

21 Covert SEO Secrets to Boost Google Rankings, Drive A *Flood of Visitors* And Dominate Your Competition.



By Aidan Booth

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Part 1: On Page SEO – The Essentials

Before I get to the 21 Covert SEO Secrets, I want to run through the fundamentals of “On Page SEO”...if you don’t have this stuff right, then it’s pointless even applying the other secrets – first you NEED to get this stuff in order.

In this first section I’ll run through:

- Amount of Content Required (on each page)
- Ad to Content Ratio
- Unique Content
- Unique Images
- Content Location
- Keyword Density
- Broken Links
- Domain Name Choice
- Fresh Content
- Website Speed
- Required Pages

Once we’ve covered that, we’ll dive into the Ninja moves, the future of SEO, **Engagement**.

Time to get started...

Amount of Content Required

There’s not really any “rule” to the right amount of content required on each page.

Highly successful eCommerce websites (like Amazon.com) work fine with a very small amount of content on product pages, and informational websites (such as Wikipedia.org) also work fine with huge amounts of content on each page (in many cases, thousands of words).

As a general rule, on informational sites such as AdSense sites and Affiliate sites, I aim for a minimum of 300 words per page. For eCommerce sites, I aim for at least 150 words per product page.

As long as pages are formatted well (lots of whitespace, short paragraphs, large font etc), there’s no limit to the number of words you can put on a page – more words will never hurt your rankings.

Ad to Content Ratio

Ever since Google Panda was first released in February 2011, it's become important that on websites such as affiliate sites and AdSense sites, the ad to content ratio is low.

If you've only got 350 words of content, don't overdo the number of ads or affiliate links. As a general rule on pages with 350 words of content, I'd aim for 3 AdSense blocks or affiliate links at most.

The more content you have, the more affiliate links or AdSense advertising you can use.

Taking this idea one step further, the position of your ads and affiliate links is also a factor in your rankings.

Google doesn't want to see ads above the fold (the section of the website that can be seen before scrolling down). If you do have ads above the fold (Affiliate links, AdSense, or something similar), keep them to an absolute minimum.

Your initial aim should be to keep your visitor on your website and minimize the number of people who click the back button. The fewer ads you show near the top of your pages, the lower your bounce rate will be. Avoid the temptation to push your AdSense ads and affiliate links to the top of your pages.

Unique Content

One thing that's becoming more important is the use of unique content.

While content curation and syndicating content from different sources can work, Google still prefers unique content, especially on small websites.

Everything should be unique, even your Privacy page, your Disclaimer page, your About page etc.

If you've got 10 pages on your website, and the Privacy page is a direct copy of some other Privacy page on some other website, that'll make 10% of your entire website duplicate content.

If you've got 300 pages on your website and only a few pages that are duplicates, the percentage of duplicate content will be much lower (around 1-2%).

As far as your website content goes, the BEST thing you can do to put yourself in a strong SEO position, it to use 100% unique content.

Unique Images

Unique images are an extension of unique content. Where possible, try to use unique images.

Google recognizes images and knows when and where they've been used in the past. Google also knows that the highest quality sites often use unique images in their pages.

Now, don't get me wrong, you can nail down top rankings using basic stock images that've been used thousands of times before (I use stock images all the time), but using brand new images that you create yourself, or images that you have the unique rights to use, is another way that you can show Google you're serious and it certainly won't hurt your rankings!

Content Location

As I mentioned in the "Ad to Content Ratio" section, Google wants to see as much content as possible above the fold because they believe this gives the website visitor a better experience.

Not only do Google want to see this, but if users are bombarded with ads and affiliate links as soon as they arrive on your site, you'll have worse on page metrics (high bounce rate, low time on site, few pages visited per visit, etc) which will ultimately cause you to get bad rankings.

Make sure you have at least 1 full paragraph of content at the top of your site BEFORE displaying any ads or affiliate links (this doesn't really apply for eCommerce websites).

One way you can get more quality content above the fold, is to make your header image narrower. Avoid using wide header images and stick to using narrow ones.

I aim for my header images to be a maximum of about 160 pixels high, and 120 pixels high is even better.

Check out the size of the header image on AidanBooth.com for an example: <http://aidanbooth.com>

Keyword Density

Reaching a certain keyword density should NOT be a target these days. In fact, I often check to make sure my keywords haven't been over optimized for.

I ensure that at an absolute maximum, my main target keyword is being used less than 1% of the time on my pages.

Note: A 1% keyword density means using your target keyword 5 times in a 500 word article.

When I outsource articles, or when I write them myself, I don't target any certain keyword. I just write about a topic naturally and use the keyword when required – I don't go to any special measures to ensure it's used a certain number of times.

Broken Links

Google prefers websites that are error free. When Google's robots "crawl" (scan) your website, they see every link you've got and they follow them to see where they go.

The best quality websites on the internet do NOT have broken links.

