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SEO EDITING GUIDELINES

THRIVE

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Introduction

SEO, or Search Engine Optimisation is where you change elements of your article to make them more likely to appear in web search results.

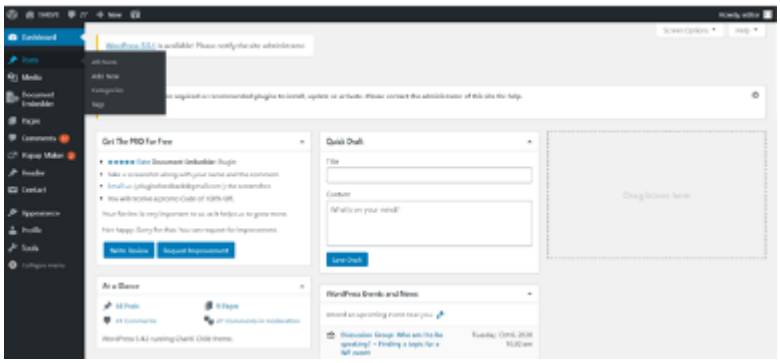
The purpose of this guide is to provide a clear process to follow when reviewing articles to ensure they meet SEO standards.These standards have been developed to help keep all our content consistent and accessible.

A major part of this is arranging the information in your article efficiently and logically, so search engines can understand what your article is about more easily. A high SEO score will help drive readers to THRIVE, and thus help us build a thrivable world.

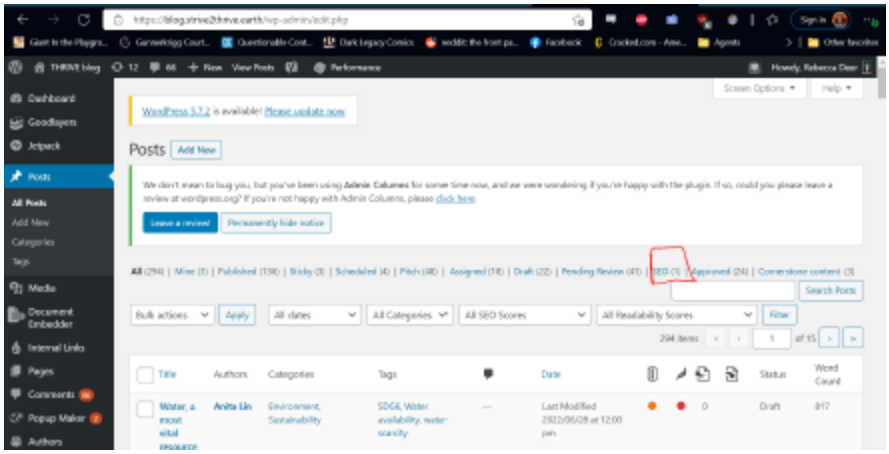
Editing an article in WordPress

Please note that you will need editor access in order to view all posts. Once you do, follow the instructions below:

- Log in at blogpost.strive2thrive.earth
- Go to Posts via the Left Sidebar and click “All Posts”



- On the following screen you will see a dashboard with information on ALL posts on our blog site.



- Click on the SEO tag to access all posts that need an SEO review.

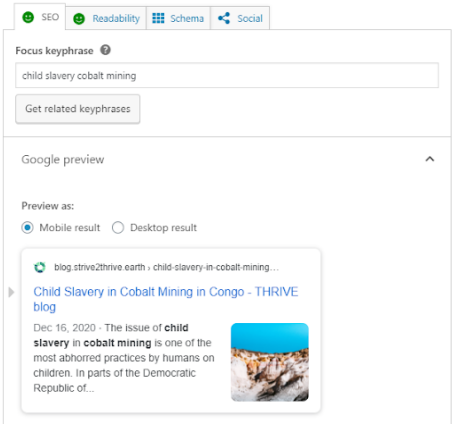
These are articles which have been marked as ready for SEO review. This means that they have already passed through a thorough editing process and have been pushed through to you to check the last details before they are ready to be published. If you do notice any errors at this stage, please be sure to notify both the writer and previous editors, so that there is clear documentation, and the error can be corrected. DO NOT push an article to approved if it has any errors.

