**Search Engine Optimization**

Notes on Yale Training Sessions (Videos)

# VIDEOS

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| Video 1  <https://youtu.be/kHyGT2syCyM> | **Content Marketing Best Practices –** Mainly covering stories/articles rather than “web pages,” but logic applies. Headlines and subheads how-to. Keyword research how-to. |
| Video 2  <https://youtu.be/uV6u23Ggtuo> | **White Hat Writing & Writing Best Practices –** How to improve SEO on articles. Technical SEO. Sample keyword research. White Hat writing. |
| Video 3  <https://youtu.be/oWBDGIu9jTs> | **Writing Optimization & Page Speed –** Readability, readability tips. Passive voice. Readability tools. Review of existing articles. |
| Video 4:  <https://youtu.be/EFA2hXKoOSc> | **Yale Article Review –** SEO checklist. SEO video checklist. Most time spent reviewing Yale articles. |
| Video 5  <https://youtu.be/CZSCz3Z7QSA> | **Other Content Opportunities & Wrap-Up –** 3 Types of SEO. Link-building, backlinks. Guest posting. How to get press. |

# RESOURCES

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| --- | --- |
| ***Resource*** | ***Brief Description*** |
| **Ahrefs**  [www.Ahrefs.com](http://www.Ahrefs.com) | Mainly covering stories/articles rather than “web pages,” but logic applies. Headlines and subheads how-to. Keyword research how-to. |
| Google Analytics |  |

# NOTES ON THE VIDEOS

Video 1: <https://youtu.be/kHyGT2syCyM>

## Headlines and Subheads

* Tell a story, make things flow, but use keywords.
* H1 are most important for search
* Should help rank for a specific (researched) keyword
* Use Google Analytics and Ahrefs
* Should be self-explanatory and catchy
* Should have keywords first (or close) – also true of the page name/title
* Should NOT duplicate page title
* Should be relevant, focused
* Should NOT be keyword stuffed
* Should consist of 50 min. to 60 max characters (including character spaces)
* H2 are 2nd-most important. Use a keyword variation or another keyword.

## Meta Descriptions

* Pull a snipped (two lines?) of copy into the search results. It generates more clicks.
* 140 to 160 char
* Avoid breaking up keywords with other words

## URL Structure

* Simple and clear permalink structure. Silos are important.
* Use Keywords in URLs
* Remove stop words
* Remove numbers: Not things like “3D” but rather things like “9 ways to…”
* 3 to 5 words in URL
* What about changing URL (when articles move)? Do a 301 redirect. Get old URL, do a 301 to auto-point to new URL. So, if URL was ranking, Google will pass all that authority to the new location. If you don’t redirect, they may flag it as 404 (no longer there). So refresh and confirm. Any pitfalls in analytics? How to hold it together? A: Not really a way to merge it in Analytics. Note it with spreadsheet. Can plot it in your analytics. Note when it changed and watch it. (Discussion of what priorities to follow for updating URLs.)

## Keyword Research

* **Google autocomplete** – These are the most-searched topics. Easiest way. Productive.
* **Ahrefs keyword tool** – ahrefs.com/keywords-explorer. Volume is how many search on it.
* **Competitive research** – Research competitors. Enter their domain in Ahrefs
* **SEO Site Tools** (Chrome add-on)

# QUESTIONS

* Is KD score better when higher or worse? What is a good KD score for Web Pages..
* Should page name be based on search keyword?
* Should page name be included in Meta Tag, Description, H1, H2? Or should they be different?
* Should page name and URL be (essentially) the same?
* GENERAL:

Video 2:<https://youtu.be/uV6u23Ggtuo>

## Recap from Video 1

* Where is the position of the keywords in the headline? Forward. As close to front as possible without sounding contrived.
* SEO-ish vs. more Editorial Content, Headlines: Content Split (for Articles): 80% article writing, 20% stories (about doctors, what’s going on on the provider side, less SEO-focused).
* We are writing for humans. Important to write to be read.
* Could make a non-SEO-ish article more SEO-based by using H2 subheads.
* For these non-SEO articles, the URL structure should still be SEO-based.
* Also filter in keywords throughout the copy.
* Don’t overuse keywords.
* There are trade-offs.

## Details on how to improve SEO on sample articles

* Narrow the focus; don’t address “skin problems” but “beard skin problems.”
* Put the tentative headline in the Tool before using it.
* Brainstorm the idea. “Beards don’t have to cause skin problems.” Combine the natural, editorial and search. What specifically are we going after with these articles?
* URL might be “/beards-acne-bumps”
* Also get keywords into Meta Description, then into subheads. Then more keywords into the article itself. Generally prefer the headlines be mostly SEO, but there are trade-offs. After a while, when you get into it… connectivity problems…
* Figure out your keywords (research). Put the big ones as close to the front as possible without sounding contrived. If everything sounds contrived, rely on the other tools. Get keywords into URL. Possibly have a subhead that’s more SEO-based. Then also have keywords into Meta Title and Meta Description. Also put the terms into the article itself.
* How To Find Keywords: Ahrefs, enter base term. See who is ranking highest. Look at what keywords are in their URL, Title and Description. Watch search terms volume.
* Does the searcher’s geography matter in how the search terms return? Our rankings? Mostly national SEO keywords. Will be more location-specific when you ask/input location information. Even when inputting your location, you could still end up with the national results.

