

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO) AND THE .TEL DOMAIN

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to a domain or website from search engines via "natural" ("organic" or "algorithmic") search results. As a result, search engines return links to that domain or website higher up the search rankings, thus enabling those searching for relevant resources to discover it more easily.

Optimizing a domain or website for better search engine ranking primarily involves regular editing of its content to both increase its relevance to specific keyword being used in search queries and to encourage more frequent indexing by search engines. However, the rules for SEO are fluid and constantly change because search engine operators try to counter 'gaming' – the forcing of results to higher rankings than their perceived value in the specific search conducted.

Search engine optimization has developed into a huge industry with agencies and specialists analyzing and employing a set of techniques in an attempt to bring together human-readable content and computers that evaluate the relevance of that content. Why is this? Traditional websites lack a standardized structure and also focus on strong visual presentation of content to capture the interest of the viewer/researcher, not necessarily focusing on data. As a result, search engines need to apply complex algorithms to determine whether those websites might be useful for visitors, evaluating a number of variable characteristics. Added to this, the multi-lingual nature of websites, and the differing purposes of Internet searches (someone might be trying to find an address or telephone number of a veterinary surgery, the other a video of kittens playing the piano), and you immediately get a matrix of global possibilities without structure. SEO experts aim to address these unstructured possibilities to try to bring your domain or website to the top of the search results matrix and keep it there.

With .tel, SEO skills can be applied more easily and allow your domain and websites to be more productive as a result. All .tel domains are "search engine optimized" insofar as a .tel domain pushes you to publish valuable, structured information in it, which is of great relevance to search engines. Here are a few simple yet unique SEO features that a .tel domain provides over other types of top level domains:

- No HTML coding or webmaster knowledge required

All .tel edits can be done by the .tel owner and do not require setup of complex meta tags, robot files or other webmaster tools and techniques commonly used on websites. With a .tel, everything you add is published immediately, and seen by search engines as industry-standard, meaningful .tel information. It's as simple as that.

- Machine-readable structured content

Unlike a traditional website, .tel contains structured information which has standardized labels. For example, a telephone number has the label 'callto:' associated with it, meaning a machine knows how to deal with this type of data record. So the automatic search algorithm needn't to parse the whole text to, for example, identify a string of digits as a phone number. With a solution that is both machine-readable and optimized for presentation to humans is a revolution in SEO.

- Increased relevance and authoritative data source

Because any contact item has labels to identify its type and location, and any keyword can belong to a category, a simple crawler can instantly identify all the data needed to consider a .tel domain

as an authoritative data source. This is far more efficient than meta-tagging information within web pages and highlighting to search engines the manually-created site map.

- Standard source of contact information for directory listings

.tel domains have a single purpose: contact information. Therefore, search engines will not mistake .tel data for other less relevant information and will integrate .tel data into their local directory page offerings.

- Continuous re-indexing

Actively used .tel domains will be more appealing to search engines. As contact information in a .tel can be easily changed using profiles from a mobile device, or keywords can be updated through the control panel, a .tel domain can be made dynamic very easily. From the search engine viewpoint, a resource that is frequently updated and used is highly relevant for the search.

- Structured layout for multi-faceted hierarchy of info

A hierarchy of folders allows you to create an easily navigable and transparent structure to cater to different groups of visitors with various types of queries. Add a section to sell your product, but also another one to explain what it is, link to specs and comparisons, and a phone line for immediate purchase. Each .tel page (sub-domain) is indexed and viewed independently by search engines.

- Localization for geo-based searches

Because .tel domains allow text and keywords in any language (UTF-8 encoding), you can have a .tel domain or sub-domain catering to your local audience(s). In addition, the Proxy service that presents your .tel on the web using one of the 11 supported languages depending on browser settings, which again increases relevance for local markets and thus for local search engines in those languages.

With these assets, a .tel domain owner can create an SEO strategy and develop a .tel domain into a highly-ranked, useful resource which complements traditional websites.

Any domain, a .tel or a traditional one, can get to the top of the results table. Here are a few recommendations on how to make this happen:

- Determine the target group for your .tel and the type of query they are going to have:

Are they researching a subject?

Are they willing to buy something?

Are they trying to find a resource they visited previously?

- Populate your .tel with relevant information.

The more relevant information that is contained within a domain, the better it is for both search engines and people. Adding irrelevant data dilutes the relevance of a resource.

Both for visitors and for search engines, getting an exact match for the requested information is the ideal search experience. Based on your findings in item 1, determine important information of different types and add it to your .tel.

- Do not try to cheat, work out a strategy instead.

Trying to cheat the system by matching one particular search algorithm at a particular time won't be a viable long-term marketing strategy. Real SEO is not about exact domain name vs. number of keywords vs. outbound links. Algorithms change, and search engine companies employ human methods to evaluate and improve their search results. Specially trained 'raters' tell the search engine whether the top results are relevant for the query, while monitored number of clicks shows whether actual users follow the links at the top of the search results table.

- Make your .tel interesting for visitors to generate inbound links.

If visitors like your .tel, they will link to it.

Search engines often attribute high value to the amount of inbound linking. Benefit from the dynamic content of .tel to announce special deals, competitions, promo codes and free trials. Visitors will keep coming back and linking to your resource.

- Update and add information often.

Adding new content such as special offers, new menus, pricing changes, opening times, news or links to other useful resources (whether paid listings or free) can enhance the usefulness of your .tel domain

In traditional websites, search engines take the age of the page into account during indexing. Even though a .tel domain is not simply a webpage, search engines use the length of time the data has been static as an indication of its usefulness, so make sure it's also refreshed and renewed in the same way. Again, this can be as simple as changing profiles, or refreshing the keywords.

- Use your .tel and make it your contact hub.

Sign your blog, forum posts and email with your .tel, add it to your profile on social and professional networks, give it away on cards. Use every free resource you can in order to link to and from your .tel domain in order to create a strong association with relevant resources on the Internet. A .tel domain is the also perfect place to list your websites and provide inbound links to them. The more social your .tel is, the better it will be viewed by search engines.

To re-iterate, you have fantastic instruments at your disposal, but you also need to work on your .tel to optimize it for search engines.

As .tel domains grow in popularity and become widely adopted, search engines will become more aware of this new extension, and will provide more sophisticated ways of indexing these domains.