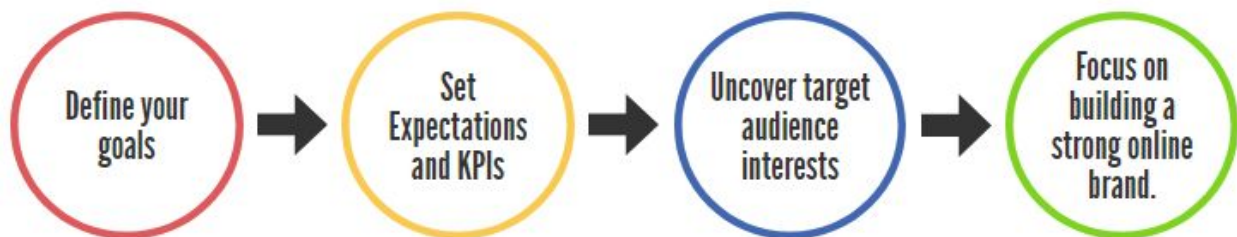


Chapter 1: Digital Marketing Plan For Nonprofits: The Definitive Guide (Updated 2018)

When you're feeling overwhelmed by [digital marketing](#) it's best to step back from the day to day to reevaluate your situation.

A good place to start is with your digital marketing plan.

This plan should be actionable and include specific steps and strategies you'll take to achieve your marketing goals, while also translating the strategic vision of your organization.



We've broken the first chapter of this guide into four steps:

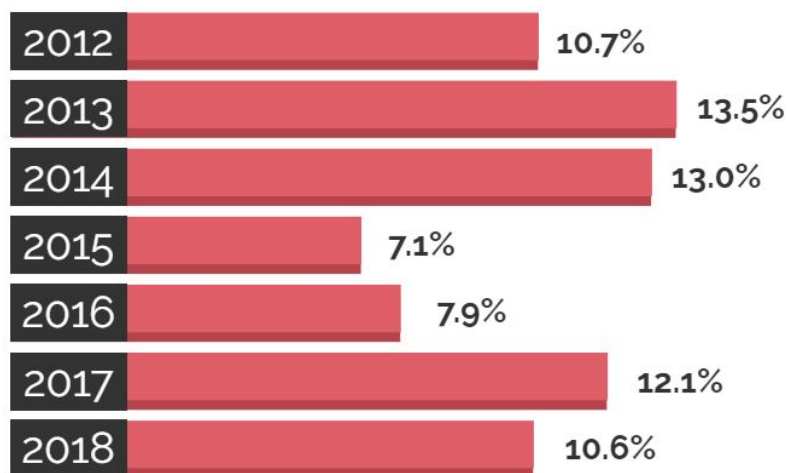
1. Define your digital marketing goals
2. Set expectations to measure digital marketing success
3. Uncover target audience insights to get your content read
4. Bring your digital marketing strategies together to establish an online brand

This is perfect for you whether you're flying solo, have the support of a team, or are working with an agency/consultant.

Why Nonprofits Need A Digital Marketing Plan

Did you know that last year people in the U.S. gave \$31 billion dollars online?

With six years of steady growth, one could argue that there has been a shift in preference for how donors are choosing to support their nonprofit.



Online giving is up 10.6% so far through April 2018.

This creates an opportunity for organizations that are looking to expand their brand presence online in order to connect with their audience – and like minded individuals.

Despite how difficult digital marketing can be, people still tend to approach it like this:

- Create a piece of content
- Share on social media
- Move on to the next project



Let's take a look at why this doesn't work.

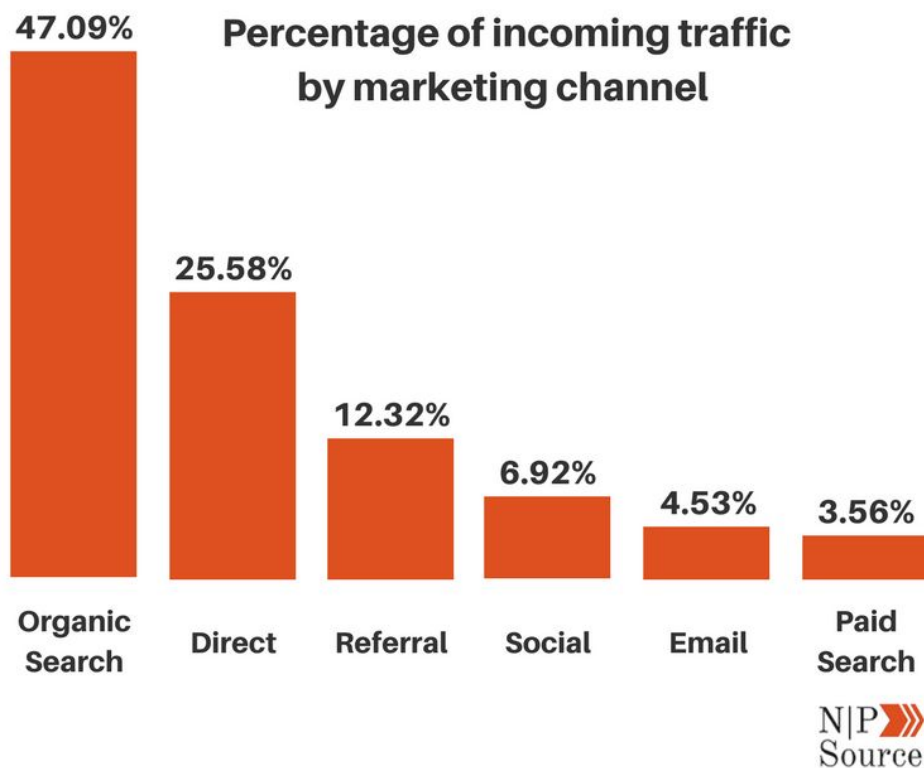
First, it's easy for content to get lost in the [2 million blog posts published every day](#).

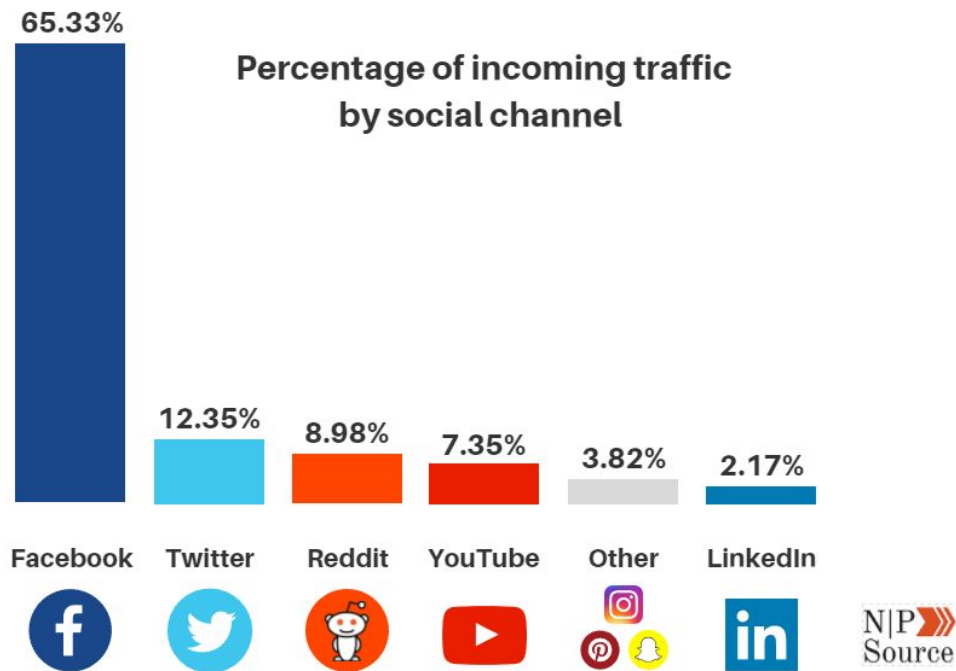
You may have thought you wrote something of value, but none of that matters if your website isn't being found by potential visitors.

Second, [social media](#) isn't enough on its own to expose your organization to a new audience.

These platforms make their revenue from advertising giving them no incentive to show your post to thousands of feeds unless you pay for it.

An internal study of 1,000 nonprofit websites found that people are **7 times more likely to visit a nonprofit's website in a search result** than they are through social media.





