Click to visit source: On-Page SEO Consultant & Content Creator Portfolio Website

SEO BASICS PRESENTATION

Truncated, revised & updated English language version of **SEO presentation** originally held in Hamburg, Germany, designed to convey **basic SEO knowledge** to language professionals

Even basic SEO tasks for On-Site SEO require the right tools for the job.

Where to find them, and how to use them is explained here (click the PDF link):

Find your SEO tool!

SEO presentation manuscript:

SLIDE 1 =

This **SEO presentation** aims to convey basics about **about Search Engine Optimization**!

1. What is SEO?

Today we want to talk about S E O.

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization.

Specifically, SEO is concerned with any and all measures required or advisable for enabling, managing, promoting, and hopefully guaranteeing the appearance of individual website pages among the search results found using a search engine.

The objective is to be found, to be viewable, and clickable on the "**SERP**" = "**Search Engine Results Page**" ... meaning on the "results page" for a certain search term.

SLIDE 2 = >>>>>>> (screenshot) SERP

Very important: the search result will be for an individual page (URL) of the website! Only when several pages have been registered by the search engine can they be assessed in relation to the root domain, and be evaluated in context of the other pages.

Although this is explicitly denied by Google, **top SEO experts** believe that the algorithm assigns a certain authority level to the root domain name of the website, such authority being derived from the sum total of content performance on individual pages of that website.

SEO jargon: "**Domain Authority**"

However, this concept of all website pages profiting from the performance of individual page URLs is entirely based on experience and repeat observation. Whether "domain authority" even exists within the Google algorithm remains a constant object of contention and debate among **search engine optimization specialists** while being routinely denied by Google itself.

In principle, the search engine works on the basis of one page (URL). Of course, this can be the home page, which of course has the root domain as its URL. But the search engine will first of all rate each additional page (URL) individually, separately and regardless of how other pages on the same website are performing.

Furthermore, SEO encompasses all measures designed to actually convert the searching "web user" into a visitor to the page (URL) quoted in the search results. The web user starts a search on a search engine, but then has to actually access the website: the user must click on a web page's listing on the search engine results page (SERP) for SEO to be successful.

So it is not enough for a search term, a certain keyword, to cause a web page to show up on 1st place of **page 1 on Google** – in what is known as "ranking at the top on Google". The searching user must also click ("click-thru") on this entry in the search index to reach the actual website!

SEO jargon: "**Ranking**" (of a page, for a specific search query)

In summary, SEO initially aims to do two things ...

➔ make the page appear as high as possible in the search results

➔ make sure that the searching user actually clicks on the URL of that listing

This may appear to be rather simple, but this in essence is the basic aim of all SEO activities. As we will learn today, a lot of work goes into actually making this happen.

SLIDE 3 =

2. Taxonomy of SEO categories: "On-Page" (Technical) vs. "Off-Page" SEO

(worksheet On-Page and Off-Page SEO)

To achieve these objectives, the measures taken within the framework of all SEO activities are subdivided into 2 distinct categories – each encompassing a variety of SEO sub-disciplines:

1. So-called "**On-Page SEO"** (also called "On-Site SEO")

...and

2. So-called "**Off-Page SEO"** (also known as "Off-Site SEO")

This presentation is focused on "On-Page SEO".

"Off-Page SEO" is merely mentioned as a matter of reference and comparison (... if at all possible, one is anyway best advised to stay away from it anyway).

Understanding the **difference between On-Page and Off-Page SEO**:

"**On-Page Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**" means everything that has to do with the content, the work done by programmers, **user experience design**, and the server administration of the individual pages and the website as a whole.

Every website operator can and should take these things into account and implement accordingly. There is no excuse to ignore "On-Page SEO". Every website owner should "max out" in this regard.

This is not rocket science. While "On-Page SEO" is a lot of work, and in particular requires good content, created by good copywriters, it is essentially doable for everyone. When taking charge of an existing website, or helping to build a new one, **top SEO experts** will always start pulling out all the stops in terms of "On-Page SEO" before working on anything else.

"Off-Page SEO" can (at least temporarily) help to achieve a better position in the search results! "Off-Page SEO" takes place outside the website itself, outside the server. It is done using external measures, platforms, methods, not directly under the control of the website operator.

"Off-Page SEO" means on the one hand generating "traffic" (i.e. high volume of website visitors and page views) - without a search engine even being involved as the origin of this "traffic". The "Off-Page SEO" traffic comes from other websites (domains), external sources, directories or social networks directly your own website pages (URLs).

SEO jargon: "**Traffic**"

In order to generate this "traffic", "links" must first be "built" that point to your own website pages. What is known as "link-building" in SEO is an important sub-discipline of "Off-Page SEO". No "traffic" without "links".

SEO jargon: "**Link-Building**"

These "links" can be created in directories, and business portals (a listing in such a directory is called a "citation"). Furthermore, "traffic" can come in via "links" placed in e-mails, newsletters, in various posts and profiles on social networks - either maintained by yourself or by others, e.g. so-called "influencers".

SEO jargon: "**Citation**" (i.e. a directory listing with an outbound link)

These "traffic" statistics and the origin of that traffic are precisely recorded by "Google Analytics" (a free online service operated by Google). The statistics on website access and also the so-called "link profile" of a page (the individual URL) are assigned a certain relevance by the search engine algorithm. This results in the so-called "ranking" of the page for specific keywords. The "ranking" determines the SERP position for a certain keyword where the relevant page (URL) is being displayed.

SEO jargon: "**Link-Profile**" (of a page, consisting of inbound, outbound, internal links)

By this indirect approach, "Off-Page SEO" can potentially help to increase the placement in the search results and also help to achieve indexing of a page which Google has not yet recorded in the index.

In theory, the "crawler" of the search engine follows every link on the World Wide Web and will "know" about the existence of every page. In practice this takes time. Google also alots what is known as a "crawling budget" to every website. It can take a substantial amount of time to get a new website page indexed when that budget has been exhausted.

Depending on the specific, subjective interpretation, "Off-Page SEO" includes the sub-disciplines of "Search Engine Marketing" (SEM), also known as "Search Engine Advertising" (SEA), which entails placement of Google ads on the search engine.

