

TOOLKIT | web design

SEO GUIDE

GETTING STARTED

Search Engine Optimisation is seen a bit of an enigma and how Search Engines rank sites can at times be a closely guarded secret. Although challenging, it's hardly impossible to get your site to number one in the listings.

This guide is based on our experience of what works and guidelines accepted across the Internet on improving your website ranking. A lot of it we've learnt and applied from working on our own website and feedback from clients like you.

These days the majority of websites are built around a content management system or CMS, allowing the website author to update their website instantly and continuously. This is great news for Search Engines as websites with a CMS can be constantly changed to improve their search engine rankings. Through this guide we make reference to 'The Toolkit', our purpose built CMS, which can make all the necessary changes to a website to improve it's ranking.

You're going to have to work hard to optimise your site for Search Engines. You may not see results for months, and you're going to want to monitor your results in case you need to adjust them further. All websites need both online and offline marketing if they're going to be successful, not just SEO, however optimising your site is incredibly easy and a great starting point.

The number one thing you have to do is make sure your site content is focused on the keywords you wish to rank highly on in Search Engine result pages. It's going to take a bit of time but with The Toolkit and the advice and guidance of our Support Team you have everything you need to get started.

We're going to use our website, <https://www.toolkitwebsites.co.uk/> as an example to demonstrate how you can use The Toolkit to optimise your own website.

For more specialist help we can recommend a fantastic SEO company we've worked with for years who have proven results with our clients using our Toolkit.



Rome wasn't built in a day

One last thing. We've already said that it's going to take a bit of time to optimise your site. It's also going to take a bit of time before you see results. Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is something in which you need to invest time and effort. No one really knows how often a search engine will visit your site, we can't tell you how long it will be till your hard work pays off. But it will pay off.

Search Engines reward sites that have been around longer than others, as that makes your site seem more credible, and there is nothing like good old fashioned marketing to support your credibility. Make sure your website address is on all of your other publicity material, (headed paper, business cards, van etc.), that it's on any directory listings and do consider some other form of online advertising, either banner ads or Pay Per Click like Google Ad words. For more information on what you can do away from your website to help your Search Engine positions, go to <https://www.toolkitsupport.uk/website-success>.

FINDING YOUR KEYWORDS

So, you have a website. You're going to want two things for it:

- Listed in the major Search Engines
- Ranked highly for your chosen keywords

To achieve this, you need to know what your keywords are.

What is a keyword?

These are the words or phrases your website should appear under when someone searches using a search engine. What search terms do you want your site to appear under? How would people describe what your business does in as few words as possible?

The more specific, the better. Looking at Toolkit Websites, www.toolkitwebsites.co.uk, there are a number of keywords to describe our business:

Websites, Web Design, Website Services, Bespoke Website Designers

See how many results each of these return in Google:

Professional Web Design: 4,250,000,000

Web Design: 9,600,000,000

Website Services: 8,160,000,000

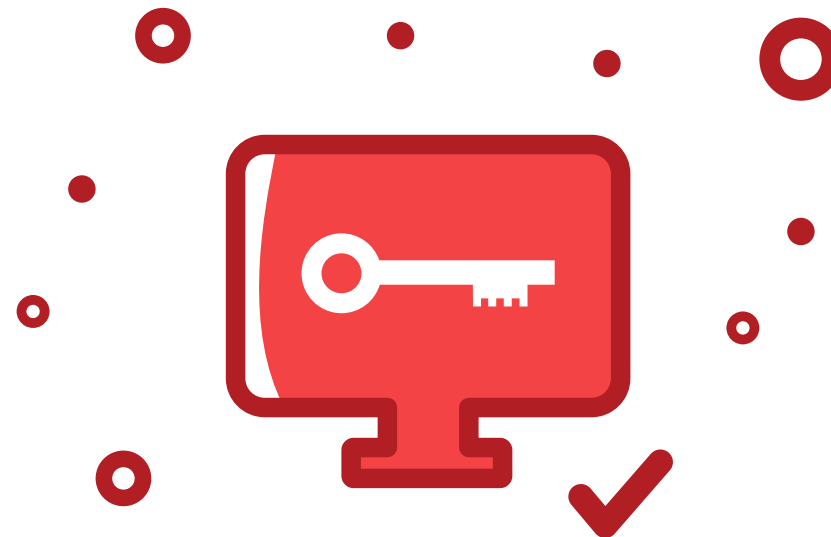
Bespoke Website Designers: 13,000,000

These are pretty huge numbers, right? If you use general keywords like these, the chances of your website being noticed is pretty slim! Using 2 or 3 word phrases improves your chances as they will attract fewer companies, and you can tailor them to be specific to your business. Let's try a few more phrases for Toolkit Websites:

Web Design Hampshire: 79,400,000

Website Designers in Southampton: 35,700,000

Bespoke Web Design Agency Hampshire: 12,000,000



Phrases like this have fewer results because they're more focussed and less competitive, meaning our site would be more likely to score highly under these keywords.

