



# SEO

## SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

### WHAT IS IT?

SEO stands for "search engine optimisation." In simple terms, SEO means the process of improving your website to increase its visibility in Google, Microsoft, Bing, and other search engines whenever people search online. It is basically increasing your digital visibility through a number of methods so people can find you more readily or in turn discover your business.

### WHY DO I NEED IT?

It is no longer enough to create a website and hope it reaches people organically. There is so much competition and information out there with people and organisations trying to buy consumers attention. In fact, without SEO it's like talking to an empty room.

### SEO vs. SEM

SEM stands for "search engine marketing" – or, as it is more commonly known, search marketing. Search marketing is a type of digital marketing.

It is an umbrella term for the combination of SEO and PPC (pay-per-click) activities, meant to drive traffic via organic and paid search. (this will be explained in the next section).

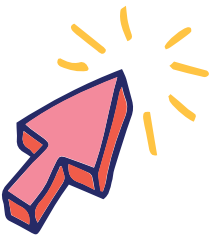
Put simply, search marketing is the process of gaining traffic and visibility from search engines through both paid and unpaid efforts.

So how do SEO and SEM differ?

Technically they aren't different – SEO is simply one-half of SEM:

**SEO** = driving organic traffic from search engines.

**SEM** = driving organic and paid traffic from search engines.



**PPC** stands for "pay-per-click" – a type of digital marketing where advertisers are charged whenever one of their ads gets clicked on.

Basically, advertisers bid on specific keywords or phrases that they want their ads to appear for in the search engine results. When a user searches for one of those keywords or phrases, the advertiser's ad will appear among the top results.

Don't think of it as "SEO vs. PPC" (i.e., which one is better) because these are complementary channels.

In the past, whenever people want to go somewhere, do something, find information, research or buy a product/service – their journey typically began with a search.

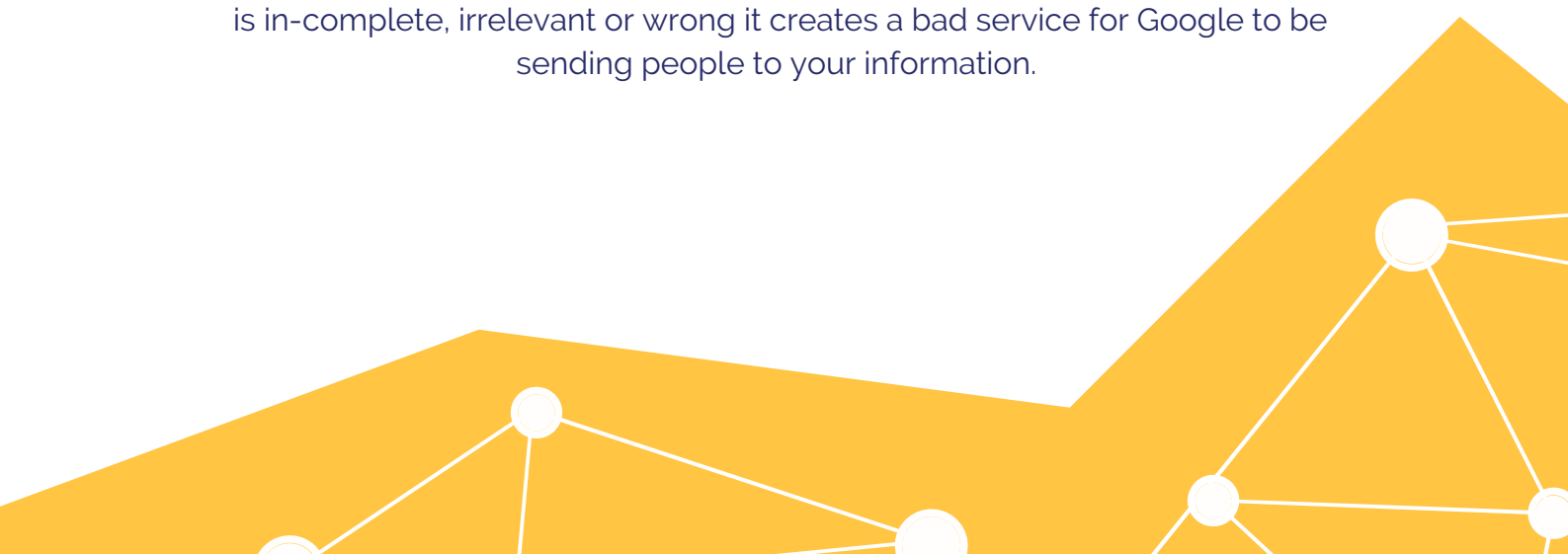
But today, search is incredibly fragmented. Users will still search on traditional search engine sites (Google) however all social media platforms now have their own search function as well and you can be taken to a webpage, product or service direct from there.