We are all familiar with the "sponsored" advertisements on the search engine results pages, above, next to, or beneath the "organic" search results.

Furthermore, this also includes the placement of ads on social networks … e.g. Facebook ads in what is known as "social media marketing" (SMM). The well-known Google Ads (formerly known as the **Google Adwords** / Adsense program), as well as other advertising networks, can play an important role in driving traffic. The cost is calculated on the basis of PPC (Pay Per Click) or CPM (cost per 'mille', meaning per 1000 impressions).

SEO jargon: "**Paid Search**"

The budget for these ads can quickly get out of control. Or, said in another way, the seemingly high budget limit you set in the system might be maxed out quickly, without the advertising campaign having much effect.

What often happens: advertising experts, marketing people, but also SEO agencies (or their customers) prefer these cost-intensive methods associated with "Off-Page SEO" because they can generate a high number of website page access events very quickly. This allows the marketing department or SEO agency to present rapid and apparently "impressive" results to the C-suite, or to the agency's customers, respectively.

Too often, "On-Page SEO" is neglected because this requires a higher professional competence in terms of content creation and also takes more time to implement and bring results.

In particular, it takes longer to achieve results in terms of "traffic" via "On-Page SEO". This is because "On-Page" measures always require a certain "exposure time".

SEO jargon: "**Soak the page into the index**"

Using "On-Page" methods, results can be achieved using comparatively manageable budgets, and these results are ultimately more steady, and more sustained. This means you get a higher RoI (Return on Investment) from the budget invested into "On-Page SEO", than from "Off-Page SEO".

Important to understand: With "On-Page SEO" you can already be successful in **effective search engine optimization**, i.e. in getting "traffic" from the search engine. This can be accomplished without having tackled the "Off-Page SEO" at all!

From a strategic point of view - if you do decide to make of use of "Off-Page SEO" measures at all ... then the "On-Page SEO" must have been perfected beforehand:

After the search engine has registered inbound traffic to a page as a result of "Off-Page SEO" measures, it can appear in the search results. Following validation of this page where it is also deemed worthy in terms of the entire suite of "On-Page SEO" factors, it should rank on the SERP in as high a position as possible. But if this endeavor remains unsuccessful, the "Off-Page" budget fizzles out without a sustainable result. Even the **best seo expert** cannot change the underlying mechanics of the search algorithm, which is responsible for this.

In logical conclusion, "Off-Page SEO" is rather more worthwhile as a secondary or follow-up measure – or to obtain a kind of "boost effect". It is especially useful in case of time-critical projects, such as new introduction of products or announcement of events, seasonal offers, etc..

It is not worthwhile to use "Off-Page SEO" for winning original "traffic" without having pulled out all the stops in terms of "On-Page SEO" beforehand.

So it is best to first try gaining search engine "traffic" using "On-Page SEO", then magnify this using "Off-Page" traffic generated from outside the search engine results page. Not the other way around!

Look at "Off-Page" as an "afterburner" – designed to boost an already existing momentum. To capitalize on this analogy: a fighter jet does not launch using the afterburner alone. The "On-Page" jet engine turbines must first be brought to maximum thrust, before the "Off-Page" afterburners can kick in. The analogy also applies to fuel consumption: while producing short-term speed increases, "Off-Page SEO" uses a lot more budget than "On-Page" measures ever will. In short, a website cannot "fly" using only the "Off-Page" afterburner.

"On-Page SEO" is the prime motive power source for your website! It is the better investment over time, to yield lasting results.

"Off-page SEO" can bring quick traffic spikes, which will come at a premium. The effect can quickly fizzle out. In fact, it can even end up being counterproductive. If the traffic generated by "Off-page SEO" - and the inbound links obtained - are not leveraged using "On-Page SEO", meaning if many users visit your page in a short period of time and leave it again very quickly, then this can actually amount to a negative "On-Page SEO" signal.

SLIDE 4 = >>>>>>> (screenshot) duplicate SERP entry

Search engine optimization specialists frequently notice the effects of operating "Off-Page" and "On-Page" SEO side by side, sometimes managed independently and even by separate departments.

A classic case of "one hand does not know what the other is doing" is illustrated by this example we see on the slide …

For sure, many of us have already experienced this first-hand: You enter a search term on Google, e.g. the name of a company, and first find a "sponsored" Google ad … and immediately below this there is an organic search result pointing to precisely the same target URL … which was achieved simply by applying good "On-Page SEO".

If you want to do the website owner a favor, then click on the organic listing, not on the "sponsored" advertising. And if you don't care for those people, you might just click on the "sponsored" ad link – burning as much as maybe $5 of their Google advertising budget – with exactly zero positive effect for them.

This makes it obvious that placement of sponsored advertising on the Google SERP often proves to be superfluous. Furthermore, now having arrived in the age of AI we can gauge the level of smart automation actually achieved within Google's systems. This applies both to placement of advertising, as well as to the categorization of search results. Placement is obviously done by systems and algorithms decoupled from each other, both belonging to Google … However, the AI often turns out to be a bit stupid: it would be in the best interest of Google if only (!) that "sponsored" listing would appear - because that is the one that can generate a click to bring revenue to Google itself!

SLIDE 5 = > > > > > > > site: ... search all indexed pages per domain

How do you find all pages for one domain which have actually been indexed by the search engine? Very simple:

Enter: "site:" + "domain" in the search bar.

The search results will show all pages (URLs) of a website which are actually in the Google search index, including subdomains.

SLIDE 6 =

3. SEO in the Google era: the Google thesis ... "Link Juice" and "Traffic"

The internet once existed with many different search engines, but without Google. Then this new search engine revolutionized how things could be found on the internet. This reigned in the Google era. While SEO existed as a concept before that time, the advent of Google at the turn of the millennium meant that **search engine optimization experts** gained in relevance and saw a substantial increase in demand for their services. More people were searching online because Google made that very easy and efficient. So more website owners wanted to be found online.

We have already addressed the concepts "Traffic" and "Links".

"Traffic" means the volume and quality, including the origin, the duration and the repetition rate (per user) of access to your website.

