Four SEO myths to shake off in 2020



If you’re in charge of managing a website, you’re probably always looking for ways to make your site smarter, faster and more relevant to users so it ranks higher in organic search results. Though, due to the unpredictable reputation of SEO, there have been many SEO myths circulating around how to achieve higher organic rankings.

To help your brand succeed in 2020 by optimizing your website for greater organic visibility, here’s the truth about the top four SEO myths.

SEO myth #1 – XML sitemaps automatically improve your search rankings

The XML sitemap’s main job is to help search engines crawl and index the pages of a website. Search engines especially like to see fresh pages added to the sitemap, as it indicates that the website is up-to-date and may be more relevant to online users. The real question here is, does the XML sitemap help boost a website’s search rankings?

According to the Google Webmaster Central Blog, an XML sitemap does not have a direct effect on the rankings of a website. Submitting a sitemap helps ensure search engines like Google

know about all the important URLs on a website. This can be especially useful when certain web pages are not easily discoverable by crawlers. To put into layman's terms, an XML sitemap will augment Google's crawl and discovery process and may result in an increased presence and visibility of a website, but it will not automatically improve a site's organic ranking.

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SEO myth #2 – Too many keywords = poor organic rankings

There's been buzz around the SEO industry for years when it comes to keywords, more specifically, keyword density. How many keywords are too many? Will Google penalize my website for over-optimizing it with keywords?

Despite what many online forums and articles may elude to, there is no one-size-fits-all option when it comes to keyword density. In 2014, John Mueller of Google said,

> *"Keyword density, in general, is something I wouldn't focus on. Search engines have kind of moved on from there."*

At the end of the day, if the content on your website is natural and helpful to users, don't spend too much energy trying to calculate the perfect number of keywords for a web page.

SEO myth #3 – Having a secure website isn't that important

Okay, kids. It's 2020. Let's talk about the importance of

having a secure website in today's day and age. Website hackers are only getting smarter. Malicious cyber intruders will exploit every unprotected resource they can between your website and users. For this reason alone, it's critical to protect your website by equipping it with a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) to help monitor and transfer data safely and securely between two points. In other words, the days of HTTP are over and it's time to make the move to HTTPS.

Also known as Hypertext Transfer Protocol, HTTP is a protocol that allows for the communication between different systems across the web. HTTPS, or Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure, use an SSL certificate to create a secure encrypted connection between servers and browsers. This helps protect sensitive information from being stolen as it is transferred over the web.

There are SEO benefits to making your website more secure as well since one of Google's top priorities is making sure that their services use industry-leading security. In 2014, Google announced that all HTTPS websites would receive a minor ranking boost over those using HTTP.

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SEO myth #4 – Google will penalize your website for duplicate copy

Before we dive into the duplicate copy controversy, let's take a step back and discuss the difference between algorithm devaluations and penalty devaluations. When Google releases new algorithm updates like Penguin, Panda, Pigeon, and Layout, different websites will see different results. Each time an

algorithm is updated, one site may see devaluations, while another may see an exponential increase in organic traffic.

Penalty devaluations occur when Google decides that your website is in violation of the Webmaster Guidelines. When a website appears to use deceptive or manipulative behavior to gain traffic, Google may respond in a negative fashion by devaluating the site's ranking in the search engine results page.

When it comes to duplicate copy on a website, the common misconception is that Google will penalize the site. The reality of the matter is that Google does not have a duplicate content filter. If there are multiple pages on a website with the same content, Google will simply decide not to rank all pages for the same query. Crawlers will choose which page to rank for what, which can have a negative impact on organic rankings.

Conclusion

Don't let these common SEO myths sideline you as you work toward ranking your website for organic success. As Google and other search engines continue to tweak their algorithms to give users the most relevant search results, it will be important for content marketers and SEO experts to stay on top of the latest SEO trends and updates.

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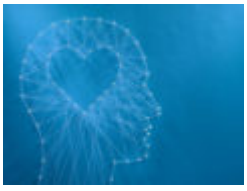
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