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DS 101: Advocating for your Project

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Digital Scholarship 101: Advocating for your Project

March 30, 2022

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Link to these slides: https://bit.ly/DS101Discover

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Part 1: Optimizing Your Project for Visibility

Goals for Part 1:

- Gain basic understanding of SEO
- Learn SEO Best Practices
- Review some on-page optimizations
- Share helpful resources to continue SEO exploration

SEO Basics

What is SEO?

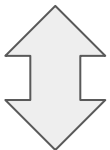
SEO is short for Search Engine Optimization. This term refers to the process search engines use to rank web pages based on a search query

How Does It Work?

Websites and pages are crawled by bots

Pages are indexed and cached

Ranking algorithm is applied to determine position



Search Engine Results Page (SERP)

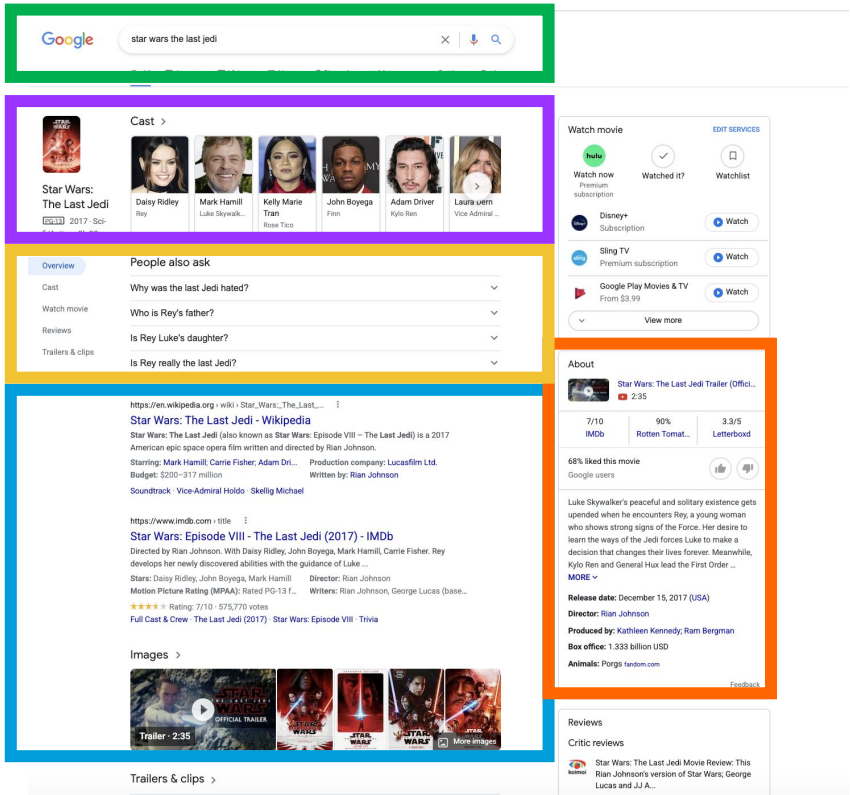
Keyword / Search Query

Organic Search Results

Carousel

Knowledge Graph

Quick Answers



Creating and Optimizing Content

Things to keep in mind when creating new pages or content:

- What is the page about?
- What is the goal of the page?
- Who is going to visit the page?
- What are some keyword phrases for this page?
- Does each page have a unique title?

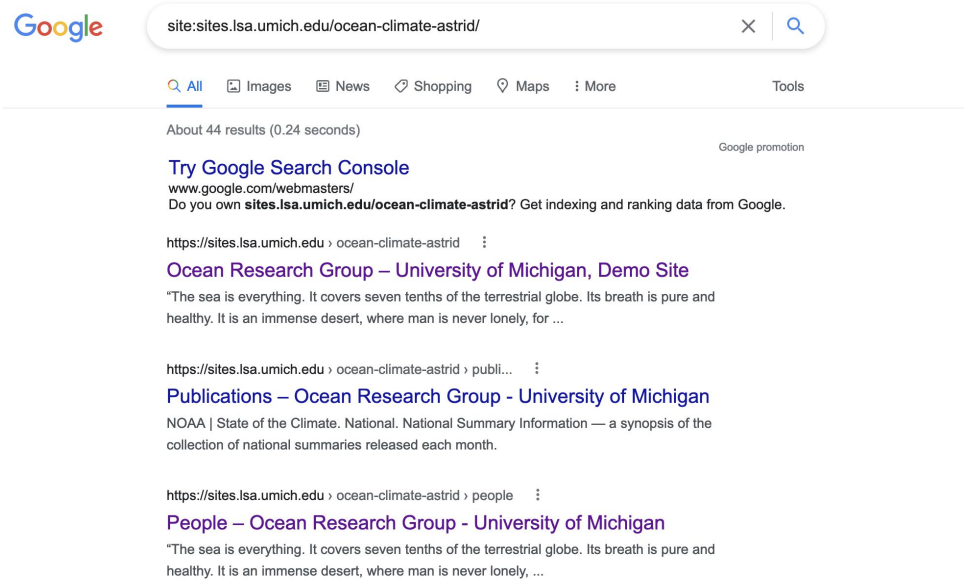
How do I know if my project is on Google?

