How to Be Master of Your Domain

SEO STRATEGIES FOR TOURISM

McD

REMARKABLY UNCOMMON.

YOUR PRESENTERS

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// **WHAT WE WILL COVER TODAY…**

+ What is SEO?

+ What makes tourism SEO unique?

+ SEO tactics for tourism websites

+ Why is ADA so important?

+ Is Local SEO still important for a DMO?

+ How to measure your website's SEO health?

+ Application of AI in the travel industry

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// WHAT IS SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION?

SEO stands for "search engine optimization."

In simple terms, it means the process of improving your site to increase its visibility when people search for events or activities related to your location in Google, Bing, and other search engines. The better visibility your pages have in search results, the more likely you are to garner attention and attract visitors to your destination.

~70% of all tourism and travel sales will be made online, making it more important than ever to be discoverable on search engines.

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YOU WANT TO INCREASE HIGH QUALITY TRAFFIC TO YOUR SITE.

High-quality web traffic equals more clients who will be genuinely interested in your destination.

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// WHAT IS FUELING GROWTH IN SEO?

Without SEO, you'd be missing out on opportunities to reach clients who are searching for your destination.

Travelers and tourists are now using online resources twice as much as they do word-of-mouth recommendations.

In order to put your organization in front of these prospects you will need a high SERP ranking.

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// WHAT IS SERP?

The search engine results page lists results that a search engine returns in response to a specific word or phrase typed into Google or any other search engine.

Why do we need high SERP rankings?
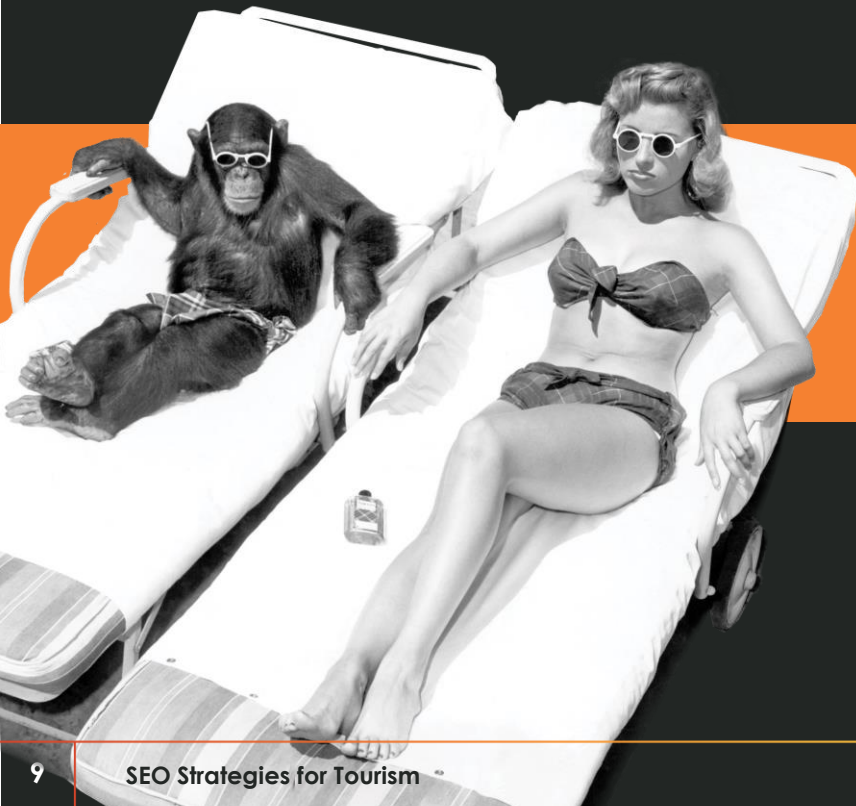Because the first five organic search listings get about 68% of all website clicks.

68%

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// **KEY BENEFITS**

+ High-quality traffic

+ Consistent Exposure

+ Low Initial Investment

+ Brand Authority

// WHAT MAKES TOURISM SEO UNIQUE?

+ Local SEO takes higher priority

+ Focus on activity-based keywords

+ Conversions driven by "micro-moments"

+ Website content NEEDS to be helpful and inspiring

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// LOCAL SEO FOR TOURISM

Tourists aren't always from out of town! The start of any DMO SEO strategy should be to make sure that your website is helpful for local families and individuals to find last minute things to do near them. A surprising amount of traffic to a tourism website is from locals and people living in-state. Just like for your physical location, getting the support and buy-in from the community helps make you more attractive to potential visitors. It also proves to search engines that you are a legitimate destination to list on the SERP.

