

SEO Glossary

Important Terms & Abbreviations

A reference guide to essential SEO and digital marketing terminology

This glossary brings together the key terminology used across Search Engine Optimization and digital marketing — from foundational concepts like keywords and crawling to monetization models, link-building, and the abbreviations you'll encounter in tools like MOZ, Ahrefs, and Majestic. Use it as a quick reference while learning, auditing a site, or planning a campaign.

SEO Fundamentals

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

The process of improving the quality of content by optimizing it according to user intent and getting traffic to increase a website's ranking and visibility on search engines.

On-Page Optimization

Actions you take on your website to improve your organic search engine rankings. This can include improving meta tags or optimizing your website content.

Off-Page Optimization

Everything you can do to improve your organic search rankings that does not involve your actual website. This includes anything you can do to create high-quality backlinks and further drive your exposure.

Organic Search

Unpaid search results — naturally generated traffic produced by users typing queries into a search engine.

Keywords

Terms and phrases users type into a search engine to find their required results. The terms people use to find their targeted content are also called search queries.

Long-Tail Keyword

A specific, targeted search phrase, usually containing three or more words. Long-tail keywords are a great way to attract more qualified leads who are likely to convert.

Keyword Stuffing

Messing up a web page's content or meta information by overloading it with keywords. This is considered a spam tactic by search engines.

Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI)

Google attempts to discover correlations between words. LSI helps compare the relationship between different terms and phrases. Using LSI keywords helps boost website traffic and increase search engine visibility. For example, if the main keyword is 'ways to reduce weight', LSI keywords include 'remedies to reduce weight', 'ways to cut down fat', and 'weight loss hacks'.

SEO Approaches & Strategies

White Hat SEO

Techniques and strategies used to boost a website on search engines by following the policies and rules of the search engine — also called ethical SEO. White hat SEO is totally based on user satisfaction.

Black Hat SEO

A technique used to increase a website's rank in search engines by violating search engine rules and regulations. Black hat techniques are tactics used to manipulate Google — also called unethical SEO techniques.

Competitive Analysis (Competitor Analysis)

Identifying your competitors and analyzing their businesses or sites in depth. This lets you learn from their successes and mistakes, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and find gaps in the market that other businesses or websites aren't covering.

Site Audit

A systematic review of your website's performance against benchmarks such as search ranking, traffic numbers, time users spend on each page, external links viewers use to reach your site, and links visitors click once they arrive.

Content Marketing

The process of creating and distributing content used for digital marketing campaigns.

Monetization & Marketing Models

Affiliate

An affiliate website helps promote the products and services sold on other websites in exchange for a commission.

Affiliate Marketing

Promoting products and earning an affiliate commission on these products by building a site, running paid advertising, or doing social media marketing. Examples include product review sites and PPC ads.

CPA Marketing

Cost Per Action marketing — when you promote something (a product, a membership, a book, etc.) and a visitor takes any specified action, you earn a commission.

AdSense (Google AdSense)

A Google platform that allows websites to earn money by publishing Google network ads on their pages.

Blog

A website that provides content on a regular basis through a content management system such as WordPress or Blogger.

Event Blogging

Building a site or blog around a trending topic or event coming up in the next few months and taking advantage of the traffic spike during that time. Examples include Happy New Year, Eid, and the World Cup.

Links & Link Building

Link Building

The main SEO activity of acquiring links from other websites to your domain — including outbound and internal links.

Backlinks

Links a website receives from another website — also known as inbound or incoming links. Backlinks help build authority and are often called a vote of confidence. Any external domain referring to your website provides you a backlink.

Dofollow Link

A link that instructs search engines to crawl and pass authority to the destination page.

Nofollow Link

A link that instructs search engines not to crawl an outgoing link or pass authority to the destination page.

Deep Link

A link pointing to a page other than the homepage.

Reciprocal Links

Links built when two websites agree to link to each other. They help to increase traffic to your website.

Internal Link

A hyperlink that links from one page to another page within the same domain. It helps users navigate the website easily.

Link Juice

The value passed from one page or site to another page or site through a hyperlink.

Anchor Text

The clickable visible text of a hyperlink that links to another webpage or document. Example: `<a href="http://www.example.com">Anchor Text</a>`.

