

Search Engine Optimization

Tips for improving your search engine rankings

So you've got a beautiful website with lots of great information. The problem is, your page ranks poorly in the search engines, making it difficult for prospects to find you. It's time to look at your website and see how you can improve your rankings. Here are a few simple tips to raise your visibility in the search engines.

1. Identify Keywords

- **What words would people use to search for you? Some ideas to get you started:**
 - The name of the institution
 - The name of your office, program, department, or organization
 - A general term for what you offer
 - Your location (Mankato, Twin Cities, one of our partner institutions)
 - Your accreditation
 - **Brainstorm words you think people should use to find you in a search, and write them down.**
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2. Use Keywords Throughout your Site

- **Use keywords in headings.**
 - Tell the search engines which text are headings by assigning a heading style in the page editor (from the tool bar in page edit, choose "Format" and choose a heading style). The search engines will give more value to words used in headings.
- **Use keywords in links.**
 - This is called "link building". By using descriptive link text, your pages will rank higher in the search engines.
 - Example: Instead of writing "To contact us, [click here](#)", consider simply writing "[Contact Us](#)".
- **Use keywords in the left navigation.**
 - You can update the left navigation terms in the site editor.
- **Use keywords in the window title.**
 - You can update the window title name in the site editor.
- **Use keywords in the meta data.**

- In the site editor, type your keywords into the "keywords" field. Separate each keyword with a comma.
 - Write a description of your website that uses keywords, and enter this into the "description" field in the site editor. The description should be a comprehensive sentence.
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3. Use Descriptive Image Names

- **Search engines catalog images.**
 - An image named "memorial-library-minnesota-state-mankato.jpg" will help your search engine rankings. An image named "IMG_0874.jpg" will not. Make sure your image names describe the image.
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4. Use Alternative Text on Images

- **This not only helps your website's accessibility, but it also helps your SEO.**
 - When you add an image using the page editor, be sure to add descriptive text in the "Alternative Text" field. This text will display if images are disabled, will be readable with screen readers, and will improve your SEO.
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5. Use Social Media

- **Search engines reward social media users.**
 - If you have any social media pages, be sure to link to them from your website.
 - Also be sure to post links to your website from social media as often as possible.