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// FOCUS ON "MICRO-MOMENTS"

SEO is all about anticipating what people are looking for when planning a trip. You need to put yourself in the shoes of someone craving a getaway. We call this process "micro-moments" and your website needs to be there every step of the way.

For most potential visitors, it takes multiple trips to your website before finalizing a plan. The process looks a little like this:

+ Dreaming: "I want to get away" moments

+ Planning: "Time to make a plan" moments

+ Booking: "Let's book it" moments

+ Experiencing: "Can't wait to explore" moments

// TARGET ACTIVITY-BASED KEYWORDS

Keyword research is the bread and butter of SEO. This is the actual research done to anticipate what people are typing into the search bar to find websites like yours. For DMOs, the most lucrative keywords to target are ones that highlight the specific attractions that your destination has to offer.

TOP ACTIVITY-BASED KEYWORD EXAMPLES
"things to do in [DESTINATION]"
"[DESTINATION] restaurants"
"family-friendly activities in [DESTINATION]"
"events in [DESTINATION] this weekend"
"weekend getaway in [DESTINATION]"

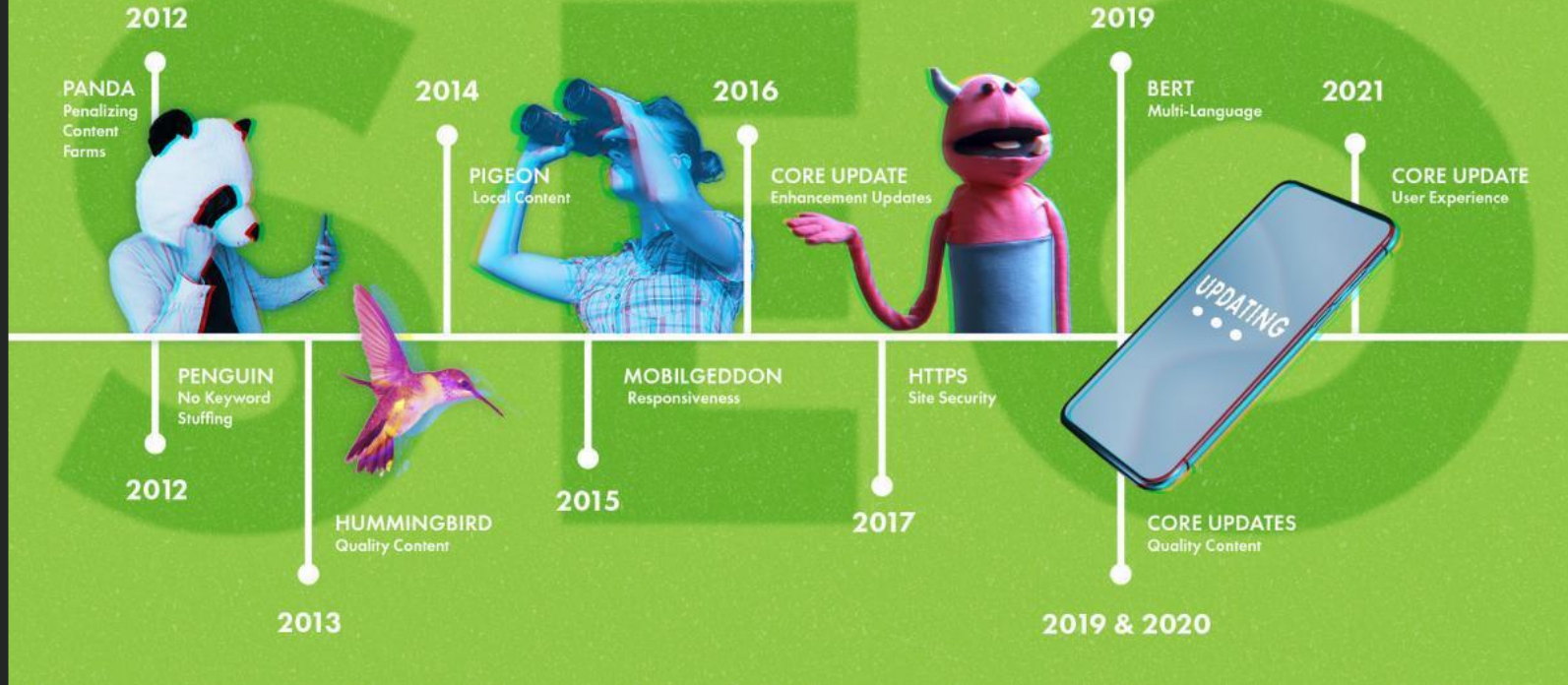McD REMARKABLY UNCOMMON.