Here's a tool that'll scan your website and tell you how many broken links you've got:

<http://www.internetmarketingninjas.com/seo-tools/google-sitemap-generator/>

Make sure all your links (both internal links and outbound links) are working and you'll get better results.

Domain Name Choice

Believe it or not, your domain name WILL impact how well you rank.

Why? Because it has a direct impact on your CTR (click through rate) from the Google results pages (SERPs – "search engine results pages").

Authoritative sounding domain names have higher click through rates (than average) from the SERPs and this shows Google that your website is more likely a higher quality.

Here are a few examples of good and bad domain names (I've just made these up make a point):

Good domain names:

- SwimmingTipsOnline.com
- OutdoorFurnitureDepot.com
- LondonTouristAdvice.com
- WoodworkingGuru.com

Bad domain names:

- Swimming-Tips-Online.com (dashes)

- OutdoorFurnitures.com (doesn't make sense)
- LondonTouristAdviceOnline.com (too long)
- WoodworkingGuru.info (.info's don't rank well!)

The good domain names would definitely get a higher click through rate from the search engines than the bad ones.

As far domain name extensions go, ".com" is still the best performing domain name extension and pretty much the only one I use nowadays (I'll sometimes use a .net or a .org to promote a product launch, but that's the only time).

If you're targeting a keyword in one particular country, say in Australia, you could use ".com.au" and it'd be noticeably easier to get rankings. The same applies for other countries such as the UK where a ".co.uk" domain name would be beneficial.

Fresh Content

Google knows how often you update your website, and in most cases, websites that are updated more frequently get better rankings. It's not critical that you have fresh content, you can get top rankings without it (I have on hundreds of occasions), but adding fresh content definitely does help.

If your website is built using Wordpress, adding comments to pages and posts is one of the best ways to add fresh content.

It's easy to outsource because you don't need to provide any private login details, no formatting of any kind is required, and it provides an additional form of social proof (because you post/page will have the number of comments next to it).

To emphasize how useful comments can be, imagine if all your pages/posts have 500 words, and you add just ONE 50 word comment to each page/post, you'll increase your ENTIRE website content by 10%, and Google rewards new content!

I'll talk more about using social proof to improve your website performance later, right now just know that comments are a great way to add additional content to your websites.

Website Speed

Matt Cutts (head of Google Web Spam team) has openly said that Google prefers fast websites to slow ones and that website speed is a factor in their ranking algorithm.

It makes sense for a couple of reasons:

1. Fast websites give users a better experience (no one likes waiting for pages to load)
2. Google saves money

Google's robots have BILLIONS of websites to crawl and slow websites use more resources which costs Google more money.

One second multiplied by 1 billion websites is equivalent to 31 YEARS...when you think about the resources Google needs to scan that many websites, it makes sense that they prefer faster websites.

Website speed can be dramatically reduced by minimizing the number of plugins you use, and also by using caching plugins.

With millions of downloads between them, WP Super Cache (<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/wp-super-cache/>) and WP Total Cache (<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/w3-total-cache/>) are the two of the most popular options

To check your website speed you can use <http://tools.pingdom.com/fpt/>.

Required Pages

Five pages that you absolutely MUST have on your website are the following:

1. About Page
2. Contact Page
3. Privacy Policy
4. Disclaimer
5. Sitemap

For good measure, I recommend that you ALSO add the following 2 pages:

6. Disclosure
7. Terms of Service/Terms of Use Page

I'll now give a brief explanation of each.

About Page: The about page is fairly self explanatory, but nevertheless, people always seem to find a way to mess it up!

Here's a good example of what an about page should be like on a small website (this is what Matt Cutts, the head of Google Webspam, uses on his blog):

Matt Cutts: Gadgets, Google, and SEO

About Me

Hi, my name is Matt Cutts and I joined Google as a software engineer in January 2000. I'm currently the head of Google's Webspam team.

Before Google, I worked on my Ph.D. in computer graphics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I have an M.S. from UNC-Chapel Hill, and B.S. degrees in both mathematics and computer science from the University of Kentucky.

I wrote the first version of SafeSearch, which is Google's family filter, and I've worked on search quality and webspam at Google for the last several years.



You can visit Matt Cutts blog here: <http://www.mattcutts.com/blog/about-me/>

As you can see, the about page is simple but it's what Google wants. A few short paragraphs explaining who you are (whether you're a one-man-band or a business), what you do, and why you've made the website.

Here's an example of a good about page from a large eCommerce store (RidingToys.com):

About Us

Welcome to RidingToys.com!

We offer the best selection of quality products you'll find anywhere. If you're looking for a wide assortment of items at great prices, you've come to the right place. You'll find an abundance of exciting options to choose from at RidingToys.com, and our checkout process is quick, safe, and secure.

When it comes to providing the customer with just the right thing, we're the experts. We work closely with manufacturers to bring you a variety of unique choices, at prices that fit every budget. You don't have to travel from store to store looking for what you need. You're certain to find great products, great value, and great service at RidingToys.com.