"Links" in essence are referral actions from external website to pages on your own website. As these are links between websites, not within one and the same website, the correct term would be (inbound) "hyperlinks". Note that links are relevant even before anyone has actually clicked on them. The mere existence of a link to your website is already meaningful.

For comparison: there are also "internal links", which entail navigation, i.e. menu navigation, buttons, but also content references, so-called "breadcrumbs" and also text links. However, make sure you do not confuse "internal links" with "inbound links".

SEO jargon: "**Internal Linking**"

All of these types of internal links are very important for interconnecting the content published under one domain name. Using internal links, you can connect the website's individual content pieces into a tightly interwoven "node on the world-wide web".

Internal linking is an important sub-discipline of "On-Page SEO". When text links are used, the text actually made clickable becomes an important signal to the search engine. This so-called "anchor text" tells the search engine what the target page of that text link is actually about. Be aware that this anchor text is relevant both for internal linking, but also for outbound links to other websites.

SEO jargon: "**Anchor Text**"

Examples of good or bad anchor text implementation:

"<u>Click here</u>" is really a quite useless and counterproductive anchor text – a wasted chance for inserting keywords relevant to the target page. Note that the anchor text helps categorize the linked page for the search term that is used as an "anchor text"! Just in case the home-growing of tomatoes happens to be the main subject of your website, this "anchor text" would be much better for a link pointing to one of the pages on that website: "<u>learn more about how to grow tomato plants on your veranda</u>".

SLIDE 7 = >>>>>>> (screenshot) internal links

The importance of external links becomes clear when you occupy yourself with the details of the Google thesis. This revolutionized the world of search engines at the time.

When they published their thesis, Larry Page and Sergey Brin were both working on the Stanford Digital Library Project (SDLP), specifically, on a research project called "Backrub" - the original name of the Google search engine.

"Backrub", as in "let me rub your back, then you rub mine", as an analogy to "I'll put a link to your website on my website, then you'll put one on your website pointing back to mine". The early days of Google were marked by a veritable "link-building" frenzy – having other people link to you became a sign of elevated reputation. With certain substantive caveats, which even the **best seo consultant** might fail to explain in a plausible way, the links pointing to your website are still a a reputational issue to this day.

This is why Google in fact became the dominant search engine: exactly because the call had gone out for everyone to build links to each other, and they actually followed that call, the Google search engine was able to discover and rapidly index a far greater portion of the

websites accessible on the world wide web. By comparison, other search engines were still processing manually entered indexing requests – each only able to capture a portion of all websites that were actually out there. All Google had to do in order to achieve the same – and far better results is to just crawl websites and follow all links.

SLIDE 8 = >>>>>>> http://infolab.stanford.edu/~backrub/google.html

The Google search engine was fundamentally different from everything that had existed so far. It made use both the existence and a classification of the inbound links pointing to a specific website page. We were, and – again with certain caveats – are still led to believe Google uses this link data to evaluate and validate the website page which is the target of all those links.

The deeper meaning of "Backrub" becomes clear when you understand that you are dependent on the cooperation and the benevolence of other website operators to obtain links to your specific website pages!

But in order to fully grasp the significance of this innovation, we have to understand: What is a search engine? How does it work? What is the purpose?

We all understand: when using a search engine, you want to know something! It is about obtaining information, as quickly, as informative, and as well-founded as possible.

In the past, people went to the library to obtain information, to undertake substantive research. The library was the place to find reputable sources so as to obtain knowledge. While actual books certainly remain a valid source of knowledge today, many things we would open a book for in decades past are now researched by calling up a website.

People did not wander aimlessly among the library bookshelves. Instead, the hard-working busy women there – and this work was done mostly by women – had spent many years filling an over sized, massive cabinet full of index cards. Not only were the book titles cataloged on such index cards, but also keywords. These keywords were selected (copied manually) from the index or glossary found within the individual books.

Based on these keywords, a special set of index cards listing book titles relevant to each of these keywords, i.e. search terms, were then created and cataloged in the library index. This large cabinet with index cards, created over many years of tedious work, is to be understood in analogy to the modern search engine index.

A search engine results page (SERP), which appears after typing a specific keyword or search term into the search bar, is basically an electronic version of such a specific index card. However, it is cataloging not books – but websites relevant to that search one term! Relevant in Google's opinion, that is … and dynamically generated on demand, according to the websites currently published.

If you try to get a page into the search engine index using "On-Page SEO", all the associated activities are essentially tantamount to filling in the index card, in a rather convoluted way. The individual items entered on the index card are structured into the so-called "snippet", as follows:

SLIDE 9 = >>>>>>>   1. Page title
2. URL slug (= Website address)
3. SEO description

(screenshot SERP @ snippet)

Nowadays this happens in a much more cumbersome and far less transparent manner than was required to write information on a paper index card, using a ball-point pen.

A maze of intermediate steps are automated by the search engine, governed by the (unintelligible and constantly changing) rules of the algorithm. The actual indexing mechanism is therefore entirely outside of your control. Indexing is even outside of the control of **top SEO experts**. They can try all manner of methods and approaches. But just like there is no guarantee to rank a website page for a specific search term, there is NO GUARANTEE OF SUCCESS INDEXING A SPECIFIC WEBSITE PAGE URL in the search engine index. Google will want to know every page that exists and send their crawlers into every nook and cranny on your server. But whether a page URL actually gets accepted into the official Google index – that is entirely another matter.

SEO jargon: "**Indexing** (a website page URL)"

The concept of a search engine index already existed before the advent of Google. Indeed, the increasing abundance of websites on the internet created the problem of sorting and qualifying all those website pages – both for a specific search term, and in an attempt of assessing overall quality. This did not always work out satisfactorily on previously popular search engines, namely Netscape, Altavista, Yahoo etc..

The substance of Google's patent consisted of analyzing which pages have a link to other pages. From this analysis the so-called "link profile" was derived for each individual website page – all throughout the Internet. Who links to whom? By hyperlink!