// HELPFUL AND INSPIRING CONTENT

Your web content is a chance to celebrate what your destination has to offer and show prospective visitors that you have what they are looking for. Offering high-quality, optimized content builds trust establishes you as an authoritative source for people planning a trip.

+ Blogging

+ Guest posting

+ Podcast/video marketing

+ Itineraries and travel guides

GOOGLE ALGORITHM UPDATES THROUGH THE YEARS

2012 — PANDA, Penalizing Content Farms
2012 — PENGUIN, No Keyword Stuffing
2013 — HUMMINGBIRD, Quality Content
2014 — PIGEON, Local Content
2015 — MOBILGEDDON, Responsiveness
2016 — CORE UPDATE, Enhancement Updates
2017 — HTTPS, Site Security
2019 — BERT, Multi-Language
2019 & 2020 — CORE UPDATES, Quality Content
2021 — CORE UPDATE, User Experience

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// THE HELPFUL CONTENT UPDATE

As recently as March 2024, Google is constantly updating the requirements for what is considered "helpful content". These updates exist to reinforce the idea that the content on your website should be of high quality to the average user.

Key Things to Remember

+ Write for humans and NOT search engines.

+ Add your own content and show your expertise to your audience.

+ DON'T leave your audience with more questions than answers.

// RANCH-STYLE SEO

+ The way information on your website is organized is essential. A significant part of SEO is ensuring your website is providing key information for the questions that people are asking. If your website is informative and easy to navigate, you are building trust with potential visitors.

+ Ranch-Style SEO is all about creating targeted content the maps to a user's search journey. This wide range of content about specific topics shows your familiarity and expertise while also helping search engines assess if the information on your website answers user questions. If it does, then it is more likely to have a higher ranking in the SERP.

+ Spread high-quality content across multiple pages and posts. Ranch-Style SEO is a movement away from the "Ultimate Guide to…" SEO content strategy.

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// USER EXPERIENCE

While dwell time is an indirect ranking factor for Google, it is critical in the user experience. Dwell time is the length of time a reader spends on a page on your blog. Videos really help hold attention on page!

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// XML SITEMAP

An XML sitemap is a file intended for consumption by search engines that lists a website's important pages.

A sitemap is crucial- making sure Google can find and crawl all pages on your site. XML also helps search engines understand the structure of your website, ensuring every essential page is crawled by Google.

Sitemap	Last Modified
https://yoast.com/post-sitemap.xml	2021-04-29 12:15 +00:00
https://yoast.com/page-sitemap.xml	2021-04-29 11:47 +00:00
https://yoast.com/wpkb-article-sitemap.xml	2021-04-29 08:11 +00:00
https://yoast.com/yoast_courses-sitemap.xml	2021-04-26 15:24 +00:00
https://yoast.com/yoast_employees-sitemap.xml	2021-04-28 14:23 +00:00
https://yoast.com/yoast_events-sitemap.xml	2021-04-28 11:36 +00:00
https://yoast.com/yoast_jobs-sitemap.xml	2021-04-29 09:40 +00:00
https://yoast.com/yoast_banen-sitemap.xml	2021-04-26 15:23 +00:00

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// INDEX CONTENT

Indexes contain available information on all the websites Google (or another search engine) was able to find. If a website is not in a search engines index system, web users will not be able to find the site.

Proper website indexing allows search engines to see all important pages and give your site a major boost!

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// INDEX DATE

Indexing means a search engine finds content and adds it to its index.

Later, the page can be retrieved and displayed in the SERP when a user searches for keywords related to the indexed page.

Advanced

Allow search engines to show this Page in search results? ⓘ

Yes (current default for Pages)

Should search engines follow links on this Page ⓘ

● Yes   ○ No

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  </url>

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// ALT IMAGE TAGS

Also known as "alt attribute" and "alt description", an alt tag is an HTML attribute applied to image tags to provide a text alternative for search engines.

Search engines cannot interpret images; however, images play a crucial role in how people interpret a web page.

Alt tags are also helpful for users when a webpage or browser cannot load images.

****

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// WHY IS ADA SO IMPORTANT?

The number of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) lawsuits has quadrupled since 2013. Business owners are now facing the increasing possibility of being hit with an ADA lawsuit.