Therefore in this example, we'll focus on these more detailed keywords for the optimisation process.

How many keywords?

This depends on whom you talk to! Some people say 5 really focussed keyword phrases; others say 15-20.

Keywords also need to vary from page to page, reflecting on the content of each page specifically. On our website, our Portfolio page keywords will differ from those on our About page, but will still be within the theme of Web Design.

Now you know a bit more about keywords, you need to work out what yours are. Don't worry if you're not 100% sure as Google have a handy tool you can use to generate keywords for you:

https://ads.google.com/intl/en_uk/home/tools/keyword-planner/

APPLYING YOUR KEYWORDS

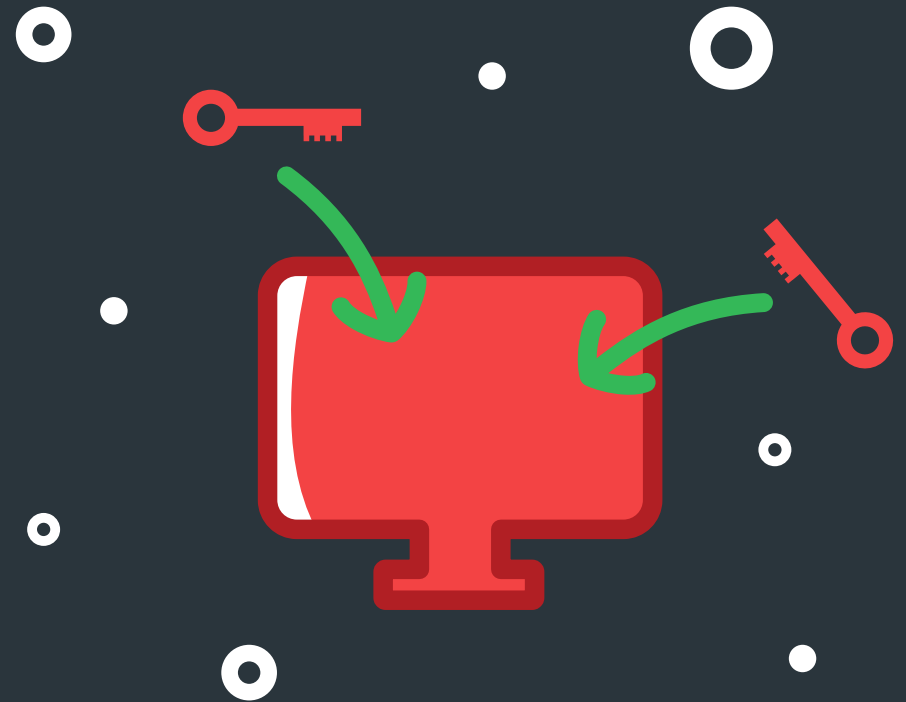
Now you've got your keyword phrases, you need to know where the Search Engines are looking for them. The answer is: across your whole website!

Common places Keywords can be added:

- Web address, eg toolkitwebsites.co.uk
- Page Titles, eg Web Design Hampshire
- Page aliases, eg toolkitwebsites.co.uk/web-design-hampshire
- Meta descriptions on your pages
- Links on your pages
- Images on your page, ie. the name of the image, the caption and the alt-tag
- Website content

Use The Toolkit to make sure all of the above areas on your website contain your specific keywords & phrases. If you're unsure, our Support Team can help you access each of the above listed elements.

Even though nothing can guarantee you success in the Search Engines, by adding keywords and phrases all over your website you give yourself the best chance of being ranked for the searches your clients will use!



GET YOUR SITE IN THE SEARCH ENGINES

As standard, when publishing your website we submit it to Bing and provide a guide on how to submit to Google through their Search Console, but it can take the Search Engines anywhere between days and months to actually index your website after submission.

To help speed this up and for more control over how the search engines see your website, we recommend setting up Webmaster Tools:

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/home>

<https://www.bing.com/toolbox/webmaster>

We'd also recommend adding your site to local directories. You can try business-based directories but it's important to check them out before your sign up as things like Link Farms are considered really disreputable.