## Technical SEO

* Just fixing poor URLs can be a huge help.

## Sample Keyword Search/Research for Articles

* How to develop article ideas based on volume and keyword difficulty (KD) score.

Do more hits help our SEO and credibility even if it doesn’t result in more business? A: The more credible the articles, and the more backlinks to you, yes, more credibility for you. Some pages on sites are more visible/backlinked; does help the site overall.

## White Hat Writing

* **Image Alt Text** – Got to have them. Strengthen message and SEO. Also key for ADA (blind people). Include keyword for the page/article. Will help boost. Still best to have keywords up front, but Alt Text isn’t as heavily weighed as some others. Accessibility is key, but so is search. Have to do both. As long as you get the keyword in there.
* **Internal Linking** – Before your content (article) can rank, it needs links. Google fids your posts/pages best when they’re linked from somewhere on the web. Link articles to cornerstone content (such as Services pages). Use links in articles to other pages, services, physicians and other stories/articles. Insert links at bottom of articles (“Read more: ‘Beards Don’t have to Cause Acne or Bumps”). Max would be 3 to 5. If you have 1,000 words, you could have more. What about links to 25 articles on the subject. If you put 30 links, you’d be splitting out the mojo between all those links. So, with 5 each link gets about 20%. So less is wiser.
* **Topic & Keyword Ideation** – keyword research, quora, forums, competitor research. And then the 80/20 rule. Ahrefs is powerful; gives you keyword difficulty (KD), search volume, and other search suggestions. Look at the top pages in Ahrefs. Look at the best-performing pages and see what kind of keywords they’re using. Also use Google Autocomplete. See what the autofill provides. Quora – A question-and-answer site. Do a topic search. See what people are searching for most. Forum Boards – Great way to get community-generated content on your site. Helps build effectiveness. Also can go on different boards and get ideas. Forums have to be regulated; it’s a whole big thing; don’t take it lightly. Competitor Research – see what keywords are their biggest.
* **Black Hat vs. White Hat Writing** – avoid over-optimization; link bait, or just a good headline?; infographics.
* **What is black-hat writing?** Unethical SEO.Disapproved practice that can increase a page’s search-engine-result ranking. They violate the search engine’s terms of service and can result in banishment from the search engine *and* affiliate sites.

**Common Types of Black Hat Writing:**

Keyword stuffing

Hidden text and links

Sneaky redirects and cloaking

Link schemes

Guest posting networks

Buying backlinks

Article spinning

Rich snippet markup spam

Duplicate content

Creating pages for the purpose of spamming search engines.

* Duplicate content is okay if you’re the original poster. You don’t have to constantly revise your content if yours is the original. Some sites WILL scrape your site; not really an issue. Just don’t duplicate content from other sites for your site.
* What is white-hat SEO writing? Ethical SEO. Best for smart long-term success of your site. Includes using keywords, keyword analysis, backlinking, writing content for human readers (rather than for search engines). Link Bait – great content, videos, infographics. Skyscraper techniques – Very popular way to increase ranking potential.
* Link Bait – Content on your site that other sites WANT to link to (rather than because you ask them to).

**Popular Types of Link Bait Scenarios**

Having great content

Breaking news

Timeless and evergreen content

Widgets, gadgets, BMI calculators, etc.

Quizzes and games

Charts

Images and infographics

Video content

Contests

Awards

* Infographics: How make them scalable? Accessible on various devices? What are best practices? What makes it ideal? Been told to not put text into images due to small screens? (ADA is also an issue.) Infographics are not really for SEO, but rather for clickbait. Include an embed code so that it’s easier for others to use your content (to drive more backlink traffic).

**Skyscraper Technique(s)**

* Find content that already ranks for your specific keyword. Use competitor keyword research to find the content that ranks well and see what they’re doing.
* Create content that deserves to rank at #1 (better content, better headlines, good —and more?—images with quality Alt Text, more copy)
* Reach out to experts for ideas, quotes to put in the article/page, etc.
* Promote the content with email outreach, social media push, etc.
* Link to that article from other posts/pages.
* Careful about linking out to other sites. You’re giving them more credibility. If they cover a topic you’ve covered, the connection could give them more “juice.” Avoid linking to competitor sites. And avoid sites that have AdSense; it’s harmful. Pick your prospective links (TO your site) carefully. Message boards. Resources. Special interest groups. Newspapers and media outlets can be really good.

Video 3: <https://youtu.be/oWBDGIu9jTs>

## Writing Optimization & Page Speed

## Writing Optimization – Google does use these for indexing

* Readability – Most people (84%) don’t read pages/posts word-for-word. Readability is roughly defined as how easy it is for someone to read a piece of content. Work with the reality that most people scan web pages rather than read them in detail. Don’t fight it.