The premise of the Google thesis now consisted of the following - as postulated therein: [paraphrased, interpreted] If a page that is found for a certain search term also has a particularly high number of incoming links, i.e. inbound hyperlinks referring to this page, then this target page must be of particular interest, and particularly relevant for that search term. This page would therefore deserve a higher position on the **1st page of Google** as a search result of the keyword in question.

From the very start, Google was very successful using this approach. It made the information available on the World Wide Web more easily accessible.

This was actually also the birth of modern-day SEO. Immediately, intrepid opportunists began selling "backlinks" to website operators, by placing links on their own websites, pointing to pages on other websites – on demand, and at a premium. Various website operators all over the world really took this thing about "rubbing each others' back" rather seriously. Actual "link farms" appeared. All sorts of other manipulative approaches were conceived in order to exploit the basic principle of the Google algorithm for your own advantage.

Google countered these efforts of sabotaging the basic concept of said thesis by launching a plethora of Google "animal" updates: the algorithm was tuned, refined, and made to differentiate to a much higher degree. Every Google update was actually a revision of the original algorithm formulated in the patent based on the Google thesis. With every new update, having backlinks began to play less of a role in the overall scheme of things.

A Google update is mainly an "if-then" cascade, kind of like so:

A link refers to a page ... But, can we use it to qualify the page?

Yes or no. Does this validate the page?

How do we rate it, weighted to what extent?

Updates of the Google algorithm routinely cause alarm among the SEO community. No one knows beforehand what the update will actually do ... intentionally, or inadvertently. Even the **best seo expert** cannot know for sure, and will be kept guessing for months or years to come as to the actual long-term effects of an algorithm update (Google doesn't really know either).

Each new algorithm update has been followed by incessant debate among **search engine optimization specialists** as to what to actually make of it, if, and how to react. Bear in mind that an algrorithm update may affect each website in very different and unpredictable ways.

A real arms race has evolved within the past decade, between **search engine optimization experts** and regularly fielded new editions of the Google algorithm ... SEO people try to overcome adverse effects of the algorithm update, and the next update aims to render their new tricks and workarounds ineffective once more.

So we have learned about the concept of a "link profile" of a website page.

A model theory among **top SEO experts** speaks of so-called "link juice" flowing along links, in the direction they are pointing. Whoever manages to attract the most "link juice" comes out on top. This "link juice" is supposedly measured by the search engine index via the algorithm, and serves as a so-called "ranking signal". It is thought to be one of the criteria for classification in the search results in a correspondingly higher position - for the relevant search term.

SEO jargon: "**Link Juice**"

This model theory further postulates that when many pages with the same domain name manage to attract a lot of "link juice", then this increases the so-called "domain authority". The reputation and credibility of that domain, and therefore of the entire internet presence (content posted there) as a whole, is elevated. As a result of this "domain authority" induced by "link juice", pages newly published under the same domain name benefit from a kind of advance bonus. This concept is a mere model theory entertained by some **search engine optimization specialists**, based on repeat observations – vehemently denied by Google.

Everyone can agree on one thing: in SEO, as elsewhere, correlation does not prove causality. This is why you need to do SEO separately for each website. You need to find and apply a unique and dedicated approach, developed from what you actually see in the analytics data.

So this idea of "link juice" is a purely conceptual model which – imagine that – is also suitable for marketing purposes by SEO consultants, and SEO agencies. This pertains especially those SEO gurus who focus on "Off-Page SEO". If you are in the business of selling backlinks, of course you will say that backlinks (inbound hyperlinks) are important.

The claim is made that with inbound links, i.e., with a lot of "link juice" flowing in, a website could gain a certain degree of authority in the search engine. Importantly, it is claimed you can rank a page using "link juice" even without actually having much "traffic" to that page.

Whether this is actually so remains a matter of dispute. In how far backlinks play a role at least varies in significance for each individual website. Depending on the keyword you target, it is possible to rank individual pages of a website without any backlinks at all. That is a proven fact. And anyway, the next Google update is likely to reshuffle the card deck as regards this "link juice" issue.

It is also certain that – at least for certain website pages – an above-average amount of quality "traffic" can compensate for a lack of "link juice". The quality of traffic comes from good "On-Page SEO" which helps to generate fantastic results for the SEO KPIs: visitors don't bounce, they hang around, they click to other pages, and they come back for repeat visits.

So better to focus on getting "traffic" right away. Because a lot of traffic, even without any inbound links, can send clear signals to the search engine that people find that website page content interesting – and therefore this page should end up higher in the index.

In the age of Google, SEO means "link juice" + "traffic". You can have success with either of these concepts separately. But using them in combination can have a multiplying effect. One thing should be obvious: any "backlinks" pointing to your website should bring actual traffic, sooner or later. Just make sure that the quality and informational content of the link target page can actually motivate other website owners to incorporate a link pointing from their own site to that target page.

Quality and informational value of content published on the target page are basic requirements for getting "links". They are likewise required factors when aiming to rank on the **1st page of Google** in the search results.

But a completely new page focused on a certain search term can land on first place (position "1") on the **1st page of Google** if the searching web users actually google the corresponding keyword, and if the page in question offers well-founded information related to such keyword, and if nobody else has published websites with such content and in this quality.

So with this approach you get the whole carousel of "Traffic" and "Link Juice" to begin rotating, driven from the search engine alone: "On-Page SEO" with a good and unique content, which is actually in demand ... without having to spend a penny on PPC / CPM, backlinks, or influencer marketing (all of these being "Off-Page SEO" disciplines).

SLIDE 10 = > > > > > > > (screenshot) diagram SEO On vs. Off page reinforcement cycle

All of this is driven only by "On-Page SEO" of high quality. But you have to create text content for the search engine and for the searching user!

Experienced **search engine optimization specialists** know: "**Content is King**".

SLIDE 11 =

4. SEO strategy: creating content for the search engine AND for the user

The listing on the SERP page of the search engine is a link to your own page! It can be the most important link that the page ever has, possibly the only one it will ever have.

"On-Page SEO" is mainly about pulling the "traffic" out of the search engine – without costly advertising, only by way of your website being accessed via a succession of "organic" search queries made by web users who want to know exactly what you have published on your own website, right at this moment.

