Web School: Search Engine Optimization
Today’s Goals

✓ Provide a foundational introduction to SEO, including on-page tactics and off-page tactics

✓ Give tactical guidance for improving your site in CQ

✓ Connect you with advanced training resources
What is SEO?

Search Engine Optimization is a set of techniques to improve the visibility of your website in relevant search engine results.

The goal is to rank as highly as possible for specific search queries so your target audience(s) can find you.

This is known as boosting your search engine rank position (SERP).
Why is SEO important?

60% of traffic into SM environment comes from search engines

Effective SEO ➔ Higher SERP ➔ Higher CTR

2011 Slingshot SEO study looked at CTR for first-page search results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>CTR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anatomy of a Search Results Page

- Organic Search
- Structured / Curated Search
- Paid Results Ads
Anatomy of a Search Results Page

What we are targeting with SEO

Let's take a look…
How does online search work?

Search engines have two main functions

1. Crawl web pages and build an index of links, images, videos and other files
2. Provide search users with a ranked list of the sites they deem most relevant
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We help search engines help their users by signaling to them what we think our site is about.

We do this by emphasizing specific keywords in the structure of our web pages.
## Factors in Google’s Algorithm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors in Google’s Algorithm</th>
<th>How we can influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PageRank, site authority</td>
<td>Domain age, quality backlinks, site health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility to search robots</td>
<td>On-page optimization - site structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevancy for a given search query</td>
<td>On-page optimization - quality content, keyword targeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site popularity, quality backlinks</td>
<td>Off-page optimization – promotion on external sites and social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location setting in user’s browser</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On-page optimization: **Bot-friendly site structure**

- Internal linking throughout site
- Flat site structure
- Fix broken links

On-page optimization: **Quality content**

- Useful content that people find helpful
- No duplication
- Fresh content
On-page optimization: **Keyword targeting**

By incorporating keywords strategically into your site structure, you are signaling their importance to search robots.

**Key considerations**

- Promote 1-2 keywords/page without distorting the user experience.
- Diversify; you want different keywords on different pages.
- Optimize for user intent.
On-page optimization: **Keyword targeting**

- List terms or phrases you think people would use to search for or describe the page you’re optimizing

- Look at similar sites within and out of Stanford to see which keywords they are emphasizing
On-page optimization: **Keyword targeting**

**URL** - Use terms that describe the page, separate terms by hyphens.

**Page Title** - Frontload keywords in text; 70 character maximum

**Headers** - Use only one H1 header per page

**Meta Description** - Unique for every page, limit 150 chars

**Meta Keywords** - Limit 10 words; largely ignored by Google now

**Anchor links and ALT text** on images
On-page optimization: **Call-to-action in search results**

- Determined by page title and meta description; unique for every page, limit 150 chars

- Impt for homepage and all top pages, which appear as SiteLinks under main search results

- Your site content needs to be aligned to what users are expecting to see, or they will bounce
Off-page optimization

- Build inbound links to your content from relevant and reputable sites

- Focus first on Stanford Medicine web environment
  
  - Stanford and School directories
  - CAP profiles
  - Parent sites: Dept & divisions
  - Functionally related sites
Off-page optimization

Publish useful content people want to share and include a Share Page component

- Pay attention to page title, description and page property image, which appear in featured Preview Snippet

Also link to your site from external web properties, such as a blog, YouTube videos, Facebook page or Twitter feed.
Deep-dive resources

1. Google's SEO Starter Guide

2. The Moz Blog

3. Lynda.com – Free to Stanford employees!
   - SEO fundamentals
   - SEO Keyword Strategy
   - Online marketing fundamentals
Questions