The pragmatic guide to SEO with WordPress
by Franz Enzenhofer
Franz Enzenhofer

• 1984 Developer (C64)

• 1998 Websites (Code, Project Manager, Editor, Sales, Business Development, …)

• 2004 1st SEO Project (Austria Press Agency)

• 2006 SEO

• 2011 www.fullstackoptimization.com

“Our goal is to make all SEO companies - including our own - redundant.”
I ❤️ WordPress
SEO - Search Engine Optimization: The business of getting found online
When these key areas work together, it should look something like this:

The image on the left is the Perfect-World Scenario. Everybody can excel in their own right while working together - fast, direct and unbureaucratically - on critical topics.

However, things can get tricky. Why does it get tricky? Because the thing is, for SEO these areas overlap. For small companies and startups the team structure usually looks like this:
SEO Point Of View

The three SEO key areas of marketing, development and content I have outlined are the reasons that people can make so many different claims about SEO. Quite often these things seem mutually exclusive.

From a content point of view: Google is the biggest content marketplace in the world. From a marketing point of view: search is just another way to promote your company, products, and offerings to an audience. And from a technical point of view: the website must fulfill some technical requirements to get crawled, indexed and displayed by Google. All of these points are true. None of these viewpoints are more important or valid than the other, nor are they optional.
In this case, the team worked in one room, and everyone was responsible for these areas. At no time was anyone outside of the team. If there was a cool feature idea, it was implemented immediately, and everyone got to work. They had a startup scenario and were always optimized. They had to setup the setup - never back down. Any of these areas could make some decisions.
Then, well, there are the big companies and the scenario looks like this:

The marketing and development teams are not only in separate buildings; they are not allowed - by some internal business process - to talk to each other directly. And even if they did, they are usually chasing very different KPIs. Maybe the marketing and development teams have been in a Cold War-like relationship for years. Perhaps the marketing and content teams believe they work better separately. Companies such as these cannot be efficiently search engine optimized. You might achieve some quick wins where you suddenly perform with much better traffic. Nevertheless, you will still underperform compared to what you could achieve.
Content creation, technical development (for example, installing a new plugin) and marketing (such as promoting new posts via social media) are all done by the blogger. A blog - if the right technical decisions are made - can be highly search engine optimized. On this note, if you are looking to make a blog search engine optimized, the right technical decisions for you are:
- WordPress
- on your own domain
- on a fast server
- with YOAST SEO Plugin
SEO Setup

- Dev
- Content Marketing
SEO Setup

Dev

Content Marketing
If you keep some simple stuff in mind, **WordPress** is 80% onpage/onsite search engine optimized and you can focus on content and marketing, as you should!
WordPress is a CMS!
Yoast SEO Plugin

If in doubt, trust Yoast!
Example
https://www.example.com/
Bitte legen Sie eine Meta-Beschreibung fest, indem Sie den Code-Schnipsel bearbeiten.

- Code-Schnipsel bearbeiten

SEO-Titel
%%title%% %page%% %sep%% %sitename%%

Titelform

Meta-Beschreibung
%%excerpt%%

Ausschnitt-Editor schließen

Fokus-Keyword

Dieser Beitrag ist Cornerstone Content
You Need To Care About Speed

Google doesn't like to send slow pages traffic, as users will use Google less!
W3TotalCache
**W3TotalCache - Base Settings**

**SHOULD**

- enable Page Cache
- enable Minify
W3TotalCache - Base Settings

**SHOULD**

- enable Browser Cache
- and check “Verify rewrite rules”
W3TotalCache - Page Cache

General

- Cache posts page
  For many blogs this is your most visited page, it is recommended that you cache it.

- Don't cache front page
  By default the front page is cached when using static front page in reading settings.

- Cache feeds: site, categories, tags, comments
  Even if using a feed proxy service (like feedburner), enabling this option is still recommended.

- Cache SSL (https) requests
  Cache SSL requests (uniquely) for improved performance.

- Cache URLs with query string variables
  Search result (and similar) pages will be cached if enabled.

- Cache 404 (not found) pages
  Reduce server load by caching 404 pages. If the disk enhanced method of disk caching is used, 404 pages will be returned with a 200 response code. Use at your own risk.

