned are one of the main factors that a search engine must know to proceed. If it receives a 3xx redirect code, the search engine knows it needs to move on, if it receives a 200 code, it knows the site has been returned correctly.

Make sure all your content is returning with a 200 and all proper redirects are returning 301, that will help search engines index and rank your content effectively.

Why should we care about Status Codes?

Status codes are important to care about because search engines aren't the only things that care about the content on your site; browsers, plugins, other sites (if you build an API) can all potentially care about the status of your site.

They will behave in ways you might not expect if the server returns invalid or incorrect status codes.

Semantic Markup

Semantic Markup is markup that uses semantically appropriate tags, a simple example is the tag.

used to mark up the heading section.

There are a few important things to consider when choosing a bookmark:

1. For what content should tags like `<h2>`, be used?
, , ,
2. When to use additional semantic properties, such as those recommended by schema.org.

3. Change the CSS to match the default style, always remembering that there is a difference between design and functionality.
4. Don't just use tags because you can, instead use tags . You must know that all tags come with their own semantic value.

Why Semantic Markup is Good for SEO

Semantic Markup is great for SEO because you're putting clear, concise content on your page that search engines can easily understand.

When you use schema.org (<http://schema.org/>) hint tags in your reviews, search engines will understand that when you say 3/5 at the end of your article, you have rated it 3 out of 5 and will automatically display the * equivalent number of stars on the results page.

Semantic Markup allows you to group and link content. The old way of thinking was that a page could have a tag

, and normally it is reserved for the name of the website. Now we can combine the tag with

to create similar meaning. This means that search engines can have a much easier time parsing long articles.

Why Should We Care About Semantic Markup

We should care about this because search engines aren't the only ones using our websites. Assistive technologies like newsreaders can make it much easier to use semantic markup on text.

For example, when content is marked with a tag `aside`, assistive technology knows to exclude that content from the main content when reading to someone with a visual impairment.

Perhaps a user cannot focus on a long article with too much information. By using markup to divide that long article into paragraphs, it will be easier for the reader to segment the parts they want to read.

Search engines aren't the only robots that visit your site. Other services can also visit your site and look for other information like a CV, and if you use the correct semantic markup this will be easier.

URL structure

The URL structure is what you see when you look at the address bar, it could be `mysite.com/my-awesome-page/` or it could be `mysite.com/?p=233432`

Getting the structures right requires technical knowledge and thoughtful thinking:

1. Is there a need for a multi-tiered structure like `site.com/category/theme/page.html`?
2. Consistent structure on my website?
3. Structure matters to everything except the code of the website.

4. There is logic that new developers can learn from and add to.

Why URL structure is good for SEO

A good URL structure is useful for SEO because it is used as part of the ranking algorithm on most search engines. If you want a website to rank for the keyword 'purple beans' and your website URL is `mysite.com/purple-beans/` then the search engine understands that the website is for discussions about 'purple beans'.

URLs will appear in search results, if they make sense then searchers will be more likely to click on them than a bunch of IDs and keywords.

A URL will take care of the anchor text. When people share the link they only care about the URL, if this address is easy to understand it will help the website to be rated with relevant keywords without having to customize everything.

Why should we care about URL structure?

In addition to search engine optimization, we also work with URLs regularly, and as web browsers a simple, readable and understandable address is appreciated.

Your users will appreciate the URL when they look at it and can remember why they bookmarked it, without having to click on it. That's a big win.

As you go through the process of managing your website, you will be surprised to know how much administrative work you need to do regarding URL structure. And if you manage it correctly, it will definitely make your work much easier and more efficient.

Some notes about Javascript and SEO

Finally let's end the article with a brief summary of JavaScript and SEO.

Many websites rely heavily on JavaScript, or at least rely heavily on it. There are different schools of thought on whether this is a good thing or not, but the fact is that JavaScript is everywhere.

Previously, search engines couldn't even follow JS onClick based links, now there have been huge advances and they can completely rank pages built entirely with JS.

So we know that search engines are not very strong when it comes to JS-heavy pages. So the advice is that if you want to be found by robots, you need to make sure that everything is visible, and that there are as few elements that get in the way of the search engines doing their job as possible.

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