



Is your head spinning from acronyms like PPC, SEO, SEM, SMM, or terms like bot, canonical, duplicate content, and link sculpting? Well this is the resource you've been looking for. In this guide we have compiled a comprehensive collection of SEO terms and practices that marketers, businesses, and clients have needed further clarification on.

301 redirect

To begin, let's cover the basics of redirects. A redirection occurs if you visit a specific webpage and then are immediately redirected to an entirely new webpage with a different URL.

The two main types of redirects are **temporary** and **permanent**. To users, there is no obvious difference. But for search engines, a 301 redirect informs them that the page attempting to be accessed has changed permanently and must have its link juice transferred to the new address (which would not happen with a temporary redirect).

Affiliate

An affiliate site markets products or services that are sold by another website or business in exchange for fees or commissions. An example is a site that markets Amazon or eBay products on their own website. Affiliate sites often assist in increasing traffic to the site in which they are marketing products or services for.

Algorithm (algo)

An algorithm is a type of program that search engines use when deciding which pages to put forth as most relevant for a particular search query.

Alt tag

An alt tag is an HTML attribute of the IMG tag. The IMG tag is responsible for displaying images, while the alt tag/attribute is the text that gets displayed if an image is unable to be loaded (or if the file happens to be missing).

Here is what a standard IMG tag could look like:

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Alt tags have some SEO value because Google is currently unable to recognize what the actual image presents. It can in fact read the alt tag to understand what is going on in the image. The best way to help Google understand your images is by using alt tags. This practice will also allow for your images to be found through image searches.

Analytics

A program which assists in gathering and analyzing data about website usage. Google Analytics is a feature rich, popular, free analytics program.

Anchor text

Every link consists of two main elements.

1. The web address that the link is pointing to (the destination)
2. The anchor text

The anchor text is the text displayed that works as the link.

Here's a link to our SEO 101 blog post: [SEO 101](https://www.braveriver.com/seo-for-beginners-search-engine-optimization-101-seo-best-practices/). The **destination** of this link is <https://www.braveriver.com/seo-for-beginners-search-engine-optimization-101-seo-best-practices/>, and the **anchor text** is "SEO 101."

Anchor text is particularly important for SEO. Whenever you're trying to get a link back to your website it's good to have a relevant keyword as the anchor text.

Authority (trust, link juice, Google juice)

The amount of trust that a site is credited with for a particular search query. Authority/trust is derived from related incoming links from other trusted sites.

Authority site

An authority site is a website that has achieved multiple links from valuable and accredited websites. Having links from expert websites allows for authority websites to have a high level of trustworthiness, as well as a better PageRank and placement in the search engine results page.

Backlinks

Simply put, a backlink is a link placed on someone else's website that points back to your site. Backlinks are one of the most important factors for SEO. Getting a lot of backlinks with relevant anchor texts from reliable sources the shortest way of improving your search engine rankings.

Black hat SEO

Black hat SEO refers to the type of SEO practice that is unethical and could be detrimental to the rank of your website. There is no specific set of guidelines that states which type of SEO practices are good or bad, so it is important to practice SEO that does not involve manipulation, deceit, or cheating.

Bot (robot, spider, crawler)

A bot is a program that search engines use to scrape web pages and add to their index. Bots are also used by spammers with the intent of copying content to plagiarize.

Bounce rate

A bounce rate is a measure of the percent of individuals who click on your website, do not engage with the page, and leave prior to visiting any other pages across your site. If the user does nothing, Google Analytics receives a trigger and incorporates this into the bounce rate.

Breadcrumbs

A breadcrumb trail, also known as “breadcrumbs,” refer to a scheme of navigation that allows for a user to recognize their location on a website and how they got there.

Breadcrumbs are often shown in a horizontal display above the main content to help users understand how to get back to the root location.