On average, visits from social media represent 6.92% (**65.33% of which is driven by Facebook**) of all traffic to nonprofit websites compared to 47.09% from organic search.

Step 1: Define Your Digital Marketing Goals

Defining your [digital marketing goals](#) help to identify the primary strategies you need to accomplish your objectives.

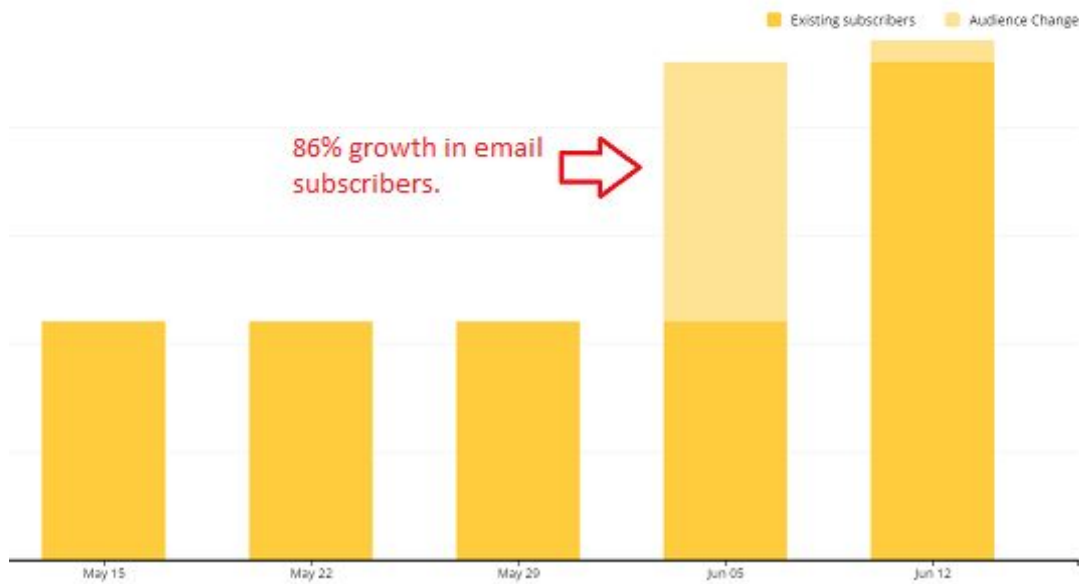
For example, what strategies would you use if your goal is to build your brand and grow your audience online?

How would you then prioritize resources so they are spent on activities that work to achieve that goal?

While these questions aren't always easy to answer, you can chunk it down:

1. What is one of your organization's goals?
2. What's an action you need to take to achieve your goal?
3. What's a digital marketing strategy you want to focus on?
4. Who on your team will be responsible for taking this action?
5. When do they need to take this action?

This is a goal I set that **grew my email list by 86% in one week!**




Here's how I did it...

First, I began by publishing a blog post with a content offer that was relevant to the article.

In this case, [15 Online Fundraising Ideas That Actually Work](#) has a downloadable checklist.

Almost there! Please complete this form and click the button below to gain instant access.



Free Step-by-Step Checklist: Leverage These Techniques For Your Site (+7 Bonus Strategies Not Found In The Post)

Send Me The PDF

100% Privacy Guarantee. Your email address is safe with me.

The key to convincing someone to download your offer is to go above and beyond expectations by delivering on value.

Not only does it condense the article into a 2-minute read, but **this checklist doubles the value** by offering 7 bonus strategies not found in the post.

Next, to maximize reach I integrated my promotion



strategy across multiple channels.

I was then able to identify my top converting channel as a Twitter ad promoting the checklist:

Nonprofits Source
@NonprofitSource

Want more donations? Get our checklist ----->
14 Online **#Fundraising** Strategies (That
Work FAST) **#nonprofit**



14 ONLINE FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES Checklist

Online donations are one of the fastest growing methods of giving. Last year alone saw \$27 billion in donations from online sources.

Here's my question for you:
Is your organization doing everything it can to take advantage of this **MASSIVE** growth opportunity?
While online marketing can sound like an overwhelming initiative; it doesn't have to be.
I'm going to share with you 14 easy fundraising strategies that will grow your online revenues **TODAY**.

1 CUSTOM FACEBOOK AUDIENCES

- Grow your revenue by 63% by leveraging custom

Free Step-By-Step Checklist:
nonprofitsource.com

Retweets 9 Likes 25

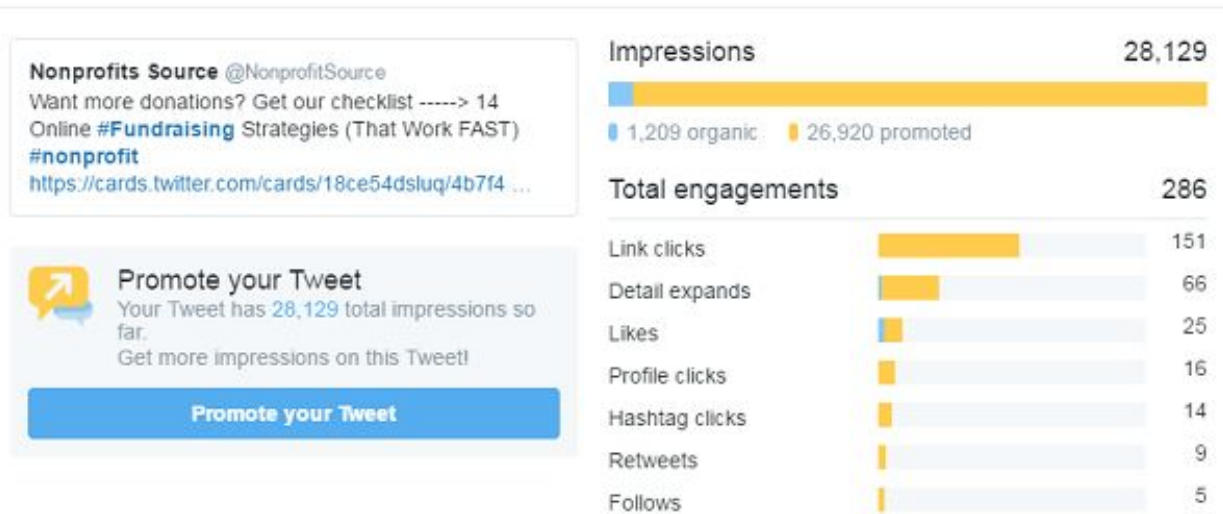
7:40 PM - 3 Jun 2017

9 25

On average, I that found 20% of the people who clicked my ad became an email subscriber.

At a cost per click of \$0.80, I spent \$4.00 to get each new subscriber.

Tweet Activity



Note: Only 4.5% of all impressions were organic.

As a nonprofit, a cost per lead of \$4.00 isn't bad when you consider the average online one-time gift across sectors is \$104.00.

Finally, I spent a month reaching out to relevant websites to build backlinks to my page.



Backlinks, according to [Google](#), are one of the top 3 search ranking factors.

What were the results?

