



Search engine optimization (SEO) for authors

What are search engines?

Search engines are programs that allow you to search large databases for certain keywords. Search engines help in obtaining information. However, they serve to support the search for the desired information rather than provide information as is often assumed mistakenly.

How do search engines work?

As soon as a search query is submitted in a search engine by entering keywords, it searches its entire index for this keyword. Many different algorithms determine the relevance of the website content for this keyword and present the result in a certain order (ranking) on the search engine result page (SERP). The first positions always contain the results that the algorithms have determined as most relevant for the respective search query.

What is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?

The major search engines on the Internet earn their money from paid search results, which appear in the form of marked ads above the unpaid search results, the so-called organic results. Under the term "search engine optimization" various measures are summarized, which aim to improve the ranking of internet sites within the organic search.

Why is SEO important for book publications?

Search engine optimization brings your book and its target audience together. Google alone makes millions of searches every day. There is an incredible potential in this, which also affects our websites. This is because the majority of our visitors still come to us via organic search. The ability to find your book in the search engines has become a decisive criterion for its distribution and revenue potential. Therefore, use the following SEO measures to present your book as prominently as possible on the SERPS.

It all starts with keyword research

The times when you optimized your content for a single keyword are long gone. Today, it depends on the relevance of the keywords. Invest a little time in keyword research, because it is the basis for optimizing the product page of your book. Remember, it is the keywords that users type into search engines to search for your book and its content. If you have chosen unfavorable keywords, you make it more difficult to find your title.

You should know these 3 types of keywords

1. Head keywords/generic keywords such as "biology":

These keywords consist of only one word, which is very often searched for, but too unspecific to draw users' attention to your book.

2. Body keywords such as "biology textbooks":

Body keywords are keywords that consist of 2-3 word phrases. They are good for your keyword list, as enough people are looking for such phrases, but the competition is not as big as that your book title would get lost in the crowd.

3. Long tail keywords like "how will biology help me in life":

These keywords consist of search phrases of more than 4 words. They often represent entire search queries/answers and should also be integrated in the optimized cover text in specific cases.

Tips for keyword research

- Determine the search intention of the users. These 6 questions will help you:
 - How would I search for the title?
 - What kind of result do users expect when searching for these keywords?
 - Would my title be a useful addition to the existing search results?
 - Are there synonyms or other phrases I should use?
 - In which categories/disciplines would you expect the title?
 - Are there any questions that a user could ask, that the title answers?

- Define a main keyword and integrate it meaningfully into your book title, the USPs, the meta-description and the information text, but avoid the excessive use of the keyword. A pure sequence of words is unpleasant for the user to read and is therefore also "punished" by search engines ranking it lower.

- Define additional keywords (relevant general, more specific long tail keywords, synonyms, variations and abbreviations).

- Collect a total of 5-10 relevant keywords that reflect the content of your book and the way users would search for that content.

- Use one of these free keyword tools as support for your keyword research:
 - Check Google Suggestions and related searches
 - [Ubersuggest](#) (All possible combinations around your main keyword, from A-Z and 0-10)
 - [GoogleTrends](#) (Shows how often a specific search term is used relative to the total search volume – in different regions of the world and different languages)
 - [Answer the Public](#) (Tool for researching longtail keywords in question form)
 - [Keywords Everywhere](#) (Browser Add-On for querying the search volumes of certain keywords)

Why is a search engine optimized title important for your book?

The book title is often the first and also the only thing that users perceive of your book on the SERP.

Before you have even read a page of the book, you decide whether the book is of interest to you or not on the basis of the title. Therefore, make clear what added value the book has for the potential reader with its title. Ideally, your book title will already answer one of the questions users have in connection with the topic of your book.

SEO checklist for your book title:

Therefore, your titles (and subtitles) should:

- ✓ be **descriptive** so that users know immediately what it is all about.
- ✓ **not** be designed too **creatively or poetically**.
- ✓ necessarily **answer any questions users may have** instead of raising new ones.
- ✓ ideally be **no longer than 50 characters**.
- ✓ pick up the **main keyword** or the **main keyword phrase**.
- ✓ **not to be formulated too generally**. One-word titles or very generic titles (such as socialization) run the risk of drowning in the mass of search results.
- ✓ be as **unique** as possible.

