

Introduction to natural referencing (SEO)

Natural referencing includes all techniques aimed at improving the positioning of a page, site or web application in the search results page.

Google is a fully automated search engine that relies on software called “web crawlers” to regularly explore the web and search sites to be included in its index¹. It uses an algorithm with more than 200 criteria to determine the order of results in search engines for searches of specific key words. Optimization for search engines is a complex task requiring continuous monitoring, judicious analysis of results and statistics; and a customized action plan based on your sector and competition.



Google follows three basic steps to generate results from web pages¹ :

- **Crawling** : The first step is finding out what pages exist on the web. There isn't a central registry of all web pages, so Google must constantly search for new pages and add them to its list of known pages. Some pages are known because Google has already visited them before. Other pages are discovered when Google follows a link from a known page to a new page.
- **Indexing** : After a page is discovered, Google tries to understand what the page is about. This process is called *indexing*. Google analyzes the content of the page, catalogs images and video files embedded on the page, and otherwise tries to understand the page. This information is stored in the *Google index*, a huge database stored in many, many (many!) computers.
- **Serving (and ranking)** : When a user types a query, Google tries to find the most relevant answer from its index based on many factors.

Your home page is the most important page on your site, as far as **Google** is concerned.¹

Google doesn't accept payment to crawl a site more frequently, or rank it higher. If anyone tells you otherwise, they're wrong.

¹<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/basics/how-search-works?>

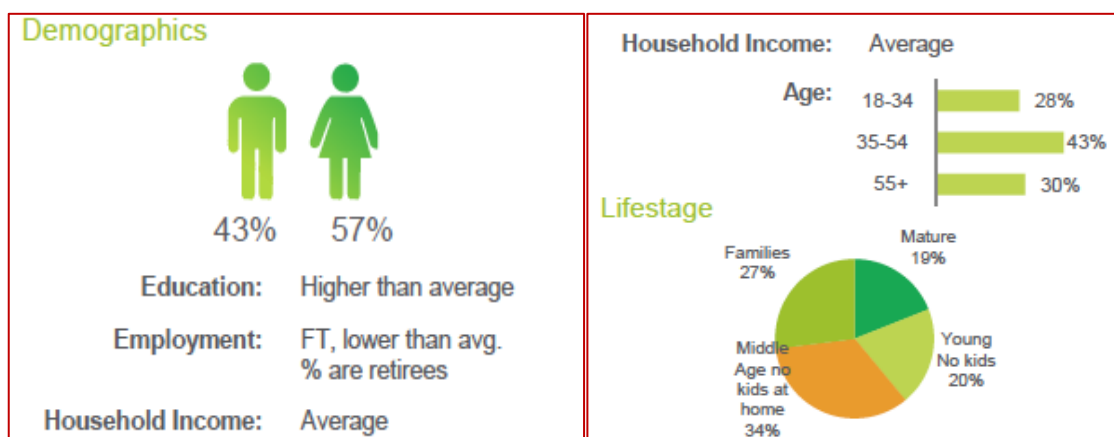
Content is King

Web content provides information to convince your clientele to purchase your product or service. Prior to writing your content, you should :

Know your target and their objectives

Before getting into search engines, algorithms and key words, let's concentrate on what is central to the discussion – your reader or target audience. Who are you writing for? That's the first step in a successful web message. Your web content must be written in a way suited to the type of audience you wish to attract. It is therefore important that the content be written, bearing in mind the typical profile of persons you want to reach. In other words, define your target audience.

Your target audience is the virtual representation of your ideal client. This representation is based on criteria such as the industry your client is active in, their demographic characteristics (age, family situation), their income or their online behaviour.



You can identify the profile of your target audience using the tool box on the [Explorer Quotient](#) toolbox, which provides tourism companies with valuable information on the motivations and travel habits of various groups.

The QE™ enables you to:

Determine your best customers using EQ	Fine-tune your products using EQ	Package experiences using EQ	Describe your experience using EQ	Assess and choose imagery using EQ	Promote and sell y using EQ
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Correct information influences visitor behaviour

- Who are you writing for?
- What are the characteristics of your target audience? Sex, age, profession, living habits, education level, search behaviour, purchasing and search behaviour, key words, language, etc.
- What are their needs and expectations?
- What are your objectives?
- What message do you want to convey?
- What values do you want to showcase?

Aspects of content to optimize in order to improve internal referencing

Target specific key words to insert in your project description

Think of the words that visitors could search for to find the experience of the sought destination. Not all Internet users look for the same key words in their search requests. You thus have to anticipate these different search behaviours and take them into account when writing your content (using a good mix of expressions) to generate positive results.

