



Drupal GovCon 2018

Demystifying SEO for Government Agencies

Why should you listen me?

Jason Hamrick
Senior Strategist
Phase2

jhamrick@phase2technology.com



How Google Releases Updates

- Tweaks search algorithm 500 times a year
- Rarely announce changes in advance
- Rarely describe impact or how to respond





Google SearchLiaison

@searchliaison

Follow



This week we released a broad core algorithm update, as we do several times per year. Our guidance about such updates remains the same as in March, as we covered here:

9:22 AM - 1 Aug 2018



Google SearchLiaison

@searchliaison

Follow



There's no "fix" for pages that may perform less well other than to remain focused on building great content. Over time, it may be that your content may rise relative to other pages.

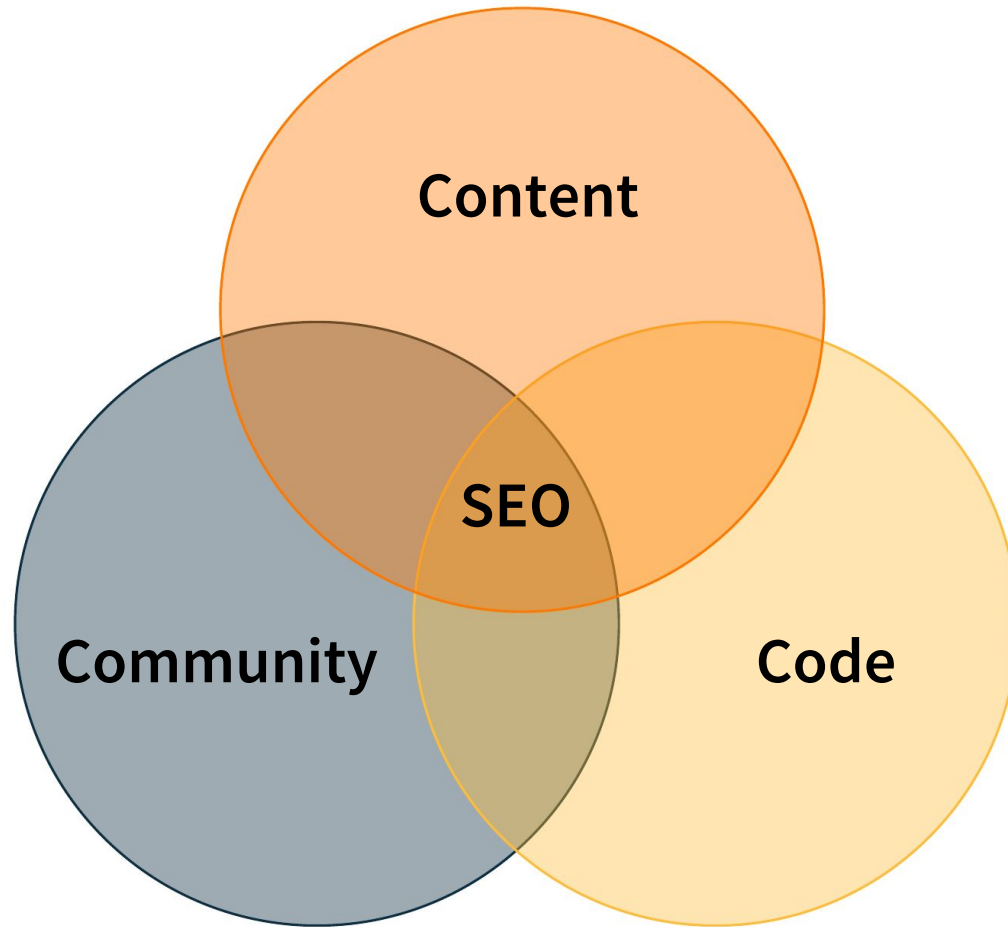
9:57 AM - 12 Mar 2018



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We believe that Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is not a separate activity from website management, but is the result of building the right digital experience for your audiences.





CONTENT



**Understand your audiences goals and
create content and experiences that
encourage them to achieve those goals.**

Write in Plain Language

- Write for **your audience**
- Concise, **scannable text**
- Highlighted **keywords** (hypertext links, typeface variations, colors)
- Meaningful **sub-headings** (not “clever ones”)
- Bulleted **lists**
- **One idea** per paragraph
- The **inverted pyramid style** (start with the conclusion)
- **Half the word count** than conventional writing



Keep it Conversational

- Almost **70% of voice searches** with Google Assistant use **conversational language**
- Conversational language means users **ask complete questions**
- Those voice search questions can be used as page **titles**, section **headers**, and **Frequently Asked Questions** pages

Make it Multi-lingual

Review your organization's **Language Access Plan** and create content that supports the languages outlined



Use Clean Interaction Design

- Well-tested **information architecture**
- Engaging **landing pages**
- Clear **content aggregation** pages
- Encourage content **exploration and conversion**

COMMUNITY



Maintain Your Onsite and Offsite Links

- Scan the site monthly to **detect bad URLs**, including expired offsite links
- Reduce 404 errors by **eliminating dead links**
- **Reduce duplicate content** pages by adding 301 redirects and canonical URLs
- Review **incoming links** for quality. Disavow low-quality links



Search Engine Optimization: Community

Keep it Social.
Share Your
Content.

