



List of terms mentioned in the Yoast SEO for WordPress course

We mention a lot of terms in this course which you might not be familiar with yet. Although we will explain these terms carefully in the course, it's easy to lose track of which term serves what purpose. Below, we have compiled an overview of terms mentioned in this course, with short descriptions of what they entail. They are listed alphabetically.

Algorithm:

aspect of a search engine that decides which pages (that have been saved in the index) are shown in the search results, and in which order. How Google's algorithm works is a secret and the factors that determine the ordering change regularly.

Archives in WordPress:

archives in WordPress are collections of posts, that can be based on taxonomies, categories, custom post types and dates.

Attachment URL:

when you upload media to WordPress, it adds the video or image to the library. In addition, WordPress makes an attachment URL for the piece of media. These are mostly empty pages that serve no real purpose, but sometimes they get picked up by search engines.

Bing:

a web search engine owned and operated by Microsoft.

Bing Webmaster Tools:

a service as part of the Bing search engine which allows webmasters to add their website to the Bing index crawler. The service also offers other helpful tools for webmasters, such as the possibility to troubleshoot the crawling and indexing of their website.



Black-hat SEO (also: scorched-earth SEO):

SEO tactics that focus on trying to exploit loopholes in Google's algorithms and that try to rank websites higher than they actually deserve to. Examples of black-hat SEO tricks are keyword stuffing (filling pages with keywords), black-hat link building (try to rank higher by buying links), and page swapping (trying to get ranked for one page and then replacing that page for another).

Bounce rate:

a metric that measures the percentage of people who land on your website, and do completely nothing on the page they entered. So they don't click a menu item, a 'read more' link, or any other internal links on the page. A user bounces when there has been no engagement with the landing page, and the visit ends with a single-page visit. You can use bounce rate as a metric that indicates the quality of a webpage and/or the 'quality' of your audience.

Breadcrumbs:

a small text path, often located at the top of a page. On yoast.com, for instance, the path to our Yoast SEO plugin page is *Home » Yoast Plugins » Yoast SEO for WordPress*. This breadcrumb immediately shows you where you are. Every part of that path is clickable, all the way back to the homepage.

Canonical:

the canonical link element lets search engines know which variation of a collection of similar or identical pages you want Google to put into the search results. A canonical consists of two elements: the `link rel=`, which specifies that we're dealing with a canonical link, and the `href`, which points to the canonical page. An example of a canonical link element is: `<link rel="canonical" href="http://example.com/es" />`

Categories in WordPress:

Categories allow for a broad grouping of post or page topics. They can be arranged in a hierarchy, so you can have subcategories. Each post must be attached to at least one category. For example, categories for a blog can be 'Books', 'Food', 'Music', and 'Travel'. In this example, the category 'Books' could be subdivided into the subcategories 'Fiction books' and 'Nonfiction books'.

Click-through rate:

the ratio of users who click on a specific link to the number of total users who view a page, email, or advertisement.

Configuration wizard of Yoast SEO:

the installation wizard that helps you configure your SEO settings to match your website's needs in a few steps.

Conversions:

conversion happens every time a visitor completes a desired action on your website, like clicking-through to the next page, subscribing to a newsletter or buying your product. In Google analytics, you can define what you consider to be a conversion for yourself.

Cornerstone content:

cornerstone content pieces are those articles on your website you're most proud of. They reflect your business, communicate your mission and are extremely well written. These are the articles you would like to rank high in the search engines. Cornerstone articles are usually explainers; these articles combine insights from different blog posts. If you mark an article as cornerstone content in the Yoast SEO plugin, the content and SEO analyses become a little stricter.

Crawlability:

has to do with the possibilities Google has to crawl your site. Crawlers can be blocked from your site. There are a few ways to block a crawler from your website: in the robots.txt file, in the HTTP header or in the robots meta tag. If your website or a page on your website is blocked, you're saying to Google's crawler: '*do not come here*'. Your site or the respective page won't turn up in the search results in most of these cases.