ADA was created to protect people with disabilities from discrimination in all areas of life in public. Ex: schools, restaurants, stores, and public transportation. This protection extends online as well on social media, websites, etc.

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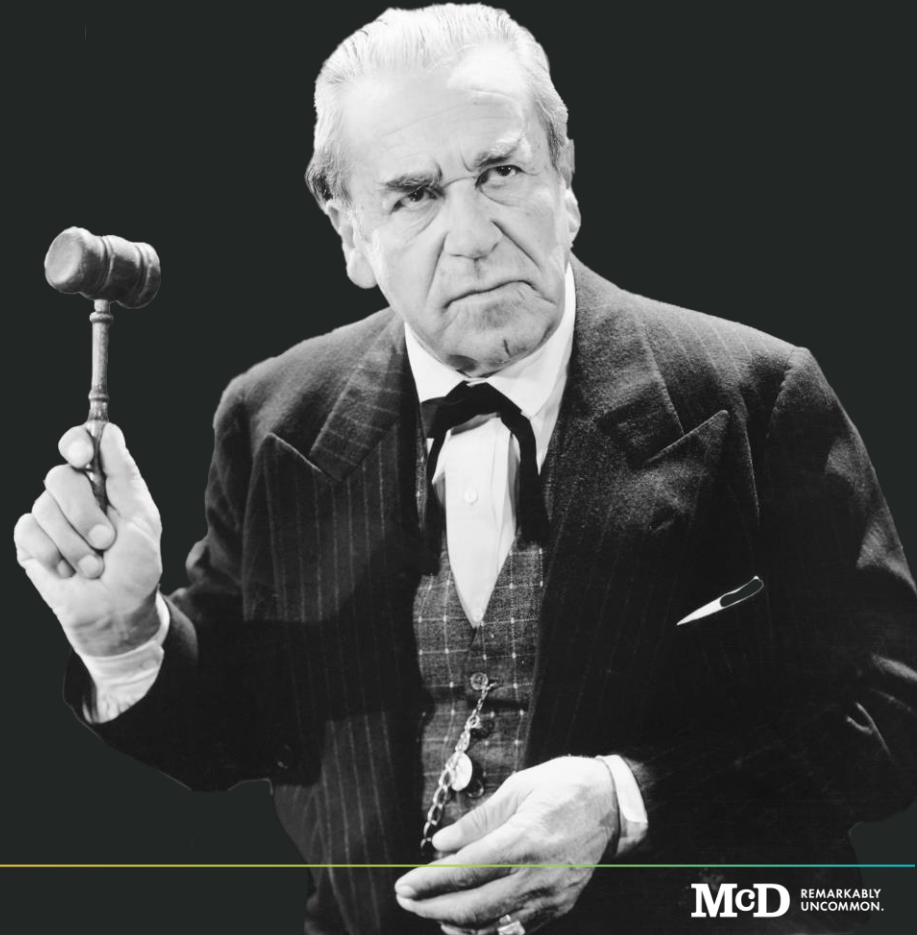
// WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

+ Travel/Hospitality
+ Restaurants/Food Service
+ Medical/Health
+ E-Commerce
+ Universities/Education
+ Beauty/Fitness/Wellness
+ Entertainment/Leisure

+ Insurance
+ Retail Stores
+ Home Services
+ Banking/Financial
+ Real Estate
+ Automotive
+ Government

In 2021, settlements for most targeting smaller and midsized businesses range from $5k-$20k. Since 2013, the law firm Seyfarth Shaw has tracked the number of lawsuits filed under the ADA each year. The data shows in 2021 more than 11,400 people filed an ADA Title III lawsuit.

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// SCREEN READERS

Screen readers are a form of assistive technology which renders text and image content as speech or braille output.

This technology carries out a variety of different tasks, from reading documents, navigating web pages, opening, and closing files, and listening to music. It is extremely important that websites are set up to be accessible to screen reader users.