- Click EDIT to open a post's edit view

In the editor you can start reviewing the article and input necessary changes. You will need to scroll all the way to the bottom of the article, below the pagebuilder elements, to view Yoast SEO - this program scans our articles for any SEO issues.

How to use Yoast SEO WordPress Plugin

To access Yoast SEO, Scroll down to the bottom of your text editor and this should appear:



The Yoast SEO Plugin is a useful guide for SEO improvements; we detail how to use it below.

You can change the following options, and preview how the site will look in search results.

Focus Keyphrase: One of the most important aspects of SEO. This is what your article is about. This should be researched beforehand. Instructions on picking the perfect keyphrases (or keywords) are in this SEO Keyword Analysis Guide.

SEO Title: The title of the post, as seen in search results. By default, this is {Your post title} – {Site title}. This should be around 60 characters. When typing it, a bar will appear within the textbox - make sure it is green (Orange indicates too short and Red means too long).

If your title is too long or short you can either edit your main post title, write a new custom SEO title (this won't affect your main post title) or remove the {Site title} tag if it's too long.

URL Slug: Forms the URL for your article - it will be https://blog.strive2thrive.earth/**(your-URL-slug)**/

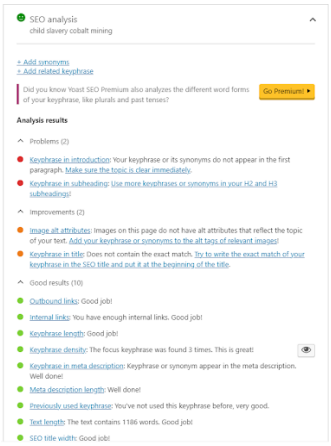
Type each word separated by hyphens. This will typically be the title of your article without any stop word. Make sure your keyphrase is in the slug.

Meta Description: A catchy description and summary of the contents of your post for users and search engines to know and understand what your content is about.

Your meta description should be approximately 155 characters long. Use the green bar under to check if it's of the right length.

Try to include commonly used keywords and phrases when possible in your meta description.

The SEO and Readability tabs analyse your article in terms of SEO performance. Read these notes and use them to guide your article and SEO options to be the best they can be. Address any problems or improvements by making any changes to your article based on Yoast's recommendations till you get an overall green dot (or close to).



Remember that having a green dot or not doesn't generally affect your SEO performance as this tool is just a guide. However, try to ensure you address any issues related to keyphrases. (Yoast sometimes cannot differentiate between different forms of a word e.g. sustainable and sustainability. If you are still getting problems from Yoast after you have already done what it has suggested, don't worry about it.)

Make sure you get a green dot for "Previously used Keyphrase". This ensures you are not competing with another article on the blog for rankings.

Also, avoid linking your keyphrase to an external website, instead link a surrounding word.
To get an approved readability score simply click on the highlight tool in Yoast SEO under the readability tab. An overall Green Dot for readability is not necessary but desirable.

SEO Guidelines

We have developed a series of guidelines to make sure our content stands out in web searches - meeting SEO standards. To this end, you will need to review the content to ensure it meets these guidelines.

Focus Keyphrase/Yoast

1. Has a focus keyphrase been assigned? **This is vital, as no analysis can be completed without one.**

If there is no keyword, you will need to either set one, or contact the author to set one. Yoast SEO will flag any issues that require attention as problems, and will contribute to a red "score". Aim for green.

2. Has the keyword been used in the title, headers, and url slug?

The title absolutely requires the key phrase. It's also good to have some of the subheadings contain it, or common alternatives. The slug is the unique URL for the article. This will typically be the title of the article without any stop words such as "the, it, on etc". Make sure the key phrase is in the slug.

3. Has this keyphrase been used enough times?

That means, the phrase that has been designated as the target keyphrase needs to be used in the text body multiple times. If it has not, you will need to go through the post and slightly amend

the wording to include it. This includes common synonyms and variations of the keyphrase as well. Yoast will provide you with a handy green circle when this has been done sufficiently.