Canonical tag

An HTML link element that allows webmasters to inform search engines about any duplicate content pages that they created. The tag is placed in the HEAD section of the HTML structure. Here’s what a canonical tag looks like:

```
<link rel="canonical" href="http://www.example.com/" />
```

This tag informs that the current page is a copy of the page located under the address set in the canonical tag (href).

The main idea is that when a search engine sees this tag it will transfer all of the rankings to the canonical page. In essence, it is very similar to the 301 redirect.

Click fraud

Click fraud refers to act of repeat clicking on a PPC advertisement to generate higher revenue for the business or website. Click fraud is a “black hat” SEO technique often carried out via automation and can ultimately result in penalty by Google.

Cloaking (page cloaking)

Cloaking is the practice of taking a webpage and building it in a way that it displays different content to people and to search engines. With cloaking, you technically can rank for your keywords of choice by putting forth a fully optimized page for spiders, while also presenting ads, offers, and unrelated content to actual users. This is a “black hat” SEO tactic and can harm your website or get you banned from a search engine.

CMS (Content Management System)

A CMS serves a collaborative resource used for implementing and modifying digital content on a website. Content management systems offer a user-friendly front-end editing experience, allowing individuals with little to no expertise in web design or editing the ability to change content without outside assistance.

WordPress is a widely used CMS, however, Brave River has our very own content management system that has been carefully constructed to streamline the editing experience for businesses. Every Brave River website comes equipped with a custom CMS.

Content (text, copy)

Content is the most valuable portion of a webpage. Anything that could be considered as valuable to a user that is placed upon a webpage is content—from text, to imagery, and more.

Advertising, branding, boilerplate, and navigation do not fall under the category of content.

Conversion (goal)

Achievement of a quantifiable goal on a website. A few examples of a conversion include: sales, sign-ups, form submissions, and ad clicks.

Conversion rate

Percentage of users who convert

*See conversion

CPC - Cost Per Click

CPC is the rate that advertisers pay per user click on a PPC (pay-per-click) advertisement.

CPM (Cost Per Thousand Impressions)

CPM is a metric used by marketers that calculates the average value or cost of a Pay Per Click (PPC) advertisement. The “M” in CPM refers to the Roman numeral for 1,000.

Crawler (bot, spider)

A program which moves through the worldwide web or a website by way of the link structure to gather data.

Deep linking

Deep linking refers to the process of using a hyperlink within your website to link to a specific piece of content or area on your website. A few examples would be linking to a certain webpage like a blog, or an image on the site.

Deep links are of great value in the world of SEO. Having links within your website to specific pages and pieces of content with proper anchor text helps you improve upon the rankings of the pages linked.

Directory

A site devoted to directory pages. The Yahoo directory is an example.

Do-follow link

A do-follow link is one of the most valuable types of links in SEO. Do-follow links are a standard HTML link that doesn't have the rel="nofollow" attribute, allowing for search engines to crawl or index the content.

Domain name (and hosting)

A domain is your unique address on the internet. For example, the domain of this blog is braveriver.com. Hosting, or a web host, is where your website is kept/stored on the web. You need a web host to be a website owner. You can get a shiny new domain with hosting at [Rackspace](#).

Doorway (gateway)

A web page that is designed specifically to attract traffic from a search engine. A doorway page that redirects users, but not spiders, to another site or page is nearly a form of cloaking.

Duplicate content

If you have two separate pages within your website that have the same content on them (or very similar content), then you have duplicate content. Google is not partial to websites that continuously repeat content across its pages, and has no problem penalizing you for it. So, duplicate content is believed to have an overall negative effect on SEO.

It may be wise for you to reevaluate your web content to make sure you don't have an issue with duplicate content. Specifically with a WordPress website, it is very easy to use categories and tags that are all too similar. Using the term "business" for both the category and tag sections is an example of serving duplicate content across a WordPress site.

E-commerce site

A website that is devoted to retail sales.

Gateway page (doorway page)

A gateway page is a webpage that is created to redirect search engine traffic to an alternative site or page and receive a stronger ranking for a certain search query. Gateway pages work similarly to the effects of cloaking in the aspect of serving alternative content than a user originally anticipated viewing, and participating in a “black hat” SEO practice.

