

Top 10 Optimizing For the Social Web Tips

Optimizing your website for search engines is no longer a question of filling it full of keywords and exact-match anchor text while madly blog-commenting in other people's blogs to create relevant backlinks. In fact, following this formula will almost certainly leave you down in the rankings under Google's Panda and Penguin algorithmic changes – and more are coming.

But you shouldn't just pay attention to Google: SEO nowadays involves maintaining an active social media presence and profiles. Social media actions can actually improve your Google rank, if done right. And you need to pay attention to what people see... and what's behind the scenes.

Here are ten highly relevant SEO practices for today...

1. Remove or Revamp Your Traditional Meta-tags

Google's Penguin algorithm filter tends to take meta-keywords and other traditional tags as keyword-stuffing. It won't help your site ranking – and it could hurt.

If you use the Thesis theme, check out instructions at Binary Turf on [removing the meta description tag](#) correctly.

Thesis SEO Tip For Google Penguin — Removing The META DESCRIPTION Tag

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Have you ever wondered how search engines use meta description? Search engines use the meta description in the results snippets in search results along with the title and the site url. It gives the visitors a general overview of the page. And providing the relevant information in the meta-description increases the possibility of gaining and attracting more visitors.



According to SearchEngineWatch, Penguin isn't actually an algorithm, but a "link quality filter" that "is designed to take out sites that use manipulative techniques to improve search visibility".

Bottom line: If you have too many repetitions in meta data, your site may be penalized.

2. Adjust and Correct Your Anchor Text

If your anchor text is an exact match to your keywords *and doesn't make descriptive, readable sense*, scrap it and give your anchor text more **clickably-appealing, descriptive words**. (That goes for the **Alt Tag** text for your graphics, too.)

You need to do this because Google's Penguin filter now targets and de-ranks exact-match domains (e.g. "highproteinfoodsfatlowcarb.com"), after Google clued on to the fact that names like these were evidence of attempts to manipulate. Anchor text has been affected too.

The less spammy you can make your anchor text and Alt tags, the better.



For example if you were displaying the [above photo](#) on your blog, you might want to change:

```
<a href="page.html"></a>
```

...to something more descriptive and real, such as:

```
<a href="page.html"></a>
```

Again, if you're trying to manipulate rather than describe when using keywords in anchor text, domain names or Alt tags, Google will penalize you.

3. Familiarize Yourself with Graph Search



The old way of searching involved keywords. Facebook's new [Graph Search](#) combines keywords plus your Friends' Facebook content.

This way, you can find out what connections you share with them, causes you both support, Pages you "Like", places you've both been connected with, common interests and just about every type of connection you can think of.

(Graph search results did dip recently, but Facebook assures the "dip" has been corrected.)

4. Optimize Your Facebook Page “About” Section

This is the one part of your Facebook Page where you can put your best keywords, descriptions and anchor text. Make the most of it, as artist [Steph Dix](#) has done here.



She has included in her description:

- Specific keywords (pencil portraits, free shipping worldwide, guarantee, website)
- A link to her website
- Email contact details

In addition, her text is not too long – it doesn't run off the page, with vital sentences hidden. It's clear and well-optimized.

5. Use Facebook Social Plugins

Once you click on artist, Steph Dix's link, you are taken to her [website](#)... where those who have "Liked" her page immediately see a widget from the [Facebook social plugins](#), containing their own Profile photo plus a selection of other fan photos.



Anyone who clicks on hypertext within the widget will be taken to her Facebook Page – and that is a high-quality backlink, as far as Google is concerned. She is leveraging the power of Facebook very efficiently.

6. Make the Most of Google+

SEO author Simon Penson [predicted recently](#) that Google+ will play a much more prominent role in **validating social links** over the coming months, so if you haven't created a profile there yet, do so.

And if you have signed up, but visit Google+ only sporadically or not at all, start exploring Google+ and spending time interacting and exploring its SEO-powerful platforms, apps and features daily.

One of its most powerful features to explore: Google+ Hangouts. If you live-stream them, they will be automatically recorded and posted to your YouTube channel, which is now also automatically linked with Google+.



If you haven't yet bothered with Google Hangouts, [learn more about them](#) right now.

7. Make Sure Your Titles Match Your Content

Again, it's all about not being carried away, trying to include keywords. Titles that don't feel natural and don't match the post they headline not only will displease Google, but will not get shared via social sites (as well as losing trust).

Here's an example of a simple but effective title followed by relevant content from [Copyblogger](#).

How to Write Magnetic Headlines



Your headline is the first, and perhaps only, impression you make on a prospective reader. Without a compelling promise that turns a browser into a reader, the rest of your words may as well not even exist. So, from a [copywriting](#) and [content marketing](#) standpoint, writing great headlines is a critical skill.

Here are some interesting statistics:

Your best bet is always to make sure your blog post or web page title are:

- Attention-grabbing
- Easy to read
- Descriptive
- Clean

A truly interesting and intriguing title is your best route to making sure your posts and pages are found and shared.

8. Make it Easy for Visitors and Readers to Share

Make sure you've included **social media plugins, widgets, share and follow badges, buttons and icons** to help people share your content with one click.

Place them above the fold on all your web pages in the upper right-hand side of your page.



For extra effectiveness, include **calls to action** in or with your social media buttons, such as [Daylan Pearce](#) does in the right hand side of his blog, above.

