

Online Literacy and SEO

How Digital Writing Differs from Print and What Students Can Do to Get Started

Susana Marcelo, M.A.

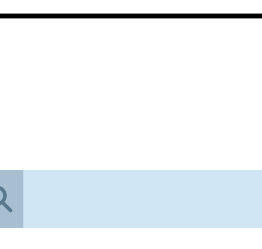


Key contents

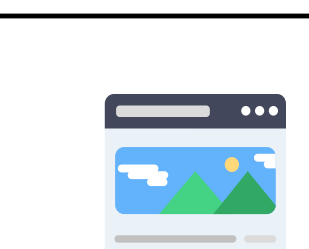
- What Is SEO?
- How Does SEO Work?
- What Not To Do
- Print vs. Digital Content
- Stats On Users
- Getting Started + Sample Assignments

What is SEO?

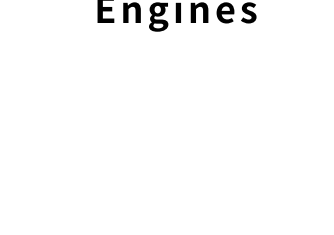
Search Engine Optimization is a set of guidelines designed to sort and rank web search results.



Business



Potential Customers

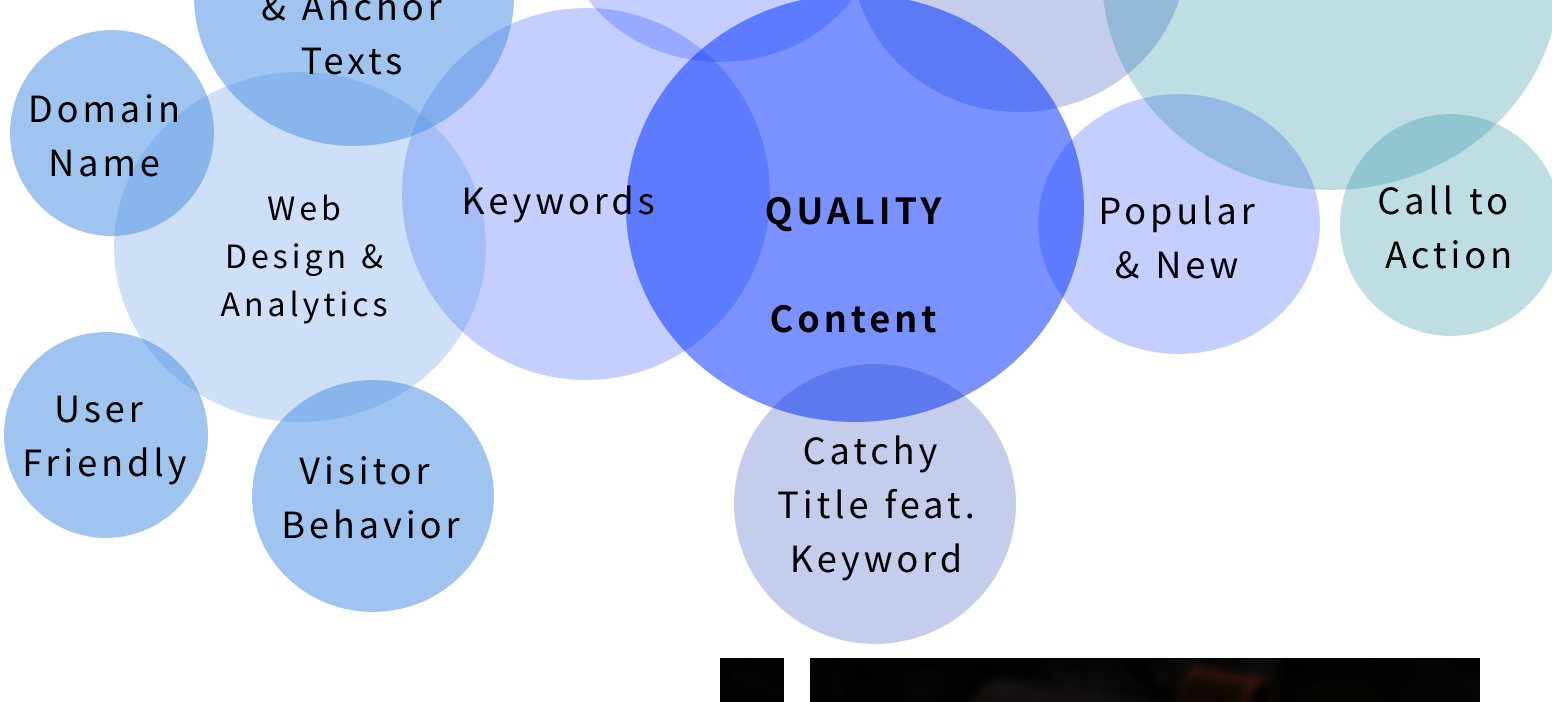


Search Engines



Organic & Sponsored Results

How Does SEO Work?



What Not To Do

- Cram keywords or spam
- Post content irregularly
- Sloppy/bad web aesthetic
- Click bait!
- Long text without subheadings, bullet points, and hyperlinks



Print vs. Digital

People read online differently than on paper.

This influences how content is designed on the web.

Print

- Longform content
- Images not always essential
- Bullet points/subheadings are less common
- No hyperlinks

Digital

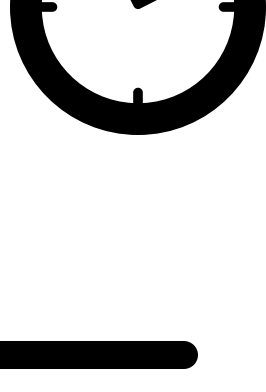
- Shorter content (300-1500 words)
- Images are essential
- Buzzfeed style reigns
- Hyperlinks are necessary for usability and rankings
- Image alt-tags

Stats

We read differently online. Specifically, in an F-pattern.



Time Spent on a Website



7 - 15

seconds

minutes

Yes, SEO guidelines are flexible and frequently change

- Much like MLA guidelines, though online content typically uses AP or Chicago Style
- Bullet points and subheadings help keep the reader's attention
- These guidelines are based on usability and design principles. Instructors using Canvas must also use these practices, such as alt-tag descriptions and hyperlinks instead of pasting long URLs.

So How Can Students Get Started?

College students are often expected to understand, if not create, online content in their fields.



