



## Search Engine Optimisation

### □ Getting People to Visit Your Website

The most important thing with any website is getting people to visit it. Without visitors a well designed website with great content means nothing.

The best way to get people to visit your website is through a search engine, like Google. When you think about it, this is how you find most of the websites you visit yourself.

Getting your website to perform well in search engines is called search engine optimisation or (SEO) for short. Optimising your site is an ongoing process that needs constant attention.

### □ Search Engines

Unless you have a huge advertising budget your websites success will depend on how many people find it through the search engines.

Google is currently the biggest search engine out there, with around 50% of all searches going through it. Yahoo comes next with about 25% followed by MSN with 10%, AOL 6% and Ask 3%.

### □ What is search engine optimisation?

Getting your website into the search engines is important, but with so many web pages currently indexed by Google, how can you ensure that yours will perform well?

Search engine optimisation or (SEO) for short, is the art of making your website perform as well as possible in Google and other search engines.

There are many ways and techniques to help your web pages appear higher up in the search engines. These can be split into two type's on-site and off-site optimisation.

**On-site optimisation** is anything that involves changing the website for example changing the titles on pages or creating and adding new pages to your website.

**Off-site optimisation** is doing things that don't change your actual website like getting other websites to link to your website.

If you want your website to do well in the search engines you need to apply both on-site and off-site techniques.

## □ How Google Thinks

When you use Google to do a search for something, you are given a list of websites that contain the keywords you were looking for.

For example if you searched for "Dublin Restaurants" you would be given a list of websites that contain the keywords "Dublin" and "Restaurants".

When you search Google with a keyword there are a lot of web pages out there which match the search, so which does Google show first? Google ranks web pages based on a number of factors.

### Using Keywords in your pages

Google first looks at where the keywords appear in a page and how often they appear. For example a page that uses the words "Dublin" and "Restaurant" in the first few paragraphs, is much more likely to be about restaurants in Dublin, than a web page where the words appear once.

### Headings

Google gives more weight to text that appears in the title of each page and also in the headings used on the page. For example a web page that had "Italian Restaurant in Dublin" is highly likely to be about an Italian restaurant in Dublin. The same goes for the headings you use throughout a web page, for example "Dublin's best Italian Restaurant", "Bringing Italian food to Dublin". This lets Google know what your page is about; you need to use your keywords in titles and headings on pages.

### Links Popularity

An important factor that Google uses to determine how high a web page appears in a search is other web pages that link to it. Google counts each web page that links to your web page as a vote for that page. The idea is that if lots of people link to your site, they probably think it's a good one!

### Link Text

As well as the number of web pages that link to yours Google also looks at the words used in the link text. If other sites link to yours with the words "Italian Restaurant Dublin" it will improve your ranking for those keywords. It is less likely to do well for [www.italianfood.ie](http://www.italianfood.ie)

This is another reason why you should never use "click here" for link text. Google will assume the page it links to is about something called "click here", rather than an Italian restaurant in Dublin.

## □ Updating your site regularly

Updating your site regularly will make you search engine friendly. As mentioned, SEO isn't a one-off thing – you can't write really good copy with lots of keywords and then leave it on your site for 2 years. You need to constantly update and improve it by adding in new articles, newsletters, updating statistics and product descriptions, rewriting and tweaking copy and fixing broken links. Changes like this will draw search engine spiders back to your site, which will help you climb the ranks. Constantly updating also ensures you are still using the right keywords to reach your market and that your content is fresh and interesting for the humans that use your site!

## □ Putting it into practice

Put some of these ideas into action and you might just see your site start to climb the search engine rankings. This article is not designed to be a complete SEO guide, but it should educate you about SEO and how important it is to get it right. If you want some expert guidance on optimising your site contact us

**Website:** [www.mulvanywebdesign.ie](http://www.mulvanywebdesign.ie) **Email:** [info@mulvanywebdesign.ie](mailto:info@mulvanywebdesign.ie) **Phone:** 086-390-9007