

Google's 200 Ranking Factors

Google uses over 200 factors in ranking your website. Google will never tell you these factors or their relative importance. The reason for this is that Google changes their algorithms over 400 times per year. But not all is lost. Google gives you some hints as to what's important.

Google even offers a guide to SEO best practices, just click here to download.
http://static.googleusercontent.com/external_content/untrusted_dlcp/www.google.com/en/us/webmasters/docs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf

Ranking of your website has gotten extremely sophisticated from the days of content on the page and links to your site. Your site is now being evaluated on multiple interrelated and spatial factors.

- Links – links to and from your site, the quality of those links, and ratios between links and even links with pages on your site and how it interrelates and how often it changes and the rate of change.
- Site content – the content of your site, keyword density and interrelationships of content on the page and content within the site itself and how it interrelates and how often it changes and the rate of change.
- Visitor related factors – how many visitors return, how many visits you receive and the rate of change (increase or decrease) of new visits.
- Domain name factors – How long your domain name has been registered for and how long it has been owned. How many times it has changed ownership.

If you want to make sure that Google categorizes your web pages correctly, you should use many different and related keywords that describe the topic of your website on your web pages. You should focus only one keyword to each page on your website and the overall focus of your website should be on one business type or product group. Google does evaluate keywords routed to one page relative to the other pages on your site.

The more varied words related to your website topic that appear on your web pages, the easier it is for Google to categorize your pages. By doing so, your web pages will also be ready for Google's other algorithms that try to solve this problem.

Which web page elements are monitored by search engines?

According to a recent patent, changes of the following web page elements can influence the position of the page in the search results:

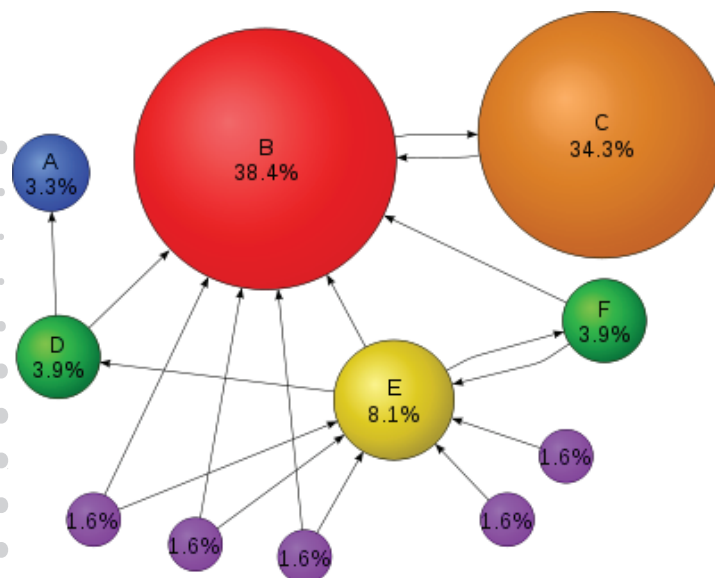
- Keywords that are included in a web page
- Keywords that are associated with a web page
- The anchor texts that are used in links on the page
- The colors and the sizes of images on the page
- The position of text or images on the page
- The frequency of document changes over time
- The amount of the web page content that has been changed
- The change in keyword density
- The number of new web pages that link to a web page
- Changes in anchor text
- Tags that are assigned to the page
- Search queries that are used to find the page
- The number of links to low trust websites

Page Rank

Google's original patent, developed by Larry Page and Serge Brin was developed while they were still students at Stanford University. This patent focused solely on links to and from your site and the authority of these links. Google's algorithms have gotten much more complex since then.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Page_rank

"PageRank reflects our view of the importance of web pages by considering more than 500 million variables and 2 billion terms. Pages that we believe are important pages receive a higher PageRank and are more likely to appear at the top of the search results. PageRank also considers the importance of each page that casts a vote, as votes from some pages are considered to have greater value, thus giving the linked page greater value. We have always taken a pragmatic approach to help improve search quality and create useful products, and our technology uses the collective intelligence of the web to determine a page's importance."



Factors Effecting Position

Below are the results from a study conducted by SEOMoz, where they polled SEO experts and asked them the importance of various factors on page rank. In this study the experts modestly agreed on the numbers below and Google could change their algorithms at any time. Consider these as guidelines.