Google Ads

Google Ads, a PPC contextual ad program, is one of the most common avenues for basic website advertising.

Google juice (trust, authority, pagerank)

Google juice is trust or authority gained from Google that flows through outgoing links to other pages.

Googlebot

Google’s spider program.

HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language)

HTML, or hypertext markup language, is a standardized system of directives used to format or structure plain text on webpages. HTML is often referenced as “code.”

Impression (page view)

In advertising, an impression refers to the instance of a user viewing a webpage.

Inbound link (inlink, incoming link)

An inbound link, also known as an inlink, is a link placed upon a website that points traffic to your website or one of your webpages. This can lead to an increase in PageRank if the website who created the link is credible and of high regard.

*See Inlink

Index (noun)

A database of webpages and their content, used by search engines.

Index (verb)

Adding a webpage into the index of a search engine.

Indexed Pages

The pages on a site which have been indexed.

When a webpage or website is indexed, it is added into a search engine's database also known as an "index."

Inlink (incoming link, inbound link)

An inbound link is a hyperlink from another credible website that points to your site or one of your webpages. Inbound links that come from trusted or popular websites can assist you in increasing your PageRank.

*See Inbound Link

Keywords

A keyword is a word or phrase that is used when attempting to rank a website or webpage for a particular topic.

For example, the main keyword for this blog article is **SEO glossary**. We want people to find this post by searching "SEO glossary" on Google, so we have incorporated the term "SEO glossary" 2-3 times, while also including relevant like-terms to indicate to search engines what this article is really about.

Keyword cannibalization

Keyword cannibalization is the act of reusing a particular keyword repeatedly and excessively throughout or across too many pages on a website. By doing this, search engine's struggle to recognize the differences between your content and which content is actually most relevant to a user conducting a search based on the keyword you are overusing.

Keyword density

Keyword density refers to the amount and occurrence of a particular phrase of keyword within a webpage. Keyword density is said to have a high influence on SEO. If you have a high-density percentage than it communicates that the text is relevant to the keyword. However, you must give and take with this practice, as search engines do not want to see you engaging in keyword stuffing.

To calculate keyword density:

of times the keyword appears in the text / total # of words in the text = result → result x 100 = final percentage score

Keyword research

Keyword research is the process of determining which keywords are appropriate for targeting.

Keyword spam (keyword stuffing)

Inappropriately high keyword density.

Keyword stuffing

Keyword stuffing refers to the act of literally “stuffing” your on-page content with a specific keyword, solely with the intent of increasing your PageRank. Keyword stuffing is considered to be a “black hat” practice and can ultimately hurt your website. If your content does not read naturally due to the density of keywords included, then you’re more than likely engaging in keyword stuffing.

Try the [Natural Understanding tool by Watson](#) to see how well your content reads.

Avoiding keyword stuffing will not only keep you in the clear from the Google police, but it will also help you serve more valuable content to viewers. Would you want to read content that is jampacked with the same term in every sentence?

Landing page

The page that a user lands on when they click on a link in a SERP (search engine results page).

Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI)

Latent Semantic Indexing, also known as LSI, refers to the process of search engines analyzing webpages based on the inclusion of similar key terms (LSI keywords) that support and are relevant to your main keyword, which can ultimately lead to a boost in ranking should said terms exist. The use of LSI keywords will allow search engines to understand whether your content is valuable and relevant, rather than over-optimized to increase rankings.

For example, the main keyword of an article might be “*gardening*” So, rather than using it too much throughout the article it would be beneficial to use LSI keywords, or closely related terms that support the keyword. Including terms such as, “*planting,*” “*seeding,*” “*bedding,*” “*transplanting,*” and other terms that relate to the garden, like “*plants,*” “*vegetables,*” or even “*flowers.*”

Link

A link is an element placed onto a webpage that directs a user to a different website or webpage when clicked.

