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SEO and Accessibility

How they work together

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What is SEO?

- **Search Engine Optimization:** the process of maximizing the number of visitors to a particular website by ensuring that the site appears high on the list of results returned by a search engine
  - Involves increasing the quality and quantity of your website traffic, as well as exposure to your brand

Why it matters:

- Most online traffic begins with a Google search

- Optimizing your site will help deliver better information to search engines so that your content can be properly indexed and displayed within search results

- 20x more traffic opportunity than paid advertising

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Did you know?

- Websites that take web accessibility seriously consistently rank higher than their competition on Google and Youtube (Google Quality Content Index)

  – Google ranks websites with accessibility techniques included in metadata, content, visual design, and development better in organic search.

  – Why? Search engine crawlers can't see or hear, and they only use a keyboard, similar to many people with disabilities

SEO + Accessibility

Website accessibility has a strong relationship with essential elements of search engine optimization (SEO) such as:

1. Accessible design enhances user experience

2. Better page titles help screen readers and searchers

3. Good heading structure establishes content hierarchy

4. Descriptive alt-text provides both context and keywords

5. Anchor text sets user expectations and improves page relevance

6. Video transcriptions help your videos get indexed

7. Schema markup helps rich media content get noticed

8. Sitemaps help users and search engine crawlers navigate pages

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Best Practices for SEO + Accessibility

- **Write a unique title for every page**

  - Use keywords in your title that make the substance of the content clear for everyone

- **Use true headings and use them in order**

  - Use headings to break up blocks of text. This makes it easier for users to scan content and find what they need.

  - Use keywords in headings to provide clues to users about the substance of a particular section.

  - A key tip: Assistive technology users must use headings to navigate your content — imagine listening to your entire page.

- **Write meaningful, descriptive alt text for images using keywords**

  - Describes the image (how would you explain it to someone over the phone?)

  - Avoid "Image of" or "photo of" — assistive technologies announce to users that it is an image

- **Write clear link/anchor text**

  - A page full of "learn more" and "click here" links negatively affects your site's usability and the accessibility of your content and is a missed opportunity for search engine optimization (SEO).

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Questions?

Key takeaways:

- SEO is *not* accessibility, but accessibility enhancements will help your page ranking

- Design/Content/Development changes needed for SEO will add accessibility features to your site

- Search crawlers access your site the same way a screen reader would