Audience Awareness is Key

Any content cannot thrive without catering to its audience.



Design Your Texts Based on the Genre

Making a website is not enough. Posting your essay online without SEO-friendly modifications is not rhetorically effective.



Have Clear Goals: What Do You Want to Get Out of This?

Sure, you're not aiming to become #instafamous. But online literacy is a skill and understanding the art of writing online will help you cater your writing to the rhetorical situation.

Sample Assignments

- Blogging on your own personal website
- Designing a website for a business with articles (content marketing strategy)

Goals

Helps you understand what you're passionate about and in turn experiment with building your personal brand.

The main rhetorical elements in digital writing are the same in business writing--concise, segmented, and properly titled.

Students practice designing professional content.

Use your website as an online portfolio for future internship + job opportunities.

Detailed Look

Title Using a Hook + Keyword

Introduction: Establishes context and theme. Sometimes, it provides a thesis/claim.

Subtitle #1 That Details or Hints to the Point

Body paragraph(s) for point #1 using first and secondary keywords.

Subtitle #2 That Details or Hints to the Point

Body paragraph(s) for point #2. Avoid over-using keywords.

Subtitle #3 That Details or Hints to the Point

Body paragraph(s) for point #3.

Conclusion wraps up theme and has a call to action, such as "read more here."

*The body also should include an image, gif, or videos with captions. Anchor texts need to work and supplement the content. Reserve bullet points for lists.



CONTACT

2018

Website Samples

- ✉ susana.marcelo@csun.edu
- in https://www.linkedin.com/in/susanamarcelo/
- 🐦 twitter.com/snamarcelo
- 📁 Teaching Philosophy + LAVC Teaching Website
- 📁 CSUN Teaching Website
- 📁 La Ceiba: The Undergraduate Journal of Central American Studies