Crawler (also: spider, bot, robot):

aspect of a search engine that goes around the internet 24/7, following links from one web page to another and saving the HTML-version of all pages in a gigantic database (the index). Pages that are saved in the index could appear in the search results.

Crawl errors:

errors that occur when the spider crawls your site. There are two types of crawl errors: site errors, that affect your entire site (e.g. connectivity issues, problems fetching the robots.txt file), and URL errors, that affect a specific page on your site.

Flesch Reading Ease test:

measures textual difficulty of a text and grades texts on a scale from 1–100. The lower the score, the more difficult to read the text is. Texts with a high Flesch reading ease score are easy to read. Usually, a reading ease score of 60–70 is believed to be acceptable/normal for web copy. The Flesch Reading Ease test is implemented in the Yoast SEO plugin, and provides reliable scores for English, Dutch, and German.

Google:

the world's most popular search engine. Google's mission is to *'organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful'*.

Google Search Console:

a web service by Google for webmasters. It allows webmasters to check their site's indexability and optimize visibility of their websites.

Head keyword:

your most important keywords. They form the basis of your keyword research sheet and keyword strategy. After identifying your head keywords, you can start coming up with longer tail keywords. Note: head keywords can consist of several words.

Holistic SEO approach:

an SEO approach where you focus on making every aspect of your site as good as possible in order to improve your ranking in the search results. Google's mission is to build the perfect search engine that helps people find the best results for what they are looking for. At Yoast, we believe that making your website fit this goal is the way to go, and that this can be accomplished by using a holistic SEO approach.

Hummingbird update:

a Google update that laid down the groundwork for voice-search. It pays more attention to each word in a query, ensuring that the whole search phrase is taken into account, rather than just particular words. The Hummingbird update was released in 2013.

Index:

aspect of a search engine; a gigantic database where the HTML-versions of pages that the crawler has found are saved. Pages that are saved in the index could appear in the search results. Whether they do depends on how the algorithm of the search engine ranks it.

Internal link:

a type of link on a webpage to another page or resource (e.g. an image or document), on the same website or domain. Internal links connect your content and give Google an idea of the structure of your website. They can establish hierarchy on your site, which enables you to give the most important pages and posts more link value than other, less valuable, pages.

Internal linking tool in Yoast SEO:

a tool that is part of the premium version of Yoast SEO that helps you find related posts to link to. This feature analyzes your text and suggests links to related posts – as you write.

Keyword:

word or phrase you would like your website to rank for, so when people search for that keyword or phrase in a search engine, they should find your site.

Keyword research:

the activity you undertake to come up with an extensive list of keywords you would like to rank for.

Knowledge Graph Card:

a block, usually on the right-hand side of the search results page, containing relevant, context-specific information regarding your search (e.g. a company or a person).

Long tail keyword:

even more specific and less common keywords than mid tail keywords. They often focus on a niche. The longer (and more specific) search terms are, the easier it will be to rank for the term. The length of long tail keywords is relative: they may consist of three or four words for big companies, they may consist of six or more words for smaller companies.

Meta description:

a snippet of up to 320 characters, a tag in HTML, that summarizes a page's content. Search engines show the meta description in search results mostly when the searched for phrase is contained in the description. Optimizing the meta description is a very important aspect of on-page SEO.

Mid tail keyword:

more specific and longer keywords than head keywords, derived from the head keyword they tie into. The length of mid tail keywords is relative: they may be very short for big companies, they may be quite long for smaller companies.

Mobilegeddon update:

a Google update that boosts sites that have mobile friendly pages in Google's mobile search results. The Mobilegeddon update was introduced in 2015.

Mobile indexing first algorithm:

a Google algorithm that has been announced for 2018. This algorithm will make sure Google creates and ranks its search listings based on the mobile version of a site, even for listings that are shown to desktop users.

Nofollow tag:

a robots meta tag that tells the search engines robots to not follow any links on the page at all.

