



Let Searchmetrics deal you the strongest hand – **SEO Checklist 2015**

In our annual Searchmetrics Search Ranking Factors and Rank Correlations study, we examined 36 key factors that affect Google search rankings. We then graded these factors based on how much each could affect your rankings. This SEO checklist summarizes some of the most important factors from the study, as well as provides a few optimization tips for your own web projects.

Want the whole picture? Read the [full study](#) and be sure to check our [blog](#) for interesting developments in the world of SEO.



Content

Word Count



Quick definition:

Quick definition: Number of words in body of page.



Searchmetrics Relevance:

Highly relevant

Insights:

- ✓ The content of highranking URLs has a higher average word count this year than last.
- ✓ Be as detailed (and relevant) as possible when covering a topic. Simply writing more is not a sufficient way to improve your ranking.

Proof Terms



Quick definition:

Words that are very closely related to the main keyword for which the page ranks and are extremely likely to appear at the same time.



Searchmetrics Relevance:

+2 – Highly relevant

Insights:

- ✓ When writing, use terms that are closely associated with your main keyword, but limit repeated uses of the same word to keep content interesting.
- ✓ Example: If writing about green energy, use the term “green energy” once, then use terms like “renewable energy” or “natural energy.”



Relevant Terms

**Quick definition:**

Relevant terms are not as closely related to your main keyword as proof terms, but are likely to appear in the same context.

**Searchmetrics Relevance:**

+2+ – Extremely relevant

Insights:

- ✓ These terms most likely appear because they naturally belong in the content—they are related terms.
- ✓ Example: If writing about Christmas trees, your content will probably include “ornaments” and “tinsel.”
- ✓ The correct usage of these terms can make your page the most relevant search result.
- ✓ Relevant terms can be used to structure your content into specific subtopics and tailor your content for specific searches.

HOW CAN SEARCHMETRICS HELP?

Searchmetrics Content Performance clusters individual keywords with the same intention and suggests similar and related terms. **Content Optimization** identifies proof and relevant terms for each keyword or keyword groups—including ngrams. Our Keyword Finder finds related terms and many other areas of the Searchmetrics Suite can be integrated in your content research & optimization.



User Experience

Number of Internal Links



Quick definition:

An internal link is one that points to another page on the same website.



Searchmetrics Relevance:

+2 – Highly relevant

Insights:

- ✓ Number of internal links has increased since 2014.
- ✓ Don't just increase your internal links. Instead, optimize the internal structure in general. Link to relevant internal pages, create topic hubs and link to related landing pages users will find useful. People (and search engines) will follow an optimal path through content and stay on site until satisfied.

Responsive design



Quick definition:

Web design that automatically adjusts your page content to different display sizes.



Searchmetrics Relevance:

+1 – Relevant

Insights:

- ✓ The better a page ranks, the more likely it is to have responsive design.
- ✓ There are other ways to make your site mobilefriendly (Dynamic Serving, single mobile URLs (m.domain.com), etc.). In general, Searchmetrics recommends responsive design, but the most important thing is to provide a good user experience across all devices.



User Signals

**Quick definition:**

The holy trinity - click through rate (CTR), bounce rate, time on site.

**Searchmetrics Relevance:**

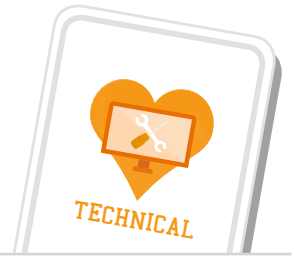
+2 – Highly relevant

Insights:

- ✓ These metrics give search engines direct feedback about how satisfied users are with your content.
- ✓ Google can measure these signals very efficiently across its product base. Chrome has ~50% market coverage.
- ✓ Improving these key performance indicators (KPIs) is paramount to climb rankings.

HOW CAN SEARCHMETRICS HELP?