- Write page titles and page excerpts that **encourage click through** from Google
- **Create links off-site** when appropriate
- Collaborate with your government and non-profit **partners**
- **Syndicate** with HHS Digital Storefront
- Include social media in your **outreach plan**



CODE



Optimize for Safety and Speed

- Follow the federal mandate of **SSL everywhere**
- Avoid landing **page redirects**
- Enable **compression**
- Leverage **browser caching**
- **Minify** HTML, CSS, Javascript
- **Optimize** images
- **Prioritize** visible content
- **Reduce** server response time
- Use a **content distribution network**



Introduce Schema Code Markup

National Institutes of Health (NIH) | Turning Discovery Into Health

<https://www.nih.gov/> ▼

Official website of the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**. NIH is one of the world's foremost medical research centers. An agency of the U.S. Department of Health ...

Results from nih.gov



Health Information

Find science-based health information on symptoms ...

Grants & Funding

NIH offers funding for many types of grants, contracts, and even ...

About NIH

A part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ...

Institutes at NIH

NIH is made up of 27 Institutes and Centers, each with a specific ...

Research & Training

A list of resources related to research performed in NIH labs ...

NIH Clinical Center

NIH Clinical Center - America's Research Hospital Building 10.



Build for Accessibility

Search Engine Optimization: Code

- Follow established best practices
 - ◆ **Images:** Descriptive and succinct alt text
 - ◆ **Navigation:** Keyboard navigable with proper tab order
 - ◆ **Page Markup:** Headings are used properly
 - ◆ **Audio/Video:** The media on the page are available with a caption file or transcript
 - ◆ **Visual Design:** Good contrast and properly-sized text
- Review monthly audit reports and **resolve issues**



Build for Accessibility

Search Engine Optimization: Code

- **Choice:** Provide options for how audiences can engage with a site, not forcing them down a single path.
- **Context:** Give more information about what they are reading, watching, or listening so they are confident that they're going to get the content they are expecting.
- **Clarity:** What is the reader clicking, viewing, or watching? Can they easily understand and follow along?



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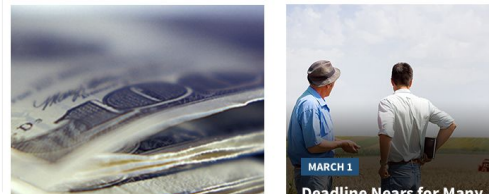
Forms & Instructions

1040
Individual Tax Return

1040-EZ
Tax Return for Single and Joint Filers With No Dependents

W-4
Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate

[Search Forms & Instructions](#)



MARCH 1
Deadline Nears for Many

[Filing Information](#)[Get My Refund Status](#)[Pay My Tax Bill](#)[Get My Tax Record](#)

Instructions

1040
Tax Return **1040-EZ**
Tax Return for Single and Joint Filers With No Dependents[Apply for an EIN](#)[Get Answers to Tax Questions](#)[Free File](#)[Apply for an ITIN](#)[Search Forms & Instructions](#)

MARCH 1
Deadline Nears for Many Farmers and Fishermen

TAX TIME GUIDE
Avoid the Presidents Day Rush

The month of February, especially around Presidents Day, marks the busiest time of year for IRS phone lines. Taxpayers can avoid long call wait times by getting answers to their questions on IRS.gov.

UNCLAIMED REFUNDS

Does Some of This \$1

SEO does not start with keyword competition or paid rankings.

Long-term success in SEO means demonstrating Expertise, Authority, Trustworthiness

SEO isn't a thing we DO, it's a thing we GET.





Questions?



Resources

Plain Language Writing

[Plain Language.gov](#)

[CDC Simply Put](#)

[Checklist of Requirements for Federal Websites and Digital Services](#)

Conversational Search

[Is Your SEO Strategy Optimized for Voice Technology?](#)

[How to Hack Voice Search: Use Long Tail Keywords](#)

Digital Strategy

[Digital Services Playbook](#)

[Digital Strategy at HHS](#)

Accessibility

[Section508.gov](#)

[Phase2 Web Accessibility Playbook](#)



For More Information

Jason Hamrick
Senior Strategist
Phase2

jhamrick@phase2technology.com