First page on Google:

Keyword	Volume ⁱ	KD ⁱ	CPC ⁱ	Traffic [↓] ⁱ	Position ⁱ	URL ⁱ
online fundraising ideas	600	17	4.50	27	8 [↓] 1	nonprofitssource.com/online-fundraising-ideas/ ▼

By defining my goal and aligning strategies behind it, I was able to identify:

- A content offer that both converts and is shareable
- My most valuable digital channel for this campaign
- Ranking opportunities to sustain long-term growth

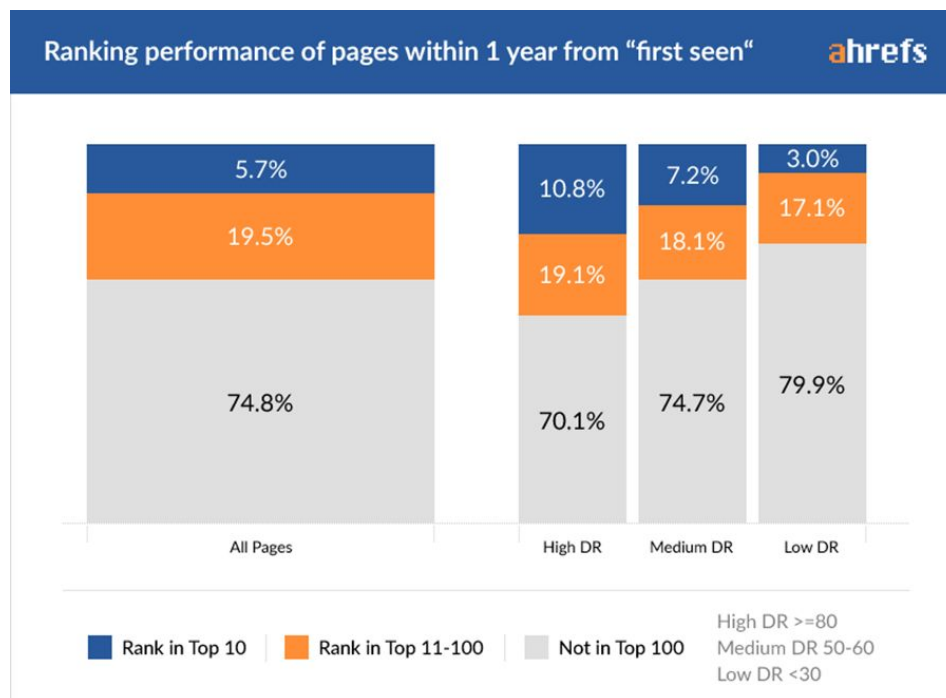
Step 2: Set Expectations To Measure Digital Marketing Success

Setting expectations that align with your capabilities and resources are critical to gaining [continued support from leadership](#).

Leadership wants to see results in their investments and it's your job, as a marketer, to be able to show that progress.

But turning your website into an inbound lead generating and branding machine takes time and commitment.

A study by Ahrefs found that only 5.7% of all newly published pages will get to Google Top 10 within a year.



The reality is that noticeable results can take 12-18 months on average, regardless of how fine-tuned your digital marketing process is.

However, there are two ways to ensure you're doing everything to track and measure that progress as your marketing matures:

1. **Tangible Measurements:** Are typically revenue focused where the desired outcome is to sell a service or receive donations while accounting for expenses

2. **Intangible Measurements:** Identity how, and **most importantly why**, people behave the way they do when they engage with your brand

Tangible measurements are easy to calculate and can fall into any number of ratios and equations.

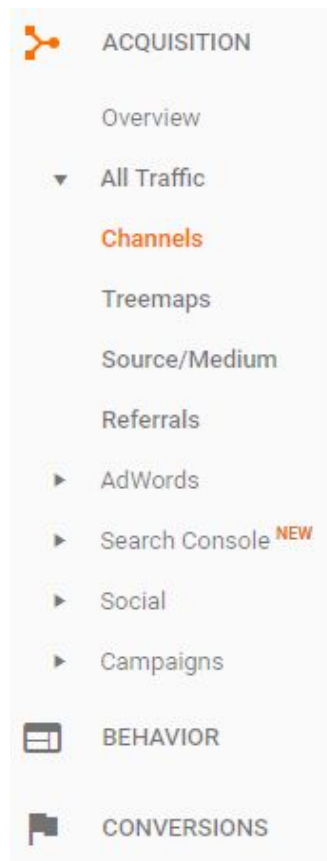
Here's a list of a few of the basics every marketer should have in their toolkit, but it is by no means exhaustive:

- Cost Per Click (CPC)
- Cost Per Impression (CPM)
- Cost Per Marketing Qualified Lead
- Cost Per Sales Qualified Lead
- Cost Per Sale (CPS)
- Click Through Rate (CTR)
- Landing Page Conversions
- Email Opt-In Rate
- Customer Lifetime Value

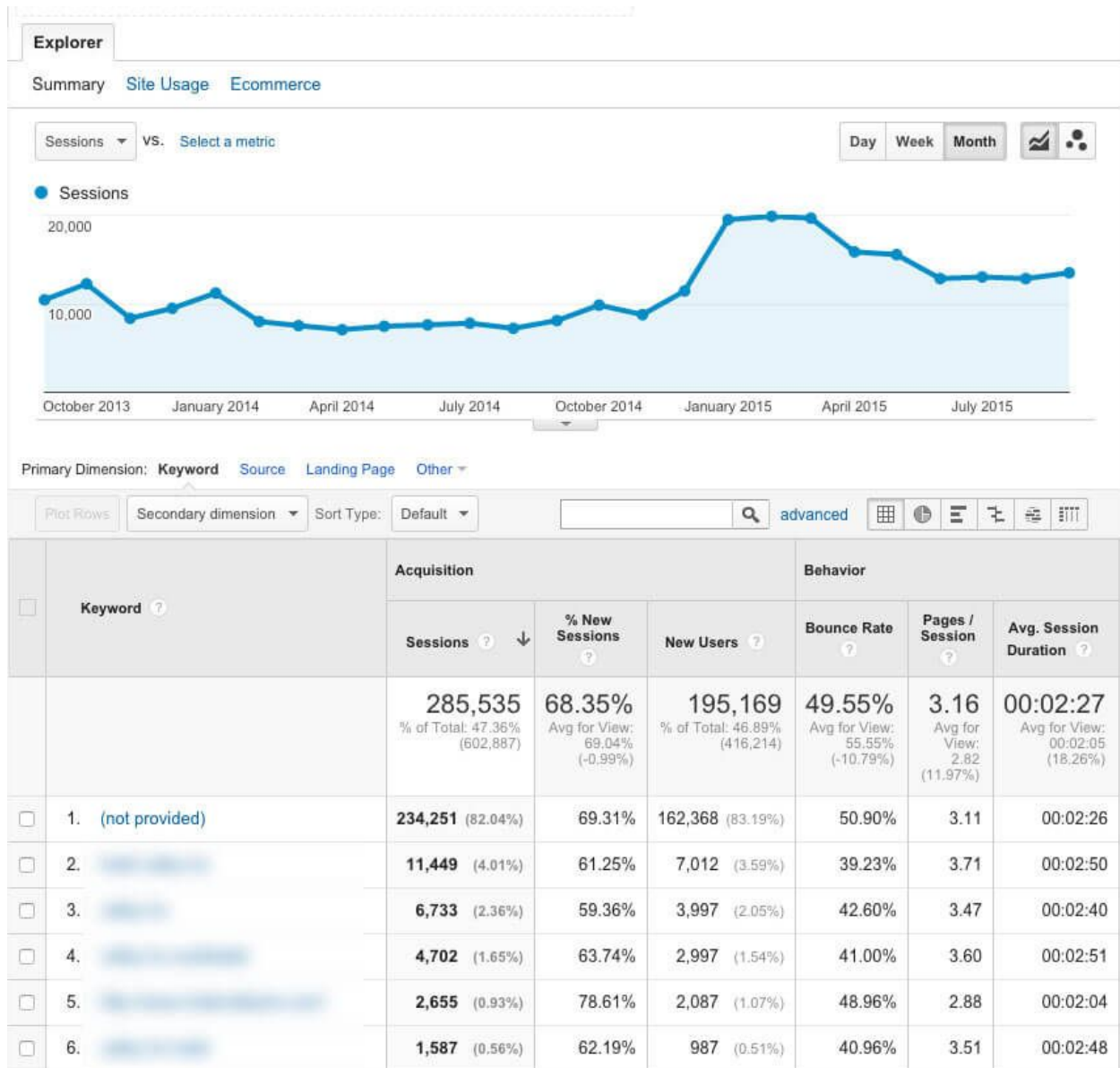
As your marketing ramps up, some of your focus should be on finding opportunities to lift your **organic search**.

The best way to measure that growth is with Google Analytics.