- Don't cache pages for logged in users
  Unauthenticated users may view a cached version of the last authenticated user’s view of a given page. Disabling this option is not recommended.
W3TotalCache - Cache Warming

Cache Preload

- Automatically prime the page cache
  - Update interval: 900 seconds
    - The number of seconds to wait before creating another set of cached pages.
  - Pages per interval: 10
    - Limit the number of pages to create per batch. Fewer pages may be better for under-powered servers.
  - Sitemap URL: https://example.com/sitemap_index.xml
    - A compliant sitemap can be used to specify the pages to maintain in the primed cache. Pages will be cached according to the priorities specified in the XML file.
- Preload the post cache upon publish events

Save all settings  Save Settings & Purge Caches
W3TotalCache - Browser Cache

General

Specify global browser cache policy.

- Set Last-Modified header
  Set the Last-Modified header to enable 304 Not Modified response.

- Set expires header
  Set the expires header to encourage browser caching of files.

- Set cache control header
  Set pragma and cache-control headers to encourage browser caching of files.

- Set entity tag (ETag)
  Set the ETag header to encourage browser caching of files.

- Set W3 Total Cache header
  Set this header to assist in identifying optimised files.

- Enable HTTP (gzip) compression
  Reduce the download time for text-based files.
Minify and bundle CSS

SHOULD

1. enable & check additional settings
2. choose your theme
3. click add “Add a style sheet”
4. paste URLs of all CSS files enqueued by the theme (in correct order)
5. choose “All Templates” if the generated bundle should be loaded on all pages
   5.1. choose another template if parts of the CSS should only be loaded on specific templates
Minify and bundle JS

**SCOPE**: Frontend / All page types — **PRIO**: CRITICAL

**SHOULD**

1. enable

2. for embed location “before </body>” method choose “Non-blocking using defer”

3. paste URLs of all enqueued scripts in correct order (ie: as they appear top to bottom in the HTML source)

4. choose “All Templates” if the generated bundle should be loaded on all pages
   - 4.1 choose another template for scripts that should only be loaded on specific page types

5. select “Embed before </body>”
A Fast and Slim Theme
Stop choosing Themes based on Design or Functionality

- Speed First

- Download Theme (do not just test the demo version)

- Install

- Make sure you have the right W3TotalCache setting

- Test Detail-Pages (Post-Pages) and List-Pages (Categories) Google Page Speed Insights

- If not in the Green Area, do not use it!
Do not use any other plugins!

But as you will do anyway, test with **Page Speed Insights** after every install! Clear W3TotalCache Page Cache First!
URL Rules

SEOs love to talk about URLs. Why? URLs are at the intersection of development, marketing, and content.
URLs

**URL Rules**

1) URLs must be unique.
2) URLs must be permanent.
3) URLs must be manageable.
4) URLs must be scalable.
5) URLs must be short.
6) URLs should include a short variation of the targeted page.

The URL rules listed above are by culminated priority. That means rule number one is more important than rules two to six put together; rule number two is more important than rules three to six put together and so on. Rules number five and six are always a tradeoff, with six being the least important rule. Search engine optimized URLs must fulfill all URL rules to be truly optimized. Let’s discuss each rule in more detail.
URLs

- https://www.example.com/a/%whatever-you-write-in-yoast%
- https://www.example.com/c/%category%
- https://www.example.com/t/%tag%
5

Internal Linking

Onsite Internal interlinking
1. every targeted page has at least one link from another targeted page
2. every targeted page must be reachable through a click-path starting from the start page
3. more important targeted pages have more links than less important targeted pages
4. most important targeted pages have a static link from the startpage
5. every targeted page must have the chance to get at least once a link from the startpage
6. we only link systematically to the canonical URL
7. we do not link systematically to dead weight
8. hidden (i.e.: after user interaction, drop-downs) links do not count as votes
5 Serendipity Links on each & every Page

• not in footer
SEO Setup

Dev

Content Marketing

Brand > Links
4 SEO Tests to do 80% of technical onpage/onsite SEO right!

- **Page Speed Insights**: Everything green + sensemaking screenshots for desktop and mobile!
- **Google Mobile Friendly Test**: Green + sensemaking screenshot!
- **“JS turned off” Test:**
  - Above fold and main content must be visible on the site with JS turned off!
  - Whole site must be navigate-able with JS turned off!
- **Google Search Console -> Fetch as Googlebot**: Must work! Mobile + desktop! Googlebot and browser must show the same (above fold, main content) visible result! Image below fold might get lazy loaded (non visible).