Noindex tag:

a robots meta tag that disallows search engines from showing this page in their results.

Organic search results:

the non-paid search results. Google's search engine results page (SERP) shows seven to ten organic links which fit your search the best.

Orphaned content:

content that doesn't have any links pointing to it, and thus will stay undiscovered by visitors and search engines.

Paid search results:

the paid search results, which are shown above the organic (non-paid) links. These links are ads; people have paid Google to put these links at the top of the site when people search for a specific term.

Panda update:

a Google update that tries to diminish those websites which are purely created to rank in the search engines. The first Panda update was released in 2011 and Google has re-run this update periodically.

Passive voice:

a grammatical construction where the noun or noun phrase that would be the object of an active sentence (such as '*Yoast SEO calculates your SEO score*') appears as the subject of a sentence with passive voice ('*The SEO score is calculated by Yoast SEO*'). You should try to avoid passive voice in your articles, because text using a lot of passive voice tends to be hard and unattractive to read.

Penguin update:

a Google update that judges the links websites got from other sites. If the links turn out to be artificial (e.g. created by buying or exchanging), Google no longer assigns link value. The first Penguin update was rolled out in 2012. Google has re-run this update several times and it is now said to be run continuously.

Permalink (or: permanent link):

the full URL you see – and use – for any given post, page, or other pieces of content on your site. It's a permanent link, hence the name permalink. A permalink could include your domain name (www.yoast.com) plus what's called a slug, the piece of the URL that comes after the domain name. This might include a date or a category or anything you please. A simple permalink makes a URL easy to understand and share.

Possum update:

a Google update that was released in 2016. After Possum, Google has shown more varied results depending on the physical location of the searcher and the phrasing of the query.

RankBrain:

a Google algorithm; a machine learning system that helps Google better decipher the meaning behind queries, and serve best-matching search results in response to those queries. RankBrain has a query processing and a ranking component.

Ranking:

getting your website in a high position in the search results of a search engine, like Google. The algorithm of a search engine determines the position your site gets in the search engine.

Readability:

the ease with which a reader can understand a written text. Readability is not only important for your audience, but also for SEO. At Yoast, we believe that readable content leads to higher rankings and more traffic.

Readability analysis in Yoast SEO:

an analysis in the Yoast SEO plugin that uses an algorithm to determine how readable your post is. It features several checks that'll give you advice when you write your post. By following the advice, you can make your text easier to read and understand.

Redirection (of URLs):

a technique for making a web page available under more than one URL address. When a web browser attempts to open a URL that has been redirected, a page with a different URL is opened. There are different types of redirect, depending on the purpose of the redirect, for example when you delete a post or page, or when you change a slug or URL.

Redirect manager in Yoast SEO:

a tool in the Yoast SEO for WordPress plugin that helps you to set the correct redirect. After deleting a post or page, or changing a slug or URL, our plugin will ask you directly what you'd like to do with the old URL via an automatic notification. Besides this, you can also go to the redirect manager in the plugin menu.

Regex redirects:

if you're an expert SEO and you need to do complex redirections, you may need to use Regex – regular expressions – redirects. With normal redirects, you specify a single source URL and a destination URL. With Regex redirects, you can, for instance, make a single redirect to move entire groups of URLs containing a specific keyword to a new location. This could save you a ton of time while working on a massive SEO project.

rel=next/rel=prev:

a method of indicating paginated archives to search engines. This way, a search engine knows certain pages are part of an archive. It also makes sure that search engines understand the order of the archive or post. A rel=next/prev tag in the header of your site tells Google what the previous and the next page in that archive is. No one besides people looking at the source code of your site and search engines see this piece of code.

Rich Site Summary (RSS):

a standardized system for the distribution of content from an online publisher to internet users. RSS allows users to easily access updates to online content.

Rich snippet:

snippets that show more than just the title, slug, and meta description. They could show an image, a rating, and whether or not a product is in stock. Rich snippets stand out from other snippets, and thus they have a higher click-through rate.

