

The Late Night Blog Post SEO Checklist

- ✓ **Do you know what keywords your post is targeting?** When you write a blog post, you need to know WHY you are writing it. What action do you want the reader to take? Based on that, you can then imagine what idea keyword phrase a searcher in Google would type to find your post. It should be the keyword phrase for which your post is the perfect answer! **Know that phrase.**
- ✓ **Are your keywords somewhere in the post?** Is that ideal keyword phrase in the post? What about related phrases that mean the same thing. The phrase “big rubber duck” and “large rubber duck” mean about the same thing. Google knows this so use both phrases in your post in a natural way to maximize search traffic, but don’t stuff keywords in there. **Write for people, not Google.** To research related phrases use [UberSuggest.com](http://ubersuggest.com)
- ✓ **Is your content better than other content for that keyword?** Google makes more money if their search engine is great, so they are constantly working to surface the best content. Your best defense against this is to be the best. **Up your game.** If other content for your ideal keywords is awesome, you should be “more awesomer” – OK, awesomer is not a word, but you get it, right?



- ✓ **Do you have more words than your competition??** Somehow, in the search for awesome content, Google has realized that longer content is usually better than shorter content. Most English professors would disagree, but it's Google that matters here. **Be longer than your competition** and set 1000 words as the minimum.
- ✓ **Is your SEO title compelling?** One of the things that people often miss is the fact that your "SEO Title" that appears in the search engine. The title of your page **is actually selling your post** to the reader. So, you need to write your page title (SEO Title) in a way that entices the searcher to "pick you" and click through to your site. Write a page title as if it were ad copy.



- ✓ **Is your description compelling?** The same thing that is true for SEO title goes for descriptions. The main difference is that descriptions are not considered in the ranking algorithm. But, searchers are reading those descriptions and deciding if they should click through to your site. So **write great descriptions**.

- ✓ **Do you have a couple of outbound authority links?** People who are writing [great content](#) (which is you, hopefully) always reference other great content to prove and support their point. Make sure that your excellent content links out to at least two authority sites from every page you are trying to rank. **Pro tip: link to sites that are related but don't directly compete with you.** You don't want your links to siphon traffic away from your site. *Example: Above, I linked to an article about great content on Forbes.com. You are not here to learn about great content, so you are less likely to be distracted by that link.*

- ✓ **Do you have a couple of internal links to and from your content?** It's good SEO practice to link to other content in your site, both to and from the page you are writing. Do this in a way that is helpful to your reader, with the goal of keeping them on your site. Google considers time on site and bounce rate when deciding where to rank you page, and **internal links can help.** Internal links also help spread around any authority (sometimes called "juice") Google gives to a page in your site to other pages.

- ✓ **Are your images keyword rich?** All great content should have images. Your images can be "tagged" with helpful information to identify what they are about. This image information is also used to help visually impaired people navigate your site. **So, take the time to fill out your "alt tags" and "title tags"** with accurate keyword-rich descriptions of your images. Don't stuff keywords, but be sure to include at least one keyword variation in every image tag.





- ✓ **Do your backlinks have varied anchor text?** Backlinks (links to your article, often from other sites) are still very important in SEO. On the occasions when you get to pick the words that are used to link to your page (called the anchor text), ***make sure you use many variations of your keywords.*** In this sentence, the phrase “[weekly podcast about internet marketing](#)” is the anchor text. That phrase is a variation of my main keyword for that page, which is “internet marketing podcast”. Google is sensitive to cases where the same exact phrase is used to link to a site over and over again – so mix it up.
- ✓ **Are your backlinks coming from relevant content?** In the old days, any backlink from any site was good. If you could pay a Bulgarian dating site to link to you, that was just as good as any other site, even if you weren’t in the Bulgarian dating niche.

These days, Google is paying more attention to the quality and the relevance of the link coming in. So, ***don't waste time soliciting links from sites that aren't relevant*** to your general topic area.

- ✓ **Is there a sharing signal for your content?** Indications are that Google has been trying to figure out for years how to best use “sharing signals” in ranking algorithms. After all, if a post is going viral on Facebook, that can be a good indication that it is a good piece of content (or a cat video). So, **make sure it is easy to share your articles**, and make sure you share them. This is another place where having great content helps.
- ✓ **Is your content duplicated?** Generally speaking, ***chunks of duplicate content on your site are bad for SEO***. There are three things to watch out for. First, make sure that you don't have two URLs pointing to exactly the same content. Wordpress is notorious for this because of all the content archive pages like category pages. Make sure those are not indexed by google. Second, don't use the same text content over and over on your site. Typical offenders are calls to action and other boilerplate at the end of every blog post and stuff in the footer and sidebar (which appears on every page). Use images instead where possible. Finally, always make sure that your content is not somewhere else on the internet. The best tool for this is [Copyscape](#). Simply put, **Google does not like duplicate content**, so you should try to eliminate it where possible.

