



Top 10 Search Engine Ranking Factors

This is a list of the factors that can influence a web document's rank at the major search engines (Yahoo!, MSN, & Google) for a particular term or phrase. These results are from a survey of SEO professionals conducted by SEOMoz.org. The total score for each factor has been averaged out and displayed out of a possible perfect 5.00.

1. Title Tag - 4.57/5.00

Denoted by the <title> tags in HTML, this tag always shows at the top of a browser window and often appears in the SERPs as the title of the web page.

2. Anchor Text of Links - 4.46/5.00

The phrasing, terms, order and length of a link's anchor text (Anchor text is the visible hyperlinked text on the page) is one of the largest factors taken into account by the major search engines for ranking. Specific anchor text links help a site to rank better for that particular term/phrase at the search engines.

In a normally built site, anchor text is usually used to indicate the subject matter of the page that it links to. This pattern of usage has been applied in search engine algorithms to enhance the relevance of the "target" or the "landing page" URL for the keywords appearing within the anchor text.

3. Keyword Use in Document Text - 4.38/5.00

The use of queried terms (the keywords users search for) appearing in the document text.

4. Accessibility of Document - 4.3/5.00

Inaccessible documents could be due to 404 errors, server mishaps, plug-in requirements or other technical issues. Accessibility can also be compromised by using URL re-directs that search engine spiders cannot follow, hiding content behind select forms, JavaScript or other hard-to-spider forms of navigation including frames and Flash.

5. Links to Document from Site-Internal Pages - 4.15/5.00

A specific page's importance in a site's overall architecture can be measured by the importance and depth of the other pages on the site that refer to the page in question. An internally well-linked to document is generally considered more important than an obscured or buried page.

6. Primary Subject Matter of Site - 4.00/5.00

A website's primary topic (as determined through analysis of the content of its hosted documents) may influence how well it is able to rank pages on similar, corresponding or off-topic subjects. If a site is particularly focused in one niche or another (from finance to politics to restaurants) documents hosted at that site on specific subjects encompassed by the broader topic may have a better chance of ranking well. There are also many sites on topics like news or general information distribution (e.g. CNN.com, Topix.net, etc.) that encompass all or many subjects equally and may be able to rank documents for a wide variety of topics.

7. External Links to Linking Pages - 3.92/5.00

The external links that point to a document can have a strong effect on the power and relevancy that links from that document to other documents carry.

8. Link Popularity of Site in Topical Community - 3.77/5.00

Topical communities are measured by the search engines as groups of websites who interlink to and with one another frequently and carry a similar topic or theme. Since topical communities are relevant and "on-topic", the links from them carry great weight. A site that is included in a topical community by way of links from many other members may be considered more relevant and authoritative on the community's subject matter.

9. Global Link Popularity of Site - 3.69/5.00

Global link popularity simply measures the importance of all the links to a unique domain, with more links from more important sites (relative to their own link popularity) typically having stronger influence.

10. Keyword Spamming - 3.69/5.00

Stuffing, stacking or overusing key terms in an attempt to appear "relevant" for terms/phrases may negatively affect rankings.

Full results can be viewed online:

<http://www.seomoz.org/articles/search-ranking-factors.php>

SEOMoz

SEOMoz provides companies around the world with consulting, Internet marketing and search engine optimization services. Although our home offices in Seattle, WA serve as our base of operations, we're frequently found globetrotting across the US, Canada & Europe. Our goal is to provide a high level of service and education to businesses, individuals, non-profits and government organizations so they can best leverage the unique reach of the Internet to increase visibility and achieve success.