SEO jargon: "**Organic Search**"

The pivotal issue: How do you convince Google to be sorted as high as possible in the index, hopefully on the 1st page of Google? And how do you actually generate traffic from this position?

Because when someone sees your page on Google, they look, they contemplate, the mouse hovers over the SERP snippet … but the user has not yet clicked! Only when the user clicks is "traffic" actually being generated. So how do you now convince this user to click on the SERP snippet to actually reach your own website page?

How do you generate actual "traffic" from a good ranking in the search engine?

For this endeavor to be successful, it is very important how the entry in the search engine index is designed, the first impression it makes, how it reads and catches the eye, and whether it is even understood by the user.

What are the elements of the SERP snippet?! … meaning, what is written on the "index card":

- What is the **Page Title**?
- What is the name of the **URL** and how is this structured?
- What is written in the **SEO meta description**?

As a website publisher, you have complete control over the page title! That is the very first thing the user reads. And Google is not known to often edit this particular element.

You only have limited control over the SEO meta description, which appears underneath the page title. You have to adhere to certain specifications.

You can fill out the corresponding meta data in the HTML header ... but Google will validate this data again and may modify it as Google sees fit.

You have the option of writing this "SEO description" in a particularly informative manner, so that it encourages the user to click, so that it arouses curiosity. This is fundamentally about offering the user an incentive to click now - with enthusiasm, with raised expectations, driven by curiosity.

The URL is also important. This is the actual page address. The appearance of the URL is dictated by the architecture of the entire website, the navigation flow, and directory structure of the website content on the server. The URL should be clean and look trustworthy. As a website publisher, you have full control over what the website address for each and every individual page looks like.

The URL structure can create a good first impression. Conversely, experience has shown that trust on the part of searching users is diminished if the URL structure is driven purely by code, littered with non-sensical special characters.

The **URL structure** can be "styled" directly on the server by creating directories or categories and by naming these appropriately, also by naming the respective file name using corresponding keywords.

Similar results can be achieved in the CMS (content management systems), e.g. within WordPress by the optional use of the so-called "Pretty Permalinks".

SLIDE 12 = >>>>>>> (screenshot) URL anatomy / Pretty Permalinks

Of course, the selected domain name is likewise important for making this "first impression", for the URL to engender trustworthiness, so that a decision to "click" is not averted or discouraged.

These three components of the index entry: side titles, SEO description and also the URL are relevant for text work. They are directly related to a sophisticated **content strategy for the web**.

For a **good SEO** description, the **search engine optimization specialists** must be good copywriters. At the very least, hired SEO copywriters must understand and take into account detailed "On-Page SEO" requirements. By leveraging skilled wordsmithing of these 3 elements in the SERP snippet, you can win the struggle of actually transforming the "link" in the SERP listing into "traffic" to your own website!

The decision to click is made within fractions of a second!

To summarize: by way of good work done in the creation of content, the listing is favored and promoted in the search engine index. Because these quality signals are read by the search engine's algorithm. Furthermore, the searching user is encouraged to click on the search result by good wording and structure of the snippet elements.

Only after this click can the user start reading the actual content. Only after this click does the quality of the page for the human web user come into play at all, the same quality that was previously validated by the search engine. This is the only way to get to this point where the user is given the opportunity to read on the actual website.

"On-Page SEO" pursues three basic objectives in accordance with the creation of optimal content:

1. Write for the search engine, so that the algorithm determines the page to be suitable for landing in the index, in as high a position as possible (= "ranking").

2. Wordsmithing of the 3 elements of the search engine listing (SERP snippet), so that searching web users actually see themselves compelled to click on it.

3. Writing content for the user so that the user will actually start reading the page – and continue reading as long as possible. Ideally, the user will find the page to be so interesting that a bookmark is set, so as to visit the same page again at a later date.

Only when the user has opened the page does the text quality, as written for the web user and not just for the search engine, actually come into play.

Important to understand: the content must be written for the search engine and for the user.

In this order. It is often said that writing for the user automatically means the content will be qualified accordingly by the search engine. But people who say this generally try to find reasons why the work effort – or the expense – for "On-Page SEO" can be omitted.

Indeed, the user must not notice that the website's **user experience design** is also focused on the requirements of the search engine ... everything has to be naturally written text which directly addresses and informs the web user. But the quality signals emanating from the text content have to encourage the search engine to allocate a proper position in the search results for the relevant search term.

There are also certain ... you cannot say rules, you cannot say guidelines, but still indications on the part of Google ... and also experience how to go about this in the best way. This is what we may call "**natural search engine optimization**". For sure, Google quality rater guidelines must be taken into account. Ignore them at your own peril, thereby risking a "manual penalty". You heard that correctly, Google still issues human-generated "manual penalties" even in the era of AI. Maybe that's because AI is, well, artificial. So make sure to perform "**natural search engine optimization**" to get those human quality raters working for Google to view you as a champion.

If the page has a low volume of text (less than ~300 words), the information must be extremely specific to be able to rank in the search results. Ranking will then only be for this special request that no other competitors may be catering to. More text volume can help. In general, it is said that at least about 500 words, ideally approx. 2000 words or more should be readable on one website page. Anything above 5000 words is considered "long-form content".

The layout, accessibility, and structuring of text on the page is very important: Is there a small table of contents that provides the reader an overview of what the page is about? And can the reader even jump from this table of contents to the individual paragraphs or sub-headings (so-called "page jumps")?

This structuring into heading and sub-headings (structured in tags <h1> ... <h3+>) makes sense for displaying carefully created content. Accessibility is enhanced for the web user, thereby increasing the likelihood of scrolling down the page and dwelling on it longer. Those page-jumped sub-headings are also read as in-page anchor text by the search engine. So you can see how writing for the search engine and writing for the user can actually complement each other!

If the web user has ended up on your page after making the click, the first portion of the text content is very crucial. This is the text readable even without scrolling in an area "above the page fold" or within the "first contentful paint" (FCP). Ideally, this should include the heading (H1), the first sub-heading (H2) and the first few sentences of the first paragraph. These elements should be immediately recognizable in the layout on the device display, without scrolling and without the web user having to click anywhere within the website page.