When you place your order today, you'll get your item quickly, so you can enjoy it as soon as possible. We understand that shipping costs can be an issue when it comes to the items we sell. That's why we offer free or low-cost shipping on nearly every item we stock. Plus, we offer no-hassle returns - **your satisfaction is guaranteed.**

We are here to answer your calls from 8AM-10PM ET, Mon - Fri; 10AM-6PM ET Sat. Just call **1-866-530-4152** or [click here to contact us](#). We strive to answer your e-mail within 24 hours.

Enjoy safe, secure shopping. RidingToys.com uses a safe and secure online ordering system that protects your privacy every step of the way. Plus, RidingToys.com is **thawte SSL Certified**, meaning we offer secure communications by encrypting all your data.

We work hard to provide you with a great shopping experience at RidingToys.com, and we're confident you'll enjoy the product you purchase. After all, that's why we're here.

Thanks for shopping with us!

The RidingToys.com team

If the above image is too small to read, you can check it out here:
<http://www.ridingtoys.com/info/about-us.cfm>

Contact Page: The contact page obviously needs to put people in contact with you (or the owner of a website).

Until recently, I'd always used a contact form as my contact page so that I could avoid sharing any of my personal details or my email address.

Nowadays however, I've gone one step further and in addition to the contact form, I provide a name, a contact email address, and where possible, a physical address and phone number as well.

The reason that I recommend actually writing your details in addition to using a form is that Google can't scan the form but they can scan written details.

Google wants to see whether or not you provide contact information, and writing it out in plain text is the best way to show them.

Be careful with the contact information you use. If you want to get top rankings in the USA (where, in most cases, the most traffic is), it pays to use a USA address and a USA phone number (as this shows Google that you're USA based).

I use a virtual address (which I got through EarthClassMail.com) and an 800 number (which I got through Grasshopper.com).

All the best websites provide comprehensive contact information, and so should you – Google rewards it.

Privacy Page: I've recently changed my stance on Privacy Policies. Until recently I've always just used a template generated at <http://www.serprank.com/privacy-policy-generator/>.

Now however, I'm creating slightly modified versions of that template.

The reason being is that I want my Privacy Policy to be as unique as possible.

Now, it's not essential that you have a unique Privacy Policy, in fact, millions of websites use the exact same Privacy Policies. However, Google DOES prefer unique content and in an ideal situation your Privacy Policy should be made and customized for your website.

Disclaimer Page: Here's what Matt Cutts uses for his Disclaimer page (<http://www.mattcutts.com/blog/disclaimer/>):

Matt Cutts: Gadgets, Google, and SEO

Disclaimer

by MATT CUTTS on DECEMBER 22, 2005
in GOOGLE/SEO, PERSONAL, WEBLOG/BLOG

I'm one of several Googlers who answer questions online and sometimes for the press. I usually handle questions about webmasters or SEO, so in those areas I'm more likely to make sense and less likely to say something stupid. If I post something here that you find helpful as you build or manage your web presence, that's wonderful. But when push comes to shove: This is my personal blog. The views expressed on these pages are mine alone and not those of my employer.

Q: Heh. Did you get a talking to?

A: No, I haven't. Hopefully I never will.

Q: Why are you doing this now?

A: Just in case. If I say something stupid in the future, it's better to be able to point out that the stupidity is mine, and mine alone. My stupidity! You can't have it! 😊



In most cases, Disclaimer pages don't need to be long and exhaustive. They just need to state what you are and aren't taking responsibility for.

If you've got a health site but you're not a qualified Doctor, it'd be a good idea to state that fact and tell people that the information on your site is your opinion only and that they should see a Physician for qualified opinion.

If you've got a website about training dogs, you can do the same thing. Basically, use these pages to protect yourself from people who (in rare instances) may try to claim something from you that they believe you haven't delivered.

Sitemap: A sitemap is a simple page that "maps out" your entire website. As I use Wordpress for my websites, I use a plugin to automatically create my sitemaps.

I've been using the same plugin for years and it works just fine. You can download it here:

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/google-sitemap-generator/>

Here's an example of a sitemap:

<http://aidanbooth.com/sitemap.xml>

Disclosure: Matt Cutts uses his disclosure page to state that he works for Google, that he's paid a salary by Google and that he owns stocks in Google.

Here's his full disclosure statement:

Matt Cutts: Gadgets, Google, and SEO

Disclosure

by MATT CUTTS on OCTOBER 5, 2009
in PERSONAL, WEBLOG/BLOG

I was glad to see that the FTC [unanimously approved](#) new guidelines regarding endorsements and testimonials. The updated guidelines affirm the principle that material connections behind endorsements should be disclosed. This seems like a great time to offer my own disclosure information.

I am currently an employee of [Google](#). I receive a salary from them and I also own Google stock and options.

Other than compensation from Google, I don't accept any money or [other gifts of value](#) from any companies or individuals. I don't accept speaking fees, consulting fees, honoraria, or trips. I don't accept free, discounted, or loaned products. When I receive unsolicited gifts of value from companies or individuals in the scope of work, I give away those gifts.