Linkbait

Linkbait is putting forth content of high value that is used to attract viewers that will hopefully link to said content.

Viral linkbait can range from content that is hilarious, to content that provides exceptional quality to the viewer, free of charge. Videos, infographics, or even blog posts are all examples of content that can serve as linkbait.

However, linkbait has had a past of being used with negative intent. Be mindful of principles of “black hat SEO” when deciding whether your use of content is ethical or not.

Link building

Link building is the practice of working to increase the amount of quality links, or backlinks, pointing to your website. From an SEO perspective, having high quality backlinks to your website is a substantial factor used in ranking. An example of link building would be publishing a blog post and sharing the link to your site on an article sharing platform such as [Medium](#).

Link farm

A link farm is a group or network of websites/pages that interlink to each other with the intent of achieving higher PageRank. This is another “black hat” practice that you should not engage in, as you may be penalized for doing so.

For example, if you were to create multiple websites and place them upon different servers and include links on each site on every page to every other site and all of their pages, this is considered a link farm.

Link sculpting

Link sculpting refers to the process of implementing “nofollow” attributes to certain links on your site so that you signal to search engines that links without that attribute on your site are open to receiving rank. Using a “nofollow” attribute indicates that certain links are less important from an SEO perspective than others. You can “sculpt” the PageRanks for a specific set of pages across your website by engaging in this practice.

You can increase the visibility of some pages by applying follow links and decrease the visibility of others by using nofollow links. This whole technique requires a lot of practice and knowledge to do it properly. Many people believe that it’s no longer effective due to Google’s new approach for handling nofollow links.

Link Text

Link text is also known as anchor text and is used by search engines to specify and understand the relevance of the content that is being linked. Link text is the text that users will see as a clickable link.

Long Tail

“Long tail” refers to a type of keyword that consists of multiple terms, rather than one or two. Long tail keywords are specific and allow for marketers to connect to their target audience more directly than with broad keywords or terms. A higher percentage of searches are made using long tail keywords.

For example, the term “IT specialists” is not a long tail keyword, but the term, “IT specialists in Warwick, Rhode Island” is.

LSI (Latent Semantic Indexing)

Latent semantic indexing (also known as LSI) refers to the indexing of commonly associated word groups (“long tail” keywords) within a page or document.

Every search conducted generally contains three or more terms, making it almost impossible for a site or page to rank well for a one-word search, but more realistic to rank for a mult-term search.

For example, it would be significantly more difficult to rank for the term “web designer,” rather than for “best web designer in Warwick, Rhode Island.”

Meta-description

A meta-description is a brief description of a webpage used mostly by search engines but also by viewers to understand the content of a site prior to clicking.

Whenever someone searches for a specific keyphrase, Google decides which websites should be displayed, and in what order. For each website, Google displays a title and a short description (this is the meta-description). Google has two ways of organizing this description:

1. If the meta-description of the website contains the keyphrase used by the user, then Google displays the meta description.
2. If the meta description doesn't contain the keyphrase then Google displays a fragment of the website's content that does contain it.

Meta keywords

A list of keywords and keyphrases for each blog/page/post (mainly used by search engines).

In this day and age, major search engines such as Google have opted to rid meta keywords as a ranking element for websites. However, incorporating relevant keywords certainly won't harm your website.

For example, for the meta keywords I would include for this blog post would be “SEO glossary” and “SEO terms.”

If you're using WordPress, the meta keywords for each page or post can be set using the [“All in One SEO Pack”](#) plugin.

Meta-tags

A meta tag consists of meta keywords and a meta description. Meta tags are used to describe the content of a page and are included in the “head” element of your HTML structure.

The information contained in a meta-tag is meant mainly to help search engines determine what a webpage is about. Therefore, it might be worth your time to them manually for each page or post within your blog.

Mirror Site

A mirror site is a webpage that is identical but has a different web address.

Natural Links

Natural links are links to your page that were organically acquired, and not gained through the act of link building.