After the web user started reading, this must not be interrupted. This is again decided within fractions of the second. Ideally, the user should be literally glued to the device display. Give the user good reasons to decide whether to stay on the website or not.

The first few rows of text, as well as immediately recognizable sub-headings, have a decisive impact on the duration of the user staying on that relevant website page.

SLIDE 13 = >>>>>>> (screenshot) First text read … / page fold

Of course, these results are only achieved by talented SEO copywriters, producing carefully written and well-researched content!

How long the user stays on one website page is one of the various KPIs ("Key Performance Indicators"). This is recorded as dwell time by so-called "analytics" software.

So the capturing of data, measuring and checking these KPIs, is an important part of SEO.

How to set up, adapt, and evaluate "Google Analytics" is an essential part of SEO consulting activities.

SLIDE 14 =

5. "Benchmarking" - capture and assessment of SEO results

>>>>>>> List of KPIs … (worksheet)

Many of the KPIs result from so-called "Technical SEO". This important sub-discipline of "On-Page SEO" requires specialist knowledge in programming and server administration. All factors affecting Technical SEO are entirely under the control of whoever controls the server and the files deposited there.

SEO jargon: "**Technical SEO**"

One of the most important KPIs in terms of "Technical SEO" is the loading speed of the individual page, significantly dependent on the quality of the web hosting and on the file size of the files called up by the browser from the server – this concerns images, i.e. graphic files, in particular.

As we have learned, the text quality significantly impacts the particularly important KPI of dwell time, i.e. a web users length of stay on one page. For how long does the user look at the website page? ... and – very importantly – does the user then move from this page to another page accessible via the menu, i.e. by site navigation - or via an internal text link? Yes or no?

Another important KPI is the so-called "Keyword Density". This is a static determination of how often the "keyword", i.e. the search term, can be found within the text of that page. According to various Google updates, the rate of keyword repetition is now a negative factor: a keyword being reiterated too frequently will give rise to penalty points.

Good SEO copywriters know to avoid repeating themselves. Conversely, the use of synonymous terms for that keyword only increases the likelihood that a page will "rank" for multiple keywords.

SLIDE 15 = >>>>>> (screenshot) Keyword density formula

   Density = (Nkr / Tkn) x 100
   Density = your keyword density in %
   Nkr = how many times you repeated a specific key-phrase
   Tkn = total words in the analyzed text

This refers to having too many repetitions of the same keyword or over-use of a variety of keywords that unnaturally impact the flow of text. The content becomes difficult to read or comprehend as the reader keeps stumbling over one keyword after another, which seems to be unnaturally out of context.

To avoid being penalized for keyword stuffing, it helps to have a sufficient volume of text that allows enough room for placement of those keyword instances you really want to accommodate.

SEO jargon: "**Keyword Stuffing**"

Note that according to experience it is generally agreed that in order to obtain any level of page authority, a page usually needs to contain between approx. 500 and 2000 words of text volume.

Within 500 words, the target keyword you are trying to rank for should only occur about three times: 1 x in the page title (inside the <title>...</title> tag), once in the H1 heading, and once in the text corpus. For further references to that keyword's meaning it is better to use synonyms.

Plain text keyword reiterations can be more frequent for a volume of 2000 words, but if the same keyword appears 10 times within these 2000 words, a red light will certainly illuminate somewhere within Google's systems. Google will say: "A naturally written text would not repeat this keyword so often!". More importantly, the visitor to your website page might get bored, and bounce.

You can already see that copywriters for SEO content must be very disciplined, at the same time inventive and, above all, well trained. A lot of work and revision rounds for finishing touches are required for creating high quality content: the first draft is rarely published in its original wording.

Another important KPI is the link profile: How many inbound hyperlinks point to the page? How many links within the website refer to another page within the domain, i.e. the website, and how many links are pointing outbound to another website?

In addition, as part of the link profile, Google looks at how the content within the domain is interconnected by internal linking, via menus and text links.

The purpose of these KPIs is what's called "benchmarking". No matter what you do when it comes to SEO, whether "On-Page" or "Off-Page": The customer wants to see the results of SEO measures have brought! What changed after all that work invested?

This is why the very first step in SEO is data acquisition. Data must be collected over time. A snapshot alone really does not tell you that much. For diagnostic purposes, maintaining a changelog is crucially important. That way you know exactly what was changed when on the website.

For this purpose, most people still use the free application "Google Analytics" is used. But there are also other dedicated providers offering a free version, such as "Matomo". If you want to overdo it, you take several analytics trackers to compare the data obtained by each. This gives you way to validate the reliability of these tools as a basis for decision-making. If you are not concerned about GDPR so much, take a look at Yandex Metrica.

"**Google Analytics**" is still the standard today - because Google as a search engine currently retains about 90% market share. However, many users find this analytics portal to be rather confusing (even after a comprehensive new edition in the 4th generation, known as GA4). This tool requires a steep learning curve for familiarization, all the while data is not so transparent, and conclusions from the data remain rather nebulous.

SEO jargon: "**Analytics**"

That is why it makes sense to invest the additional work and to export selected data records from "Analytics" into "Looker Studio" (formerly called "Google Data Studio") into an individualized dashboard, which can then be presented to the customer. Facilitating this export to "Google Data Studio" is a science in itself, but is worthwhile in terms of fostering customer loyalty.

Setup of this dashboard represents an SEO service, which is often the first step when performing a comprehensive website SEO audit.

SLIDE 16 = >>>>>>> Looker Studio (formerly Google Data Studio) dashboard

This dashboard allows the customer to clearly see: Where does my traffic come from? From social media, from the search engine or from another website? Or because someone manually typed the domain name into the browser address field?

This data is also important in terms of market research. So the customer understands where his company actually stands on the web and what his customers (buyers) actually want.

Analytics data are an abundant resource of information, going way beyond SEO. This can even contribute to the realignment of a corporate strategy. Which keywords are the subject of Google searches can be seen within another free Google tool, the "**Google Search Console**" (GSC). Knowing how to use and read GSC data is a prerequisite for even the most basic "On-Page SEO" tasks.