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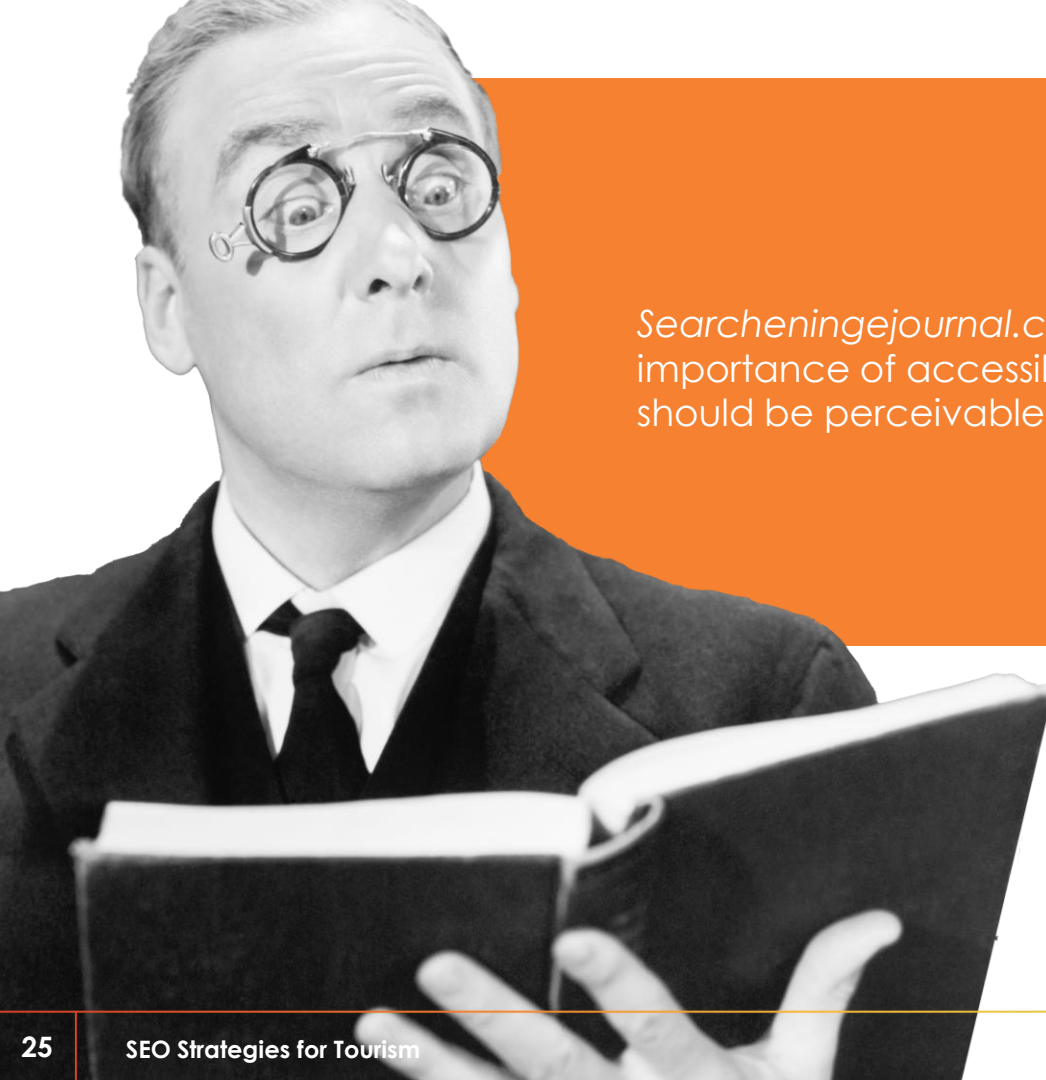
Searcheningejournal.com wrote a great article on the importance of accessibility in terms of SEO. They stated a website should be perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust.

LET'S BREAK THOSE DOWN...

// PERCEIVABLE

Perceivable encompasses removing any barriers that a user may face while accessing your content. This involves making websites screen reader accessible by supplying text alternatives (alt tags) and a logical structure to the page.

heading elements placed in sequentially descending order

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// **OPERABLE**

Operable refers to making a website usable for all users, regardless of the device they are browsing on (tablet, phone, computer). It also means allowing enough time for users to complete any task they might be given on the site.

// **UNDERSTANDABLE**

Understandable means users must be able to comprehend the information displayed on a webpage, as well as clearly understand the user interface and navigation of the site. This relies on predictable and consistent navigation.

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// ROBUST

To be a robust, a website must be able to be accessed and interpreted by all different technologies and platforms. As well as remaining accessible throughout updates to all platforms.

FOODIE SPOTLIGHT

MARTINELLI'S MARKET

GRAB A BITE!