Titles

“5 times as many people read the headline as they do the body”

Is the title catchy? The title should be less than 70 characters. It must be unique and include the focus keyphrase. It needs to describe the content of the article.
If the title is uninspiring, you may need to create a new title for the article.

Some ways to create engaging titles include:

1. Start headlines with Numbers

This makes people curious. It allows for easy content structure and makes it easy for people to read so they can scan through the X number of points.

Examples include:

- Top 15 Businesses Who are Killing it in Sustainability
- 21 Things You Can Do to Become More Sustainable
- 7 Secrets, 7 Proven Ways, 7 Reasons, 7 Tips…
- 7 Ways to Make a Positive Impact on Your Carbon Footprint

2. Use ‘how to’ headlines

This is a great way to show that your blog is answering an issue your audience may have. This is more for articles that guide people. Examples include:

- How to Make Your Business More Sustainable Without Losing Customers
- How to XXX even if XXXX
- How to XXX to {solve a problem}
- How to Create an At-Home Compost to Help Your Community

3. Flag Common Mistakes

This creates curiosity so they read the blog to see if they made that mistake. It helps them to solve their problems. Ask questions that your audience would be interested in, for instance:

- 16 Assumptions on Hunger you’re probably making (and how to fix them)
- Are you making these 10 common google adwords mistakes?
- Do You Know The Real Cost of Our Gadgets?

4. Engage people, get them into the content

The title should highlight the topic the article is discussing, and give readers a reason to engage with the content - while the above methods are useful for this, you can also explain how this article stands out from others (in a few words), like so:

- What is A Circular Economy? We Dig in Deep
- Think You Know Your Carbon Footprint? Quiz Yourself and Find Out

5. Use Punctuation

This is particularly useful for SEO. For instance, you can place your keyphrase before the colon and add a way it can benefit/inform readers afterwards, like so:

- Marketing Plan Template: Create Your First Marketing Plan in 5 Steps
- Coronavirus on Marine Life: What are long-term effects?

6. Be ultra-specific

Define what the article is about. Set the expectation for the rest of the article

- **An example of a bad headline** = Fast Fashion
- **An example of a good headline** = Fast Fashion: What is the real impact on our environment?

7. Use the 5Ws

These are interrogative words used to gather information - and can build reader curiosity.
For instance:

- Who - Who do we hold accountable when there's not enough climate action?
- What - What are climate change modelling impacts?
- When - How to motivate yourself when you don't feel like it
- Where - Where does the waste of all our gadgets end up?
- Why - Why moving towards a green hydrogen economy benefits us all

Some tips:

Model the best in the business. See how successful bloggers/NGOs are writing their titles and modify them so you can use them yourself in a different way.

Practice. You'll get better as you go. You can use this tool as a base for your titles.

Try and write at least 10 variations of the headline. See which works best. Post in the #editorial-team thread (or any relevant channel) in Slack and see what others think works best.

Use the search terms and questions revealed by keyword analysis to create headings and structure the outline. This should naturally create a more optimised article. Create this outline in WordPress and also paste it into the editorial notes so that editors can check that it has been followed.

Subheadings

Subheadings should include the focus keyphrase (or any synonyms of the keyphrase) when possible. These are also useful for defining each topic within your article, which can make it easier for search engines to understand your article's contents.

For instance, if you were writing an article with the keywords "Sustainable Tourism", you could have headings on the following:

- What is responsible tourism
- Green tourism defined
- Examples of Sustainable Tourism in 2021
- Top 5 Green Destinations in Australia
- What are the different types of sustainable tourism
- The best sustainable tourism companies

Links

Check for:

1. **Internal links:**
   Are there sufficient internal links? We try to aim for three or four at minimum. If there are not, you will need to perform a search either using this search tool or the default wordpress one, to find relevant articles that have been previously published that are related to the content. This can be other articles, audio files, YouTube links, or images/charts on the THRIVE Platform.

2. **External Links:**
   All external links (links to places outside THRIVE) must open in a new tab, like so:



   It is also important that the words linking to an external website do NOT contain the key phrase - this reduces SEO scores. Instead, link a surrounding word.

3. **Inline citations:**
   All links must use inline citation when referencing a source. This means the links should all exist within the body of the text, and there should be no reference list.