It is worth considering the expense of traditional market research in contrast to the extremely valuable and reliable data gathered by practicing SEO. This data is made available practically free of charge, as a bonus, or as a value-added effect. It provides website publishers with real insights as to the motivation driving users to search online.

When you know what people google to find you, you know what makes your customer tick!

The data acquisition performed over time is therefore a major component of SEO consulting activities. The "benchmarking" allows answers to questions, such as: "Where do we stand?", "What results have the past three months brought us?", "What went wrong?", "Where and when did we lose our way?".

You also have to experiment a lot to find the right SEO strategy,

SEO jargon: "**A-B testing**" / "**Split-Testing**"

Because with the algorithm of the search engine you have to deal with a mathematical equation of 5 variables. There is a lot of trial and error in SEO. Generally applicable rules can rarely be derived from the performance of a specific website. Even the **best SEO expert** can only surmise, and make intelligent guesses – which need to be validated by such testing.

Without data acquisition using tools like "Analytics" and "Search Console", SEO turns into a completely fly-by-night endeavor.

The moral of the story:

"On-Page SEO", which is largely determined by text work, by content quality, by website architecture, content structure, and code, is a far better investment over time than "Off-Page SEO" which uses paid advertising, social media, influencers, link-building, etc..

SLIDE 17 = coffee break

*** INTERMISSION ***

6. Content Creation based on Keyword Research

In the first half of this SEP presentation, we basically dealt with the challenges we have to face when doing SEO, particularly "On-Page SEO" ... and came to the conclusion: Without high quality text, what is known as "content", there is no way to get ahead in SEO. **Search engine optimization experts** know: content is the foundation of success for performing **effective search engine optimization**.

SEO jargon: "**Content**"

Everything in SEO begins and ends with a good content!

SEO jargon: "**Keyword Research**"

There are different types of keywords! Every single page on a website, i.e. every URL for a domain, should be oriented to perform for a specific keyword. Each URL should laser-target a certain"**Target Keyword**", also called "Primary Keyword", or "Focus Keyword". Most of the time you will choose that keyword that best represents the advertised topic, best addresses the user's search intent, and which has the highest search volume.

SEO jargon: "**Focus Keyword**"

Of course, a well-written and interesting text should use many other keywords. Many style guides or writing manuals clearly advise not use the same word for the same concepts of meaning in each and every instance. Instead, you would prefer to use synonyms or keywords closely related to the "Target Keyword" meaning. These are so-called "**Accessory Keywords**", much may also be referred to as "Secondary Keywords".

The aggregation of these synonyms for the "Target Keyword" is called a "**keyword cluster**". The entirety of the topic is nowadays referred to by **search engine optimization specialists** as an "entity".

SEO jargon: "**Keyword Cluster**", forming the basis of an "**SEO entity**"

It has been postulated in the last few years that the search engine now "knows" which keywords are synonyms. Some intrepid SEO "strategists" claim they could therefore save themselves the very trouble of keyword research and diligent content creation, and and just write off the cuff. If there were any validity to this claim, this postulate can only apply to such keywords for which a large amount of contextually related data has already been parsed and therefore resides in search engine index. But this will mean that the keywords in question are highly competitive! A proper SEO strategist will know that using exactly these competitive keywords makes it rather difficult to "get your foot into the door". So don't rely on the search engine having learned anything. Use the exact keyword, with the exact spelling, using singular or plural, according to what the keyword data tells you.

A better approach than writing off the cuff is to aim for precise orientation and identification of the topic by using relevant keywords that would appear only in this context. This is done using keywords, terminology and phrases that frequently occur in the corresponding context: "**LSI keywords**" (LSI = "Latent Semantic Index").

Quite a few "gurus" in the SEO community dispute the concept of "LSI keywords". Google denies that they play a role. Perhaps we should use them anyway, for the benefit of the searching user who skims SEO meta descriptions and after clicking starts to dig into the teaser text above the page fold. "LSI keywords" play an important role here to help the user determine the proper context of the content. "LSI keywords" can answer the question "Am I in the right place on this website?" in split seconds. As such, **top SEO experts** often use "LSI keywords" for calibration of website content to address a specific "entity".

SLIDE 19 = > > > > > > Keyword types

Target Keyword	This is what people google, using exactly this spelling!
Accessory Keywords	These are identical or similar in meaning to the target keyword
LSI Keywords	Will often appear in similar context, but have different meaning

The ideal "Target Keyword" is often not yet known when you start the keyword search. But you have to start somewhere.

The keyword entered into the keyword tool when you start your keyword research is known as the "seed keyword". So you have a keyword in mind that you think he would be of interest - but you don't even know whether the searching user is actually googling that.

You start with this "**Seed Keyword**", by entering this into the keyword tool. The keyword tool then pulls keywords that have been seen before in this context out of the database and sorts them into a list. The tool will produce a disorganized keyword list, possibly littered with completely irrelevant keywords that have a similar spelling, or have been misappropriated in previously parsed website content. Categorization according to "Target" / "Accessory" / "LSI" keywords is now the responsibility of the SEO consultant based on the topic chosen for the content! This is where the wheat is separated from the chaff. Doing keyword research properly is mentally taxing and intense work. But this work is required for laying the foundation of a successful website built using great content.

SEO jargon: "**Seed Keyword**"

Many **search engine optimization specialists** started their career using the **Google Adwords** keyword tool – which was available for free in previous years.

Nowadays, with a Google Ads account (a paid advertisement must be live), you still get access to the keyword tool and this allows you to access a certain volume of keyword data.

While it is much better to use a proper SEO tools suite for doing keyword research, Google Ads allows you to at least gain limited access to "rounded" and "extrapolated" statistics about how often this keyword is the subject of a search, every month, in which region, and in what language. So you can answer important questions:

Who googles what - how often (comparatively) - and which other keywords occur in this context?

SLIDE 20 = >>>>>>> Example: "prague tours" vs. "things to do in prague"

Example: "Prague Tours" appears plausible as a "Target-Keyword", it ideally describes the advised topic of the page, i.e. the service to be advertised. This is our "seed keyword".