Here is an example scenario:

You've written an amazing blog post, and now it has gone viral on social media. Individuals share your blog post because they find it so valuable—these are natural links.

Nofollow

One of the most well-known terms in SEO is “nofollow.” Nofollow and follow attributes are critically important from an SEO perspective, as they both provide instruction for search engines to recognize if a particular link should be eligible to receive ranks.

All links are acknowledged as follow links, by default. Unless a nofollow attribute is present, search engines will register any link they encounter as eligible for rank. With a nofollow attribute, you inform search engines to disregard a certain link and where it leads to so that it does not receive any link juice.

To create a nofollow link, include this additional attribute to an HTML link:

`rel="nofollow"`

Below is an example of a nofollow link:

`Wikipedia`

Noindex

The noindex command is a directive for search engines bots to not include a particular webpage in their search engine results page. Unless otherwise noted, all webpages are set to index by default. This command can be placed in the head section in the HTML of a web page, or in an individual link code.

A command found in either the HEAD section of a web page or within individual link code, which instructs robots to not index the page or the specific link. A form of link condom.

Off-page SEO

Off-page SEO refers to anything that is done outside any of your website to improve upon its ranking. Link building is the most common practices associated with off-page SEO.

On-page SEO

On-page SEO refers to anything that is done on a webpage to help improve its rankings. Improving your site through on-page SEO can include a number of practices, such as enhancing meta-descriptions and title-tags, bettering page load speeds, creating a clear linking structure for pages across your site, or even managing keyword density.

Organic Search

An organic search is when someone inputs a keyword or phrase into a search engine (like Google or Bing) and then finds your website naturally based on the results in the SERP.

Organic Search Results (Natural Search Results)

Organic search results are any of the options displayed after running a search that appear on the left-hand column and don't have an "ad" icon. Paid results often appear on the right-hand side, but also appear above or below the organic results on the left-hand side. It is better for SEO to have your webpage rank organically, rather than paid.

PageRank

PageRank (also known as PR) is an algorithm that was first created by Larry Page, a founder of Google. PR was created to more or less calculate the approximate importance of a website, however, no one besides Google is entirely certain of how this process works as it has been a highly guarded algorithm since inception.

One of the most commonly held opinions believes that the number of highly rated backlinks a site has can lead to a higher PageRank overall.

Pages with the highest PageRanks are generally those with the highest esteem or popularity across the internet. The PageRank for Google.com is 10, while Facebook and Yahoo both rank in at 9. The more recognizable and well-known sites are more likely to have higher PageRank than others.

PPA (Pay per Action)

With PPA, advertisers only pay when a specific action occurs. For example, when an individual fills out a contact form or makes a purchase. PPA is also known as CPA (Cost per Action).

PPC (Pay per Click)

With PPC, advertisers pay ad agencies every time someone clicks on an ad. Examples of PPC ads include display and banner ads.

A contextual advertisement scheme where advertisers pay ad agencies (such as Google) whenever a user clicks on their ad. Google Ads is a common agency used for PPC advertising.

Redirect

When a user goes to one web address but is brought to another—this is known as a redirect. If you changed a URL, or moved the content from one page to another, you would implement a redirect. Behind the scenes, redirects help search engines recognize who to pass the ranking power to. This is one of the best practices to engage in with SEO.

The most common type of redirect is a 301 redirect, which is used when a URL has changed permanently but you still want to maintain the same amount of ranking power.

Robots.txt

The robots.txt file is used by website owners to instruct robots where to visit on their site. This is an important file to use for SEO, as you are able to keep certain pages on your site (such as admin pages or pages with duplicate content) from being indexed.

ROI (Return on Investment)

ROI stands for “return on investment.” This is a common ratio used to determine and quantify cost vs. benefit on an investment.

One use of analytics software is to analyze and quantify return on investment, and thus cost / benefit of different schemes.