Search for your site!

Ex: site:yoursite.com

Reasons why your site isn't on Google:

- Your site is brand new
- Not linked from other sites
- Navigation makes it hard for Google to find pages



Keyword Research: Foundation of SEO Strategy

- Choose 1 - 2 keywords per page. These keywords should make sense for the type of content on the page
- Look at similar project/sites for inspiration
- Use Google to discover related keywords phrases and terms (consider search suggestions and Quick Answers)

Additional (free!) tools: Moz Keyword Explorer, Google Trends

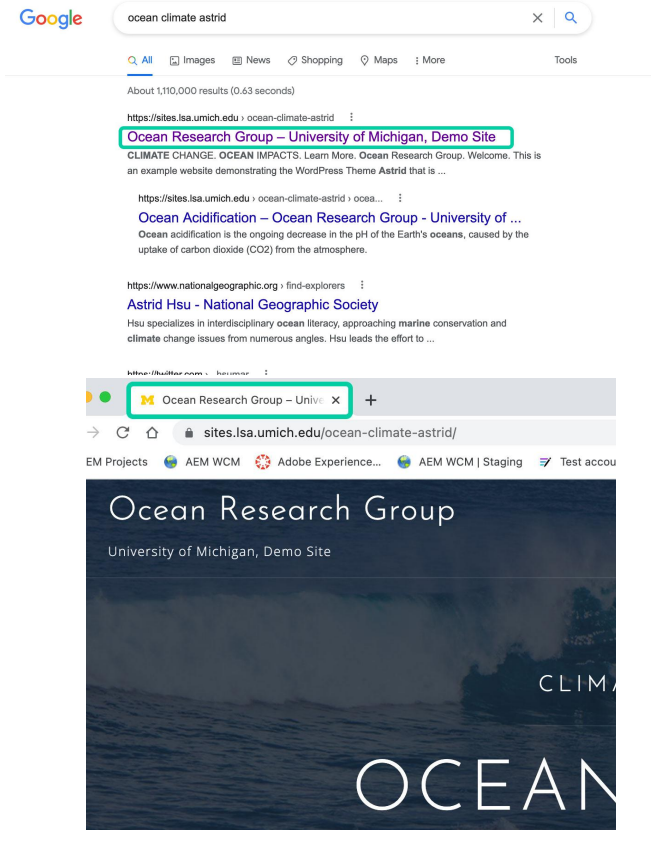
On-Page Optimization

On-Page Optimization: Page Title

A page title is the main text that describes an online document.

Recommendations:

- Place the target keyword towards the front of the page title
- Make them unique for each page
- Try to keep them around 50-60 characters long

