5 killer SEO resources

Get your website in gear for better rankings
BY TOM FLANAGAN

Search engine optimization (SEO) is critical to most businesses today, and real estate is no exception. With more than 90 percent of buyers utilizing the Internet to search for a home, optimizing your website for search engines is imperative. Google states that it "has more real estate searches than other search engines combined, and more unique visitors than all real estate-specific websites."

Search is a dynamic industry comprised of many components, and there are a handful of trusted resources that I use to stay up to date on techniques, strategies and industry news. Here are five helpful resources that I recommend:

1. Google Webmaster Central
Google Webmaster Central is an essential tool for any website owner. It's a robust application that allows you to view how Google crawls, ranks and indexes your website. And best of all: it's free. There is a slight overlap in data between Google Analytics and Webmaster Central, but both tools are crucial to managing SEO.

Unlike Google Analytics, there is no tracking code that needs to placed on your website. There is just a verification process to prove site ownership. This can be accomplished by creating a DNS record in your registrar, and instructions are included.

Once your site is verified, you will have access to a wealth of search engine data, including search queries, crawl errors and even an option to submit your Site Map to Google.

One of my favorite modules is "Links to your site." You can view who links to your site and analyze anchor text, the readable text of a hyperlink that is a key ingredient in search engine ranking. Another great feature of Webmaster Central is "Diagnostics," which records crawl stats, errors and even malicious malware. It also includes suggestions to help improve your website's performance.

2. [Google Webmaster Central YouTube channel](#)
The official YouTube channel for Google Webmaster Central is a perfect companion the site. As stated by Google, it's "your one-stop shop for webmaster resources that will help your crawling and indexing questions, introduce you to offerings that can enhance and increase traffic to your site, and connect you with your visitors."

The videos feature Google software engineer [Matt Cutts](#) answering questions and exploring Google's search practices. For those not familiar with Matt, he is the head of Google's Web spam team and is a well-known figure in the SEO world.

Matt's videos are engaging and educational for both the seasoned SEO professional and the beginner. The majority of the videos are between one and two minutes and address such topics as "[Do URL shorteners pass anchor text?](#)" or "[How would a nonoptimized site outrank an optimized one?](#)" If you haven't subscribed to the Google Webmaster Central YouTube Channel, [check it out](#).

3. [SEOmoz](#)
SEOmoz is a Seattle-based SEO software company that offers both free and premium services starting at $99 a month. The company has a plethora of resources, including "[The beginners guide to SEO](#)," which has been read over a million times. The guide is available as a free downloadable PDF. SEOmoz offers a bunch of great tools, including an SEO [Toolbar](#) for your browser and the [Trifecta](#). The Trifecta "measures the strength of pages, blogs and entire domains."

However, my favorite tool to play with is the [Open Site Explorer](#). The Open Site Explorer is a link popularity checker and back-link analysis tool. Link

popularity typically refers to the number of inbound links to a website. Just enter your URL and click "Get Link Data." The Open Site Explorer displays a data such as links back to your site, page authority, anchor text and more. [Give it a try](#).

4. [Search Engine Watch](#)
Search engine industry guru [Danny Sullivan](#) founded Search Engine Watch in [1997](#). As stated on the site, the "Search Engine Watch provides tips and information about searching the Web, analysis of the search engine industry, and help to site owners trying to improve their ability to be found in search engines."

Search Engine Watch covers all things search-related, including PPC (pay per click), organic search, analytics, link building and more. The site offers fantastic articles covering SEO. For more information, I recommend subscribing to the site's [newsletter](#) and following the publication on [Twitter](#).

5. [Search Engine Land](#)
After Danny Sullivan left Search Engine Watch, he founded the Search Engine Land blog in 2006. The blog covers SEO and industry-related news. The website has a great "[How To](#)" library that addresses topics such as SEM (search engine marketing), paid search and social media.

Premium members have full access to the comprehensive library and an annual subscription is $199. I certainly recommend subscribing to the free [newsletter](#) and connecting on [Twitter](#).

These are a handful of valuable resources that I use every day. If I left out a great resource or site, feel free to share and leave a comment.

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