When I speak at a conference or event, I generally do not pay a registration fee for that event. Some conferences also waive registration fees for that event for one or more of my colleagues or a traveling companion. Either my company or I pay my own travel and hotel expenses when I speak at an event.

I do not run advertisements or otherwise receive any monetary compensation from the operation of my website.

Added January 16, 2010: A few years ago my wife and I formed a non-profit foundation. Neither of us are paid a salary from the foundation. Example groups that the foundation has donated to include the Electronic Frontier Foundation, MAPLight, Change Congress, the Sunlight Foundation, Free Press, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, Committee to Protect Journalists, Public.Resource.Org, Khan Academy, Code for America, charity: water, and Room to Read. The Employer Identification Number (EIN) of our foundation is 203865461.

I have invested in Perfect Third (the company that makes the [WakeMate](#)), [Zencoder](#), [Cardpool](#), [Tasty Labs](#), [Drchrono](#), [Grubwithus](#), [PoundPay](#), [Apportable](#), [Mailgun](#), and [Parse](#). I have also invested in [Lowercase Capital](#) (Lowercase Ventures Fund I), [Y Combinator](#) (Y Combinator Fund II), and Lowercase 140.



You can also check out his disclosure statement here:
<http://www.mattcutts.com/blog/disclosure/>

The most common disclosure that you'll need to make on your websites is to state that you earn money from your website.

If you run an AdSense website, make it clear on the disclosure page that you earn money from AdSense.

If you run an affiliate website, make it clear that you earn money from products listed on your website.

Terms of Service/Terms of Use: This page is optional and I don't always use it as it often repeats much of what's already normally covered on the Privacy page, the Disclosure page, and in particular, the Disclaimer page.

The only time I normally use a Terms of Use page is on an eCommerce website.

Terms of Use pages are set up to protect the website owner from claims that website visitors may make and typically state rules that visitors must abide by in order to use your website.

Here's an example of a Terms of Use page on the RidingToys.com website:

<http://www.ridingtoys.com/info/toa.cfm>

Other Recommended On Page Elements

"Copyright 2012" Notice: Adding the Copyright warning to the footer of your website pages is another small thing you can do to show Google that you're serious about your website.

All serious websites use a copyright clause, and while I'm not 100% sure whether it's something Google checks for or not, it certainly won't hurt to have it.

Unique Favicon: A Favicon is the little image that appears in the website address bar in your browser.

Here's an example of a group of unique Favicons:



Like having a “Copyright” notice in your footer, having a unique Favicon isn’t necessarily going to earn you any credit from Google, but it certainly won’t hurt and it’s another way show Google that you’re serious – every little thing you can do helps!

Part 2: Engagement Secrets

The 3 Vital Metrics

Since the release of Google Panda, there's so much more to on page SEO than just getting the basics right. Making sure your visitor metrics are in line with what Google wants to see now has a big impact on rankings.

There are 3 vital on page metrics that you need to focus on:

- Bounce Rate
- Time on Site
- Pages Per Visit

Get these right, and you'll go a LONG way to showing Google that your website gives your visitors what they need.

In order to know your metrics, you need to have an analytics program installed. My favorites are:

- Clicky.com
- Google Analytics
- Stat Counter

All three of the above services will give you the information needed.

Here's what I set as a bare minimum for my metric goals:

Bounce Rate – must be less than 60%

Time on Site – must be 2 minutes or more

Pages Per Visit – must be at least 2 pages per visit

If your website doesn't perform well for one of these metrics, it can be the difference between SEO success, and SEO failure.

The good news is that if you focus on improving JUST the bounce rate, everything else tends to improve as well. So when I'm looking at improving a website's on page metrics, I first look to improve the bounce rate.

21 Ninja Tactics To Improve Your Vital Metrics

Here are a list of 21 things you can do right now, to instantly improve your bounce rate (designed for Affiliate sites and AdSense sites – also works for eCommerce sites).

1. Increase The Amount Of Internal Linking

By increasing the number of internal links in each of your articles (or on eCommerce product pages), you can drastically increase the number of pages per visit, which instantly lowers the bounce rate and also normally increases time on site as well.

Here's an example of internal linking: <http://thehorseridingsite.com>

As you can see on the site above, there are plenty of relevant internal links.

2. Increase The Font Size

In some cases, websites lose visitors because their fonts are too small. This may sound trivial, but size 12 font is TOO SMALL for a large segment of the population, especially older visitors.

By simply increasing your font size to size 14, you can often reduce bounce rate.

NOTE: Font size is more important for some niches than others. For example, the "gardening" niche is a niche that interests an older segment of the population compared to the "World of Warcraft" niche which is popular amongst younger people.

3. Add At Least 10 Facebook Likes To Every Page

The reason it's important to show Facebook Likes and other social shares (Tweets, Google +1's etc), is that they're "social proof".

They show people that your site is popular. They show your visitors that your site is where the party is.