<http://www.seomoz.org/article/search-ranking-factors#ranking-factors>

Legend

	Positive Influence	Negative Influence
Very High Importance		
High Importance		
Moderate Importance		
Low Importance		
Very Low Importance		

Positive Factors Effecting Position on the Page

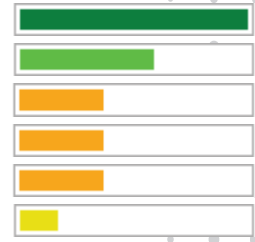
On-Page (Keyword-Specific) Ranking Factors

1. Keyword Use Anywhere in the Title Tag
2. Keyword Use as the First Word(s) of the Title Tag
3. Keyword Use in the Root Domain Name (e.g. keyword.com)
4. Keyword Use Anywhere in the H1 Headline Tag
5. Keyword Use in Internal Link Anchor Text on the Page
6. Keyword Use in External Link Anchor Text on the Page
7. Keyword Use as the First Word(s) in the H1 Tag
8. Keyword Use in the First 50-100 Words in HTML on the Page
9. Keyword Use in the Subdomain Name (e.g. keyword.seomoz.org)
10. Keyword Use in the Page Name URL
11. Keyword Use in the Page Folder URL
12. Keyword Use in other Headline Tags (h2 – h6)
13. Keyword Use in Image Alt Text
14. Keyword Use / Number of Repetitions in the HTML Text on the Page
15. Keyword Use in Image Names (e.g. keyword.jpg)
16. Keyword Use in **b** or **strong** Tags
17. Keyword Density Formula ($\#$ of Keywords \div Total $\#$ of Terms)
18. Keyword Use in List Items on the Page
19. Keyword Use in the Page's Query Parameters
20. Keyword Use in **i** or **em** Tags
21. Keyword Use in the Meta Description Tag
22. Keyword Use in the Page's File Extension
23. Keyword Use in Comment Tags in the HTML
24. Keyword Use in the Meta Keywords Tag



On-Page (Non-Keyword) Ranking Factors

1. Existence of Substantive, Unique Content on the Page
2. Recency (freshness) of Page Creation
3. Use of Links on the Page that Point to Other URLs on this Domain
4. Historical Content Changes (how often change were made)
5. Use of External-Pointing Links on the Page
6. Query Parameters in the URL vs. Static URL Format



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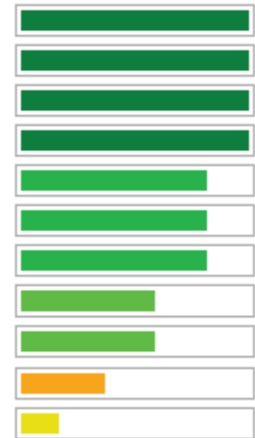
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6. Query Parameters in the URL vs. Static URL Format
7. Ratio of Code to Text in HTML
8. Existence of a Meta Description Tag
9. HTML Validation to W3C Standards
10. Use of Flash Elements (or other plug-in content)
11. Use of Advertising on the Page
12. Use of Google AdSense (specifically) on the Page



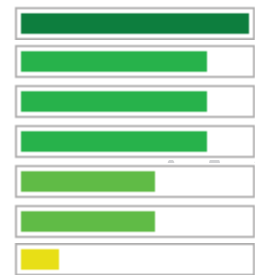
Page-Specific Link Popularity Ranking Factors

1. Keyword-Focused Anchor Text from External Links
2. External Link Popularity (quantity/quality of external links)
3. Diversity of Link Sources (links from many unique root domains)
4. Page-Specific TrustRank (page has earned links from trusted sources)
5. Iterative Algorithm-Based, Global Link Popularity (PageRank)
6. Topic-Specificity/Focus of External Link Sources
7. Keyword-Focused Anchor Text from Internal Links
8. Location of Information in the Site Hierarchy
9. Internal Link Popularity
10. Quantity & Quality of Nofollowed Links to the Page
11. Percent of Followed vs. Nofollowed Links that Point to the Page



Site-Wide Link-Based Ranking Factors

1. Trustworthiness Based on Link Distance from Trusted Domains
2. Link Popularity of the Domain Based on an Iterative Link Algorithm
3. Link Diversity Based on number/variety of root domains linking in)
4. Links from Hubs/Authorities in a Given Topic
5. Temporal Growth/Shrinkage of Links to the Domain
6. Links from Domains with Restricted Access (.edu, .gov, .mil)
7. Percent of Followed vs. Nofollowed Links that Point to the Domain



Site-Wide (non-link based) Ranking Factors

1. Site Architecture of the Domain (structure and hierarchy)
2. Use of External Links to Reputable, Trustworthy Sites/Pages
3. Length of Domain Registration
4. Domain Registration History (how long it's been registered)
5. Server/Hosting Uptime
6. Hosting Information (domains hosted on the server/c-block)
7. Domain Registration Ownership Change
8. Inclusion of Feeds from the Domain in Google News
9. Use of XML Sitemap(s)
10. Domain Ownership (who registered the domain and their history)
11. Domain Registration with Google Local
12. Domain "Mentions" (text citations of the domain name)
13. Inclusion of Feeds from the Domain in Google Blog Search
14. Citations/References of the Domain in the Yahoo! Directory
15. Citations/References of the Domain in DMOZ.org
16. Citations/References of the Domain in Wikipedia
17. Use of Feeds on the Domain
18. Citations/References of the Domain in Lii.org
19. Domain Registration with Google Webmaster Tools
20. Activation of Google's "Enhanced Image Search"