Within your analytics dashboard head over to **Acquisition -> All Traffic -> Channels**

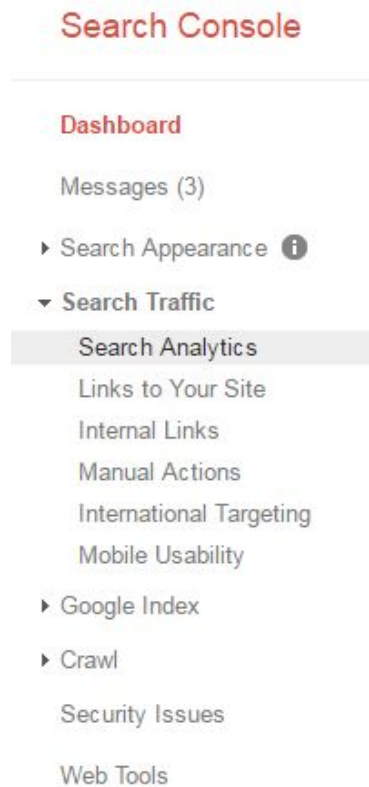


Once you select the **Channels** tab it will bring up a chart showing your organic traffic:

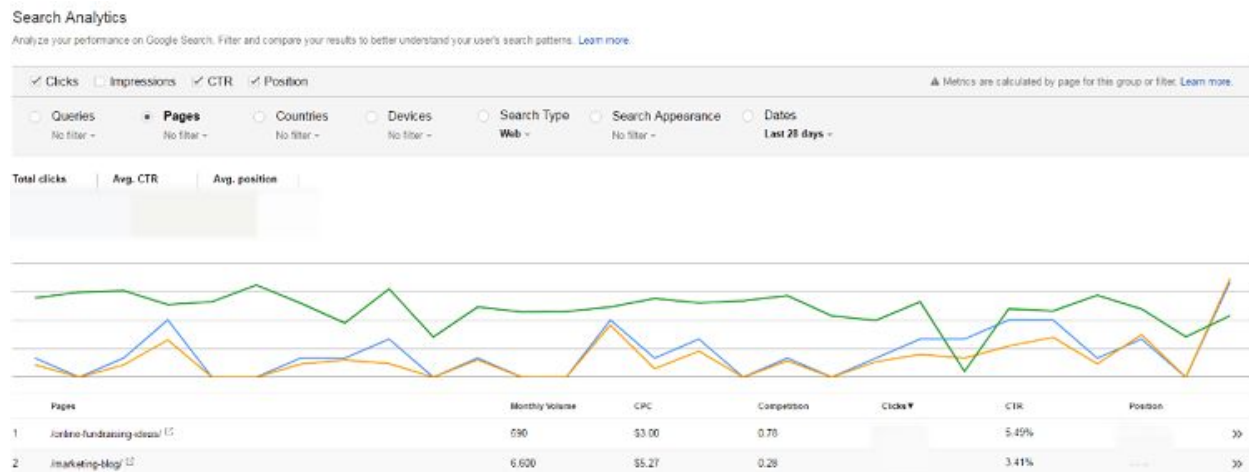


Selecting the **Landing Page** dimension will filter data to show individual page performance.

Another way to track organic page performance is to look at pages by clicks by navigating to **Search Analytics** in [Google Search Console](#).



Once in the search analytics dashboard check the **Clicks** and **CTR** metrics and then filter by **Pages**.



Clicks are important because they show value. The more clicks a page receives the more valuable it must be.

Try testing page titles & meta descriptions to optimize your clicks and increase search rankings.

For example, I've found placing brackets in my page title tend to increase clicks.

Online Fundraising Ideas (7 Strategies & 63% More Donations)

<https://nonprofitssource.com/online-fundraising-ideas/> ▼

Apr 19, 2017 - 7 insanely easy **online fundraising ideas** that you can use to grow your revenues TODAY.

Intangible measurements, on the other hand, are more difficult to quantify simply because people behave in unexpected ways.



To first understand this, we need to put ourselves in the shoes of those who engage with our brand.

This can prove to be difficult because it forces us to be aware of our surroundings and the surroundings of others’.

We can then uncover why visitors take a particular action on your page.

Or, why they choose to leave without converting.

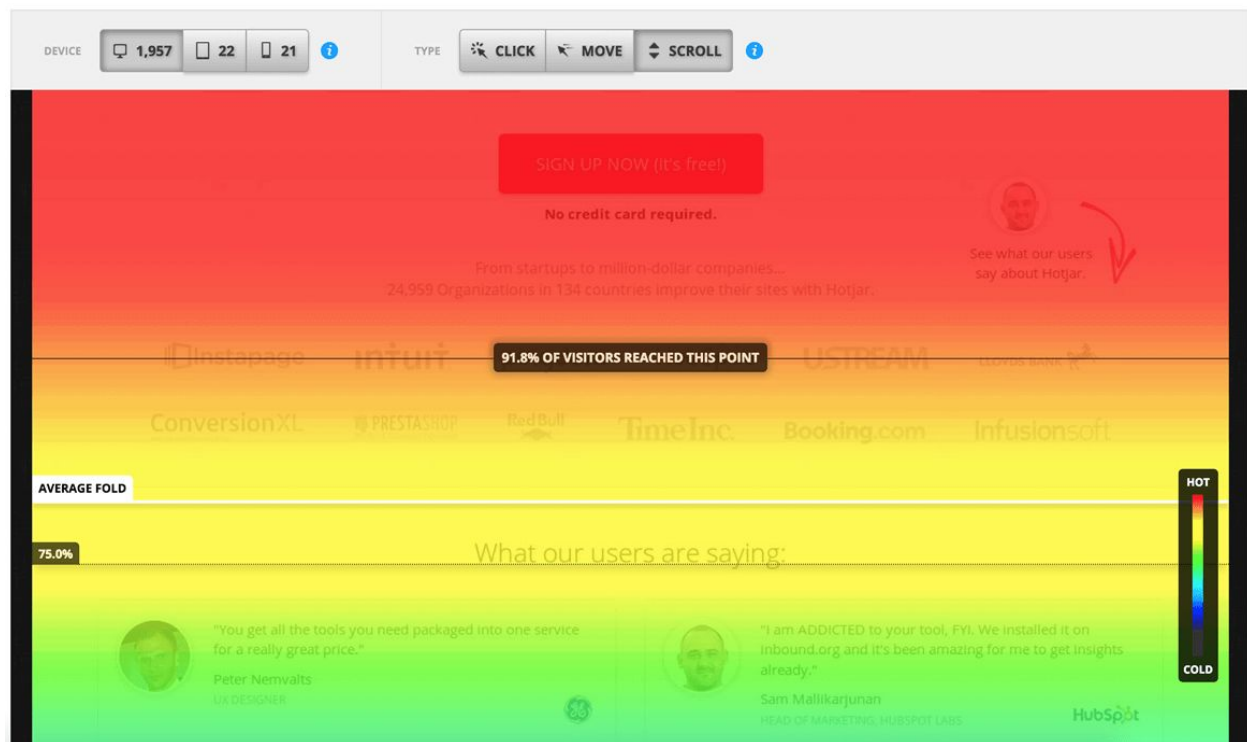
Was the information not appealing? Was the data not convincing? Is the layout of your site overwhelming? Is the donation process frustrating?

Fortunately, the technology exists to help us answer some of these questions.

Heat Maps, Click Maps And Session Recorders

I've recently come across a tool called [Hotjar](#), that analyzes how people behave when they land on your site.

Heat maps and click maps are helpful to show what content is most useful to visitors.



You can see where people fall off from your page or if interactive content, like videos, get watched.

My favorite feature by far is the recording tool that screen captures visitor activity and behavior.

Of course, these tools are not enough on their own to provide insight into your audience's needs.

For that, you'll need to dig a little deeper into audience pain points and interests.

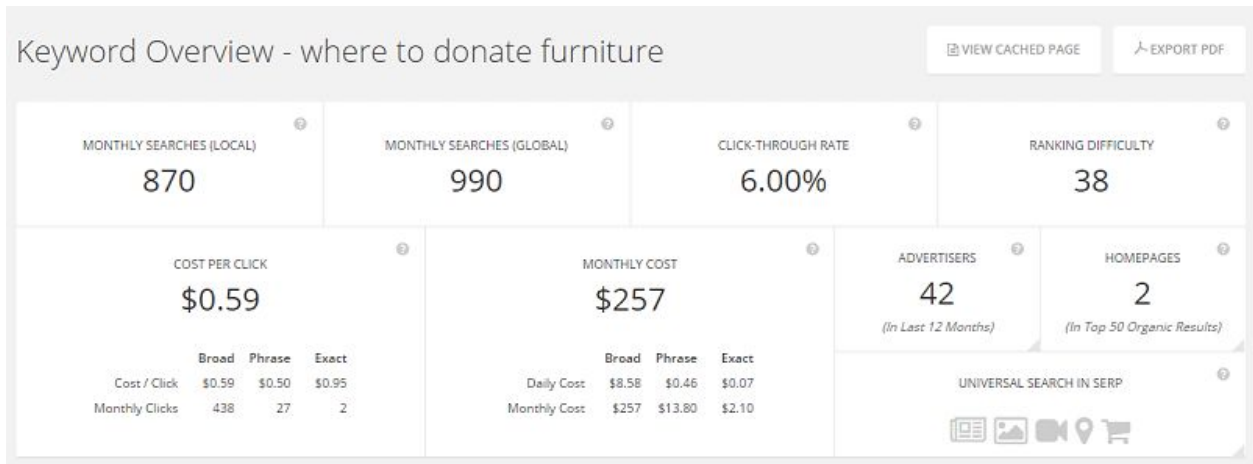
Step 3: Uncover Target Audience Insights (And Get Your Content Read)

Your content may be well written and relevant, but none of that matters if your audience isn't interested in reading it.