### **HOW DO I DO IT FOR FREE ?**

Think of your online presence as a living thing that you need to care and nurture, the more care and nurture (information) you give it the better it will do.

- Have you claimed your google page?
- Does it have up-to-date & complete information? If there are categories asking for information that don't apply to you it isn't enough to leave them empty, if there is an option for a "not applicable" put that instead.
- Does your website have up-to-date information that matches your socials and Google page?
- Be consistent with your language and words.

Remember search engines are providing a service for people. If your information is in-complete, irrelevant or wrong it creates a bad service for Google to be sending people to your information.





## **Google Analytics**

To know if your SEO efforts are working, you need to analyse your site's findability to see where your traffic is coming from. You may notice a spike in traffic after making post optimisations, but that traffic could be coming from another source like social media. Google Analytics provides you with in-depth details about your website visitors, as well as real-time activity.

With an existing Google account, sign into Google Analytics and connect with your website. To get the most helpful SEO information, pair it with your Google Console account. See what Google Console is below. When you link the two tools, you'll be able to see the keywords people are using to find your site, identify your click-through-rates on those keywords and more.

The benefits:

Google Analytics lets you see how people interact with your website. Using Google Analytics, you'll be able to see how many people are visiting your site, where your traffic is coming from, how long people are spending on the page and so much more.

## **Google Search Console**

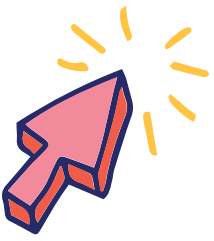
Google Search Console (GSC), previously known as Google Webmasters, helps you understand how Google crawls and indexes your site. To use the Google Search Console, create an account and add your website as a property within the account. Once you've added your domain, verify you're the site owner before you can access all of its features.

The benefits:

There are several features to highlight about Google Search Console, one of which is that it can help you diagnose technical errors on your website. It can also help you understand what keywords or content are ranking for your site.

## **Ahrefs Keyword Generator**

Ahrefs' Keyword Generator is a light version of Ahrefs full tool. It will show you the top 100 related keyword ideas when searching a keyword or phrase. To use this free tool, you can enter up to 100 keywords or phrases in the search bar. You'll see a list of the top 100 keywords related to your search, as well as their search volume from when the data for that keyword was last updated, and keyword difficulties for the first 10 keywords on the list.



## **Ahrefs Keyword Generator**

(continued)

The benefits:

This tool gives users a taste of what Ahrefs' full tool can do and is perfect for people who want to explore some industry keywords. In addition to the keywords, you can also see the top 50 questions related to that keyword.

## **Google Trends**

As the name suggests, Google Trends helps you track the popularity of topics and trends in your industry over time. You can use this tool to identify current trends and use that information to craft a timely and relevant content marketing strategy.

The benefits:

