

A GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

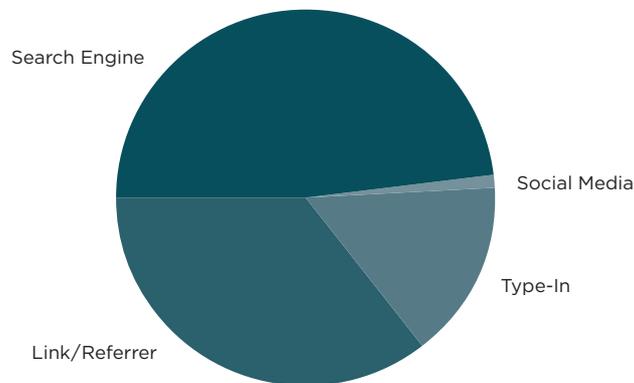
SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO) IN 4 EASY STEPS

HELPING OTHERS FIND
YOUR WORK ONLINE



WHAT IS SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)?

People now use search engines like Google as the main way to find information online. As you can see from the chart below, nearly half of the traffic to → www.degruyter.com comes from search engines. This demonstrates how crucial search engines are in helping readers to find your content.



Search engine optimization means structuring the information in your content in a way that search engines expect and their users understand.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

As a scholar, you want your publications and research to be easily accessible in order to reach a large audience. To be read, however, your work first needs to be found. By using SEO you can significantly increase the discoverability of your research online. SEO also makes it easier for other researchers to find your work in online resources such as ResearchGate, Google Scholar, Web of science, Scopus, Kudos, etc.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Search engine algorithms are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and SEO has turned into a complex subject of its own. As an author, however, you can make a big difference to your discoverability with 4 easy steps that will help users find your work online.

4 EASY STEPS TO BETTER SEO

1 Relevant keyword selection:

most search engines look first at a publication's title, subtitle, abstract or blurb/description as well as the author details. This makes it important for you to carefully consider what information you put in these sections.

2 Choose a smart title:

probably the most important piece of information (in SEO terms) in your publication is your title (and subtitle if you have one). It needs to describe the work accurately and incorporate keywords and phrases that users are likely to enter into a search engine.

3 Write a clear, information-rich abstract:

probably the second most important piece of information is your abstract, blurb or summary. Not only is it important for readers to understand what your publication is about, it is vital to effective SEO to have relevant keywords and phrases that reinforce the title and subtitle.

4 Advertise your work online (and offline, too!):

An area of SEO that is often overlooked is the importance of links and visits. The more visits your publication's website receives and the more links it has pointing to it, the better it will rank in search engine results. This makes it easier to find.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

1 Keyword Selection

Choose keywords/phrases that are directly relevant to your work. People tend to search for specific things using phrases rather than single words. It is therefore advisable to use key phrases more than individual keywords. Try to think of phrases of 2–4 words that you would use if you were searching for your publication online. When coming up with your keywords and phrases, we suggest you:

- ▶ Search for keywords from your title and abstract and see the sort of results that appear
- ▶ Test keywords using free tools like Google Trends or Google AdWords to see how often they are used
- ▶ Examples might include: 'climate change and biodiversity'; 'cognitive psychology'; 'economics and game theory'

When you have your keywords and phrases ready, include them in the description information for your article:

- ▶ Title (and subtitle)
- ▶ Abstract or blurb/summary
- ▶ Sub-headings (If your article has no sub-headers consider creating them and adding appropriate keywords)/chapter titles
- ▶ Keyword fields

TIP

If your publication is already written, you should be able to generate your keywords and phrases by picking out important and recurring phrases from the title, headings, abstract/blurb and introduction sections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When completing the Keywords field, include the keywords and phrases you have already used in your title, and abstract/blurb alongside any synonyms for those keywords. You should also add any additional relevant keywords that may not appear explicitly in your article, but that are still directly relevant to it. Keywords are not only important for SEO; they are also used for abstracting and indexing services as a mechanism to tag research content.

Remember – it is important to repeat your keywords and phrases throughout the abstract in a natural, contextual way. They need to make sense within the title and abstract and flow well in the main text.

2 Choose a smart title

The title of your publication is your chance to communicate the value of your work to the broadest possible audience. The title is especially important for helping search engines like Google (and your readers) determine what your paper is about. Put yourself in your potential reader's shoes. What type of search terms could they use when searching in Google for the information in your publication? We advise that you keep the title to 15 words or less as this will help to focus search results on your main keywords. It may help you to think of your title as a one-sentence abstract. When deciding upon your title, please note the following:

- ▶ Place the most important keyword(s) at the beginning if possible.
- ▶ Do not use abbreviations or acronyms, unless they are very well-known and in common use (e.g. DNA)
- ▶ Avoid using phrases such as “effect of”, “involvement of”, “evidence of”.

These phrases contribute extra words to your title and often weaken perceived clarity for readers. For instance, instead of “Evidence of X in Y process,” try “X impacts Y process through Z” which usually has the same number of words but conveys more information and does so in a more assertive manner.

- ▶ Avoid placing important keywords in the subtitle instead of the title
- ▶ **Do:** “Masculinities and the Nation in the Modern World: Between Hegemony and Marginalization”
- ▶ **Don't:** “Between Hegemony and Marginalization: Masculinities and the Nation in the Modern World”

3 Write a clear, information-rich abstract

Abstracts and summaries/blurbs are one of the most powerful ways to boost discoverability of your content. Abstracts and blurbs are almost always free to access, which means that along with your title, they are the most widely read part of your publication. Writing a good abstract for SEO is in many ways the same as writing a good abstract in general. Here are some pointers that may help you:

- ▶ Capture the key points in simple language. Use short sentences and direct statements if possible.
- ▶ Place essential results and conclusions first. For books, remember to state the book's main theme near the start of the description.
- ▶ Ensure that your key phrases flow naturally in the text. Although SEO is about making it easy for search engines, if the abstract feels disjointed to the end user, then it may put them off reading further.
- ▶ It is useful in SEO terms to repeat short key phrases 2–3 times in your abstracts, but more than that and it will seem unnatural to the reader.

- ▶ In 7–10 sentences, try to cover:

Why did you do the research?/Why did you write the book?

What is your key conclusion or finding?

What were your research aims and methods for gathering data?

How does your publication contribute to your field?

What is the impact of your work?/Why should someone read your publication?

4 Advertise your work online

By creating as many relevant links as possible to the web page for your book or article, you will boost the discoverability of your work. Some tips for building links include:

- ▶ Link to your publication from your institution's website.
- ▶ Link to your publication from your personal website.
- ▶ Link to your publication from your social media accounts (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook etc.), and remember to regularly share any news such as reviews or important citations.
- ▶ If you have a blog, remember to add links to your latest articles.
- ▶ Link to recent publications in your email signature.
- ▶ List your work as a reference in Wikipedia.
- ▶ Add links in your articles to other (related) articles you have published
- ▶ Promote your work by linking with online communities such as ResearchGate, JISC, Mendeley etc.
- ▶ Cite your previous work when appropriate.