Crawl Budget: Everything You Need to Know for SEO via @nikovacr

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Top six ways to optimize crawl budget for SEO

30-second summary:

- Crawl budget is an area that remains underrated in SEO.
- If you’re running a large-scale website, crawl budget is something that site runner can, and should, be optimized for SEO.
- April Brown talks about the basics of crawl budgeting, why it matters, and how you can optimize it for SEO.

Crawl budget is one of the most underrated concepts in SEO. Although most people might have heard of crawl budgeting, they might have considered using it, to begin with, or even think about it, when it comes to SEO. While some experts will tell you to ignore crawl rate, in truth, if you’re running a large-scale website, crawl budget is something that site runner can – and should – be optimized for SEO.

In this article, we'll talk about the basics of crawl budgeting, why it matters, and how you can optimize it for SEO.

What is the crawl budget?

> *"A crawl budget is responsible for influencing crawl frequency,"*

Michael Railsback, marketer at 1Day2Write and NextCoursework defined, further adding,

> *"And, it affects how quickly your updated content gets to the index since Google's robots will scan your pages for updates and collect information, which will ultimately determine your position in search rankings. As a result, it should prevent Google from overcrowding your server, and have it crawl at a normal frequency."*

Why does a crawl budget matter?

Since Google is always assessing parameters to decide which of your pages should be ranked in searches and how fast to do so, you should optimize your crawl budget to achieve upscale online visibility. However, the number of pages your domain accommodates should never exceed your crawl budget, or else all pages over that limit will go unnoticed in search.

So, if you want to expand your online platform in the future, then keep reading.

How to optimize crawl budget

While there are still super heavy-duty things that many site runners might not think about, we're here to unmask them for your benefit. With that said, here are six ways to enable

crawl budget optimization, thus letting you watch out for things that might negatively affect your site.

1. Simplify your site’s architecture

Your website should be structured layer by layer, in the following order:

- The homepage
- Categories/tags
- Content pages

Afterward, review your site structure, before you organize pages around topics, and use internal links to guide crawlers.

2. Ensure that important pages are crawlable, not blocked

The .htaccess and robots.txt should not block your site’s important pages; and bots should be able to access CSS and Javascript files. However, in the same token, you should block content that you don’t want popping up in search results. Here are some of the best candidates for blocking:

- Pages with duplicated content
- “Under construction” areas of your site
- Dynamically generated URLs

However, search engine spiders don’t always respect the instructions contained in robots.txt. Although a page may be blocked in robots.txt, Google doesn’t cache it, but may occasionally hit it.

Instead, use robots.txt to save up your crawl budget and block individual pages you don’t consider important. Or, if you don’t want Google to hit it, use metatags.

3. Beware of redirect chains

A common-sense approach to ensuring healthy website health, you must avoid having redirect chains on your entire domain. Yes, avoid the 301 and 302 redirects at all costs! If you start accumulating a bunch of those, they can definitely hurt your crawl limit, to a point where crawlers will eventually stop crawling without getting to the page you need indexed.

So, keep in mind that one or two redirects here and there might not hurt much, but don’t let that number grow.

4. Prevent 404 and 410 error pages

In truth, 404 and 410 pages can eat into your crawl budget. Plus, these pages can also hurt your user experience. So, what can you do?

Fix all 4xx and 5xx status codes. Doing this will ensure that your crawl budget isn’t eaten up. And, fixing these codes can ensure that users get a good experience on your site.

Website audit tools like SE Ranking and Screaming Frog are effective for optimizing crawl budget.

5. Update, update, update

“It’s important to take care of your XML sitemap by updating it every so often”, says Jai Tardent, a business analyst at Australia2write and Britstudent. “When you update your sitemap, bots will have a much better and easier time understanding where the internal links lead.”

In addition, as you update, use only the URLs that your sitemap is familiar with. And, the URLs should correspond to the newest uploaded version of robots.txt.

6. Manage your URL parameters

If your content management system generates a lot of dynamic URLs, they'll eventually lead to one and the same page. However, by default, search engine bots will treat these URLs as separate pages, thus wasting your crawl budget and, potentially, creating content duplication concerns.

Therefore, manage your URL parameters, so that they don't create duplicates and confuse search engine bots. In your Google Search Console account, go to "Crawl," and then "URL Parameters."

Conclusion

So, if you're still not sold on the idea that crawl budget optimization is important for your website, please understand that it is because it helps your site not only get recognized in search results but also helps you prevent users from being led to a dead-end rather than your page.

We hope that this guide will help you optimize your crawl budget and improve your SEO in no time at all!

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Five reasons why SEO should be prioritized over paid media campaigns

30-second summary:

- Most marketers combine SEO and paid media campaigns, but the marketing budget between the two should not necessarily be split down the middle.
- Paid media campaigns, which include PPC, social, and influencer campaigns, are a one-and-done expense, meaning the investment doesn’t build on itself.
- SEO can take weeks or months to show results, but after the effort, it’s cost-effective and sustainable.
- All in all, SEO should be prioritized if you’re focused on the longevity of your company’s marketing scheme.
- Elevation Marketing’s Vice President of Strategy and Marketing Services explains why SEO gives more bang for

your buck.