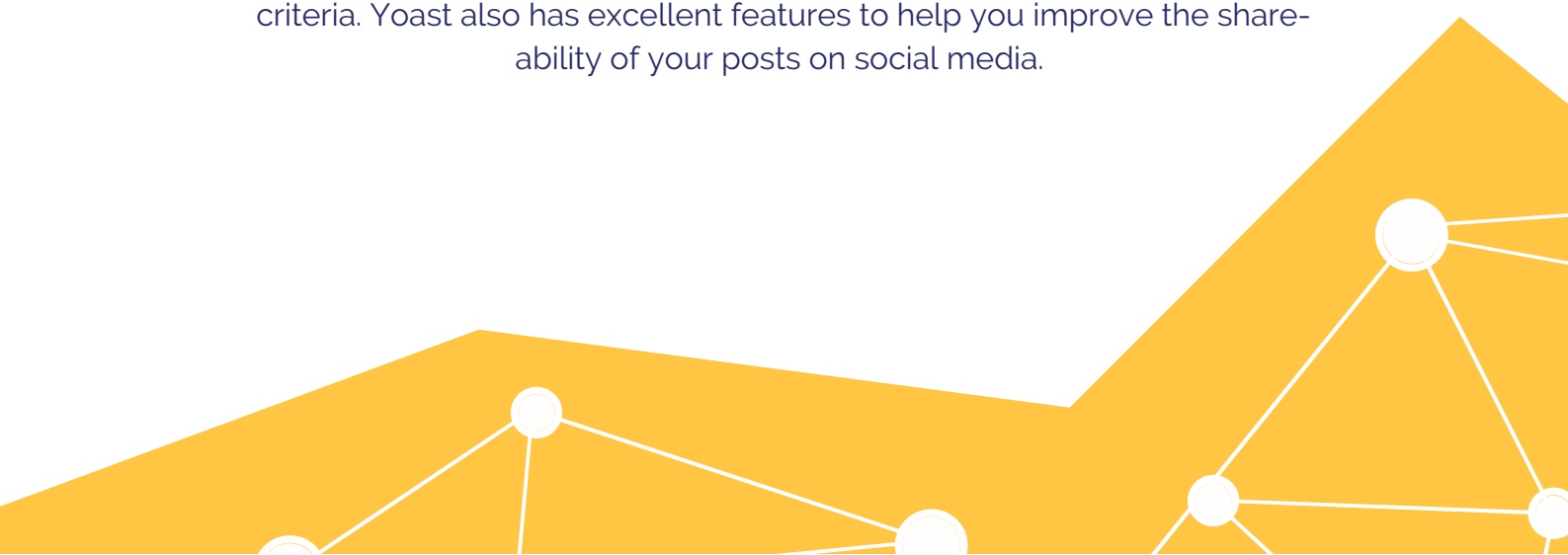
Google Trends gives you a clear picture of how specific trends change over time and how people's searching patterns around it change. To use Google Trends, start by typing in a keyword. You'll see the interest in that topic over time, which regions show the most interest, and other keywords people are searching for related to that query. This tool works best when combined with other keywords to show comparisons of trends over time.

## **Yoast SEO Plugin**

The Yoast SEO plugin makes it easy to optimize your WordPress site and identify gaps in your content. If your site runs on WordPress, install and activate the Yoast plugin to begin.

The benefits:

The Yoast plugin allows you to improve and modify your content in three ways: SEO, readability and social. With Yoast, you can set meta descriptions, titles, canonical URL, and label index/no-index pages and other backend settings on your site. This plugin will assign every post a readability score by measuring sentence and paragraph length and other criteria. Yoast also has excellent features to help you improve the shareability of your posts on social media.





## TIPS FOR YOUR WEBSITE TO ASSIST YOUR SEO

1. Make your site interesting and useful.
2. Know what your readers want (and give it to them).
3. Act in a way that cultivates user trust.
4. Make expertise and authoritativeness clear.
5. Provide an appropriate amount of content for your subject.
6. Avoid distracting advertisements.
7. Use appropriate good quality high resolution images.

## SHOULD I BE PAYING FOR SEO?

Much like an accountant, you wouldn't go to an accountant without having some idea of your finances because if you don't know, how would your accountant know? The same applies for an SEO specialist. If you do engage with an SEO specialist the first thing they will do is everything we just spoke about.

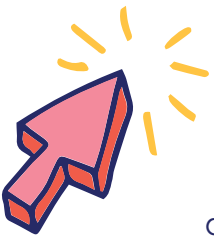
If you can do this yourself, do it, it will save you money and educate you about what you need.

If you pay for SEO without having any data behind it - it is the same as throwing something at the wall to see if it sticks!

You need to ask:

- Where do my audience search?
- Where is most of my traffic coming from?
- What kind of advertisement do I need? Do people not know about me or do people not know about this new product or service?
- Is there an audience that could be a potential customer that I am not reaching?

Once you have asked these questions and have the data to back it up you can make better decisions on where to optimise your advertising.