This is why [persona research](#) is so important.

An easy way to start is to answer objections and pain points while [writing for donor intent](#).

For example, did you know the phrase, “**where to donate furniture**,” is searched 990 times per month?



By acknowledging this pain point, [Habitat For Humanity](#) set up a page that targets the phrase:




Looking for something?

Q f t y p i

DONATE

Volunteer Shop Support

Where We Build Impact Housing Help About



Does Habitat ReStore offer furniture donation pickup?



What's the result?

Over **10,000 visits every month.**

They then use that traffic as an opportunity to target donors by adding a call to action.

- Filing cabinets
- Bookshelves

Please note that any upholstered or leather furniture must be free of any tears, stains or pet damage.

Renovating your home? Check out [eight things you can donate during your renovation](#); your Habitat ReStore may be able to pick those items up, as well.

See even more ways you can make donations on our [donate page](#), or you can donate directly with the form below. 🏠

A screenshot of a donation form for Habitat ReStore. The form has an orange background. At the top center is a white heart icon. Below it, the text 'Donate now' is written in white. Underneath that, in smaller white text, is 'Every donation makes a difference.' Below this text is a row of six white buttons with orange borders. The first five buttons are labeled '\$10', '\$25', '\$50', '\$100', and '\$200'. The sixth button is labeled 'Other'. To the right of the 'Other' button is a white button with orange text that says 'Donate'.

Here's the best part. You can uncover audience insights to get search traffic like Habitat For Humanity:

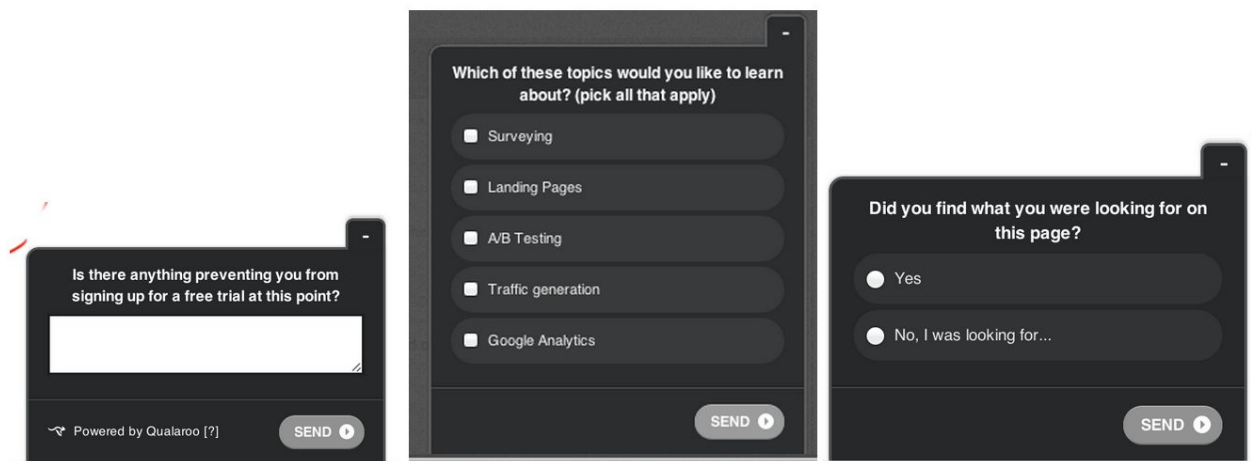
- Survey visitors to your website
- Track audience engagement
- Leverage Facebook audience insights

Survey Visitors On Your Website

Sending a survey to your email subscribers is one of the best ways to gain insight into their wants and needs.

But what if instead of surveying your subscribers, you could also survey anyone who visits your site?

That's exactly what [Qualaroo](#) does.



By placing a survey tool on your website you can prompt visitors to answer 1 to 2 step survey questions.

Start by asking about the kind of topics they want to read, the content medium they enjoy most or which channel they prefer to receive updates from your organization.

You can even ask visitors what their willingness is to pay for webinars, training sessions or memberships to price your offers.

Online surveys also provide a way to collect data from your audience as you continue to write content to meet their needs.

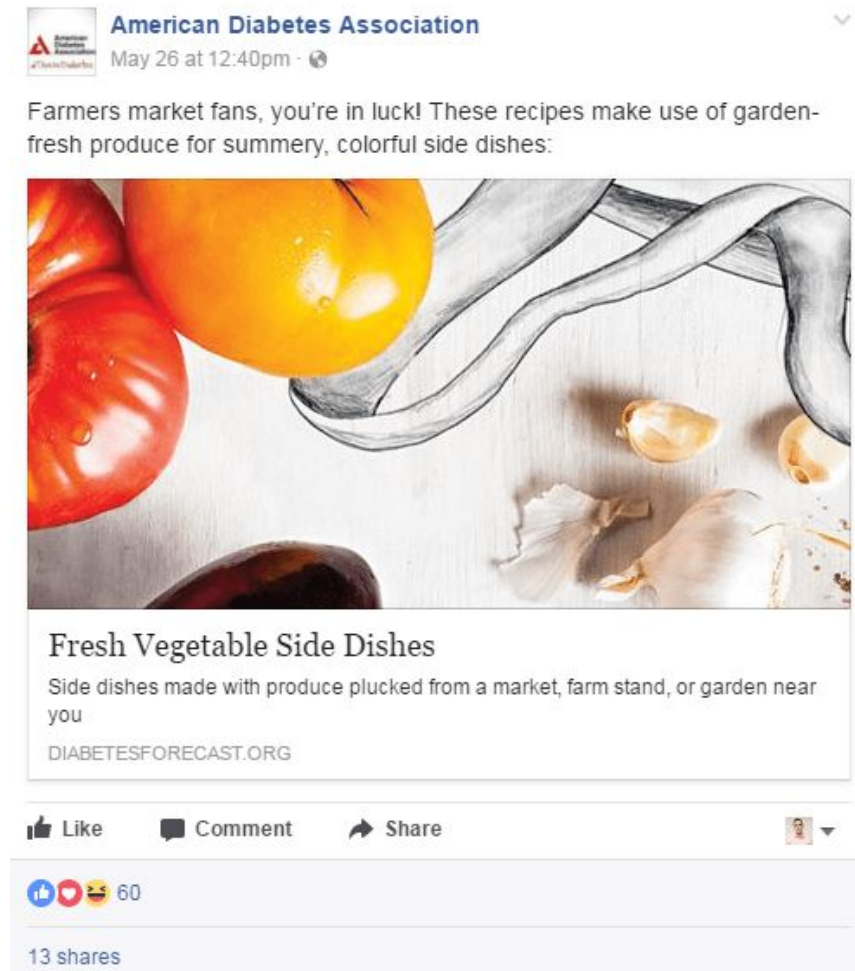
Track Audience Engagement

By looking at social engagement you can determine trends in the type of articles or offers your audience enjoys and shares most.

For example, the [American Diabetes Association](#) tend to receive a high amount of engagement for research related posts.