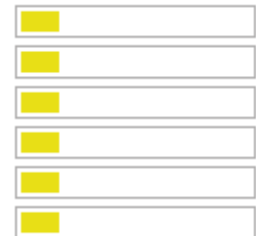


21. Use of Security Certificate on the Domain (for HTTPS transactions)
22. Validity of Listed Information from Domain Registration
23. Citations/References of the Domain in Google Knol Articles
24. Use of a Google Search Appliance on the Domain
25. Use of Google AdSense on the Domain
26. Use of Google AdWords for Ads Pointing to the Domain
27. Alexa Rank of the Domain
28. Compete.com Rank of the Domain
29. Use of Google's Hosted Web Apps on the Domain



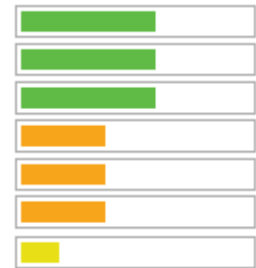
Social Media/Social Graph Based Ranking Factors

1. Delicious Data About the Domain or Page
2. StumbleUpon Data About the Domain or Page
3. Twitter Data About the Domain or Page
4. LinkedIn Data About the Domain or Page
5. Facebook Data About the Domain or Page
6. MySpace Data About the Domain or Page



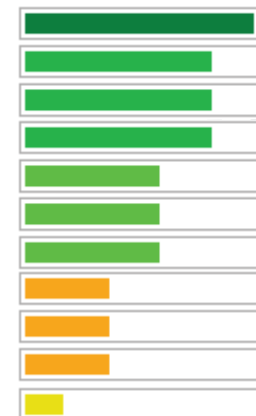
Usage Data Ranking Factors

1. Historical Click-Through Rate from Search to the Exact Page/URL
2. Historical Click-Through Rate from Search to Pages on this Domain
3. Search Queries for the Domain Name or Associated Brand
4. Use of Query Refinement Post-Click on a Search Result
5. Average "Time on Page"
6. Data from Google's SearchWiki Voting, Ratings, Comments
7. References/Links to the Domain in Gmail Emails



Geo-Targeting Factors:

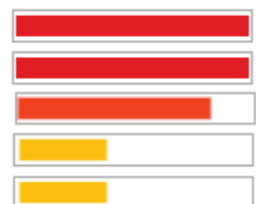
1. Country Code TLD of the Root Domain
2. Language of the Content Used on the Site
3. Links from Other Domains Targeted to the Country/Region
4. Geographic Location of the Host IP Address of the Domain
5. Targeting by Google Engineers and/or Quality Raters
6. Geo-Targeting Preference Set Inside Google Webmaster Tools
7. Registration of the Site with Google Local in the Country/Region
8. Address in On-Page Text Content
9. Address Associated with the Registration of the Domain
10. Geographic Location of Visitors to the Site
11. Geo-Tagging of Pages via Meta Data



Negative Factors Effecting Position on the Page

Factors Negatively Affecting the Value of an External Link

1. Domain Banned from Google's Index for Web Spam
2. Domain's Rankings Penalized in Google for Web Spam
3. Link is Determined to be "Paid" Rather than Editorially Given
4. Domain Contains Links to a Significant Amount of Web Spam
5. Domain Has Not Earned Trusted Links



Ranking Factors (things you shouldn't do, or let happen to you)

1. Cloaking with Malicious/Manipulative Intent
2. Link Acquisition from Known Link Broker
3. Links from the Page to Web Spam Sites/Pages
4. Cloaking by User Agent
5. Frequent Server Downtime & Site Inaccessibility
6. Hiding Text with similar colored text/background
7. Links from the Domain to Web Spam Sites/Pages
8. Excessive Repetition of the Same Anchor Text to a Page
9. Cloaking by IP Address
10. Hiding Text outside the visible page area
11. Excessive Number of Dynamic Parameters in the URL
12. Excessive Links from Sites in the Same IP Address C-Block
13. Bait-and-Switch Campaigns (301'ing micro-sites, etc.)
14. Keyword Stuffing in the On-Page Text
15. Hiding Text with CSS (display:none) Styling
16. Keyword Stuffing in the **Title** Tag
17. Keyword Stuffing in the URL
18. Link Acquisition from Manipulative Widget/Badge Campaigns
19. Cloaking by JavaScript/Rich Media Support Detection
20. Cloaking by Cookie Detection
21. Link Acquisition from Low Quality Paid Directories
22. Excessive Links from Sites Owned by the Same Registrant
23. Links to the Page from Web Spam Sites/Pages
24. Links to the Domain from Web Spam Sites/Pages
25. Link Acquisition from Manipulative Viral Campaigns
26. Cloaking with Positive User Experience Intent
27. Over-Optimization of Internal Link Anchor Text
28. "Poison" Keywords in Anchor Text of External Links (e.g. viagra)
29. Link Acquisition from Buying Old Domains & Redirecting
30. Excessively Long URL
31. Use of Keyword-Rich Anchor Text Internal Links in Footers
32. Keyword Stuffing in the Meta Description Tag
33. Link Acquisition from Buying Domains and Adding Links
34. Overuse of No -follow on Internal Links for "PageRank Sculpting"
35. Forum Link Building (Signatures, Link Drops, etc.)
36. Excessively Long Title Tag
37. Keyword Stuffing in the Meta Keywords Tag

