





Google is the world's most popular search engine, and intends to stay that way. Its popularity is a reflection of its aim to provide the best possible user experience. Today, that means a secure experience, which is why Google now boosts a site's SEO (Search Engine Optimization) ranking if it secures the entire user session by HTTPS. Essential to a site's success, SEO helps a business to be found, so higher ranking means more site traffic.

## How Google ranks sites like yours

Google's ranking algorithm is constantly evolving and is highly confidential. But it is known that Google's spiders crawl websites and currently rank based on the following key criteria:

1. Website Relevancy
2. The Importance of Metadata
3. Website Security
4. Time to First Byte
5. Trusted Sites Rank Higher
6. Create a Positive Customer Experience



# 1. Website Relevancy

When a customer searches a keyword, Google crawls websites to rank their relevancy.

Become more SEO friendly by integrating relevant keywords into your website to ensure you appear across a variety of search inquiries.

Be considered a thought leader by featuring over 450 words per page. Depending on industry, this number could be higher. Sign up for Google Adwords to research the most relevant keywords.

Update site content regularly as Google views this as a major indicator of relevancy.

## Add some Adwords

Sign up for Google Adwords and research your industry's most popular search keywords

# 2. The Importance of Metadata

Be sure to include metadata on each webpage. This ensures each page contains a space between the <head> tags to insert metadata, or information about the contents of your page. This works similarly to a catalogue in a library, making your site easily identified.

## Title Metadata

Is responsible for the page titles displayed at the top of a browser window and is the most important metadata on a page. It is a good idea to create a unique title relevant for each page.

## Description Metadata

Is the textual description that a browser uses in your page search return. Think of it as your site's window display – a concise description of what your site contains.

## Keyword Metadata

Are the search phrases that people type to find your page. Include a variety of phrases, but don't get greedy - keyword stuffing can result in a ranking penalty. Limit it to 6-8 phrases each consisting of 1-4 words. Keep descriptions accurate and a good reflection of the content, create brief and descriptive tags for each page, and avoid being too greedy.

## Meta what?

There are different types of Metadata: Title Metadata, Description Metadata, Keyword Metadata

### 3. Website Security

Google wishes to protect users from new and evolving online threats, which is why it now **gives a higher SEO ranking to websites that protect visitors throughout their sessions with HTTPS: // SSL\***.

Prevent data breaches and protect customers by encrypting your sites with SSL Certificates from Symantec.

Symantec SSL Certificates provide the industry's strongest available encryption. Based on 2048 bit roots, Symantec certificates have nearly 100% root ubiquity in browsers and wide-reaching mobile browser support.

Symantec SSL Certificates incorporate Seal-in-Search, which displays the Norton™ Secured Seal next to your site in search results and makes your site stand out from the crowd.

Seal-in-Search is available to all internet users who have Norton Safe Web <https://safeweb.norton.com/> installed on their computers.

\* Google Online Security Blog August 6th 2014

\*\* Info Cubic Japan, a Japanese SEO consulting firm, found the organic visit from the search engines increased 5% after the firm implemented Seal-in-Search. [https://www.verisign.co.jp/trust-seal/resources/pdf/CS\\_infocubic.pdf](https://www.verisign.co.jp/trust-seal/resources/pdf/CS_infocubic.pdf)



#### Secure more traffic

Sites have experienced a 5% increase in traffic from Google and Yahoo! organic searches since using Symantec Seal-in-Search\*\*

### 4. Time to First Byte

Websites that quickly deliver web content rank higher. Website owners should therefore investigate ways to improve their Time to First Byte (TTFB).

Measure your TTFB with a dedicated tool such as WebPageTest: [www.webpagetest.org](http://www.webpagetest.org).

Improve your front-end performance to create a fast, responsive, enjoyable user experience.

To improve your TTFB, your site may also benefit from using an Elliptical Curve Cryptography (ECC) SSL certificate. Requiring less computing power, ECC cuts usage by about 60%.

#### The faster, the better ranking

Faster websites make visitors happy, happy users promote sites through linking and sharing

## 5. Trusted Sites Rank Higher

Trusted and authoritative sites rank higher. Key indicators include the types of links your website receives, volume of mentions on social media, the time visitors spend on your site and if your website is secured by SSL encryption.

Earning links from highly trusted domains can result in rankings promotion. Banks, Government websites and non-profit organizations are good examples of high-trust domains.

Include SSL on all web pages within your website. This indicates that your business has been authenticated and is safe. Another way to establish trust is to display the Norton™ Secured Seal, included with any SSL purchase from Symantec.

### Trust counts

Google penalizes or removes from the search index suspicious sites that include irrelevant metadata or links to spam

## 6. Create a Positive Customer Experience

Websites that are easy to use, navigate and understand rank high for user experience. Providing a measurable benefit to a site's external popularity, search engines interpret this as a signal of higher quality.

Search engines understand that sites with low bounce rates, longer visits, returning visits and social mentions are likely a reflection of a loyal customer base, therefore all these items contribute to a significant boost in SEO.

Ensure that your website is built to be accessible by modern browsers and professionally designed for a frictionless user experience.



### Think positive

Usability and user experience are key influences on SEO ranking success

## The Last Word

Google is becoming more sophisticated and ultimately more humanlike with every new release. SEO techniques should be balanced with good user experience if they're to form part of your business' long term search strategy. So if you want to increase your website's ranking with Google, don't try and trick it, give it what it wants ... a safe site to visit and a great user experience.



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