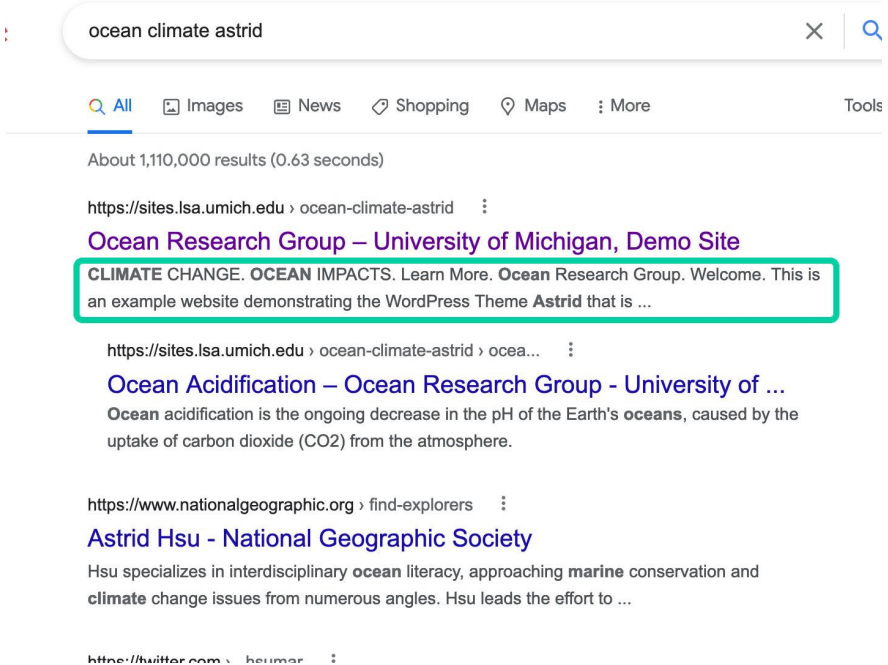


On-Page Optimization: H1 Heading

- H1 Heading
  - Use H1 only once per page
  - Make sure the H1 contains target keyword
  - Try to keep the H1 at the top of the page

On-Page Optimization: Meta Description

- Meta Description
  - Include strong call-to-actions
  - Make sure keyword is included early in the first line
  - Make them unique for each page
  - Try to keep them around 156 characters long



On-Page Optimization: Image Alt Tags

- Image Alt Text
  - Describe the image as specifically as possible
  - Keep it short (125 characters)
  - Use your keywords

Okay alt text: `<img src="escalator.jpg" alt="man on escalator">`

Better alt text: `<img src="escalator.jpg" alt="man walking on escalator">`

Best alt text: `<img src="escalator.jpg" alt="man wearing backpack walking down escalator">`

Image Source: BrightEdge

SEO Last Thoughts

- SEO is not a one and done process; searches and trends change over time.
- The algorithm is always changing!
- Changes to rankings and search listings aren’t instant; will occur over time.
- User Experience is tied very closely to SEO. Keep both in mind!
- Share your project as much as possible!
- Linking strategy is also important.

SEO Resources

Informational Resources:

- SEO in One Hour - Moz.com
- Beginner's Guide to SEO - Moz.com
- Ultimate WordPress SEO Guide for Beginners (Step by Step)

Tools:

- SEO Browser Extension (I use SEO Meta in 1 Click)
- Google Trends
- Google Search Console
- Moz Keyword Explorer

Part 2:
Telling your story

What's a research impact librarian?

I empower scholars to create the conditions under which they can establish:

- A strong public identity
- An account of their contributions to the scholarly enterprise
- A persuasive body of evidence for the impact of their work

Find me in my office in Hatcher 260A, or email me at rwelzenb@umich.edu

For today:

- What does impact mean for you & for your work?
- Charting a path for yourself
- What resources and support are available to learn more?

No single definition!

"The measurement of research impact is a contested research and political agenda that poses a complex academic question."

(Alla et al. "How do we define the policy impact of public health research? A systematic review" *Health Science Policy and Systems*, 2017)

No single definition!

- Scholarly impact (e.g., citations)
- Social, public, economic, clinical impact
- Policy impact
- ….etc.!

SCOPE Framework

A process for evaluating responsibly.
(Himanen and Gadd, December 2019)

- Start with what you value
- Context considerations
- Options for measuring
- Probe deeply
- Evaluate your evaluation

Start with what you value

- Who is this project for?
- Who needs to know about this project and be persuaded of its impact?
- What does success look like for your project?
- Gather evidence/data to serve your purpose – not the other way around.

Context considerations

- What would you need to know in order to:
  - Know if your project is reaching your desired audience and accomplishing what you expect
  - Make decisions for next steps/future work
  - Convince someone else of the value/impact/success of your project?
- What is the story you'd like to be able to tell?

Options for measuring

- What evidence do you need in order to support the story you thought about above?
- Do you have the ability to gather that evidence? (and is it appropriate to do so–more on this next)
- Can you set up your project to accumulate/receive/generate this evidence?
    - Analytics?
    - Survey/feedback/user input/contact information?
    - Alternative metrics/user engagement?

Probe deeply

- What do users need to know about the evidence you're gathering of their use?
- Are there privacy violations?
- Balancing needs and rights of communities and users against your need for information
- Laws and regulations
- Don't gather data just for the sake of gathering it. Have a use case in mind.

Evaluate your evaluation

- Is this still working? Has anything changed?
- Is the time/effort worthwhile?
- What level of upkeep/maintenance is required for the impact reporting piece of your project?
- Is there a finish line?

Additional Resource

- SCOPE Framework For Research Evaluation
- Research Impact Challenge Guide

Thank you! Questions?

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