**Readability Tips**

* Keep 75% of sentences under 20 words.
* Keep paragraphs under 150 words.
* Don’t go more than 300 words without a subhead.
* Keep passive voice to under 10%
* Add at least 30% of transition words in your sentences
* Maintain a Flesch-Kincaid score of at least 60.
* Flesch-Kincaid
* LSI – Latent Semantic Indexing
* Text should read well/natural when read out loud
* What passive voice is: *The surgery is performed under anesthesia.* Active voice is: *We perform the surgery using anesthesia.*
* Flesch-Kincaid Readability Tests help indicate how difficult a passage is to underastand. 2 tests: The Flesch Reading Ease test and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level test. They use the same core measures (word length and sentence length), they weight things different. Seventh to eighth-grade writing captures more than 80% of adults. Google likes the age 13-15 age level is what Google seems to value most. Take the Flesch-Kincaid score with a grain of salt. Some of the terms in our topics are going to skew the results. “Musculoskeletal” and   
  “interventional nephrology” are necessary but probably considered hard.
* **Readability Tools:** Microsoft products have them built in. Also readable.io: enter URL or enter your own text. Lots of different measures.
* LSI: Very important for SEO. It is a mathematical method used to determine the relationship between terms and concepts in content. Webpage contents are crawled, and the most common words/phrases are collated/identified as the keywords for the page. LSI looks for synonyms related to the title of your page. Your page should have synonyms of the page name/keywords so that the search engine recognizes that your pages is truly about its stated subject/topic. Even if you already use keywords and secondary keywords in your content, the rest of the content should have synonyms throughout (naturally) to convince search engine spiders that your content is valuable/authoritative.

## Reviewing Existing Articles

* How to improve them. (This is specific to Yale, but lessons are pertinent,
* Identify the keywords that are ranking and sprinkle them in.
* Modify the alt text to favor the best keyword (biopsy vs. biopsies).
* Not too many H2s. Use H3s.

Video 4: <https://youtu.be/EFA2hXKoOSc>

## Yale Articles Review

## From Last Session.

* Hemingway Editor to provide readability score. Hemingwayapp.com

## SEO Checklist (for Blog Posts, but also Page)

* Keyword research is as important as the article itself. Stevo says he often does 30 minutes of keyword research per article and another writing it.
* Linkbait isn’t so important now due to changes at FB.

**SEO Checklist**

* Keyword Research – As important as the content itself.
* *1 to 2 keywords*
* *Use Ahrefs*
* Titles
* *Captivating?*
* *SEO-Focused? Start with keywords at the front of the title, unless the title IS the keyword*
* Headers
* *Are keywords being used in the headers? Were they developed/conceived before the writing?*
* URL
* *Are stop words removed (unless needed for SEO URL)?*
* Internal Links
* *Does the page have them?*
* Meta Description
* *Keywords in Meta description?*
* Featured image and alt text
* Call to Action
* Social Sharing

## Additional Keyword Research

* More in-depth examples

## SEO Video Checklist

* More in-depth examples
* Keyword Research video topic, SEO titles, Headers, Meta Description
* Upload on YouTube and set the video upload location from the latitude and longitude from this office’s locations (local SEO).
* Use transcription services on the video itself.

Video 5: <https://youtu.be/CZSCz3Z7QSA>

## Other Content Opportunities & Wrap-Up

* Recap of other training sessions
* Recap of SEO performance for Yale.

## 3 types of SEO

* On-Page SEO (60% of importance). Consists of all the SEO research and writing we’ve been doing.
* Off-Page SEO

## Link-Building

## What is it?

* Helps your pages rank higher in Google search results.
* Backlinks will also help in getting more referral traffic to your site via those links.
* Google says backlinks are one of their Top 3 ranking signals.

## Two Types?

* High-quality links (from high-authority pages)
* Low-quality links
* Domain rating shows how strong a backlink provide of a target website is on a scale from 0 to 100. Backlinks from sites with higher DR carry more weight.

## Effectiveness of backlinks from Forbes.

* Link juice is divided up into smaller factions, so it’s less than if you get a backlink from a more relevant site.

## How to Build Backlinking

* Guest posting – Publish an article on someone else’s website or blog.
* Red Flags for guest posting
* *Paying to publish the post*
* *The post contains exact-match anchor text*
* *The site exists solely for the purpose of guest posts*
* *The site is unrelated to yours.*

## How to Guest Post

* Connect with other sites that accept guest posts.
* Find their emails (hunter.io)
* Send a personalized email to make the connection.

## How to Get Press

* Join HARO (help a reporter out) – Provides jouralists with a robust database of sourc3es for upcoming stories and daily opportunities for sources to secure valuable media coverage.
* Identify the proper publications and/or journalists
* Reach out…BUT DO NOT “PITCH”!
* When to use press?
* New procedures
* Clinical testing
* Charitable Donations
* Clinic al research
* New partnerships