The USPs (Unique Selling Points) as a figurehead for your book

The USPs are the largest and best advertising space for your book on our websites. Here you have the unique opportunity to convince users to buy the book with just a few words. Make sure that the USPs clearly emphasize the added value of the book, but make sure that they are short and concise. Similar to the title, the USPs should answer questions instead of raising new ones. If you confuse the potential customer here, he will probably refrain from buying. In the end, you are likely the most qualified person to answer this question: Why would you want to buy your book?

7 Tips for Formulating the USPs

- ✓ Answer the question: Why should I read / buy this title?
- ✓ Write only 3 short and concise USPs per book.
- ✓ Stay between 60 and 120 characters.
- ✓ Use only one idea per USP.
- ✓ Remember: The USPs should emphasize the benefits for the reader.
- ✓ Answer questions instead of asking them.
- ✓ Formulate as actively as possible.
- ✓ Does your title solve a problem? Then make that clear.

What is the meta-description and why is it important?

The meta-description is a HTML tag, whose content is usually displayed under the blue clickable link on the search results page.



Consider the meta-description as a kind of preview for the product page of your book. Here you can give users a first impression of your book and encourage them to click on the search result. Write an individual advertising text for your book. Here, too, the integration of keywords is important, because Google displays all keywords in bold in the meta-description that match the search query or parts of the user's search query. With this little trick you can make sure that the search result attracts the attention of the users. However, be careful not to make any promises in the meta-descriptions that the product page of your book cannot fulfill. If false expectations were raised, users will return to the SERP quickly, because the result did not meet their expectations.

Notes on formulating the meta-description

- ✓ **Do not repeat the title** of the book.
- ✓ **Do not use quotation marks**, as search engines will cut off all descriptions that follow the quotation marks.
- ✓ **Insert the media** so that users know it is a book, manual, or reference work.
- ✓ Make sure that your meta-description is between **115 and 150 characters** long.

Consider the information text as the heart of your optimization

A successful information text for your book arouses the user's curiosity without giving away too much. You are welcome to explain the problem or question that you are pursuing in the book, but only reveal a small part of the solution. Since most of our titles are aimed at a specialist audience, it is not necessary to describe the topic of the book in detail or to give definitions. Instead, we recommend personalizing the text and highlighting why anyone interested in the subject should buy this book. It is not without reason that emotions are a success factor in sales.

Therefore, emphasize the unique advantages of your book for the readers. At this point it can also be helpful to address the target group directly, so that users know immediately whether the book can also be a valuable addition for them personally.

7 steps to a good information text

- ✓ Write an **advertising** text that offers **more than** just a **summary**.
- ✓ Formulate a **first sentence** that **encourages further reading** and contains the most important **purchase incentive**.
- ✓ It is **not necessary to describe the topic or field** again.
- ✓ Don't be unnecessarily modest. **Name the advantages of the book directly** instead of just hinting at them.
- ✓ **Explain the question** of your book, but just **teaser the solution**.
- ✓ Pay attention to a **natural use of** the appropriate **keywords**...
- ✓ and **avoid** at all costs **turning the text into a mere list of keywords**.

Recommendations on format and style of the information text

Studies have shown that users have different reading habits on a screen. Instead of reading the contents of websites word for word, they scan the texts for the relevant information only.

Promote this behavior by:

- Using **lists** and **enumerations** in the appropriate place.
- Writing product texts with a length of **200 to 300 words**.
- Splitting the text into **several paragraphs**. This also makes it easier to read on the screen.
- Including longtail keywords within the text in the form of **questions and answers** and, if possible, arrange them systematically.

5 tips on the author's biography

A good written biography of the author can also help increase the sales of your book because buyers value expert advice. Therefore, leave no doubt that you are the right person to write about your topic.

- ✓ A good reputation counts: Make it clear why you are an expert on the subject.
- ✓ If necessary, refer to your previous publications in a similar area.
- ✓ Be sure to write different biographies when publishing in different subject areas.
- ✓ Limit yourself to the essentials. It is not necessary to reproduce your complete CV.
- ✓ With an interesting detail from your non-scientific life you can loosen up the biography and make yourself more accessible to the readers.