But we find that hardly anyone googles this. Most people google "Things to do in Prague".

That would be the proper "Target Keyword" - and without a keyword research you would hardly have thought of it! So you just write about that and make the tour just one important part of that content.

The "Target Keyword" must also appear in the page title, in the H1 main heading, in the SEO description and, if possible, in the URL itself (i.e. in the file name of the page). Of course it has to occur in the text itself ... and in a way that makes sense and reads naturally!

Should you now create content, geared towards those "Target Keywords", which many competitors are also targeting? Should you target a keyword simply because it is being googled umpteen-thousand times a month? And when there are tens of thousands of pages already pouncing on this keyword, does it make sense to add one more page? If you want to get your foot into the door when starting from zero, does that help in anchoring your website in the index, does it help to rank your pages higher on Google? Can you even move up at all, when starting from zero, by targeting keywords that have been served by other website operators for years? Can you profile the authority of a new domain using keywords that everyone else is already droning on about, in a veritable cacophony?

These are rhetorical questions – and the answer is of course: NO!

This is where so-called "content marketing" comes into play, an important concept for success in the field of "On-Page SEO". A clever **content strategy for the web** will base the content of the website on those search queries that are googled rather frequently, but have hardly any high-quality content competing for that keyword.

Because if only a few other website operators target a keyword or have content available for this, all the while statistics clearly tell you: Aha - some people want to know something about this keyword ... then you have a very good chance of getting to first position on **1st page of Google** for this search query. Sometimes this succeeds immediately after publication (and indexing) of the page! Without spending a penny on PPC / CPM ads, without spending any money on backlinks to this page: You publish a page on this topic that can be reached via your website navigation. Web users land on this page. From there, they click through to other pages or to the homepage of your website. In this way, visitors then find other content on your website that could otherwise not draw direct traffic due to the lack of keywords (users didn't even know to look for this), or because of too many competitors (too many other websites target this topic already).

These keywords that you choose as "Target Keywords" are not googled as often – but there is hardly any content dealing with that topic. So there are hardly any competitors – who already have content. These keywords are called "Long Tail Keywords".

SLIDE 21 = >>>>>>> "Search Volume" vs. "Conversion Rate"

(screenshot) long tail keyword graph

This diagram shows us how often a certain term is googled. This is placed in perspective to the likelihood of landing on **1st page of Google** and therefore to the ability to convert a searching web user into a visitor to your own website page. The ultimate aim when generating traffic is of course to **increase website conversion rate**.

This rate tends to increase with the specificity of the search query. The more specific the search query, the longer it will be. These are what **search engine optimization specialists** call "Long Tail Keywords".

SEO jargon: "**Long Tail Keywords**"

(this terminology was coined in reference to the endless tail of a Chinese dragon)

They are mostly longer words or chains of search terms, so-called "key phrases". More specialized search queries are of course longer and will not be entered as often as individual keywords. Many times these "key phrases" are simple questions ("How to ...").

In order to be successful with this method of targeting "Long Tail Keywords" and still obtain respectable traffic volumes to your website, you will of course have to publish several such pages, each geared towards individual "Long Tail Keywords". That means a lot of content!

With this keyword and content strategy, you can drive traffic to your website pages simply by doing a lot of grunt work in creating content. You can succeed precisely because you offer content that people want to read about, but hardly anyone else has published anything comparable.

So you can be successful using "On-Page SEO" by simply creating good content.

SLIDE 22 =

7. "Keyword Research" - Fundamentals, Processes, and Methodology

When creating text content by integrating keywords into various text elements and page layout modules, the exact wording and the correct context of the corresponding keyword is very important.

However, opinions vary on the importance and methodology of Keyword Research. As already explained, some players in the SEO industry assume that the AI "learns" synonyms and "understands" words in context.

Supposedly, today the exact speech, the grammar (e.g. singular vs. plural) is irrelevant. It is said that all this is sorted out by AI.

However, you have to make it clear: there is no guarantee that the AI has also been subjected to the learning process required for the search term in question. There is no guarantee that the AI within the search engine's algorithm, i.e. a complex chain of "if-then" relationships, had enough data volume to complete this learning process. It may very well be that the "if-then" requirement is programmed into the AI, but the repository of data is simply not there (yet). This would mean the AI fails to "understand" keywords being synonyms of others.

It will not hurt to rely on Google's simple keyword statistics, where Google says: Exactly this spelling shows up as a search query this many times per month. This is reliable data, you don't need AI for that, as it is purely a statistical record. This is why it is advisable to work with the exact spelling found in the search statistics. Just ignore the "SEO community", at least as regards the issue of "Target-Keyword" spelling. That means: If people google singular, do not write plural, etc. This is particularly important for languages other than English, because the database may not be as populated for other languages. The effectiveness and reliability of the AI will suffer accordingly!

SLIDE 23 =

This poses challenges when incorporating the collaboration of copywriters and translators into the SEO workflow. Because if you want to use the correct spelling of the keyword, it is not always so easy to write the text for fluent and natural flow of words. That takes considerable skill and SEO copywriters need to know exactly what to do.

SLIDE 24 =

9. SEO tools for keyword research and content creator support

You can't speak of a tool. It is actually an entire tool suite … In the, three large players had made a name for themselves …

SLIDE 25 = > > > > > > > SEO tools

ahrefs https://ahrefs.com/
Semrush https://www.semrush.com/
moz.com https://moz.com/

Note these are paid tools. (A monthly subscription can easily amount to an average office rent payment.)

The team at SEMrush actually developed a tool to support and accelerate the workflow for SEO copywriting. It is called "SEO Writing Assistant" as featured in this promotional video:

SLIDE 26 = > > > > > > >   **https://youtu.be/mC_3T-tJ2ws**

SEMrush SEO Writing Assistant Promo

SLIDE 27 =

10. Multilingual Content & International SEO ... "Language vs. Locale"

SLIDE 28 =

(final words)

SLIDE 29 = > > > > > > >   Discover SEMrush SEO-Tool-Suite

(wrap-up)

©   **Wulf D. Brand**

SEO_UX_CRO_Engineer