## THE MARRIAGE BETWEEN YOUR SITE AND SEO

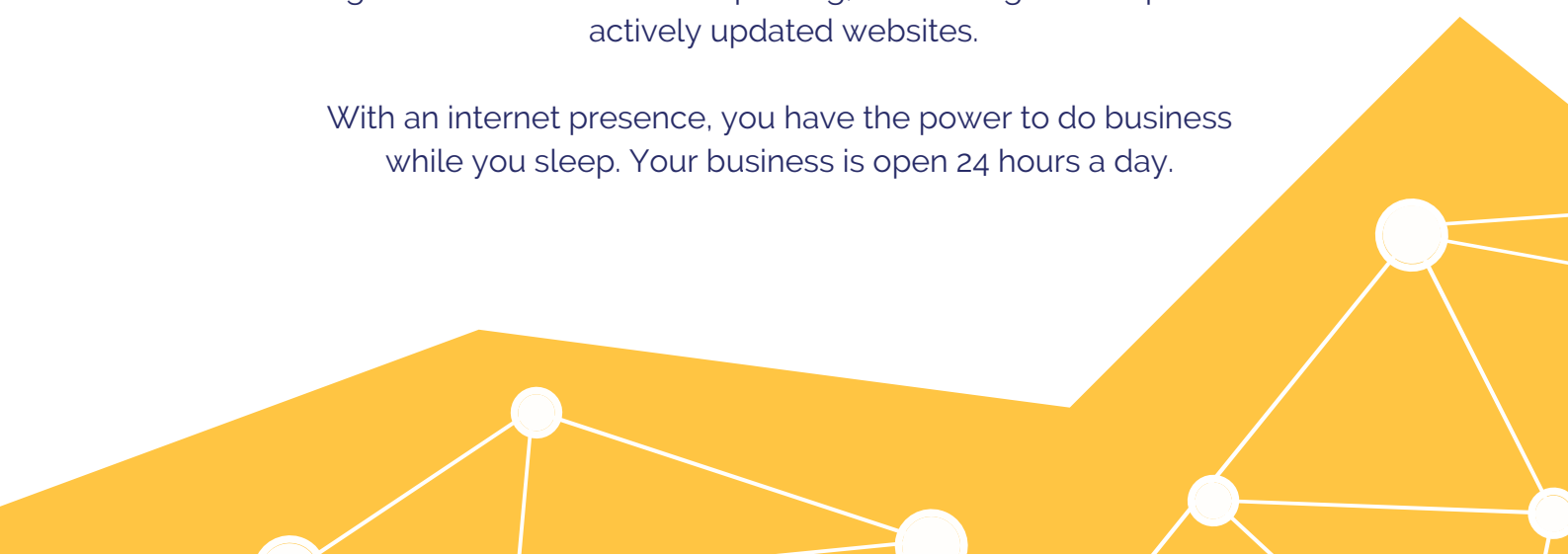
A good web designer knows that you cannot separate website design from SEO. Also, that one cannot be really successful without the other. You can have an beautiful and well designed website, but if it is not found by the user it is useless.

Along the same lines, it is no use if your website is the first one that pops up on the search result page, if it is horribly designed; the user would immediately move onto the next site. Hence, for best results the website design and the search engine optimisation (SEO) must work together.

### FACTORS THAT ARE KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE WEBSITE

1. Website design - The first step you will take when you create a website is to design it. In other words, you need to have a blueprint of what you would like this website to display and how you want it to display such information. Keep in mind when you display your home page, you have about a fraction of a second of attention from your user to create a positive impact. Hence, the aesthetics of the website are of paramount importance.
2. Website content - You made an impact on the mind of the user and you have them stay on. Now what? The user will actually read and judge from the information available on the site whether this is a quality site or not. This is why quality content is very important. The information provided should be informative and current.
3. SEO - While it is extremely important to have high-quality content, it is also very important to ensure that the content is peppered with the right keywords for search engine optimisation. Without the keywords, the search engine would not find you when searches are put through; and if this happens, your website will not exist for the user.
4. Constant updating - As we said before, a website can be easily compared to a living thing. It needs regular nurturing and care or it will die. You cannot just have a great website put up and then leave it to fate. Good website design will demand constant updating; search engines are partial to actively updated websites.

With an internet presence, you have the power to do business while you sleep. Your business is open 24 hours a day.





## **ITS A SLOW BURN**

SEO won't happen overnight, not for you or your specialist. The idea is that we can't crack the code - Google and other search engines are always changing the algorithms and updating them.

Remember it's called optimisation, not search engine secrets so be patient with it and yourself.

If you do go down the path of a specialist remember to have a goal of what you want to achieve. The more specific the goal, the easier & quicker it will be to achieve it.

**i.e. "I want to have a bigger online presence."**

versus

**"I want to create a bigger online presence through Google. My social media pages are where most of my regular business comes from and I am looking for new customers from a different platform so I can compare."**

Have an end date so you can measure your metrics. 3 months is a good amount of time to measure your data and pick up trends.

If after 3 months your plan hasn't worked, tweak it.

Don't throw it out, as it may be just a word or sentence that needs changing.

Lastly, does your ad evoke what you want it to?

A sense of experience?

A call to action?

Specific information?