

Doing a few home-improvements on the website? Keep these in mind and don't fall victim to the

Top Five Most Common SEO Mistakes

1. Insufficient Keyword Research

Keyword Research forms the foundation of your SEO efforts. While it might be fine to start with a few basic principles, once it comes to mucking in and producing large quantities of content for your website; Keyword Research is what makes the difference between ranking for nothing and ranking for popular terms that get traffic.

Keep in mind that Keyword Research is essentially an exploration of the market's semantic relationship with your product/ service; understanding that is critical to success.

2. Significant portions of content in Media

Media is great. It can really give your website that extra zing and used well media such as animations, videos and even pictures can be very effective at promoting your business online. The problem with media and SEO comes when you put so much of your content in it that the Search Engines cannot accurately judge your site's theme or even the subject of individual pages.

Stick to text for most of your content and use media to *enhance* your message.

3. Javascript Menus

Search Engines do not read Javascript the way people do! Well, people don't really see read Javascript, we just see the results. In most cases a JS menu has some sort of expanding feature or 'drops-down' as your cursor hovers over it. This can be a pretty tidy way of organising your menu items and keeping them all easily accessible, unfortunately what Google reads is something different and may have difficulty understanding the intended subject of your menu items.

Do you really need all those menu items crammed into one place? If the answer is 'Yes', then go for it but make sure you keep a sitemap easily accessible so the Search Engines can still navigate your site.

4. Forgetting URLs

I'm still surprised at how often I find session IDs in a URL. Not only that but also at the sites I find them on; some of them belonging to very high profile companies. Remember that the URL (or 'address') gives the Search Engines some important semantic clues about the content of each page and about the site in general.

Make sure you use descriptive text instead of codes or numbers wherever possible and *definitely* ensure that session IDs are not visible.

5. Focusing on META data

This is an old hangover from the late nineties, although right up until about 2004, META tags were still considered to be a relevant part of the on-page, SEO process. Things move fast on the web and what was true then is now almost completely redundant. Very few (if any) people are yet willing to say that META tags are useless, in fact the description META tag is still in relevant usage but the reality is that Search Engines no longer consider your opinion of your site in the ranking process. Fundamentally, that is what the keywords META tag has always represented; the web-developer's (or client thereof) ideas about the subject of the page - nowadays, the Search Engines prefer to read the page and then work it out for themselves, probably because what they think and what the META tags say are so often at odds.

Thinking about keywords is always good but don't worry too much about the keywords META tag too much (or at all) - the description META tag should not be overlooked though. Keep it short, sweet and salient. The description META tag is often what will show in the search results pages (under your page title), where your listing will be competing with as many as 29 other pages for the user's click - write it well.