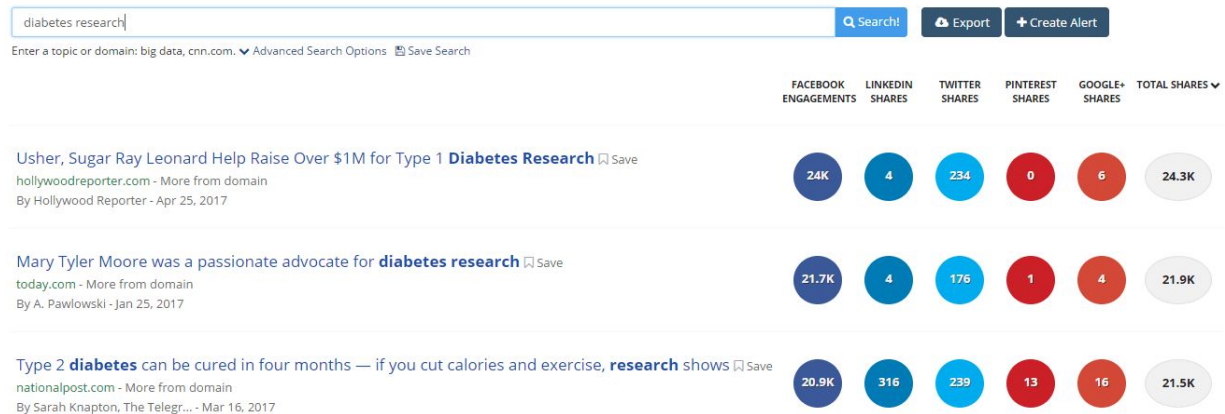
While recipe posts on average **receive 60%-85% less engagement:**



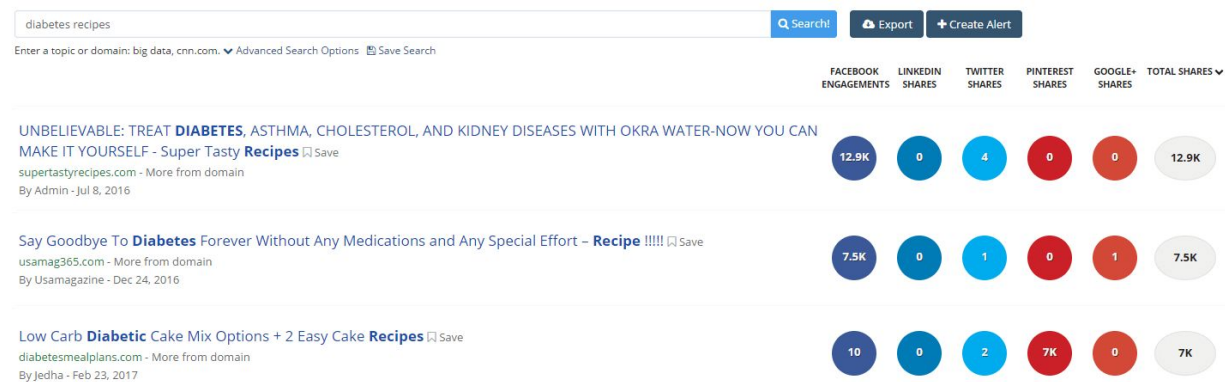


Let's take this research a step further by using [Buzzsumo](#) to identify if research or recipes receive the most social shares on the topic of diabetes.

The top 10 articles on diabetes research average 17,188 shares.



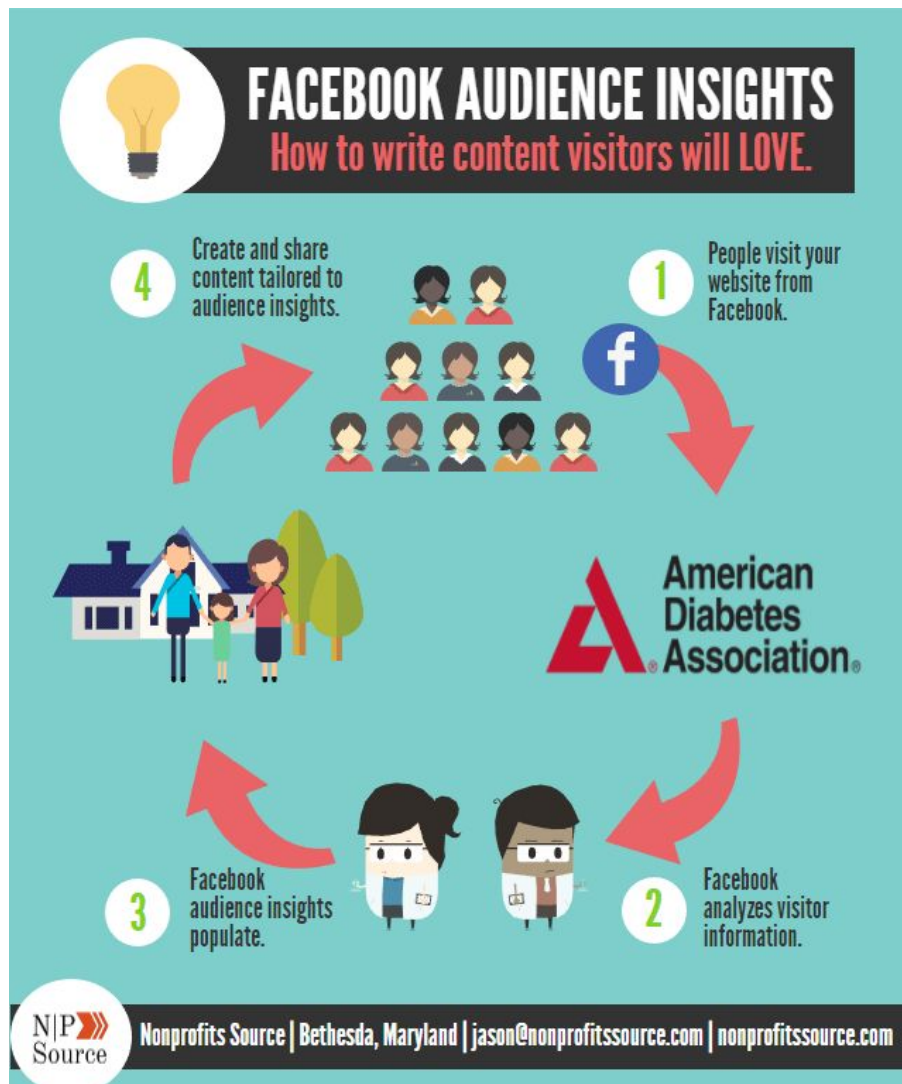
While the top 10 articles on diabetes recipes average 12,366 shares...



This exercise will you give an idea of what topics will get the most social exposure for your organization.

Facebook Audience Insights

Leveraging Facebook audience insights goes even deeper by providing the demographics, interests, likes, and behaviors of your audience. Here's how it works:



You can follow these three simple steps to start collecting data from Facebook TODAY:

- **Step 1:** Set up a [Facebook pixel](#) on your site.
- **Step 2:** Create a custom Facebook audience that [targets people who visit your site](#).
- **Step 3:** Wait a few days for the data to populate before visiting [Audience Insights](#).

Navigating around the data is easy, but requires admin and advertiser level permissions for your organization's Facebook page.

Once the demographic information populates you'll gain access to audience insights.

For example, the page likes tab shows all the pages your visitors like:

Page Likes Facebook Pages that are likely to be relevant to your audience based on Facebook Page likes.			
Page	Relevance ⓘ ▼	Audience	Facebook
Barack Obama	1	355	48.6m
NPR	2	220	5.9m
Humans of New York	3	199	18.3m
Upworthy	4	184	10.8m
Amazon.com	5	177	25.2m
Washington Post	6	175	5.5m
The Daily Show	7	156	6.8m
George Takei	8	153	10m
The New York Times	9	150	13.2m
Washington Nationals	10	146	594.1K
See More			

Top categories show everything from their favorite actors/actresses to their political viewpoint:

(New Audience)