9. Clean Up Your Guest Blogging Practices

Last year saw Google over-zealously penalize exact-match domains and anchor text, akin to thousands of healthy trees in a forest being chopped down to make sure a dead one in their midst is culled.

Now, just as their Search Evaluation team is reassuring us that they've learned from this and will be toning down the axe use, it looks as if Google has a new target: Guest blogging.

A recent YouTube video from Google's Matt Cutts warns of what to expect – and [what you can do to comply with new guest blogging rules](#).



To sum up what seems to be in the wind...

- Make sure guest post writing – to and fro – is of the **highest quality**
- Use guest bloggers who either are terrific, **professional-level writers** or who have a **well-established and validated reputation** in your niche
- Write or accept **longer posts** – Google now frowns on short guest posts under 400 words, seeing them as excuses to link
- **Don't accept guest posts that are published elsewhere.** When someone wants to write for you, make sure you ask that the content be original and exclusive to your blog
- Posts from and to other blogs should be **relevant to the blog's overall mission.** Posts should be eloquent and well-thought-out
- Make sure your **guest posts are from writers who run high-quality blogs.** You may be penalized for spammy back-links in your guest poster's blog, so check that blog out first, if you're not familiar with your guest. (Hint: See how well she or he ranks in a Google search.)

And from Jeff Foster of WebBizIdeas (in an actual guest post in [Pro Blogger](#), February 2013):

- Stop using terms like “guest posts” and “guest bloggers” (if you have to spell it out for readers, he suggests calling the writer a “guest author”)
- Don't let your guest author put “unnatural links” in their post or author bios
- A simple link to their website is okay

One last thing to do: Create a [rel=author](#) tag for yourself, allowing Google to validate your own blog (and use guest posters who are also validated this way).

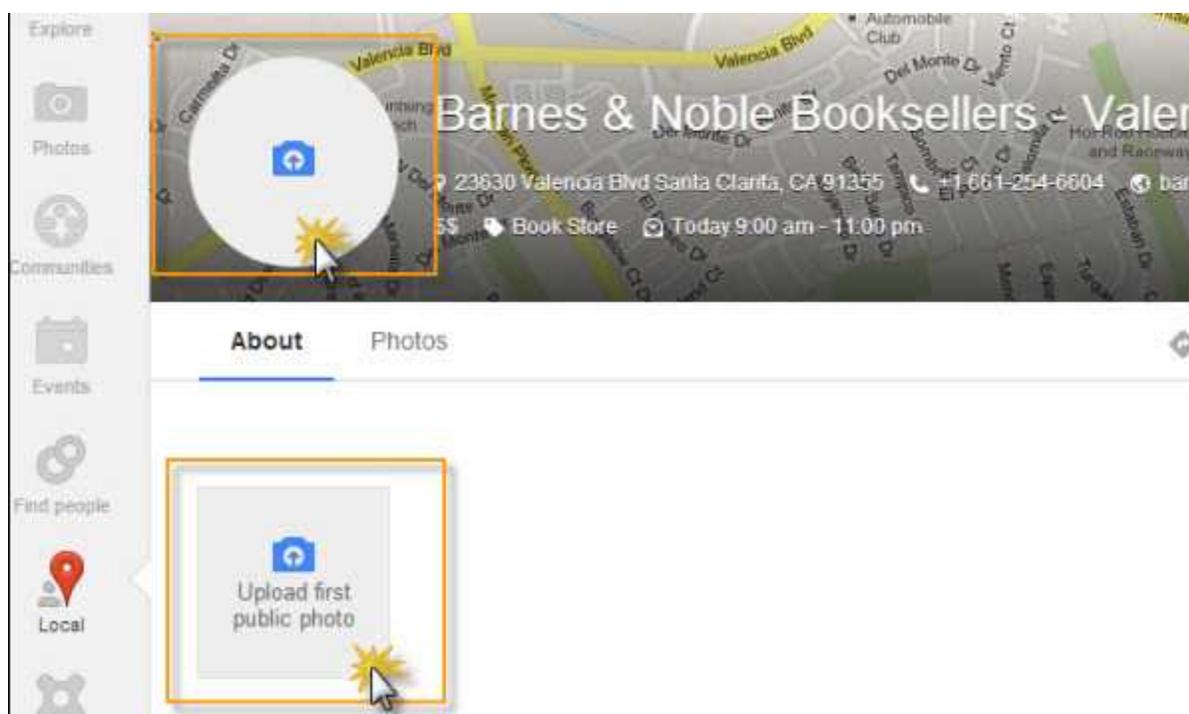
10. Optimize Your Social Media Profiles (and Claim your Pages)

It's not enough simply to *use* social media in 2013: You also need to make sure you *optimize* your social profiles to the max. **Fill out all Profile sections across all social networks as fully as possible.**

Think of doing this as an investment.

For example, if your local business appears in a Google Plus Local search for your city, make sure you claim it and add your photos, your logo, your description and your contact information, the way you want it.

Make sure no sections are [left blank](#).



Social profiles with missing elements are not ranked as highly as those with complete profiles and validating elements such as business logos and clear descriptions.

It is as important to optimize what people see as much as it is to optimize HTML and meta-tags, just as it is as important to optimize for your social networks as it is to optimize for Google searches.

Creating a well-balanced, SEO optimized web presence for both the search engines and social sites – but most of all for the benefit of your ideal viewer – will have a visibility effect worth more than the sum of its parts.



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