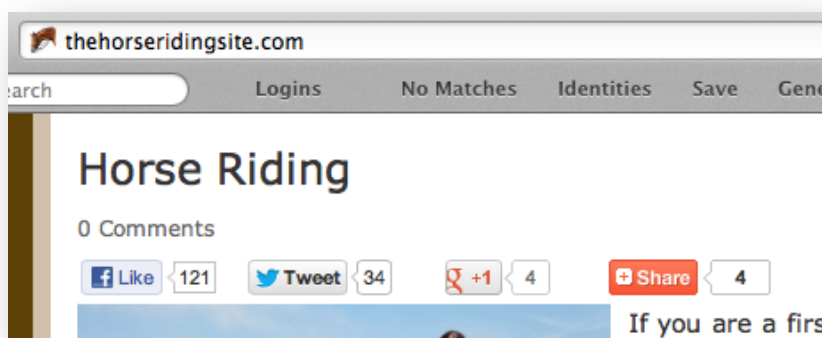
I recommend installing a social plugin that clearly shows the number of Likes, Google +1's and Tweets as a bare minimum. If you're using Wordpress, there are plenty of options available, two of my favorites are:

Slick Social Shares: <http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/slick-social-share-buttons/>



The above screenshot is taken from <http://aidanbooth.com>

AddThis: <http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/addthis/>



The above screenshot is taken from <http://thehorseridingsite.com>

Once you've got a social icons displayed on your site, make sure you get some social activity. If your website is useful, then over time people will naturally click the Like button and use other social shares. To give yourself a social boost from the beginning, I recommend using Fiverr.com and paying someone \$5 to make a few Likes etc.

NOTE: If you do pay someone on Fiverr.com to make Likes etc, make sure you only get 10-20 at a time...more than this will look unnatural and unrealistic.

4. Add An Author Name On Your Website

By default, all Wordpress websites use "Admin" as the author name on posts and pages. Make sure you change this to a real name (or a pen name). Here's an example of how the Author Name can be displayed in Wordpress:

December 2012 Internet Marketing Update

Posted by [Aidan](#) in [Updates from Aidan](#) · 53 Comments

Hey, and welcome to my end-of-2012/start-of-2013 blog post!

You can change the author name from “Admin” to the name you want to use by going to the “Your Profile” settings page inside the “Users” menu inside Wordpress.

5. Add An Author Photo To Your Pages

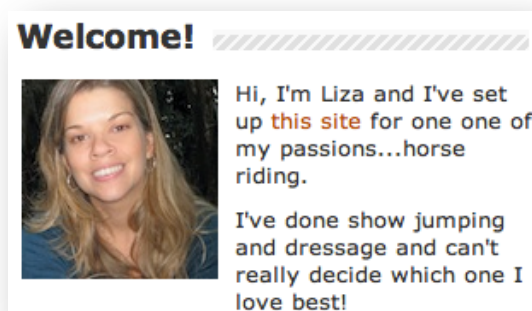
The author photo is even more powerful than the author name. Author photos show your visitors who’s talking to them and instantly increase trust.

Here are a couple of examples:



Above is the “author photo” I use for AidanBooth.com. Alongside it I welcome my visitors to my site.

Here’s another example:



The above photo is the author photo on TheHorseRidingSite.com. A simple photo like this has proven to reduce bounce rate and increase time on site.

You don't need to use your own photo. If you prefer, you can buy a stock photo for about \$1-\$2 from websites like <http://www.veer.com> and <http://www.istockphoto.com>.

6. Add A Section Showing "Top Rated Articles"

If you tell your visitors which pages on your website are the most popular, they'll be more inclined to visit them.

Here's an example:



The above image is taken from TheHorseRidingSite.com. The "WP Category Post Widget" plugin (free) has been used to create that list, you can learn more about it [here](http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/wp-category-posts-list/):

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/wp-category-posts-list/>

Just like all the other tricks I've spoken about in this section, adding a "Top 3 Articles" list to the sidebar of your site reduces bounce rate, increases time on site, and increases the number of pages people visit.

Note: On eCommerce sites, you can do something similar by displaying "Top 3 Seller" lists.

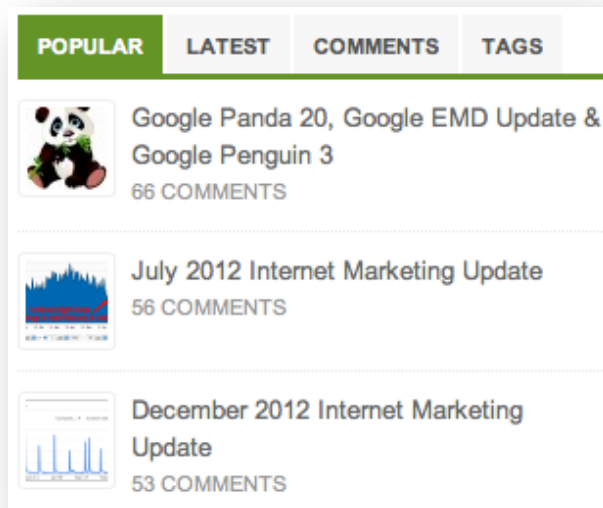
7. Add Recent Comments & User Reviews

Adding recent comments, reviews or testimonials to websites is a GREAT way to show your visitors that your website is popular. Along with adding comments, it's helpful to make it obvious that people have been commenting...here's how I do it on AidanBooth.com:

Google Panda 20, Google EMD Update &

Posted by [Aidan](#) in [Updates from Aidan](#) · 66 Comments

As you can see in the image above, at the very top of every post I show how many people have commented. I also show the number of comments in the menu in the sidebar:



These subtle additions all add up to drastically improve the 3 vital metrics (bounce rate, time on site, and pages per visit).

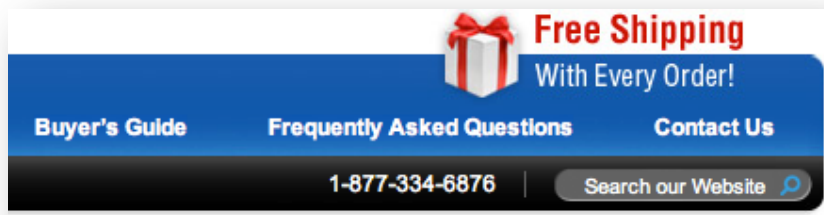
The great thing about comments is that anyone can write them. You can write your own comments if you want to and then reply to them...you don't need to wait for real people to leave comments. Since anyone can easily leave a comment, it's also an easy task to outsource (you don't need to provide any login details or anything like that!).

Another positive spin-off of adding comments to your website is that you increase the amount of content. If each of your pages is 500 words long, and you add just ONE 50 word comment to each page, you've then increased the content on your website by 10%!

TIP: On eCommerce websites, it's a good idea to enable reviews and ratings (and where possible, testimonials) on your products. In addition to improving your vital on page metrics, it'll also result in more sales!

8. Add A Contact Phone Number

This tip is most applicable to eCommerce stores. On my eCommerce stores I like to add a toll-free 800 number to the header of the site. Here's an example:



The above image is from <http://www.breathalyzer.net>. Breathalyzer.net is not one of my websites – but it is a good example of how a contact number can be added to the header to add trust and authority (both of which improve your on page metrics).

9. Add A Contact Email Address To All Pages

Another thing I do on my eCommerce stores is add a contact email address to all the pages. I still have a specific “Contact Us” page, but I add the contact email address as an addition. It shows my visitors that I’m happy for them to contact me and slightly improves my on page metrics as well.

10. Add Testimonials

This tactic can be use on both eCommerce websites and Affiliate websites. By adding a testimonial to a prominent part of your page, you increase trust instantly.

The best testimonials have full names, photos, and also the location where the person who’s making the testimonial lives.

11. Push Content Up The Page & Ads Down

This tip is mainly for Adsense sites but can also work on Affiliate sites. It might sound counter-intuitive...and you might think that it’ll make you earn less money, but it’s usually worthwhile doing.

By pushing your ads further down the page, you’re much more likely to grab your readers attention and reduce the chance that your visitors leave your site as soon as they arrive.

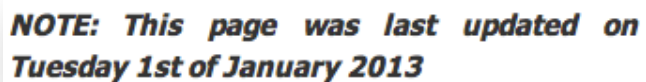
TheHorseRidingSite.com is a good example of how this works. Ads and affiliate links are pushed down the page and it has an immediate impact on the bounce rate.

12. Make Your Content Appear To Be Recent

Show people that your content is recent, and they'll stay on your site longer.

You can do this manually by going to your website from time to time and simply writing at the top of your page that your site has just been updated.

A smarter way to do it however, is to use an automated script! I use a plugin called "Extra Shortcodes" to automatically tell people when my page was last updated. Here's what I make the plugin display:



***NOTE: This page was last updated on
Tuesday 1st of January 2013***

You can find out more about the plugin here:
<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/extra-shortcodes/>

13. Make Your Website Better Looking

Good looking websites outperform ugly websites. While many people will debate this, every time I improve the way my websites look, all the vital on page metrics improve.

Professional looking websites convey authority and trust. Ugly websites don't. It's as simple as that. When you make your website look more professional, you'll get better results.

14. Strategically Place Images On The Fold

By placing an image (or video) right on the fold of a page (the bottom of the page in a default browser), people will scroll down to see what they're missing.

Here's an example:



As you can see in the screenshot above, one of the images is being displayed right on the fold of the page. In other words, half the image is above the fold, and half the image is below the fold.