3.4K monthly active people

People on Facebook

Country: United States of America

Demographics

Page Likes

Location

Activity

Household

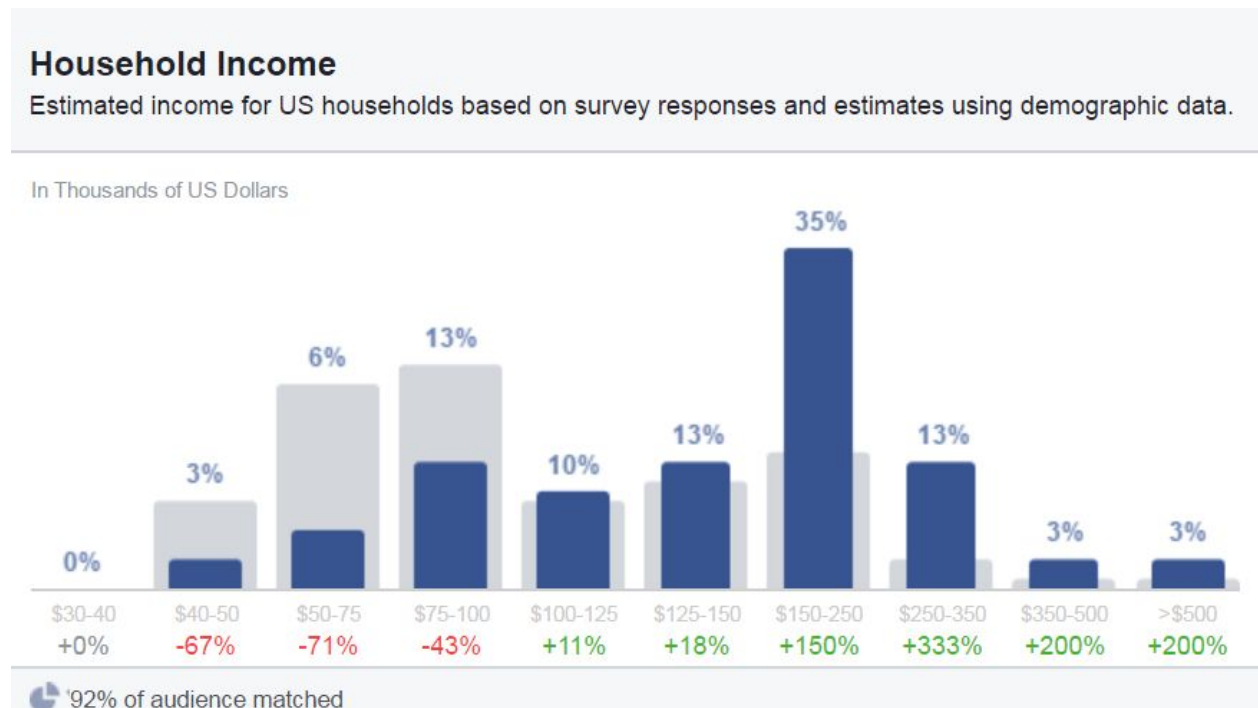
Purchase

Top Categories

1	Arts/Humanities	Humans of New York
2	Media/News/Publishing	Washington Post
3	Actor/Director	George Takei
4	Retail and Consumer Merchandise	Amazon.com • Target • Walmart • Macy's
5	Bank/Financial Institution	Chase
6	Government Organization	The Obama White House
7	Professional Sports Team	Washington Nationals • Washington Redskins • Washington Capitals
8	Unknown	The White House
9	TV Network	PBS • Food Network
10	Food/Beverages	Starbucks • Whole Foods Market

See All

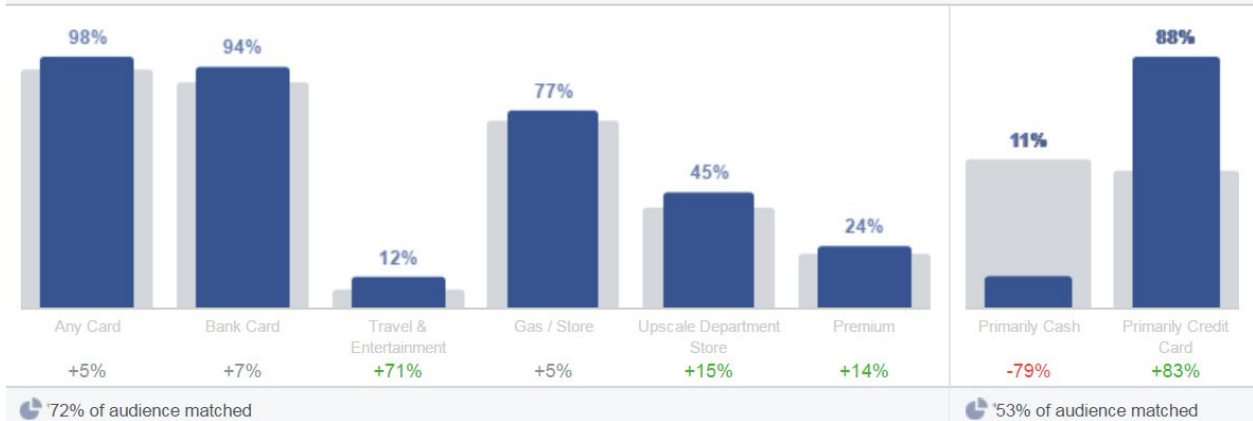
If you're looking for demographic information then you might be interested in the household tab, which gives a snapshot of the estimated household income:



As well as spending habits:

Spending Methods

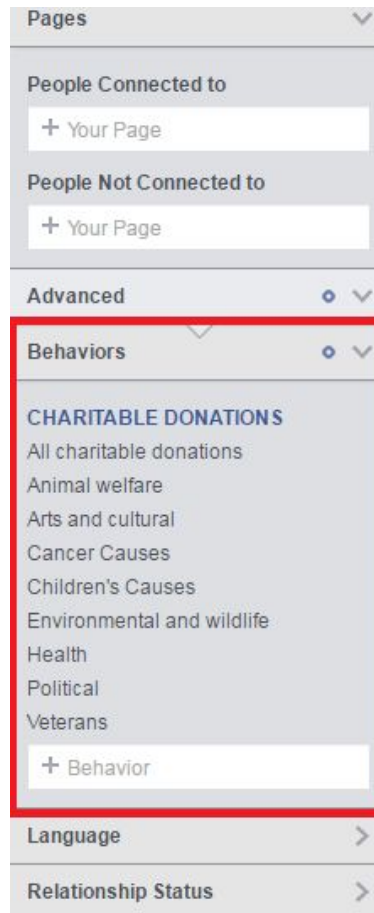
US spending behavior based on survey responses or estimates using purchase activity, occupation and census data. Source: Acxiom



You can segment your audience further by using the left drop-down menus.

For example, you can filter out visitors who have donated to a charitable cause in the past.

Under the **Advanced** drop down go to **Behaviors** and then **Charitable Donations**:



It's important to note that this data is useless unless you can draw insights from it.

If you notice that 75% of your audience likes The Daily Show, then you might consider adding references from the show to aid in your storytelling.

Step 4: Bring Your Digital Marketing Strategies Together By Establishing An Online Brand

Even with a marketing goal and insight into your audience's needs, getting results can be tough.

In a recent study conducted by HubSpot, 63% of marketers say their top marketing challenge is generating traffic and leads.



This got me to thinking...

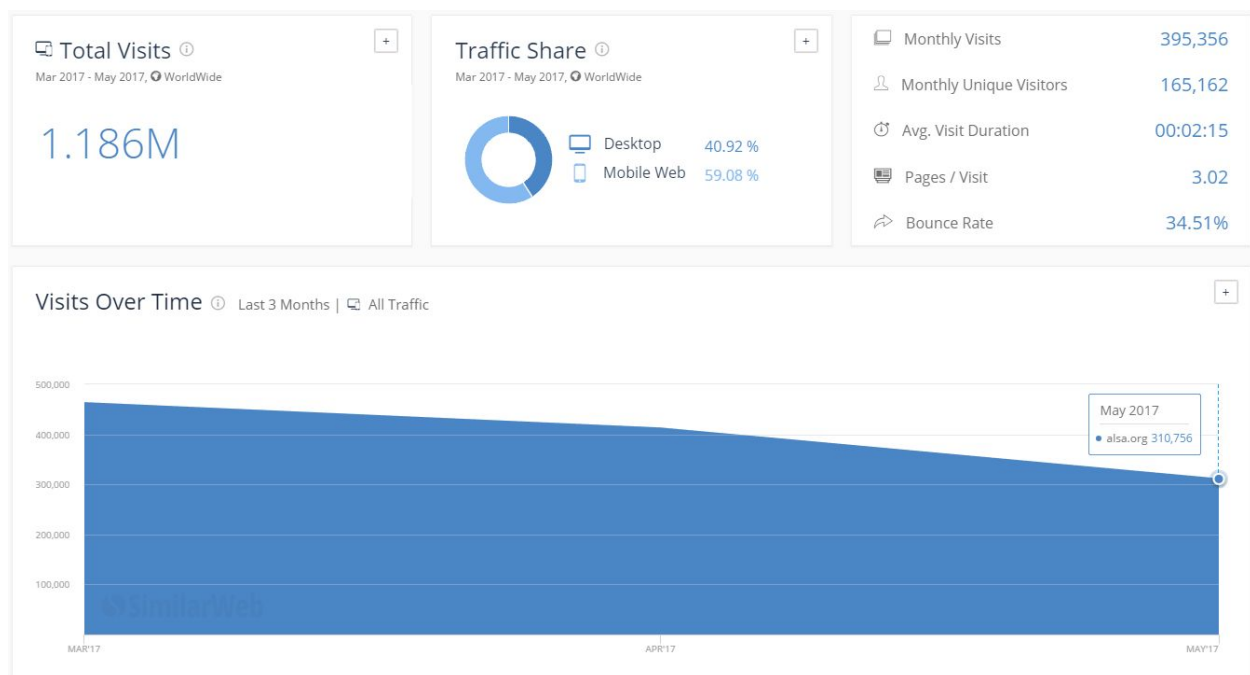
“What about the other 37% of marketers? Are they swimming in traffic and leads?”

