

# FROM THE BASICS TO THE NOW – MAXIMIZING YOUR INTERNET PRESENCE

## 10 STEPS TO A BETTER LANDING PAGE

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# Preface

- Thank you to those who attended my presentation on Day 1 of the IGLTA Conference in Fort Lauderdale! If you missed it and would like a quick primer on how to use basic web page formatting to increase your organic search rankings, please continue.
- I have been asked to publish my presentation. In doing so I have enhanced the slideshow with simple summaries of most points in each step.
- Most of you won't know HTML code however this presentation covers the most basic and most important HTML elements that must be included on every web page, especially if you're looking to increasing your ranking in organic search results.
- It may be that you're in complete control of your website, in which case these tips will be easy to implement. If you are part of a larger company, you might like to forward this presentation to your Web Developer(s). Even if one tip is taken from this presentation, it's worthwhile!
- This is not an "all-encompassing" presentation. There are many methods and protocols that combine to make a website successful.
- As there are other presentations at this Conference focusing on Social Media, this presentation makes no mention of Facebook or Twitter (except just now!).
- **Would you like to increase your position/ranking in organic search?  
If so, read on...**

# Anatomy of a Website and Its Pages

## Using (very!) basic HTML to help improve your rankings

- **What are organic results?**

They are the “natural” search results within a search engine. In Google, they are generally seen under the first section of “Ads”. They are deemed the most relevant websites based on the user’s search term. That’s why keywords play an important role.

- **Search Engine Spiders & Robots Need Coding “Cues” To Find Your Keywords**

- **Think of your website’s pages like the layout and formatting of a newspaper**

- **Headline**

In HTML, the headline “tags” are <h1>, <h2>, <h3>, <h4>, <h5> & <h6>, where <h1> has the highest importance on the page. For successful construction, every page should contain only one <h1> tag.

- **Sub-Title**

In HTML, an <h2> tag would contain the second-most important statement on the page.

- **Opening Paragraph**

Your first paragraph should be rich with keywords relevant to the topic or article you’re publishing.

- **Photos**

At least one, if not, two or three sharp, colorful photos are necessary for a well-optimized page.

- **Remaining Article**

Plan on being succinct. This philosophy will improve the “stickiness” of your pages and website.

# Step 1:

## Know Your Keywords

- **Write keyword-heavy content**

Before writing, think of the words a potential customer would use to find your website via a search engine.

- **Focus on 3-4 keywords per landing page**

Try not to be too broad. Target your audience.

e.g. Create separate pages for “gay inns in Fort Lauderdale” & “gay inns in South Miami Beach” (using the destination’s full name will encompass the search terms “Miami”, “Miami Beach” and “South Beach”).

- **Focus on words likely to be used by your audience**

Your intended words or writing style might be rather different than that of the demographic you’re trying to attract.

- **Use similar words e.g. *breakfast vs brunch***

You might refer to one of your services as one thing while others think of it as another. Combine these keywords into your writing.

- **Avoid jargon and abbreviations (unless Business-to-Business)**

e.g. “passengers” instead of “pax”; “with” instead of “w/”; “nights” instead of “nts” (especially in headlines).

- **Don’t “spam” your content**

Try not to overdo keyword usage – there’s a delicate balance. Obvious repetition and nonsensical sentences could see you penalized. Common-sense content, while skillfully using keywords, is best.

# Step 2:

## <title> tag & Meta Data

### □ First of all, know how to “View Source (HTML) Code”

If you're not the developer of your website or, if you are, you might be using an HTML editor that doesn't require you to know detailed HTML coding and tagging. This presentation talks about HTML elements that are *essential* to a successful landing page. It's good to know how well your website uses these essential elements so, let's go on a mission to find out!

You will be able to see the underlying HTML code to your online pages by using the menu toolbar in **your browser**. Go to one of your website's pages. The source code page can usually be seen by navigating the menu toolbar:

- Firefox: “View > Page Source”
- Safari: “View > View Source”
- Chrome: “View > Developer > View Source”
- Internet Explorer: “View > Source”

### □ Don't be overwhelmed! Finding the essential elements is simple.

Once you see the HTML code page, there can be hundreds of lines of code. Please don't feel daunted! You can instantly “find” the element you want by hitting Ctrl-F (that is, hitting the “Ctrl” and “F” keys simultaneously). On a Mac, you would hit Command-F. In the box provided, type in the element you're looking for. e.g. <title>

If you get a “not found” result, you are missing an important element on your landing page!