Generic key words (short tail):

A **single word** in isolation that represents the option with the greatest competition rate. Internet users use generalist key words at the start of their searches. They represent the most difficult option when it comes to converting clients.

Example : travel

Medium tail key words:

These key words consist of 2-3 words that have less competition than generic key words because they are far more specific. They increase the SEO factors and also help with the creation of content.

Example : Travel in Canada

Long tail:

The long tail keywords are the most specific option on the list and generally take the form of a short question or sentence. They are very specific search expressions that are seldom sought and express rather clearly the intent of the Internet user's search.

Example : Travelling as a family to Alberta, Canada

Long tails make up an enormous share of online searches.

How to target your key words (*see the Toolbox*):

Use the suggested key word tools, e.g., the key word generators, which provide an indication as to the number of times the key words were inputted. They also suggest related expressions.

Take advantage of [Google Trends](#) to find out the popularity of a term over a given period. It provides the search trends of Internet users and will enable you to determine whether the theme you are considering using has potential.

Toolbox

[Google Keyword Planner](#)

[Keyword Tool](#)

[Ubersuggest](#)

[Dictionary.com](#)

In order to be at the top of Google search results, it is important that the correct ratio of key words be NATURALLY incorporated into your content. Overuse of the same key word could penalize you and cause you to tumble 100 rankings in the list of Google results.

A ratio of 1% of words is recommended, in other words, 10 key words for a text of 1000 words.

Aspects of content to optimize to improve internal referencing

Writing of an optimized article

Write down a few introductory lines to specify what you will be talking about. This will save your readers time and make them more inclined to continue reading. It is important that your targeted **key word** be inserted into this introductory paragraph.

When the time comes to add content to your page, **length** and **quality** become quite important. It is advisable to go with publications of **at least 1000 words** to enable Google to see whether your content is serious, sought and top quality. The more you have, the more it will benefit your referencing.

If you offer visitors to your site **detailed, explanatory and informative content**, they will perceive you as a **specialist** in the field and will thus be more likely to return to your website more frequently. The purpose is to use these publications to eventually **turn visitors into potential customers**.

When you write your texts, we advise you, for starters, not to spend too much time on SEO optimization. That said, if your article revolves around a theme, idea or a specific term, you can already **use related synonyms or expressions**.

Synonyms and related expressions (see the *Toolbox*)

Using **variations** of your **key words** is a plus for referencing. First of all, this limits overuse of the same key words, and secondly, your content will show up in Google results for these “secondary” expressions.

Google is capable of spotting semantics (meanings of words) and will have a better understanding of the contents of your page. It spots **key words** in a group. If your article mentions the word “kayak” twenty times and makes no reference to sea, river or pleasure, it will not seem natural to Google, which knows that key words are webs of related words.

So if **Google understands the meaning of your text**, you will have a **really good chance of positioning yourself**.

Toolbox

Synonym.com

[La galerie Coggle](#)

[Outranking](#)



Repeating a key word in every sentence does not improve the meaning of your content. Quite the opposite is true.

Aspects of content to optimize to improve internal referencing

User experience:

It is essential that your visitors find your content very readable, which makes it easier to understand and retains their attention. If the content is too hard to read, the user will leave your site. If your page is structured and the information is easy to read, your chances of convincing the user increase.

It is therefore very important that your title, **sub-titles** and **paragraphs** are **logically structured**, which will also **optimize your referencing**, and that your text is structured based on **natural referencing rules**.

Page title – Title tag

The title tag is **the most important point for a page to achieve web optimization** as it relates to SEO referencing. The first thing a user sees on an Internet page is the title. It is a key element in terms of referencing and the visibility of your page as it relates to the key word in question. Create a powerful title that speaks to your target audiences!!!

The presence of a **targeted key word** in the first words of your title increases your chances of getting a better ranking with Google. It can also be inserted in the final words of the title, but this won't be as effective as it would be in the first words.

H1, H2, H3 header tags, etc.

In addition to effectively structuring your content and making the text easier to read for users, header tags, particularly H1, H2, H3, etc. titles, serve as crawlers that go through your site to find what the main topic is and the secondary themes mentioned on each page.

The H1 header defines the major theme of your content. The idea is to get it to work like the TITLE tag to position yourself on your strategic key words. This strategic key word of your page must be placed in this H1, preferably at the beginning. This first-level title must be **short and concise**.

H1, H2 and H3 Header Tags for SEO

Why are H1, H2 and H3 Header Tags Important for SEO?

How to Use the H1, H2 and H3 Tags

H1 (Bold Red Text)

This title tag explains what your webpage or blog post is about.

H2 (Bold Black Text)

The second-level heading gives more details about the topic.

H3 (Thin Red Text)

The third-level heading details information about the subtopic.

