



**Web Site Search Engine Optimization Series:
“Web Page Keywords – Do’s and Don’ts”**

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Web Page Keywords – Do's and Don'ts¹

Quite simply, our Web sites should produce returns just like we expect from our other marketing programs. Surely, you've heard the terms "optimized" and "keywords" thrown about. Perhaps you suspect that your web page keywords are important but you are not quite sure why.

These days, there are a number of hotly debated issues related to Web page keywords and the search engine optimization techniques that rely upon them. In this article, I will identify these debates in the course of discussing the proper selection and use of a Web page keyword list.

Meta Keywords Tag

First, let's be clear about the importance of your web page "Meta keywords". **So the question is:** Is the keywords Meta tag important? **Answer:** *It's not clear.* Meta tags are HTML code snippets inserted into the "head" area of your web pages that are, for the most part, not viewed by visitors to your web site. The "Meta keywords" tag contains phrases and synonyms designed to be a brief and concise list of the most important themes of your page.

But, many experts suggest that the major search engine crawlers ignore the Meta keywords tag (e.g., see "How To Use HTML Meta Tags", Danny Sullivan, Search Engine Watch, 5 Dec. 2002). Heck, some experts claim all Meta tags are useless. It turns out that over the years spammers put keywords into the Meta tag that had nothing to do with the content or theme of the site. It is believed that Web crawlers ignore the keywords Meta tag because of past deceptive practices.

Should you care about the Meta keywords tag? I believe you should. Your search engine optimization strategy should be as comprehensive as possible. You should use every legitimate technique available to you, including utilization of the standard Meta tags.

Regardless of where you stand on the keywords Meta tag issue, it is clear that the careful creation of a keyword list is an important first step towards optimization of your Web page. We now turn to the process of selecting your keywords.

¹ Please keep in mind that this content is provided for educational purposes in order to introduce you to important search engine optimization concepts. There are many factors that influence search engine page rank - we cannot promise that the techniques described in this article work in all cases. Thank you! –Bill Schwartz, EBIZ Machine

Keyword Selection

How should you select your keywords? Your goal is to find keyword phrases that are related to your business and that your potential customers actually use in Google, Yahoo! or other Internet search engines. You know your business best – should you just choose the key phrases that best describe your products and services? **WRONG!**

Let's pretend that you sell Global Positioning Systems and that you have adopted "global positioning systems" as a keyphrase. But in December of 2006 YAHOO recorded 655,000 searches on "GPS" and only 7800 searches on "Global Positioning System". Another one - you sell Pneumatic Nail Drivers but in December of 2006 there were about 9700 YAHOO searches on "nail gun". Few searches on Pneumatic Nail Driver occurred – perhaps just a few folks can even spell pneumatic?

See where I am heading with this? You may be too close to your business to objectively determine how your prospects will look for your products and services. You may not be the right person to develop your keywords unless you have kept up with the latest trends in search engine optimization. At a minimum, spend time analyzing the keywords and techniques your competitors and peers use to achieve search engine success.

In addition, you will want to factor keyword popularity into your analysis. Here are a few keyword selection tools you may wish to utilize:

- Overture Keyword Selector Tool - <http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/>
- The Google Suggest keyword selection tool - <http://www.google.com/webhp?complete=1&hl=en>
- The Google Adwords Keyword Tool - <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

You can use these tools to suggest alternative phrases and synonyms that you may not have considered. In addition, the Overture Tool in particular provides invaluable quantitative information about the actual popularity of these keyphrase Internet searches.

Note, however, that keyword popularity alone is not enough! Scrub your list of phrases carefully to ensure each phrase is BOTH popular and relevant to your business. Your list should contain phrases that generate a reasonable volume of *qualified* leads. You want visitors you can convert to customers not just visitors.

You provide a wide range of products and services. So should you add them all to your list, right? **Wrong!** Experts disagree on the ideal number of keywords you should define. However, there is no reason to exceed 20 or 25 keyphrases. And remember - order does matter. Put your most important phrases first.