Disavow

Google offers a Disavow tool to instruct Google to ignore or avoid spammy links pointing to your site.

Crawling, Indexing & Technical SEO

Crawling

Similar to patrolling — Google and other search engines send their spiders or crawlers to websites to scan the pages. Crawling does not necessarily mean that your page has been indexed.

Index

The name of the search engine's database. It contains all the data and information about websites.

Indexing

The process by which a search engine collects data from web pages and stores it in its database. Through this database, the search engine is able to respond to user queries.

Sitemaps

An XML file containing a list of pages of a website along with metadata. A sitemap helps search engines crawl the website easily.

Robots.txt

A robot exclusion protocol used to communicate with web bots or crawlers. You can restrict crawlers from indexing specific pages using 'Disallow: /', which tells the bot not to index a specific page.

Canonical Tag

When you have similar pages and URLs, a duplicate content issue can arise. To handle this, we use the canonical tag: `<link rel="canonical" href="http://www.example.com/" />`.

Alt Tag

Also known as alternative text, the alt tag describes the function of an image on a page. It is an HTML attribute inside an image tag that provides an alternate name for the image when the web page cannot display it.

Cloaking

An SEO tactic in which the content presented to search engine crawlers differs from the content presented to users. It is an unethical way to manipulate Google's algorithm, and as a result, search engines often ban such sites from being indexed.

Breadcrumbs

A navigational text path within a website that shows users where they are on the site.

Redirects & Errors

Redirects

The process of forwarding one URL to a different URL — a way to send search engines and users to a different URL from the one originally requested.

301 Redirect

A permanent redirection from one URL to another.

302 Redirect

A temporary redirection from one URL to another.

404 Error

The error message that appears when a visitor tries to go to a web page that does not exist.

Measurement & User Behavior

Click-Through Rate (CTR)

The percentage of people who saw a search result, ad, or email and then clicked through to your website.

Bounce Rate

An approximate percentage of visits in which a user leaves your website from the landing page without scrolling further or visiting other pages.

Dwell Time

The actual time duration a person spends on a website before returning to the search engine results pages (SERPs).

Google Analytics

An analytics service provided by Google that helps you track, analyze, and measure all types of revenues and costs of your website, advertising campaigns, videos, social channels, and more.

Google Search Console (Webmaster Tools)

A free tool Google offers to webmasters. It includes data on how a site is performing in search. Unlike Analytics, Search Console does not measure traffic — it measures a site's visibility on search pages and its indexability by Google's crawler bots.

Common SEO Abbreviations

A quick reference to the metrics, tools, and terms you'll see most often.

Abbreviation	Full Form	Description
DA	Domain Authority	Search engine domain ranking score developed by MOZ.
PA	Page Authority	MOZ metric that predicts the ranking ability of a specific page.
TF	Trust Flow	Score from Majestic showing how many influential links connect to a site.
CF	Citation Flow	Score from Majestic showing the amount of link juice a site has.
DR	Domain Rating	AHREFs score measuring the quantity and quality of backlinks.
UR	URL Rating	AHREFs score that rates the backlink profile of a specific URL.
KD	Keyword Difficulty	Score that helps identify ranking difficulty for a keyword.
KC	Keyword Competition	Keyword competition score relative to competitors (LTP).

Abbreviation	Full Form	Description
CPC	Cost Per Click	The amount paid per click in a paid advertising campaign.
SEM	Search Engine Marketing	Marketing on search engines, typically through paid ads.
SMM	Social Media Marketing	Marketing carried out on social media platforms.
CTA	Call to Action	A prompt encouraging a user to take a specific action.
EMD	Exact Match Domain	A domain name that exactly matches a target keyword.
OBL	Outbound Links	Links pointing from your website to external sites.
PBN	Private Blog Network	A network of websites used to build links to a money site.
RD	Referring Domains	The number of unique domains linking to a website.
SERP	Search Engine Result Pages	The pages displayed by search engines in response to a query.
TLD	Top Level Domain	The last segment of a domain name (e.g., .com, .org, .net).
CTR	Click Through Ratio	Percentage of users who click on a link out of total impressions.
CMS	Content Management System	Software used to build and manage website content.

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