A few pointers on how to write header tags:

1. Use an H1 tag as the main title of your page
2. Include the key words naturally: don't force them or excessively optimize them (The key word or subject chosen must not appear in each title)
3. Use H2-H6 tags to structure your content.
4. Write for users, but do **incorporate your key words**.

Aspects of content to optimize to improve internal referencing

Meta tags

Meta tags are used to place meta data in a web page. **Google** uses them as excerpts for your pages. They provide the browser with information on the page in question. **Meta tags** are normally invisible in the Internet user's browser. They provide Internet users with **a hint of your web page** before they even go to your site.

Ad · caen-keepexploring.canada.travel/canada/travel ▾

Travel Around Canada Safely - Canada Interprovincial Travel

Meta title

Find Out Where (And How) To Safely Experience The Incredible Places And People Of **Canada**.
Get Tips To Discover **Canada's** New Travel Landscape And Start Packing For...

Meta description

Meta title tags :

The **title** of the page appears in blue in the Google search results. This describes the content of your web page and encourages Internet users to click on it. This tag is crucial in terms of natural referencing and provides a title to your web page.

The meta description tag :

A short description of the page that is displayed under the **meta title** in the search results. It apparently does not directly affect positioning, but it indirectly **optimizes the click rate** and reduces the bounce rate if it is well written.

Optimize your meta title:

- Insert the main key word at the start of the title
- Do not accumulate key words in the title
- Have an explicit and incentivizing 7- or 8-word title

Facilitate the user experience (UX):

- Put yourself in the Internet users' place
- Understand the Internet users' expectations
- Do not lie on the subject of the page. Internet users will clue into it, which will increase the bounce rate and cost you ranking
- Showcase your competitive advantage (quality, price, services, identity, and so on)
- Come up with an engaging sentence to improve the click rate.

How to write a winning meta description

Short and effective text :

The **meta description** should be a short and concise statement within the **160-character limit**.

Active voice :

Ensure they are written in an **active** and **convincing** voice

Call-To-Action :

Use sentences that encourage people to **interact with your content**. *Examples: click here, keep reading, try it, get it now...*

Integrate the main key word:

It is important to use specific **key words** to ensure that the SEO of the site is working as planned. Google and other search engines will have a greater tendency to use your **content** and **highlight your site** in the search results.

Unique :

Having a **unique meta description** helps you stand out and avoid competing with a meta description similar to that of another site. **Google rewards efforts of this type**.

Ensure that the description matches the content.

This may seem obvious, but it certainly ranks among the most important aspects of creating a good meta description. Google and other search engines will penalize misleading meta descriptions. If the content does not match the description, Google may penalize your site. **This may result in an increased bounce rate for your site.**

To optimize your meta description :

- Use synonyms or words related to the key word of the page
- Structure your meta description with punctuation. This will make for easier reading and arouse the reader's interest
- Write a relevant meta description, which effectively matches the content of the destination page
- Put in key words or important notions of your article to arouse the curiosity of a large number of Internet users
- Produce inviting sentences with key information

The meta description below shows how to show one's competitive advantage.

www.gousto.co.uk ▼

Gousto: Recipe Boxes | Get Fresh Food & Recipes Delivered

Our award-winning food **boxes** make home cooking simple and tasty. We deliver fresh ingredients and delicious **recipes** 7 days a week. Get started now!

[Box Prices](#) · [This Week's Menu](#) · [Jobs](#) · [Cookbook](#)

Aspects of content to optimize to improve internal referencing

Image optimization

Google cannot understand images and can only read text.

Image optimization is essential to improve the positioning of your site on Google. Images play an important role both in terms of referencing and the user experience. Inserting relevant images in each of the pages of your web site is therefore an effective approach.

For users, they provide less compact and more visually appealing content. Relevant, good quality images help convey certain types of messages and improve the professional image of your company as perceived by visitors.

For web referencing: The name given to an image is very important. It is therefore advisable to use your key words in the name of your image file rather than the default number.

To optimize your images, here are some items to consider

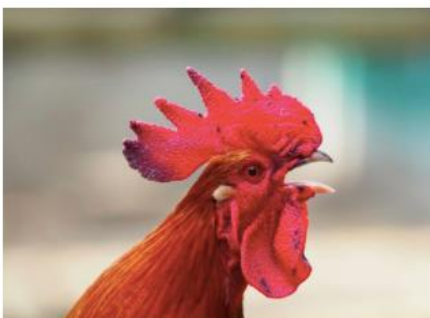
File name: This has a bearing on your referencing in Google Images. Name each photo with key words relating to your content. Also use dashes to separate words, which will enhance the visibility of your image file.