US digital ad spending was expected to grow 19% to $129.34 billion by 2020, finally surpassing traditional advertising methods. According to eMarketer, this figure accounts for 54.2% of total ad spending in the country – and this isn't a fluke. Digital marketing *is* effective, but there are multiple routes marketers can take. So, how do you know which?

SEO and paid media campaigns are two of the most common digital marketing strategies, and they're often implemented together as a one-two punch. SEO is a more long-term play in which marketers will work to enhance a website's SERP rankings, and the latter includes anything from paid social media ads to PPC campaigns. While paid media can get you thousands of impressions, it may not always be worth the largest chunk of a marketing budget, especially if you're thinking about the bigger picture.

The truth is that most online experiences (about 68% according to research) begin with a search engine, and that's where SEO shines, despite the fact that 25% of marketers admitted to having a less than average understanding of organic traffic. A great SEO strategy won't see immediate returns like PPC campaigns might, but it provides an effective strategy that is far more scalable and sustainable.

For this reason, SEO should take priority overpaid media, especially when your marketing budget is tight, but ultimately both types of digital marketing strategies work best when used hand-in-hand.

1. SEO is cost-effective

The ROI of an SEO campaign is a bit harder to calculate than that of a paid campaign. If you're paying for links or ad clicks or paying an influencer to create a sponsored post, you can easily see the real-time profits. SEO is a little bit

different because it can take months to reap the benefits. Nonetheless, it’s still more cost-effective in the long run because once a comprehensive SEO strategy is correctly implemented, it’s set and tends to snowball. You only need to invest in maintenance and updates, rather than investing every single time you run a paid campaign.

When it comes to search engines, SEO generally has a smaller CPA (cost per acquisition) than PPC. That’s not to say that SEO doesn’t require an initial investment. A great strategy requires a sharp, well-versed professional – which does come at a premium. Google also uses more than 200 different factors to rank websites and some of these factors are constantly evolving, so a long-term investment is a must to keep up with the ever-changing SEO landscape, it just doesn’t usually cost as much as consistently running paid advertising campaigns throughout the entirety of your company’s lifespan.

There are also multiple resources on the web that allow you to learn the basics of SEO on your own. This technical SEO checklist gives step-by-step instructions on how to perform on-page checks that will boost your search engine rankings. This is perfect for those who are just starting out and want to get some base-level SEO added to their site.

2. SEO has longevity

You might get great results for things like paid search and digital display media, but the second the campaign ends, that success is over. For example, you can bid for a spot on the first page of Google (which can be very expensive depending on the keyword), but that disappears the second you stop paying for it. At the end of the day, paid media is artificially inflated growth.

There is some truth to the old adage that all good things take time, and SEO is a prime example. With a great strategy, you should see solid results by six months, and even more solid

results by a year, but these results don’t just disappear the second you decide to divest and reallocate your marketing budget to something else. Once your website’s SEO is established, it’s established (i.e. when you’re in, you’re in). The rest is maintenance, like minding Google’s core updates and creating regular content, or it will trickle to a stopover time. Think of SEO as building a foundation for a house and paid media campaigns as furnishing the room.

3. SEO is sustainable

Paid media’s longevity problem makes it difficult for startups and smaller, newer businesses to maintain long term. While most brands invest a solid amount in paid campaigns from the beginning, it’s not exactly a sustainable strategy. Think of it this way: the average social media influencer charges between $75 to $3,000 per sponsored post – and it can go way beyond that. That’s just for *one* post that will get buried in a feed, whereas a business could invest the same amount in SEO content, and see the returns for months on end.

In short, SEO is a sustainable way to elevate your online presence and raise brand awareness. Your ROI from SEO will continue to climb long after your paid media efforts have peaked. Even organic social media marketing doesn’t perform the same way. For example, pages with more than 500,000 likes on Facebook have seen a dramatic decrease in reach, possibly to encourage companies to increase their ad spend.

4. Users prefer organic links

Flatly put, people prefer and trust organic links over paid ads. In fact, organic results can get 15 times the CTR of paid search results if you rank well on a high search volume keyword, and that’s because people just don’t trust advertisements. Consumers want results because they’re relevant, not because someone paid to be there.

A survey done by MarketingSherpa showed that 70% of the links users click on are organic, while only 25% are paid. This emphasizes the importance of having your site rank organically as users are far more likely to visit your site via an organic link.

Of course, backlinking is also a crucial part of any SEO strategy. Users may overwhelmingly favor organic content, but there’s a fair chance they won’t see it unless you’ve got a solid link building strategy that includes placements from trustworthy, high-quality, third party websites. Studies have shown that 91% of all pages don’t get organic traffic from Google, largely because they don’t have any backlinks. More than half of all website pages don’t even have *one* backlink

when the more backlinks a page has, the higher it ranks on Google’s SERPs.

5. SEO is scalable

SEO is fully scalable, meaning you can adjust your campaigns as your company grows. In fact, many business owners first dive into the world of SEO by reading up and implementing their own basic strategy before they have the funds to bring in the professionals. The more you do, the better it’s going to work.

Paid media doesn’t work in the same way. Sure, it can generate impressions and raise the brand, but ad blindness is an extremely real consequence. According to Forbes, Americans are inundated with 4,000 to 10,000 every single day, and it’s no secret that they start to filter them out eventually.

Overall, a solid SEO strategy sets up a solid foundation for marketing success that can only be elevated through paid campaigns. The same can’t be said for the reverse.

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More about:

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