

How to make better web pages (and better websites)

The web experience has changed. As web users, we are smarter, knowing what we want, when we want it, and more of us know how to get it in the easiest way possible.

Long gone are the days when you can expect a visitor to your website to do all the hard work to find something. Why? Because if they can't find what they are looking for from you, they will find it from somewhere else very quickly and easily.

Better websites

Better websites are made up of better web pages. It's that simple.

A website is basically a collection of web pages that have a connection in some way (ie a company web site, subject specific, product specific) but each page needs to be seen as an individual entity.

Standard Web Sites

The standard website may look something like this.

| | | | |
|-----------|------------------|---------|---------|
| Home page | | | |
| Services | Examples | Contact | About |
| generic | generic | generic | generic |
| generic | generic | generic | generic |
| generic | target (generic) | generic | generic |

If a visitor arrives from a search engine, they may enter at the home page. As a web user this is annoying because when you arrive at the website home page, you will need to do more searching to get to the specific page you want.

There is an often quoted statistic that the page someone needs should be no less than three clicks away. Potentially, that's two too many.

This process can be optimised by optimising web pages. Theoretically, the searcher could do the search in a search engine and the page they come into, is the exact one they need.

Optimising web pages

Search engines (and visitors) are looking for relevance and many websites don't offer this. A web page (not website) has many different elements when 'coded'. The key ones, for optimisation, are:

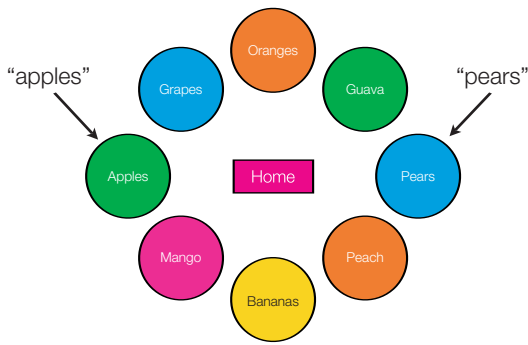
1. **Content** - the actual words on the page
2. **Meta Description** - A line of code on the page that describes what the web page is about
3. **Page Title** - A tag <title> in the code that is the name of the web page
4. The actual **name of the web page file** and the directory it is in (eg. website.co.uk/fruit/apples.htm)
5. **The Main Header** (H1 tag) of the page
6. **Meta Keywords** - A selection of words define the content of the page

Many websites ignore these important points about a web page (and the entire website in some cases). Others are lazy and apply the same information (usually points 2/3/6) across the whole website as generics

Let's get specific

Now imagine a scenario with specifics. You optimise every web page. Your better web page about "apples" is all about "apples". The title of the web page is "apples", the content talks about "apples" (not any other fruit); the meta data is about "apples" only, as is the description.

You will now have a much better chance of being found by a search engine for the search term

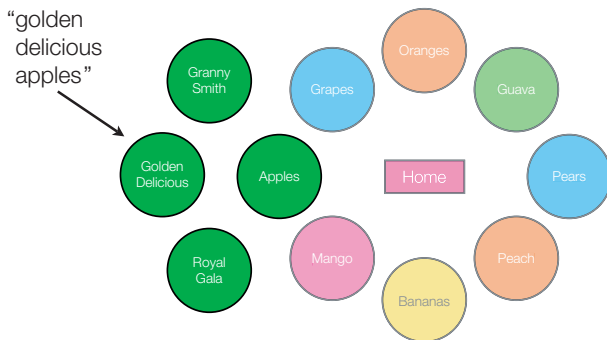


"apples". It's a little extra work but it makes sense.

Don't get tempted about slipping in something about pears - "I was looking for apples - talk to me about apples".

Let's get more specific

What are the chances of someone typing "apples" into a search engine? Think about the last time you used a search engine. How specific were you when you typed in the search term?



Imagine if you had an even better web page that was all about "golden delicious apples". (nb. most people type between three and six words in a search term).

Better business-to-business web pages

So, I want to attract people to my web site. I have to create better web pages about every specific

service (and then some more perhaps, ie geographical location). I have to think about what people may type into a search engine. I also need to think who my customers are. Would they type in 'bespoke' or 'custom'. These things have a big bearing on your keywords.

But I also have to give the 'explorer' reason to read my content.

This white paper web page is all about building better web pages. It has genuine value. With the right knowledge, you could go off and implement a lot of what I have covered and if that's the case, I'm glad to have been of service.

From that perspective, this web page has added value. The visitor will leave thinking a little bit more of The Escape and what we are about. He may even tell someone who might be interested in what we do. But, if you don't have the knowledge to implement these changes to create better web pages yourself and you understand the reasoning behind it, you may even respect our knowledge and start looking at what else we have to say. You may even pick up the phone and make contact.

And still, at this point, I haven't actually asked for anything in return - no e-mail log in to read my white paper, no charge - nothing. That's the new prospecting. If I manage to entice one in ten thousand visitors over a year, purely through this "Better Web Page" white paper article, it has more than covered the two hours I spent writing it.

Even Better Web Pages

There is obviously a lot more to making better web pages including incoming links (internal and external), copywriting, and propagation. However, if you just concentrated on the points above you should see a difference and, of course, measure the results.

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