The “Alt” tag is the most important element in optimizing your image and very useful in providing search engines with a description of the content of your visual. It enables you to specify an alternative text for the image if it cannot be displayed for whatever reason. *This attribute shall include a short descriptive sentence containing your key words. This is the perfect spot to work on your long tail expressions.*

The title is used to help users readily find your image. A clear, short and descriptive will have to be chosen. The title of your photo shall be useful and informative, while containing at least one **key word**.

Avoid

- Generic file names such as “image1.jpg,” “pic.gif,” “1.jpg.”
- Very long file names
- Names that are not relevant for Internet users
- Stuffing key words in the “Alt” tag or cutting and pasting full sentences



Okay alt text: ``

Better alt text: ``

Best alt text: ``

Aspects of content to optimize to improve internal referencing

Optimal alternative text (Alt attribute) format

The best format for an alternative text is descriptive enough but not laden with keywords. To arrive at a precise description of your image, close your eyes and ask someone to read the Alt text to you. If you can imagine a reasonably accurate picture of the image, you are on the right track.

Here are a few examples of an alternative text for this image of a delicious chocolate muffin:



The photo chosen shall **relate to the content**.

Ensure that there is perfect consistency between both elements to optimize visibility. If you wrote a “restaurant” title on an image showing footwear, Google may penalize you one day! Not to mention the fact that you are better off proposing totally consistent content to manage your reputation.

OK:

img src = “muffin.png” alt = “muffin” (img src: file name)

This “Alt” text is only “OK” because it isn’t very descriptive. Yes, it’s the image of a muffin, but more can be said about the image.

VERY GOOD

img src = “muffin.png” alt = “succulent home-made chocolate muffin” (img src: file name)

This is a better alternative, because it’s far more descriptive than what is in the image. It’s not only a muffin (as displayed by the first example of the “Alt” text, but a succulent home-made chocolate muffin!

NOT RECOMMENDED

- `img src = "muffin.png alt = "`
- `img src= "muffin.png alt ="muffin chocolate muffin home-made muffin chocolate in muffin chocolate muffin recipe."`

The first line of code doesn’t have any “Alt” text (notice the quotation marks are empty), while the second example is one laden with key words in the “Alt” text.

Also add a short description as a **legend** to provide Internet users with additional commentary. **Insert your key words naturally** so that these few lines read smoothly.

Aspects of content to be optimized to improve internal referencing

Optimizing videos

For simple searches and video searches, Google sorts videos using the same criteria as for written content, i.e., quality content. When you host videos on your site, the procedure involved to optimize referencing is **similar but not identical** to that which applies to written content or photos.

The following steps will help you **improve** your referencing and **bring out your videos** in Search engine results:

1. Select the right hosting for your videos

There are several options available **to host your videos on the Internet**. You can choose a hosting platform or use your Internet site. **To gain exposure**, video hosting platforms, particularly YouTube, are unquestionably the best options.

2. Add a transcript to your video

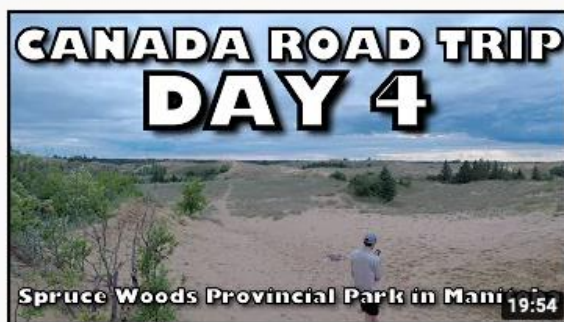
If at all possible, always try to **include a transcript with your videos**. You will thus optimize your chances of seeing your content **effectively referenced** by search engines.

3. Title and meta tags

Title and meta tags of video content still impact referencing and always will. Take the time to **write them carefully** and put in the main **key words** you would like to use to position yourself.

4. Design “compelling” thumbnails

A vignette is a spot photo that appears as a **thumbnail image** before your video is launched. In other words, Web surfers **decide based on this tiny image** whether or not to **open the video**. The more your video is viewed, the better its ranking on the platforms. Similarly, the more it is viewed, the more it will be shared and recommended, thereby improving its referencing.



The chosen vignette has to **relate to the content**. Moreover, it's best to propose totally **consistent content**, which will safeguard your reputation.

If you don't personalize it, **YouTube will randomly select** a moment from your video.

5. Optimize your video content for mobile devices

At a time when **videos are viewed more often on Smart phones** than on computers, it is essential that videos be designed to be viewed on mobile devices. Go with square format videos rather than landscape formats. In addition, it is a good idea to expand text size to make your videos more readable to consumers of roaming content (who consume everywhere and not just on one platform)