The exact position of the fold varies depending on browser sizes. Here are the general locations of the fold for a few common browser sizes:

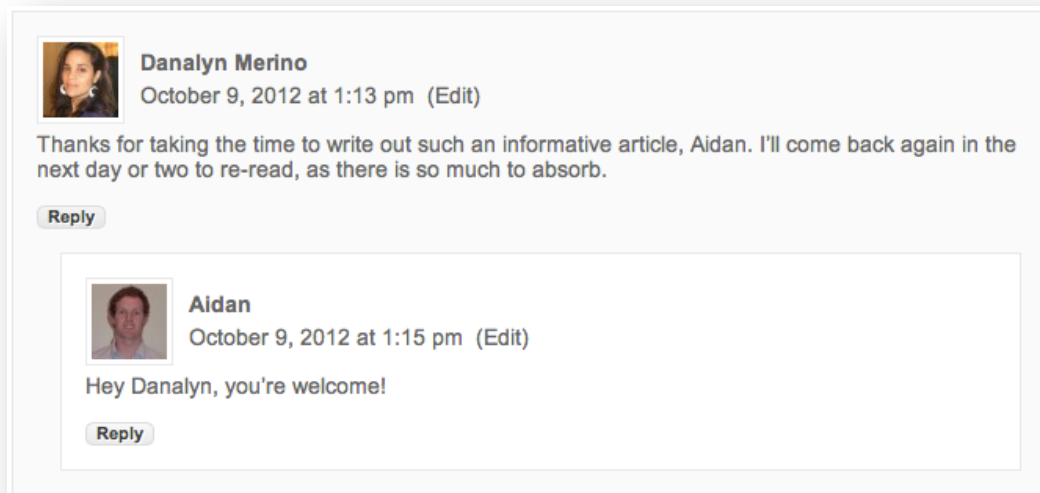
- 640 x 480 fold is around 310 pixels down
- 800 x 600 fold is around 430 pixels down
- 1024 x 768 fold is around 600 pixels down
- 1200 x 1024 fold is around 850 pixels down
- 1600 x 1200 fold is around 1030 pixels down

This tactic is an example of a very subtle thing you can do, which may only reduce bounce rate by 0.5%, but is something that can definitely make a difference when combined with other tactics I've mentioned.

15. Use A Gravatar Image For Comment Replies

If you're not using a Gravatar image on any websites you've got which are made using Wordpress, then you're missing out of a BIG "trust booster"!

Here's an example of what Gravatar's can look like in the Comments section of Wordpress websites:



As you can see, in this case, both the person asking the question (Danalyn) and I are using Gravatars.

You can set up a Gravatar account with your photo (or a pen-photo) completely free of charge here:

<http://en.gravatar.com>

16. Use Mid-Article Menus

As I've mentioned previously, internal linking is a GREAT way to improve the 3 vital on-page metrics. An idea I took from Squidoo.com is to use mid-article menus.

Here's an example of how they're often done on Squidoo lenses:

Best Things To Do in Bali



Have you ever wondered why **Bali** has drawn tourists of all ages and from various countries for so many years now and it has not yet lost its lustre? Bali has drawn, in our family alone, four generations of tourists.

The must do list for Bali keeps getting longer as it tries to satisfy the returning crowd. Yes, Bali not only draws people but continues to draw back those who had been there already not only once but many times.

It seems to be blessed by the gods the locals continually worship every day. Could this be the reason? Maybe.

Or, is it because the Balinese are so welcoming? Or, that Bali island is just so beautiful? Or there are just so many interesting things to do in Bali that continuously draw people to come and come once again?

Some just stay.

Note: All pictures in this lens other than those individually acknowledged are owned by [aesta1](#). All rights reserved.

In-Page Menus Are A GREAT Way To Direct Your Visitors!

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[The Core of what to see and do in Bali](#)

[Visit Bali this 2013](#)

[Latest Bali Accolade](#)

[More](#)

The image above is a screenshot of this lens: <http://www.squidoo.com/ten-must-do-in-bali>

Similar menus can easily be incorporated into websites made with Wordpress or any other platform.

An easy way to insert these menus so that they make sense, is to have a heading that says something like **"Recent Visitors Also Visit These Pages"**, you can then make a list of bullet points with links to your other internal pages.

Amazon.com does something very similar by recommending related products on each of their pages. Here's an example:



The tactic Amazon uses is a GREAT way to boost sales on eCommerce sites, and it also improves the pages per visit metric, the bounce rate, and the time on site.

17. Personalize Messages For Return Visitors

Where possible, you should acknowledge people who are return visitors to your website and treat them differently to first time visitors.

A simple note saying, *"hey, thanks for coming back!"*, will help you connect with your visitors more and definitely reduces bounce rate for your return visitors.

Thankfully, there's a free plugin which can be installed on Wordpress websites to make this kind of thing possible. The plugin is called "What Would Seth Godin Do", and can be downloaded here:

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/what-would-seth-godin-do/>

18. Write Captivating Page Titles

If you've got boring page titles, you're definitely missing out on a great way to increase page views.

