

EZ TIPS - SEO Checks To Tune Your Website

Chris Bachman | November 25, 2014 (updated)

The first four things listed below are checked by looking at the code that runs your website. Don't worry, it isn't hard and you don't have to be a techie, you just need to be able to look for and recognize certain things.

Step 1 – Right click on your website page and select View Source . This should open a smaller window revealing a bunch of code, the Source Code. This code represents what you are seeing when you look at your website page in a browser. This is what techies edit and create to make your site look and act the way it does.

Step 2 – Look towards the top of the page for this: <head>. Then scroll down slowly and locate this: </head>. These are called “tags”. Everything between these two “tags” is referred to as the “head” section.

Step 3 – Now, within the Head section try and locate the following items:

```
<title>Professional Website | Small Business Websites | Utah</title>
```

```
<META name="Description" content="Utah website developer creates professional, small business websites with expert SEO, website marketing, and consulting support.">
```

Note: *The descriptive copy shown here is from our website.* Your site will look different, provided you have these two items.

OK, now let's discuss these a bit.

1. Title

Your page title is super important. It is the copy that shows in the top bar of your browser for the page you are on. It is also the top piece of text on your listing in a Search Engine Results Page (SERP). This Title tag should be unique to every page and reflect the page content; keywords are good. It should also be crafted as part of the sales message; i.e., used in conjunction with the Description to deliver a strong call to action for anyone viewing your listing and the other ten on that SERP. The Title should be clear and no more than 65 characters long. Anymore than that gets truncated and lost.

2014 update: The Title is what makes people stop on your listing on the SERP...the Description is what makes them click over. Titles should begin with the keyword for that page, include a city/state (if relevant) and, please avoid using the business name in the Title. People aren't searching for the business, they are searching for keywords. If they do search for the business the website will come up anyways without adding the name in the Title and wasting valuable space to do so.

2. Description

Super important tag - this is the descriptive copy that you see on your listing, below the Title when viewing a SERP. If you don't handle this right, the search engine will put in whatever it wants to and that is always bad. This description is your sales pitch. This is what makes the viewer pick you over the other listings. It needs to be unique to the page, focused on what the page is about, and promise exactly what will be delivered when a person clicks on it. Not doing this results in lower on-site time and the search engines drop you in their rankings. Keep Descriptions to 155 characters or less.

Moving along – Look directly below the `</head>`. You should see `<body>`. This signifies the beginning of the code that deals directly with what is on the page. At the bottom of the code will be a `</body>`, this signifies the end of the code pertaining to the page. Everything on the page is found between these two in the “body” section.

3. Titles/Sub Titles

How is your web page copy written? If done properly, it should have a Title and probably a couple of Sub Titles, maybe even some bullet points. Think of it like a newspaper. Big topic is your Title; smaller, related topics are your Sub Titles. Bullet points are short, concise blips of supporting information. Keywords should be incorporated into all of these. A good suggestion here is to have a professional [keyword report](#) done. Search engines love to see well thought out keyword usage, and provided the keywords are reflected in the Title and Description tags you should have a well optimized page.

Thing is, how do you indicate to the search engine what is a Heading and a Sub Heading? This is done with `<h1> Your Heading</h1>` and `<h2> Sub Heading</h2>`. You can also use an `<h3></h3>` for even lesser important sections if you feel it necessary. The search engines don't go much beyond that. So, look for your Titles and Sub Titles and see if you have these tags.

4. Alt tags

Alt tags, `<alt></alt>` are text snippets that are associated with an image on your webpage. They are there to assist the visually impaired by providing a text alternative to the image that a text reader app can pick up and pass to the person. You can easily check your site, or anyone's site, to see if these are there by simply floating your cursor over the image. If an alt tag is there the text may appear, but not always. If there is no alt tag description, nothing will appear. The SEO secret here is to make that alt description text keyword rich so that it reinforces the purpose of the page. Not big sentences, mind you, just one to three words that reinforce the image and/or the page.

The search engines will give it more credit if the image is actually linking to something like another page; however, even if it isn't, this is an easy way to reinforce the topic for the page.

2014 update: If the image is linking to another page, yours or elsewhere, then the text used in the alt tag should describe the page being linked to, not the page the link and alt tag are on.

5. **Site: www.yoursite.com**

In your browser pull up the search box for either Google or Bing and type in the following, **site:www.yoursite.com**, be sure to substitute your real website address for yoursite.com in the example here. This will show you all the pages that this search engine has indexed for your website. This is a great way to make sure all your pages are indexed, your Titles and Descriptions are all different and properly written, and that your file names are the best they can be. If you have pages that are not being indexed, it is probably time for a professional sitemap.xml or urllist.txt as created by a pro.

TIP: This is also a great way to review your competitors' pages and see what the successful ones are up to. This is also where you may find that you have a lot of pages you weren't aware of cluttering up what the search engine thinks is your site. Make note of them and get them removed by your tech guy if the pages are not of use.

2014 update: search both using the www and without the www. If you see a mixed result of pages, some with www and some without, go to #10 on this list.

6. **Keywords**

Each page on your website should have one central topic that it is focused on. Too many different topics and the search engines won't know what the page is about and so won't index it accurately. Being sure to do your keyword research and prepare a keyword strategy to optimize your site is very important. Once you have the top 2 or 3 keywords for a page, make sure they are incorporated into the Title and Description tags as well as on the site in the Heading, Sub Heading and body copy. There are numerous resources for learning how to properly do this and it makes all the difference.

7. **Easy to find Contact info**

Is it easy to contact you from your website page? Your contact info should never be more than one click away.

2014 update: Add a click to contact ability to your phone number. Just add this code around your phone number: `(435)555-1212 `

8. **In-linking**

Find ways to place links within your site to various other pages within your site. Be sure, though, that when linking off the home page that you only do text links to a few pages and that they are your most important ones.

2014 update: Ideally, every page in your site would be able to be found by InLinks coming from another page within your site. Check in Google Webmaster Tools to see how well your InLinking is working.

9. File names - Underscore links

The best file names tell a bit about what is on that page, preferably with a keyword or two mixed in. File names shouldn't be too long, 2 to 3 words is great, 4 words is max and may be pushing it. Make sure that when you use multiple words that you don't use an underscore to separate the word, only use a hyphen. This is because, to Google, an underscore is essentially a Stop Sign and blocks the engine from reading the rest of the file name. This dates back to the early days of Google's algorithm and some weird coding that occurred then and that they never cleaned out.

10. Registration

Once your site is properly configured to zoom to the top of the SERPs, you will want to have the engines take a look. You can register the website with the two main search engines, Google and Bing/Yahoo through their Webmaster areas. Just create an account and spend a few minutes reading up. You will also want to submit a sitemap.xml or a urllist.txt to make sure the engines know about every page.

2014 update: In Google Webmaster Tools be sure to locate Site Preferences and select the version of your site you want to be the primary one, www or not www. Doing this will help avoid duplicate content issues. Canonical tags help a lot too but that is another article.

Summary

This is a basic overview of important factors that can help your website perform its best. There are many other factors involved in search engine rankings and at [ProClass Web Design](#) we would be happy to discuss these with you. Just request a consultation and you will have taken the first step to improvement.