Create a comma-separated list of keywords that you can copy and paste into the keyword Meta tag of your HTML Web page. Here's an example of a keywords tag designed for a "Search Engine Optimization Tips" page:

```
<HEAD>
<meta name="keywords" content="seo tips,search engine optimization tip,seo google
tip,denver seo,denver search engine optimization,search engine optimization denver,seo
company,search engine optimization company,internet marketing strategy">
</HEAD>
```

As you can see, the keywords Meta tag appears in the <HEAD> section of your Web page. The Meta tags, however, are not visible on the page. If you view <http://www.ebizmachine.com/seotips.htm> you will not observe the keywords Meta tag.

Keyword Placement

Let's assume you have carefully created a keyword list and you have updated the keywords Meta tag of your Web page. You're done, right?

Not even close! There are a number of ways in which you will utilize your most important keyphrases. Unfortunately, this brief article cannot speak to each of these techniques. In fact, experts disagree about the relative importance of the many locations where you might embed your keywords. I will discuss a few techniques that are almost universally considered important.

Here are several potential locations where your primary keywords can appear:

- Header Tag Content (i.e H1, H2)
- Title Tag in Anchor Tags
- Body Text
- URL/Filenames
- Meta Keyword Tags (discussed above)

First, the title tag is believed to be very important. Like the keywords tag, it is an HTML code snippet but in this case, the title tag content actually appears in the top bar of your Web browser. Make sure to embed your primary keyphrase in the title tag.

Here's an example of the HTML title tag:

```
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Search Engine Optimization - EBIZ Machine SEO Tips</TITLE>
</HEAD>
```

As you can see, it also appears in the <HEAD> section of your Web page even though it is not a “Meta” tag.

It is also believed that keyphrases embedded in HTML header tags (like H1, H2, H3, etc) are given more weight by some search engines. Here’s an example of the Heading1 (<H1>) tag:

```
<H1 align="center">Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Tips and Tricks</H1>
```

If it’s not too late, create domain names, file names and URLs that make use of your important keywords. Here’s an example that focuses on the keyphrase “Search Engine Optimization”:

1. First create and upload a web page named Search-Engine-Optimization-Tips.html
2. Create a link that is something like [Review key search engine optimization techniques designed to improve your page rank](http://www.ebizmachine.com/Search-Engine-Optimization-Tips.html) that links to <http://www.ebizmachine.com/Search-Engine-Optimization-Tips.html>

Note: it’s OK to separate the keywords in your file name by hyphens in order to help search engines distinguish the keywords. You can see that the link text discussed above also uses our keywords. Don’t just display “click [here](#) for more information” – you’re missing an opportunity to promote your important keyphrases.

Finally, your keywords should appear in the body or content areas of your Web page. However, you should not overdo it! In the online “SEO Chat” article “The Ten Commandments of Keyword Selection” (<http://www.seochat.com/c/a/Choosing-Keywords-Help/The-Ten-Commandments-of-Keyword-Selection/>), the author speculated that the optimal keyword frequency range is between 4% to 9%. This suggests that you should stay below the 9% frequency limit in order to avoid penalties from the major search engines for “keyword stuffing”.

Conclusion

Good search engine optimization requires a great deal of experimentation – what works for one Web site might not work for your site. The techniques your SEO company will recommend and implement will go well beyond those discussed in this article.

In this document, we summarize several proven techniques for using your carefully developed keyword list and dispelled a few myths along the way:

1. **Do** create a short keyword list of phrases that are popular and relevant to your business.
2. **Don't** assume you know what Internet users type into the search engines – you might be too close to the business.
3. **Do** consider keyword search popularity but **Don't** forget about the quality of the leads a search is likely to generate.
4. **Do** use your primary keyphrase in the Web page title tag, heading tags, domain name, Web page file name and page links.
5. **Don't** overdo it – pay attention to keyword density.

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We can help you achieve the full potential of the Internet. Call today!

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