   Examples:

   a. Mining lithium is a water-intensive process and even competes with local crops production.

   b. The gender gap in the amount of time spent on unpaid work is worse for poorer countries (International Labour Organization, 2018).

4. **A call to action at the end:**
   There must be a link back to the key messages, values, and purpose of THRIVE at the end of the article. This needs to be specific to the content of the article, not a generic call to look at other content on THRIVE blog.

   Instead of: "Check out the other content on our blog by clicking this link."

   Try doing this: "The benefits of sustainable tourism cannot be underestimated, but any efforts to achieve this must mitigate any potential harms. Hence, when you consider sustainable tourism options, think about the impacts that they may have in the long term."

Images

What to check for in article images:

- All images have captions and give credit to the image source
- All images have alt-text that includes the primary key phrase
- Images are contextually appropriate to the post
- Images do not include any offensive, violent or sexual visuals
- Feature image is present and the correct dimensions (900 x 483)
- The title of the featured image is different to the file name and credit given to the source.

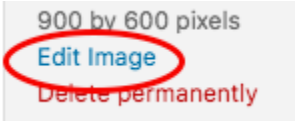
How to Resize Featured Images

Featured images are the images seen at the top of each blog post when users read them.

To ensure all featured images are equal in size when you visit the blog, please resize them to 900 x 483 pixels. You may do this in an external program, or this can be done within WordPress.

When you're editing your blog post, go to the right sidebar under "Featured image":-
select "Set featured image" and upload your image

Still in the popup, under the uploaded image select "Edit image"



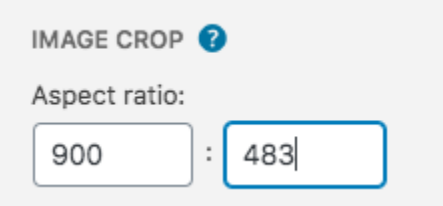
Under SCALE IMAGE, add new dimensions so that the width is 900 (ignore the height for now)

Select the button Scale

You will need to press the back button and reselect your new rescaled image at this point.

Select the "Crop" button in the top left of the popup

Under IMAGE CROP within Aspect Ratio: enter 900 x 483



Click on the image and you will now see a dotted rectangle within your image. Drag the bottom right corner to the maximum width. You may need to adjust the selection so the image looks right.



Select “Crop” again to take action.

Press “Save”

Please also change the title of your image so it isn’t the file name.

Tags and Categories

- Ensure there is a catchy meta description that describes and summarises the contents of the post for users and search engines to know and understand what the content is about. You can add this in Yoast SEO at the bottom of the page.

- The meta description should be approximately 155 characters long. See the green bar underneath to check if it’s of the right length.

- Select relevant categories for the blog post (please don’t create any new categories)

- Add any relevant tags separated by commas. It must include the appropriate monthly theme as a tag. For example, sdg6 (no spaces). Try to make sure tags don’t overlap with categories

Content Blocks

Make sure the content in the body of the article uses the appropriate block.

- Headings and subheadings should all use the heading block.
- Images should use image block (or gallery to display multiple images in one block)
- Bullet lists should use list block
- Large quotes must use the blockquote block

Before You Submit:

You should also:

- Make sure you insert your primary keywords within the first 100 words of your post
- Regularly use your primary keywords and any related terms or synonyms throughout the body of your blog.
- Add alt-text to all the images you use with your primary keywords - it tells search engines what images are about, and makes the article more accessible for those who use screen readers. You can do this by selecting images in the WordPress editor.
- Lastly, ensure your primary keyword is in your meta description as well. Google will highlight your keyword, and associated search terms, when your page is shown as a result to users.

Completing this will give your blog a higher chance of ranking on search engines.

Submitting for Approval:

If everything meets our quality standards, write a quick editors note down the bottom stating that it has passed an SEO check and change the status of the post to approved.

If the required changes are small, make the changes yourself and note that you have done so in the editors notes. Then again, push it to approved. This means that it requires zero further changes and can be scheduled for publication.

If the changes required are more substantial, notify the writer of needed changes, and change the post status to draft.