Find our recommended directories here:

<https://www.toolkitsupport.uk/recommended-directories>

Local Business Results

Add your business and site to Google My Business, which is completely free:

<https://www.google.com/business/>

Google My Business lists your website when people are searching for you business, or businesses like yours, on Google Searches or Maps.

For businesses that benefit from customers finding their locations, such as retail outlets or restaurants, Google My Business is a fantastic place as it'll put you at the top of search purely because you're the best placed company for the Google-User's search.



After registering with all of the above, you will hopefully be picked up by the Search Engines. The longer your site is around, the better it will do! Search Engines treat older sites as having more authority. This is referred to what's known as 'Domain Authority'.

A domain that's been active for 4 years is much more popular with Search Engines than one that's recently been registered. Using an older domain for your website can give you a huge advantage when trying to push up the Search Engines.

USE THE TOOLKIT TO OPTIMISE YOUR SITE

Got your keywords to hand? Great! Now we can use these to optimise your site for Search Engines using the Toolkit's SEO features.

The Toolkit makes sure that your keywords are used appropriately and consistently to help Search Engines find the information. It makes no sense to just dump a list of keywords on your site in any old place. Let's use The Toolkit to do this properly!

Remember to work out individual page keywords and generic ones for your site overall!

At the beginning of this document we gave you a list of places where Search Engines look for your keywords. Need a recap? Here they are again:

- Web address, eg toolkitwebsites.co.uk
- Page Titles, eg Web Design Hampshire
- Page aliases, eg toolkitwebsites.co.uk/web-design-hampshire
- Meta descriptions on your pages
- Links on your pages
- Images on your page, ie. the name of the image, the caption and the alt-tag
- Website content

a. Your Website Address

Having your keywords in your domain name can help. If you're a plumber in Yorkshire, you may wish to consider the domain plumberinyorkshire.co.uk instead of your company-name.co.uk

We can register many different types of domains. See them all here:

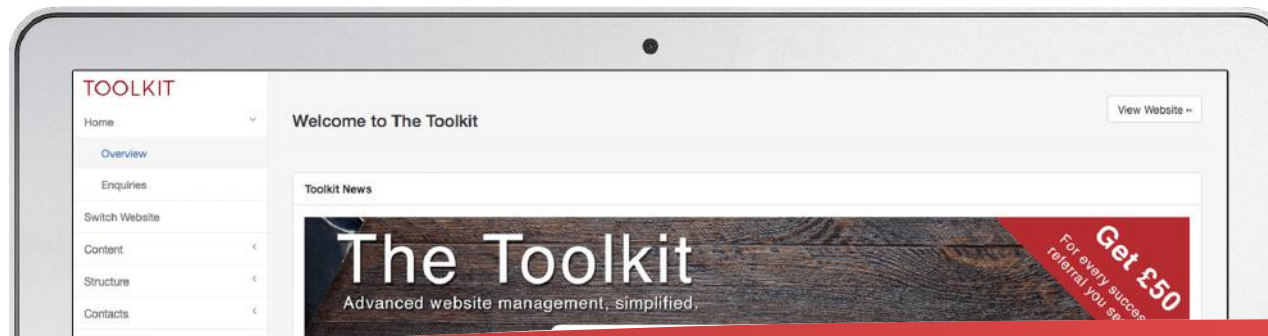
<https://www.toolkitsupport.uk/domain-registrations>

b. Page Titles

Your page titles also need to include relevant keywords. Turning to our website, one of the keyword phrases for Toolkit Websites is 'Web Design Hampshire'. So what's the title for our page about web design in Hampshire? "Web Design Hampshire" of course!

You should choose titles that describe your pages and include your main keywords. The Toolkit gives you control over both the main site title and the individual page titles:

<https://www.toolkitsupport.uk/how-to-change-a-page-name>



USE THE TOOLKIT TO OPTIMISE YOUR SITE

c. Page Aliases

For the same page, what do you think we've set the alias to be? You're absolutely right! It's / web-design-hampshire

If you're a plumber in Yorkshire and you have a page for showcasing your services, instead of using the alias / services, you should use / plumbing-services-yorkshire

Find out how to change your page's alias here:

<https://www.toolkitsupport.uk/how-to-change-a-page-alias>

d. Meta Description

This is the short description of your site for the search engines. It's the summary that appears under a site name in a listing of search results. Make sure yours is keyword rich and relevant to your business.

The Meta Description for toolkitwebsites.co.uk is:

"Top UK website design company in Hampshire. Experienced website designers providing bespoke web design for small businesses, with guaranteed 5-star passionate service provided at all times. Find out how we can help you design the perfect brochure-style website for your business."