# Step 2 (continued):

## <title> tag & Meta Data

- **What is the <title> tag?**

This is the most important phrase on your page, even though it's not too "visible" to the user! (It can mostly be seen by users in the very top of the browser, above the toolbars, usually with a blue background if you are a Windows user.) It should be a keyword-rich, explanatory statement about the content of this particular page.

The search engine robots and spiders look at this statement in a "lip-smackingly-delicious" way!

- **Unique keyword statement for each page**

- **<title> : Less than 66 characters (7-10 words)**

- **Company Name? Put it at the end, unless...**

...your company name contains "delicious" keywords, e.g.

Very Good: `<title>Gay Inns, Inc. : Gay and Lesbian Hotels in Fort Lauderdale</title>`

Not-so-good: `<title>Jeff's Travel: Gay Inns</title>`

Better: `<title>Gay Inns and Hotels in Fort Lauderdale : Jeff's Travel, Inc.</title>`

# Step 2 (continued):

## <title> tag & Meta Data

### □ Meta "Description"

You may see this field just below (or above) your <title> tags in the HTML source code. Some Search Engine Optimization (SEO) experts may deem this field unimportant but, if your page is found in a search engine result, this could be the phrase that the user will see in the search results rather than the (sometimes, nonsensical) paragraph the search engine delivers. It's important to briefly describe, in one or two short sentences, the essence of the page. Keywords are essential, too!

### □ Meta "Description": Less than 155 characters.

**Brief sentences to attract the "click" from search results**

```
<meta name="Description" content="two brief keyword-rich sentences">
```

### □ Meta "Keywords":

You may see this field too, near the "Description". In the early days of the web, this was an essential element, however many websites populated it with hundreds of irrelevant keywords. Search engines no longer place as much importance on this field as before. If, however, you want to populate this field with 5-10 relevant keywords, go ahead.

### □ Link rel "canonical":

**Is it possible that a page on your website has more than one URL?** This could be due to the fact that you use a content engine to drive your site and that the same content is delivered in different ways, from different navigational perspectives. Search engines could see this as "spam" (duplicated content) and could penalize you. It's important, therefore, to determine a single URL for a page, for the search engines' sake. You can add a field to your pages to give it a "single address" without compromising all the ways it can be found on your site. e.g.

```
<link rel="canonical" href="http://www.gayinns.com/fort-lauderdale.html">
```

# Step 3:

## Headline: `<h1>`

- **Use this to reinforce your `<title>` tag and attract users**

The `<h1>` headline can be seen by the user. It should be the most prominent keyword-rich phrase on the page.

- **Use Stylesheets (CSS) to control size, color, positioning, etc.**

Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) is the protocol used by web developers and software (such as Dreamweaver) to enable preferred sizing, color, positioning, screen size, shape, and so on.

- **CSS is used to deploy the same content across the universe of computers, tablets & smartphones**

# Step 4:

## Sub-Titles: `<h2>` & `<h3>`

- **Smart Usage**

Remember the layout of that newspaper? `<h2>` and `<h3>` tags are used to present sub-headings throughout the page, in order of importance. They should be succinct phrases - do not wrap complete paragraphs in these tags!

- **Use CSS to control size, color, positioning, etc.**

Again, it is CSS that drives a well-presented website these days.

# Step 5:

## Linking

- **Decide on your key landing pages**
- **Develop linking strategy**

Incorporate your key landing pages into your overall site navigation. Main departments link from top- or side-navigation. Many more departments and sub-departments can be linked from bottom-navigation.
- **Links to contain keywords (Get rid of “Click Here”!)**
  - ▣ BAD: Click here to see our inns.
  - ▣ GOOD: See our best gay and lesbian bed and breakfast inns in Fort Lauderdale.
- **Bolded Words**

Certain weight is given to those words you have bolded, using the tags: `<b>` or `<strong>`
- **Use CSS to control size, color, underlining, hovering**

If you don't like the "look" of, say, the bolded words in your copy, use CSS to change the look of the bolded words. BE CAREFUL when using CSS to control the look of *links*. You want the user to see that a link exists, so don't make the link look like normal text. I would recommend keeping the underline for a link and, if you like, slightly change the color/shade of a link when the user hovers over it.