Sandbox, supplemental index

Google is said to have something called a “sandbox,” or a supplemental/secondary index. When someone conducts a search, Google returns select results from its index. This supplemental index is thought to have websites that don’t have as much value as those in Google’s main index but are kept on file in the event that any of them become worthy of being placed in the main index to be displayed in the SERP.

*See supplemental index

Scrape

The act of collecting or extracting content from websites across the internet, an often automated process carried out by bots.

Search Engine

A search engine is a software application used to conduct searches online. Search engines are built to scour the internet and return listings most relevant to any given keyword or phrase. Each search engine holds an algorithm which determines which sites are most relevant based on a search. These algorithms are not public knowledge, hence, why marketers must assume the best practices and hope for a positive result.

SEM

SEM stands for Search Engine Marketing, or “marketing via search engines.” Search Engine Marketing involves the promotion of products or services through search engines to help you expand reach and connect more directly with your target audience.

With SEM, you can advertise above or below the organic results on the SERP as a “sponsored listing,” or you can optimize your website to organically reach one of the top slots.

SEO

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization. SEO is the practice of improving a website or webpage’s rankings in the search engines based on particular keywords or key phrases. Search Engine Optimization best practices are everchanging, therefore, the work involved is ongoing.

*See On-page SEO

*See Off-page SEO

SERP

SERP stands for Search Engine Results Page (SERPS – Search Engine Results Pages). The SERP is what is displayed upon conducting a search on Google or other search engines.

Spider (Crawler, Bot, Robot)

A spider is a program that scours the internet for new and updated websites. Spiders obtain information about websites to store in the search engine index.

For Google, you can manually fetch the Googlebot within Search Console to crawl your website if you update a certain page or add one.

SMM (Social Media Marketing)

[Social media marketing](#) (SMM) is a type of marketing that is most commonly used to promote a brand or website.

Static page

A static page is a webpage with content that is fixed and generally written in plain HTML. Unlike dynamic pages, static pages do not include complex scripting languages and are friendlier to search engine spiders.

Supplemental result

Supplemental results are webpages that rank in Google's secondary or "supplemental index." These types of results are ranked as less important or valuable by Google but will display in the search engine results page should there not be enough pages to return from the main index for a particular search.

Text link

A link that is displayed only by hyperlinking to text only. Text links do not involve any rich media or special coding.

Time on Page

Time on page is exactly as it states, the amount of time a visitor spends on a webpage before they leave. Time on page is an indication of the type of relevance of level of quality the content provides for visitors.

Title Tag

A title tag is an element in the HTML structure that expresses the title of a specific page. This is shown on the SERP as the clickable header on each result. The title tag is also visible in the title bar on your browser.

For example, the title tag of the page you're reading right now is: "*SEO Glossary – 41 SEO Terms Explained.*" It's a very important SEO factor. The best way to help search engines recognize what certain webpages are about is by putting forward a descriptive title tag.

URL (URI)

A URL is the address of a particular webpage.

For example, the URL of the post you're currently reading is:

<https://www.braveriver.com/services/digital-marketing/search-engine-optimization/>

Web 2.0

Web 2.0, also known as "social web," was a progressive movement in which world wide web websites began to encourage user-generated content and participative interaction.

White Hat SEO

White hat SEO involves any practice that search engines suggest that you participate in. Black hat SEO is known as the type of SEO that could be harmful to your rank or is punishable by the search engine. There isn't an official list of all of the best practices that fall under white hat SEO, so it is important to keep up with updates from the major search engines.

For Google, the following blogs are helpful when considering which SEO practices to adopt: [Official Google Blog](#), [Official Google Webmaster Central Blog](#).

XML Sitemap

An XML sitemap is a file, usually noted as *sitemap.xml*. XML sitemaps are comprised of a list of URLs and all of the on-page content (including posts and archives) from your website. XML sitemaps are created so that search engines can index your site quicker.

With WordPress sites, you can use the [Google XML Sitemaps](#) plugin to help you create the file. You can also use a service such as [XML-Sitemaps.com](#) to have one built for you