SHOPPING SPOTLIGHT

ART MART

SHOP LOCAL WITH US

OUTDOOR SPOTLIGHT

HERON VIEW FOREST PRESERVE

EXPERIENCE YOUR NEXT OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

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// OUR SOLUTION...

accessiBe

Companies like accessiBe help website become ADA compliant by allowing users to make adjustments to your website in order to fit their needs. They can adjust:

+ Color contrast
+ Increase text size
+ Add alt-text to images

Striving to make your website accessible comes with many benefits:

+ It improves the user experience by making your website accessible to more customers
+ It reduces the risk of ADA related lawsuits
+ It improves overall site performance and helps with SERP rankings.

EXPERIENCE HOW IT WORKS!

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// CANONICALS

Canonical tags are a way of telling a search engine that a specific URL is the master copy of a page.

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// KEYWORD RESEARCH

Keyword research is essential if you want to create content that is helpful and engaging. Keyword research is the process of discovering high-volume words or phrases that people use to find websites like yours. It is all about anticipating the topics your target audience will search.

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// BLOGS/
BLOG PROMOTION

Blogging helps boost SEO quality by positioning your website as a relevant answer to customer questions. Blog posts using a variety of on-page SEO tactics give you more opportunities to rank in search engines and can make your website more appealing to website visitors.

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// PAGE SPEED

Visual elements, unnecessary code, and overuse of plugins can contribute to a sluggish blog site. Remove junk to help your pages load faster.

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// MOBILE RESPONSIVENESS

More than half of Google's search traffic in the US comes from mobile devices, your blog might follow the same trend. Make sure your blog is optimized for mobile.

**48% of US travelers** exclusively use their smartphones to plan and research travel.

// RECENT DATA

Recent data is another indirect ranking factor for Google but should still be included in blog posts. Recent data gives visitors relevant and accurate information, contributing to a positive experience.

// SCHEMA MARKUPS

Schema markups are a type of microdata that can help a search engine create an enhanced description of a site, called a rich result.

SEO Strategies for Tourism
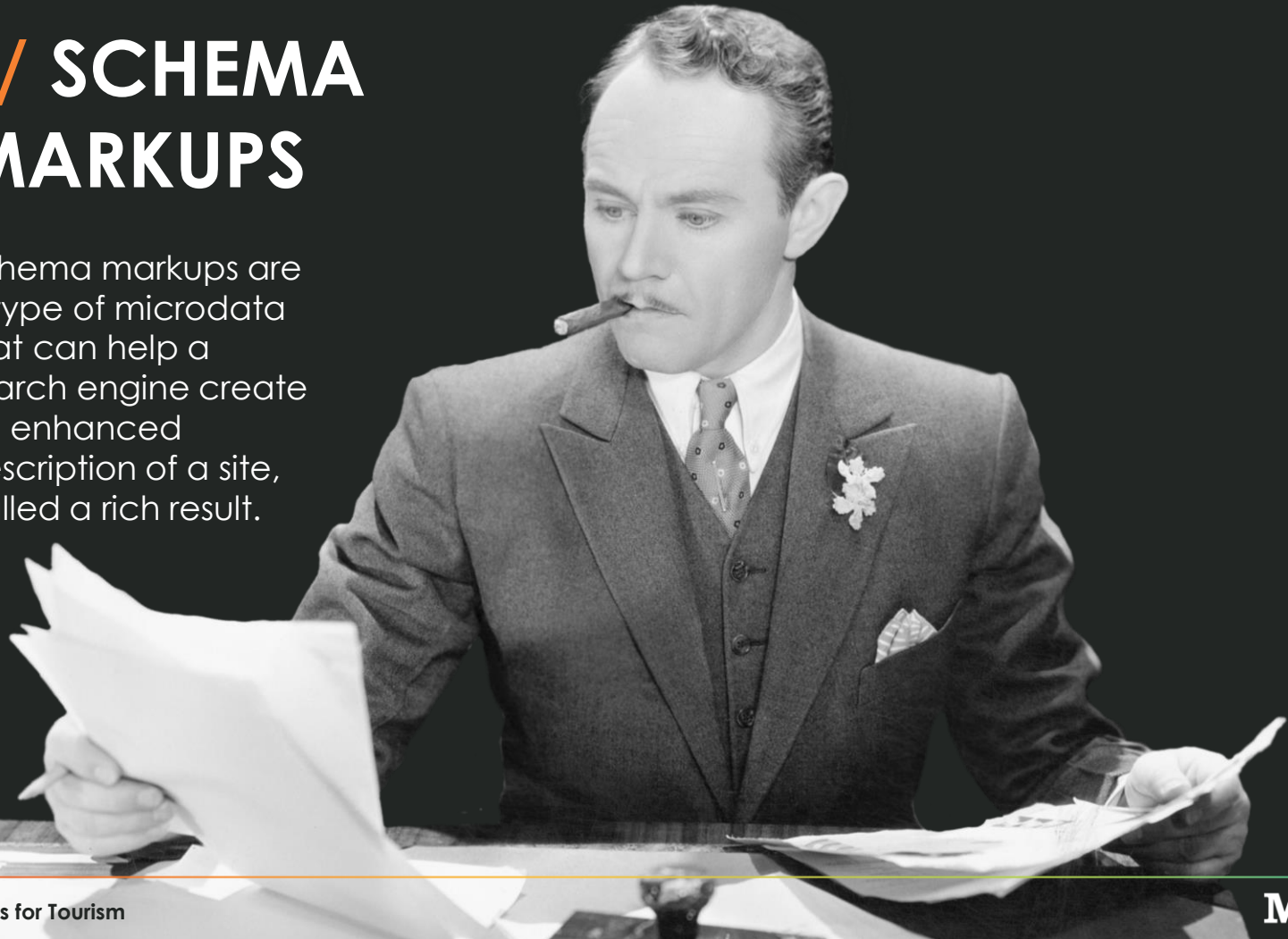
// RICH RESULTS & LOCAL BUSINESS SCHEMA