Imagine you've got a list of "Recent Posts" or "Important Pages" being displayed in your sidebar, and the titles of the pages are:

- Driver License Advice
- Driver License Tests
- Driver License Restrictions

Now imagine how much more enticing these titles will be if you change the names to something like:

- The Vital License Advice Most Drivers Are Never Given
- 5 Critical Mistakes To Avoid When Sitting Your License Test
- 7 License Restrictions You Need To Consider Before It's Too Late

Now, the second group of titles will MASSIVELY outperform the first group simply because they're more enticing.

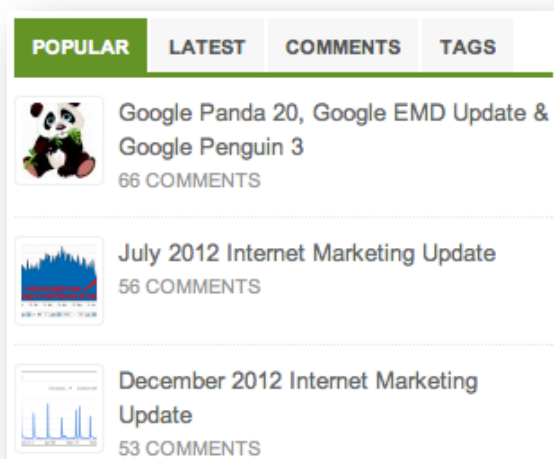
Who cares about "Driver License Restrictions"? It's not a very interesting topic...but "7 License Restrictions You Need To Consider Before It's Too Late" is intriguing and will get more people clicking through to read that article.

So think carefully when choosing the title for your article, and try to use titles that captivate the reader and grab their attention.

19. Use Good Thumbnail Images

Just like a captivating title, good thumbnail images grab the attention and will increase the number of pages your visitors visit.

Here's a look at the thumbnail images I use on AidanBooth.com:



The thumbnails appeal to my readers because they're related to topics that my readers are interested in.

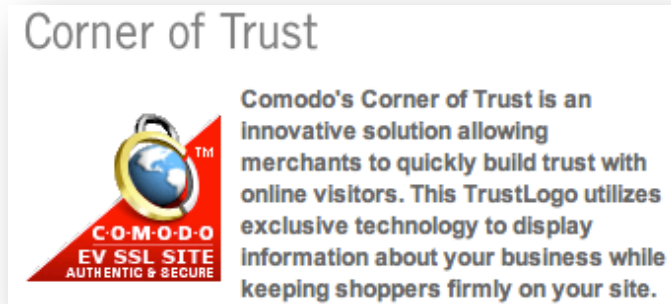
Using a thumbnail and displaying it in the sidebar will help get more people clicking through your website.

20. Use Trust Certificates and SSL Certificates

This tip is mainly applicable to eCommerce websites.

Trust Seals and SSL Certificates have been proven to increase visitor trust and in doing so, result in more sales, but also in improving the 3 vital on page metrics.

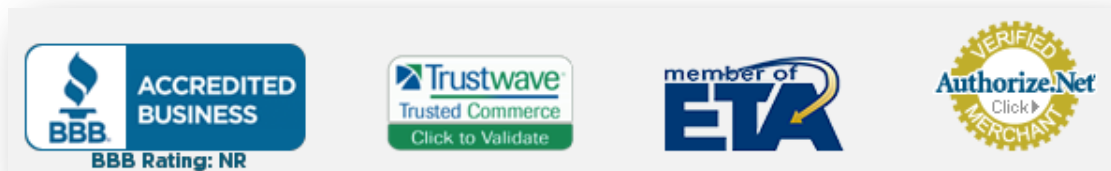
Lots of different trust seals are available. One of the most popular ones is the Comodo SSL certificate seal:



The "Corner of Trust" is a seal that can be added to the bottom corner of your website to show visitors that you run a trustworthy site.

Other popular trust seals used on eCommerce websites are often provided by payment gateway companies.

Authorize.net are one of the leading payment gateways, and a good example of using trust seals to increase visitor trust. Here are the seals they display at the bottom of their homepage:



You can check them out for yourself at <http://www.authorize.net>

21. Use Pagination

Pagination is the name given to breaking one page of content, into multiple pages. Lots of websites use Pagination and there's no doubt that it increases the number of pages that visitors visit, and also reduces bounce rate.

Let me give you an example...assume an article you want to put on your website is 900 words long, you could use pagination to split that article into 3 different posts/pages, each being 300 words long.

At the bottom of each page in the article, you'd provide a link to the next page.

Here's an example from an article that's 17 pages long, and the visitor is currently on page 9:



If you run a Wordpress website, you can leverage an existing plugin to get Pagination set up. Here's the plugin I recommend:

<http://wordpress.org/extend/plugins/wp-paginate/>

To learn more about Pagination, check out what Wikipedia have to say here:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pagination>

Final Recommendation

While some of the tactics I've mentioned above can make a big difference by themselves, the REAL POWER comes when you use them together.

Imagine for a moment that each of the tactics above improves your bounce rate by just 1%...***the combined improvement will be 21%!***

So although some of these tactics might seem trivial, they really can add up to make a BIG difference to your vital on page metrics.