# Step 6:

## Images

### □ Relevant filename

**e.g.** `eiffel-tower-300.jpg`

Renaming your image to a filename containing keywords is a good (yet very under-used) tactic to improve your rankings. You could quickly rise towards the top of the "Image" results in Google while also improving your overall organic rankings. In the example above, the "-300" refers to the width, in pixels, of the image. You might have a family of the same image, dependent upon its usage throughout your site: `-100.jpg`; `-200.jpg`; `-300.jpg` It's a good way of organizing your library and quickly identifying images.

### □ "alt" tagging images to contain names and keywords

**e.g.** `alt="Visit the Eiffel Tower on our gay and lesbian tour to Paris, France" title="Visit the Eiffel Tower on our gay and lesbian tour to Paris, France"`

The HTML "img" tag also allows for a plain-language phrase or sentence that further describes the image. Think of keywords and the relevance of the image to your content. This is the phrase that will become visible when the user hovers over the image on your page. To enable this for Firefox users, you must repeat the phrase using the "title=..." attribute

### □ Sub-titles/visible captions for images

If you like, give your image a caption, ensuring that, in the HTML code, the caption is right near the image code.

Doing so can increase your ranking in the "Image" results in Google.

# Step 7:

## “Convert” Each Page

- **What Do I Want This Customer To Do?**

Have an intention for each landing page. What are the main actions you want potential customers to do? Make the actions obvious and have your pages "convert" users into customers.

- **Conversion Calls-to-action:**

- **Buttons**

- These should be large and be in contrast to the rest of the page. If these take the user to the "next step" to becoming a customer, they have to stand out. (Your designer might not agree but stick to your guns on this point!)

- **Colors**

- Think about your headings and sub-headings and how they will stand out. Color is key to guiding the user through your page. Most users "scan" a page before reading it, so make your messages clear.

- **Forms**

- An increasingly popular practice is to put a **relevant** contact form on each key page of your site. This will prevent losing potential customers while they wait for your "Contact Us" page to load (and often the Contact Us page is far too general).

# Step 8:

## Sitemaps & Your "robots.txt" File

### □ For spiders & robots:







- `robots.txt` – tells robots where NOT to go e.g. policies; terms; script directories  
Why send robots to pages and directories on your site that have very little conversion value? Use this file to prevent them from doing so. It sits on your server at the top level. Search "robots.txt file" to see how easily you can create this file.
- `sitemap.xml` – industry standard format, used by Google, Yahoo, Bing  
This file also sits at the top level of your server. Check with your Web Developer to ensure that this is being created. For more information, read this website: <http://www.sitemaps.org/>

### □ For human eyes:

- A "mini" sitemap at the bottom of your pages ("the footer")  
You might have noticed more and more websites adopting this approach, where they list departments, sub-departments and policy pages. All of your important key landing pages should be linked here too.
- A "clickable" Sitemap linked from footer `sitemap.html`  
Create a page showing all of the pages on your site, listed logically by department. Name it "sitemap.html" or "sitemap.htm"

## Step 9:

# Integrate "geo-social" links

- Use any and all of these free tools to help your website pages gain more credibility and relevance. Many tools are now geo-sensitive, so know your GPS co-ordinates, especially with photos!
-  Google earth
- Photos & Images:  Panoramio  
from Google
-  Google maps
- Video – Create Your Own Channel:  YouTube
- Bing & Yahoo
- Owner's Center:  tripadvisor\*
-  tripadvisor\* Video, Photos, Floorplans and Other Images

# Step 10:

## Other Tools & Thoughts

### □ Google Analytics

This is a free tool enabling you to see your website traffic, its origin, search terms, demographics, and so much more.

### □ Leverage Your Home Page as a Gateway

Make sure your index.html page is a "brilliant doorway" to the rest of your site. Update it often!

### □ Write Keyword-Specific Landing Pages

Don't be shy in creating new pages based on the most common search terms you find in Google Analytics.

### □ [base.google.com](http://base.google.com)

Send a file to Google to make them aware of your goods and services.

- Events & Activities
- Travel Packages

### □ QR Codes (Quick Response) >>

These are the (new) key to successful Mobile Web Marketing.

Think of the many ways you can use these codes to bring traffic to your site.

### □ Never Stop Writing!



Thank You!

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