Robots meta tag:

a meta tag that tells Google how a specific page needs to be indexed and shown in the search results. The robots meta tag is placed in the <head>-section of a page.

Robots.txt file:

a text file that is telling a search engine where it can and cannot go on your website. The robots.txt file is read by search engine crawlers (also called robots, hence the name).

Search Engine Optimization (SEO):

the practice of optimizing websites to make them reach a high position in Google's – or another search engine's – organic search results.

Search Engine Results Page (SERP):

page of the search engine that shows the (organic and paid) search results that fit your search the best.

SEO analysis in Yoast SEO:

an analysis in the Yoast SEO plugin that gives you recommendations regarding your focus keyword and the SEO of your content. If you have Yoast SEO Premium, you can add more focus keywords, which will all be put through the SEO analysis separately.

SEO title:

the HTML title tag. This tag is the first thing a user sees in the search results. It's also one of the most important factors for Google to decide what the topic of a page is. If you would look at the source of a page, this would be found in the <head>-section and it would look like this:

```
<title>This is an example page title - Example.com</title>
```

Site errors:

errors that affect your entire site, for example connectivity issues with your web server, and problems fetching your robots.txt file (the file which tells the search engines where they can and cannot go).

Slug:

the piece of the URL that comes after the domain name.

Snippet:

a result Google shows to the user in the search results. A snippet consists of a SEO title (in blue), the slug (in green), and the meta description (in black).

Tags in WordPress:

allow for grouping of posts or pages. Tags are similar to categories, but tags are generally used to describe your post in more detail. Tags exist in their own right and have no set relationship to anything else, so they can't be arranged in a hierarchy. The use of tags is entirely optional.

Taxonomies in WordPress:

in WordPress, content can be grouped using categories and tags by default. WordPress calls these groups taxonomies. So, taxonomies are ways to structure content within WordPress, and tags and categories are both examples of a taxonomy system.

Text link counter in Yoast SEO:

a feature in the Yoast SEO plugin that counts both the internal text links you've put in your posts, and the internal links to a post. This feature is extremely useful and actionable, because it allows you to assess the number of internal links each post receives and the number of links each post contains. This can help you with improving the structure of your site, and thus, with improving your SEO.

Title separator:

symbol used to separate different parts of your SEO title from each other. For example, the separator could be a hyphen (-), a bullet (·), or a vertical bar (|). You can set the title separator in the Yoast SEO plugin.

Universal search:

a method Google is using in delivering search results. In the universal search results, Google not only delivers links to sites that best match your search; it also embeds other digital content, such as news items, pictures and videos.

URL errors:

errors that affect a specific page on your website. Googlebot tried to crawl the URL but did not succeed somehow. It was able to connect to your server and then request the URL. But after that, something went wrong.

User eXperience (UX):

how a person experiences using a product, such as a website, a mobile phone, or an app, especially in terms of how easy or pleasing it is to use. It's all about how someone feels when using a particular product: does the product make you feel excited or happy, is it a joy to use it, does it help you effortlessly achieve what you've been aiming for? UX is important for SEO, because search engines want to provide people with the best result for their query.

XML sitemap:

a roadmap to all important pages of a website. This roadmap guides search engines to all main content on a website. Having an XML sitemap can be beneficial for SEO, as search engines can retrieve essential pages of a website very fast, even if the internal linking of a site isn't flawless.

Yandex:

the largest search engine on the internet in Russian.

Yandex Webmaster Tools:

a service as part of the Yandex search engine which allows webmasters to add their website to the Yandex index crawler. The service also offers other helpful tools for webmasters, such as the possibility to troubleshoot the crawling and indexing of their website.

.htaccess file:

a configuration file for use on web servers running the Apache Web Server software.

404 error:

the HTTP 404 (Not Found) error is a standard error code in computer communications, which means that the URL that was requested doesn't point to a certain page. The page may have been deleted, or the URL was misspelled. The permalink structure might have changed or even the domain name, and redirects could have been set wrong.