Searchmetrics Suite™ Searchmetrics Suite users benefit from seamless integration of all key web analytics tools as well as the Google Search Console API. But we not only show you the data you already know, we also combine internal and external data to calculate new KPIs nobody else has. This provides more detailed insights into performance and potential user signals and offers a powerful combined approach.



Technical

Existence of Description



Quick definition:

Existence of a meta description—short page description (156 characters or less) that commonly appears on a search engine results page (SERP).



Searchmetrics Relevance:

+2 – Highly relevant

Insights:

- ✓ More than 99% of all analyzed URLs have a meta description.
- ✓ Use of meta descriptions help robots understand the page content, optimize your SERP appearance and drive attention.
- ✓ Meta descriptions and onpage title tags improve UX, CTR and bounce rates, which improves rankings.

DOMAIN SEO Visibility



Quick definition:

Searchmetrics proprietary KPI for measuring your online visibility.

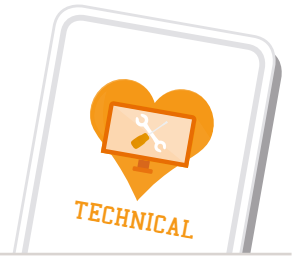


Searchmetrics Relevance:

+2 – Highly relevant

Insights:

- ✓ If you have a wellperforming and trusted domain with a considerable visibility, new published content is very likely to rank well, very fast.
- ✓ Check your domain's SEO Visibility for free and see how you compare to the competition.



Site speed



Quick definition:

Average load time of your site.



Searchmetrics Relevance:

+1 – Relevant

Insights:

- ✓ High-ranking URLs have low page loading times (though often larger file sizes).
- ✓ Domains with larger files achieve higher rank (due to higher word count, more interactive elements etc.). However, it's important to keep an eye on the speed of loading—which is even more important for mobile rankings.

HOW CAN SEARCHMETRICS HELP?

Site Structure Optimization, a feature of the Searchmetrics Suite, can check the technical health of your site by performing deep crawls and automatically identifying optimization potential.



Social

Social Signals



Quick definition:

The number of social mentions (likes, +1s etc.) a webpage has.

Insights:

- ✓ Correlation between ranking highly and social signals remains high. However, not yet confirmed as an explicit ranking factor.
- ✓ Social signals are one of several signposts that show search engines where great content and new topics are emerging.
- ✓ Create content that users want to share and recommend on social networks.

HOW CAN SEARCHMETRICS HELP?

The **Searchmetrics Suite** is the most powerful solution available for search and content performance. Increase your online visibility, grow your traffic and maximize your revenue with the Searchmetrics Suite – the complete solution for search and content performance.

LEARN MORE

Discover how Searchmetrics solutions and the Searchmetrics Suite can help you increase online visibility, grow traffic and maximize your revenue. Visit www.searchmetrics.com, email XXXXXX@searchmetrics.com or request a demo today.

About SearchMetrics

Searchmetrics, founded in 2005 is the pioneer and leading global enterprise platform for Search Experience Optimization. Search Experience Optimization combines SEO, Content Performance Marketing, Social Media and PR analysis to create the foundation for developing and executing a successful content strategy. It places the spotlight on the customer, contributing to a superior and memorable online experience.

Over 100,000 users from more than 8,000 brands use the Searchmetrics Suite to plan, execute, measure and report on their digital marketing strategies. Supported by its Research Cloud, which is a unique continually updated global data and knowledge repository, Searchmetrics answers the key questions asked by SEO professionals and digital marketers. It delivers a wealth of forecasts, analytic insights and recommendations that boost visibility and engagement, and increase online revenue. Many respected brands, such as TMobile, eBay, Siemens, Zalando, Tripadvisor and Symantec, rely on the Searchmetrics Suite.

Searchmetrics has offices in Berlin, San Mateo, New York, London, and Paris, and is backed by Holzbrinck Digital, Neuhaus Partners and Iris Capital.