Simply by adding a line of JSON-LD code to the backend of your service page, you provide Google with important details to make your services more attractive in the SERP.

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// ONLINE REVIEWS

Whether through Google, Facebook, or other review sites, online reviews are essential to fostering customer trust as well as improving your overall SEO. Better reviews mean more customers which means search engines will be more likely to put your tourism website higher in the rankings.

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// GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

Having an up-to-date Google My Business profile is a really easy way for people to find your services.

Perhaps most importantly, Google My Business compiles reviews, giving your destination a star rating and making it easy for visitors to see what you have to offer.

People want to know they are interacting with a person and Google My Business allows you to be accessible.

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS TIPS:

- Remember to consistently respond to questions.
- Be sure to add your locations in the information section AND your description.
- Use your "Business Type" as an opportunity to pursue a keyword.

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// A.I. TO ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

+ Keeps track of business listing across multiple listing sites and streamlines responding to reviews.

+ A.I. chat features can help potential visitors get their questions answered

+ Travel companies like TripAdvisor and Expedia are starting to use A.I. to provide recommendations for where to travel

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Expedia
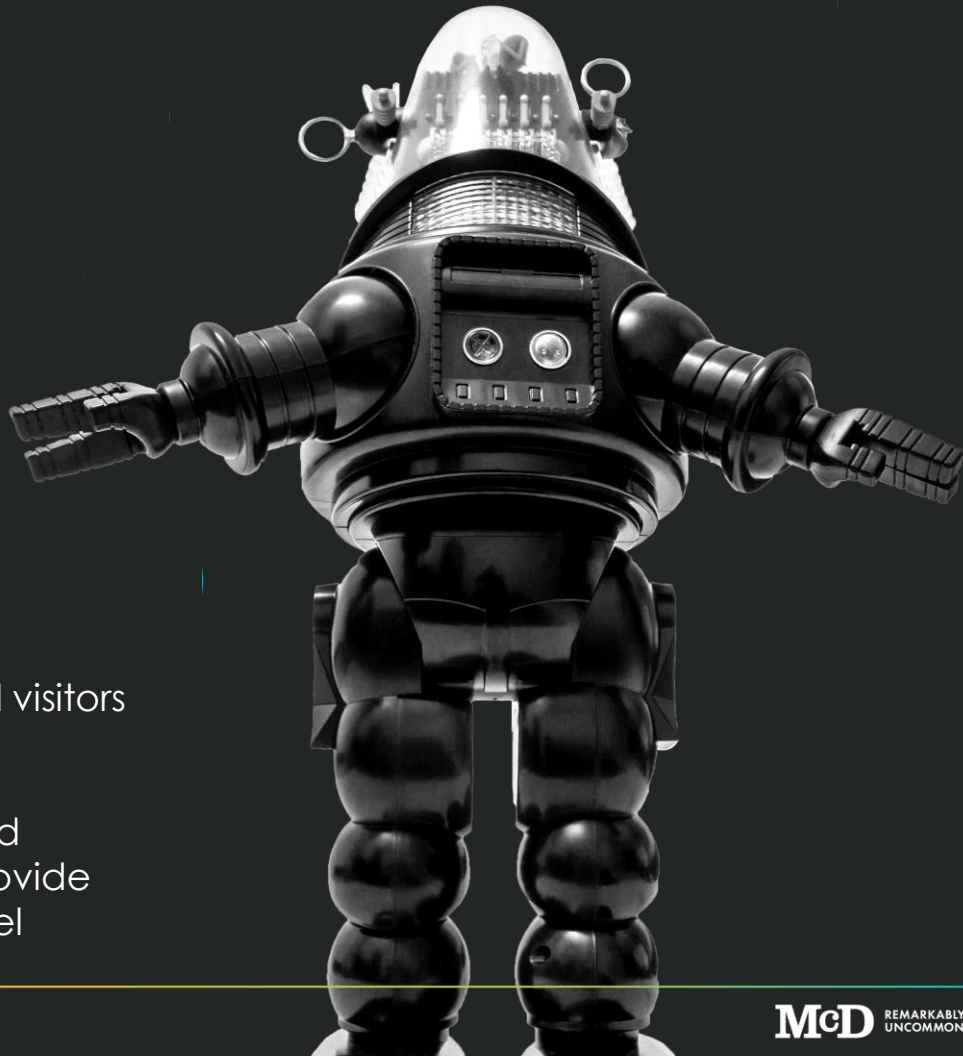
Tripadvisor