Keep your meta description short but fill it with the services you provide in the areas in which you work. You can also optimise individual page meta descriptions on your site by using the Toolkit:

<https://www.toolkitsupport.uk/how-to-add-keywords-and-meta-descriptions>

e. Links on your pages

The search engines can read every link on your page too, so it's good if the text that is attached to these links is based on your keywords too.

When linking to another webpage, you'll probably be linking some text. Therefore, make sure the link text is relevant to your keywords.

If you're linking to an anchor on your website, make sure the anchor name contains a keyword / phrase.

Don't go overboard with the internal links as more than 15 – 20 will make Search Engines think you're a link spammer, but 3 – 4 links on each page that point to other pages on your website with keyword based text should be enough.

Find out how to add a link on your website:

<https://www.toolkitsupport.uk/how-to-add-a-link>

f. Images

Search Engines can't actually see images, so they look for behind-the-scenes information that tells them what the image is of.

You can make sure that images count towards your SEO by adding alternative text to your images, so that when a Search Engine sees an image it has a textual description of the image. It makes sense to make sure that the alternative text includes some keywords.

It's also good SEO practice to make sure that you don't put any useful text in an image itself (ie photoshopped in) as search engines can't see the content of those visual elements. It's no good if the only place your keyword phrases appear in a banner image on your homepage. Replicate any text that's in existing banners, images or Javascript animations elsewhere on your site as actual text.

USE THE TOOLKIT TO OPTIMISE YOUR SITE

g. Your Website Text

Your website copy is your number one friend when it comes to SEO.

Don't just stick a huge paragraph that lists your keywords on the site, as once a Search Engine has found you, actual people will be reading it! Make sure your text content makes sense to humans whilst including your keywords.

Your text needs to be relevant, and fit with the message of the page.

Let's look at this in more detail. On our Web Design Hampshire page, we've made sure our keyword phrases are flowing naturally through the content.

For the keyword phrase 'Web Design Hampshire', see a break down of how often derivatives or parts of this phrase appear here:

Web Design: 12

Design: 21

Hampshire: 19

Web Design Hampshire: 1

See this for yourself here:

<https://www.toolkitwebsites.co.uk/web-design-hampshire>

Google will never show your website in the results for 'Plumber in Yorkshire' if you're not using any of these words, either individually or as a phrase, on your website.

To be considered a trustworthy and important site by Google, you need to provide relevant information about your industry as 'Industry news' so to speak.

Articles on the latest events in your sector will be full of useful keywords from an SEO perspective, and may generate inbound links if they're picked up by other sites as being useful. You can try the same thing by writing articles or guides on products and services if you're in a slower paced sector where there isn't often a lot of news.

For example, a firm of solicitors could write an article on why making a will is important and how to go about it. This would not only be useful to their existing and prospective customers, it provides a very nice selling opportunity to link to their will writing service.



SOCIAL MEDIA & BLOGGING

Industry News or Industry related articles brings us onto our next area of advice: Blogging and Social Media.

A great way to achieve a 'Latest News' section on your website is with the Toolkit Blog. This doesn't eat into your page allowance and allows for quick and easy article posting. See more on this service here:

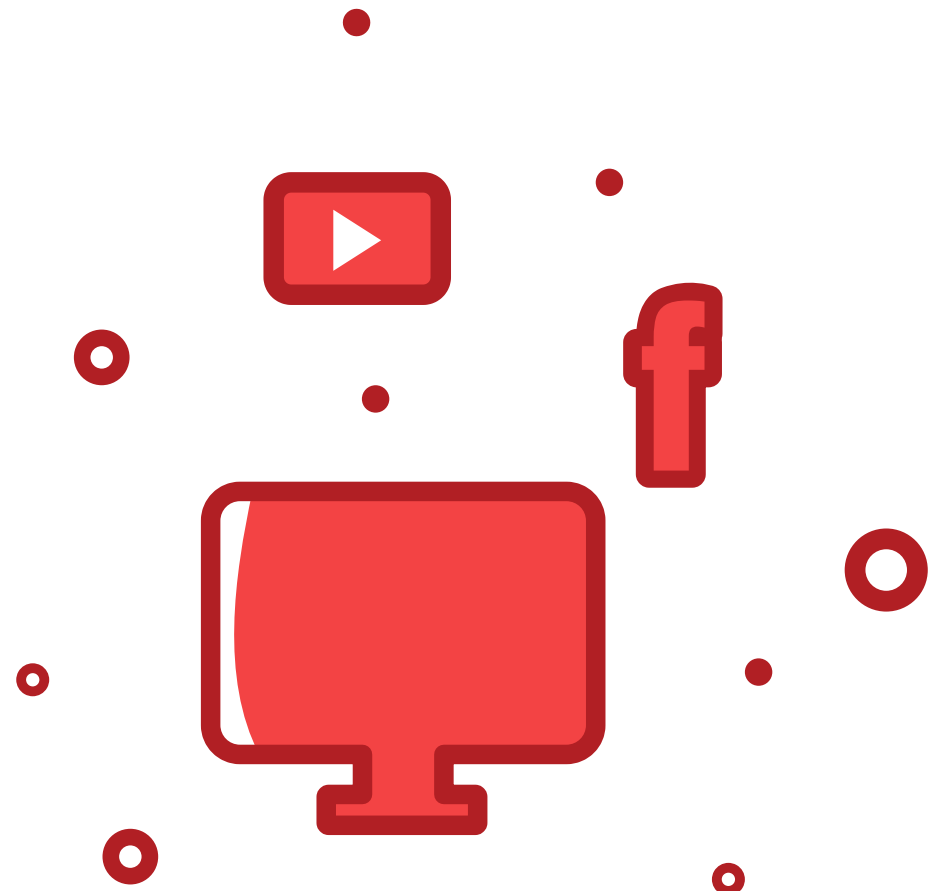
<https://www.toolkitsupport.uk/blog-service>

Social Media has become more important than ever. Search Engines now expect to see Facebook, Twitter, Google + and even a Blog on your website when they come crawling.

They believe this is the best way to see your most up to date content and they're right. Social Media is designed to show any and all up to the minute comments, posts, tweets, responses etc. and it is this content Search Engines are now most interested in. Your Social Media accounts will tell Google how invested you are by the amount your interacting and engaging with audiences on Social Media.

By responding to consumers on Social Media you are indirectly telling Search Engines you are up to date, liked and most importantly, showing customers that they can contact you through more than just the phone number on your website. Social Media is free to set up and can be linked to from your website really easily.

Push your Social Media accounts to your customer base and see the benefits in the Search Engines!



WHAT ARE SEARCH ENGINES LOOKING FOR?

Normally keeping their cards close to their chest, there are a few areas Google have openly announced that they look for in their ranking algorithm:

1. Mobile Friendly:

Not sure if your website's mobile friendly? Use Google's free test:

<https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>

Nowadays, nearly everyone has a smartphone. In fact, according to Google's own data, more Google searches take place on mobile devices than on computers in many countries.

Because of this, Google have released their Mobile-First index to further reward Mobile Websites. This means Google have started looking at mobile & responsive content before desktop.

For years now we've promoted the benefits of having a Mobile Friendly website, so if your website isn't currently Mobile Friendly but you're looking to improve your SEO, you need to make that change.

Speak to our Team today about how to achieve a mobile friendly website on 02380 633 644

2. SSL (secure socket layer):

Securing the data submitted through your website is now more important than ever and Google are backing that.

They're looking to see a more secure web and are therefore rewarding websites with SSL in the rankings, so adding SSL to your website is a quick and great way to help you SEO.

Speak to our Support Team about getting SSL added to your website as soon as possible! We can have it created, implemented and tested within 3 working days.

3. Page Speed:

In July 2018, Google announced a new ranking algorithm designed for mobile search called 'Speed Update'. Although rumoured to only impact a small percentage of queries, pages that deliver the slowest of experiences will be affected by the update.

We'd recommend running a test of your pages using Google's PageSpeed Insights:

<https://developers.google.com/speed/pagespeed/insights/>

The most common elements that slow a page down are un-optimised images, Social Media feeds and embedded videos. To help your page speed, and therefore your SEO, you may wish to replace the images in your Toolkit with optimised versions and remove any social feeds or videos from your site on small screen sizes.

CONCLUSION

So this is the end! We said at the beginning that SEO is a bit of an enigma and this guide by no means is the be all and end all. Hopefully it's provided you with some useful tips.

Remember that optimising your site takes time and won't show instant results. It's definitely a marathon rather than a sprint, but if you're willing to put the effort in, your site will eventually show up!

Finally, to prove that it actually works, here are the rankings of our very own website on Google:

“bespoke website Hampshire” – 2nd out of 1,550,000 results

“Professional web design” – 1st out of 3,910,000,000 results

“Southampton professional website designer” – 1st out of 23,500,000 results

Results correct as of August 2021.



TOOLKIT | web design