Expedia now has a travel planner feature in their app that is powered by ChatGPT.

+ Recommends stays based on conversations customer have in their chat and bookmarks any hotels that are mentioned.

TripAdvisor uses A.I. to recommend personalized travel destinations and activities

+ Customers enter destination, travel dates, who they are traveling with, and types of interested activities and can receive personalized daily itinerary recommendations

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// A.I. & SEO – USE WITH CAUTION

Authenticity is key.

+ A.I. can help streamline SEO work and give optimizers a starting place

+ It is essential that your content is unique and authentically yours

+ Search engines want content that is made by humans, for humans

+ Search engines will get more and more adept at recognizing A.I. generated content

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// YOAST
(Easiest to Use)

Yoast is a WordPress plugin that improves your websites rankings on search engines by helping optimize your sites content and keywords.

Yoast SEO automatically generates a sitemap, updates as you add new content, and pings search engines when updated.

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// HOW DOES MCD DISPLAY SEO RESULTS?

Organic Traffic

Active users
71,317
▲ 111.9%

New users
68,074
▲ 111.5%

Total Traffic

Active users
376,393
▲ 81.8%

New users
368,414
▲ 79.0%

Engaged sessions
186,571
▲ 89.9%
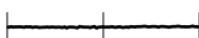
Engagement rate
40.13%
▲ 3.4%

Sessions
464,891
▲ 83.7%

Sessions per user
1.24
▲ 1.0%

Organic Keywords
48,881
▲ 30.5%

Site CTR
1.6%
▲ 46.2%

Impressions
2.1M
▲ 33.7%

Average Position
14.6
▼ -11.2%

Clicks
33.7K
▲ 95.6%

Top Peforming Keywords

	Query	Clicks ▾	Impressions	Site CTR
1.	lake of the ozarks	14,025	256,806	5.46%
2.	lake of ozarks	1,015	22,156	4.58%
3.	things to do in lake …	579	5,798	9.99%
4.	ozarks	460	125,360	0.37%
5.	ozarks missouri	440	22,921	1.92%
6.	lake of the ozarks th…	379	5,447	6.96%
7.	lake of the ozarks re…	360	18,885	1.91%
8.	ozarks lake	349	16,573	2.11%
9.	lake ozark	345	24,064	1.43%

Top Organic Landing Pages

Full page URL	Views ▾	% Δ	Active users	% Δ
www.funlake.com/	120,023	58.0% ▲	86,442	57.1% ▲
www.funlake.com/events	46,559	79.5% ▲	28,556	66.0% ▲
www.funlake.com/things-to-do/marine-a…	41,174	252.0% ▲	37,682	301.3% ▲
www.funlake.com/osage-beach	37,534	1,004.9% ▲	30,774	1,004.2% ▲
www.funlake.com/things-to-do	24,347	164.6% ▲	18,453	160.6% ▲
www.funlake.com/things-to-do/attractio…	22,599	128.1% ▲	15,577	127.9% ▲
www.funlake.com/lodging	21,818	146.9% ▲	16,004	146.7% ▲
www.funlake.com/things-to-do/golf	20,978	101.7% ▲	9,712	50.9% ▲

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QUESTIONS?

Thank You

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