Maybe not.

But, I was curious how some of these online brands became so successful.

Take the [ALS Association](#) for example.

Their website averages 400,000 visits per month.



Digging a little deeper into the traffic metrics I found something interesting:

1. 250,000, or 58% of all monthly traffic is organic search.
2. The keyword phrase with the highest traffic is ALS.
3. The top page at 10% of all organic traffic is the home page.

This isn't a coincidence.

I found the same to be true when looking at all the [top nonprofit websites](#).

The majority of web traffic for *most* organizations come from **branded keywords**.

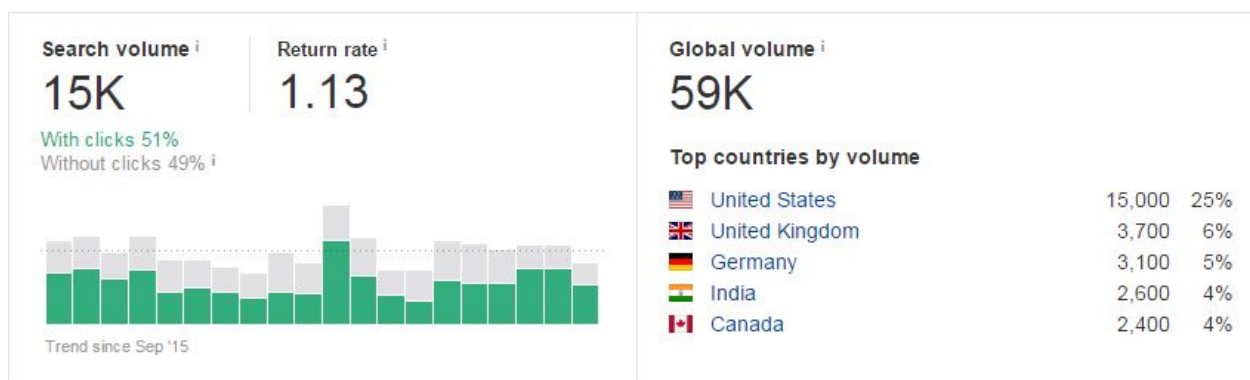
Branded keywords are phrases that people search for and associate with your brand.

Remember the *Ice Bucket Challenge*?

Before 2014, it didn't mean anything.

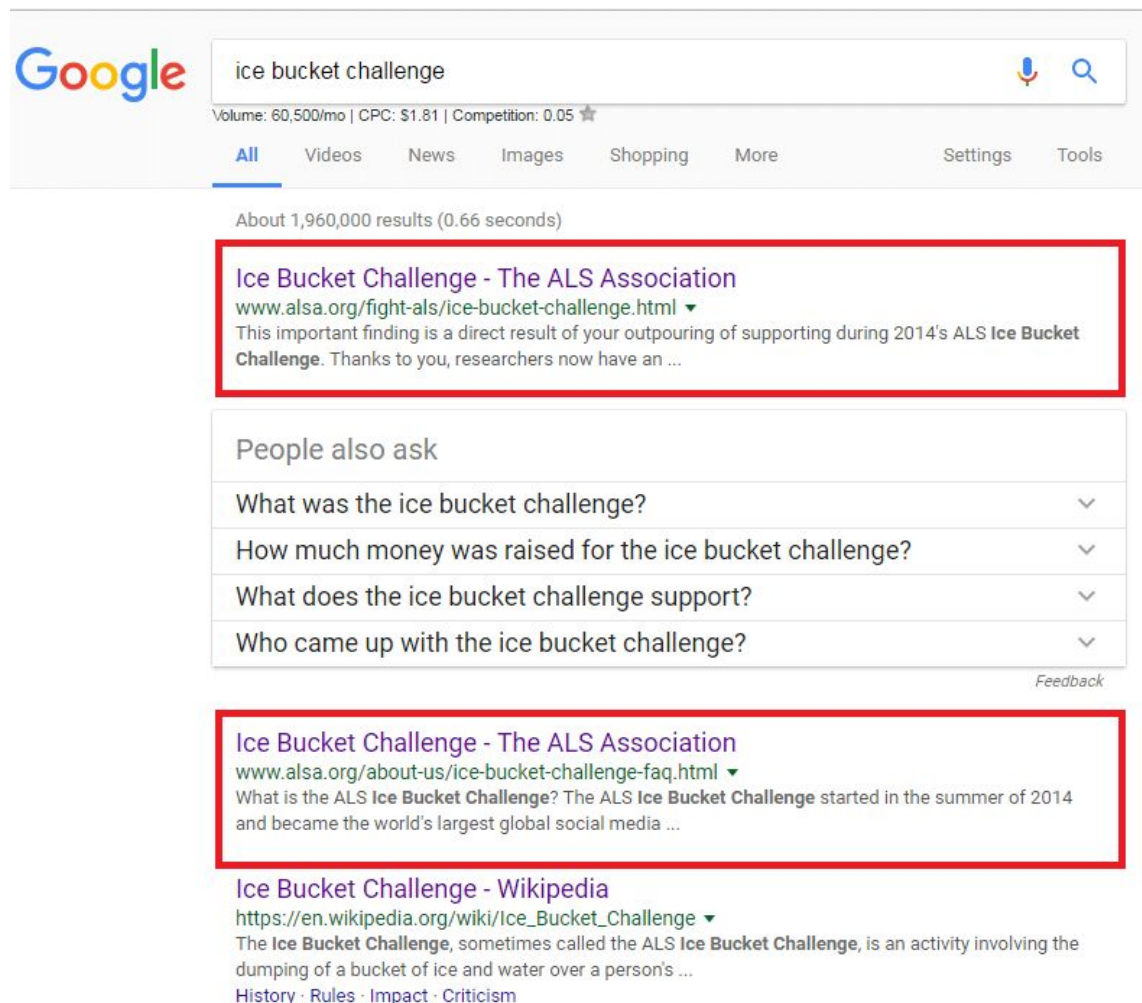
Fast forward to 2017 and the phrase is searched over 60,000 times per month, is an annual event that generates millions of dollars in donations and is synonymous with the ALS Association.

Overview: ice bucket challenge



The phrase is so popular that it even has its own [Wikipedia page](#).

Because the ALS Association were the first to use Ice Bucket Challenge in their digital marketing, their website built authority and trust for that phrase.



So how can you create branded keywords that will generate awareness for your organization?

It all starts by integrating your [content marketing strategy](#).

Chapter 2: 5 Step Content Marketing Strategy For Nonprofits (W/ Examples)

In the first chapter of this guide, we showed how having a digital plan is essential to building an online brand.

In chapter 2, we're going to break down a content marketing strategy that will:

1. Build topic authority and trust for search engine rankings
2. Research existing keyword opportunities
3. Leverage competitor insight to make data-backed marketing decisions
4. Map content to keywords for big SEO wins

I'll also show you how to use free and paid marketing tools to maximize your impact.

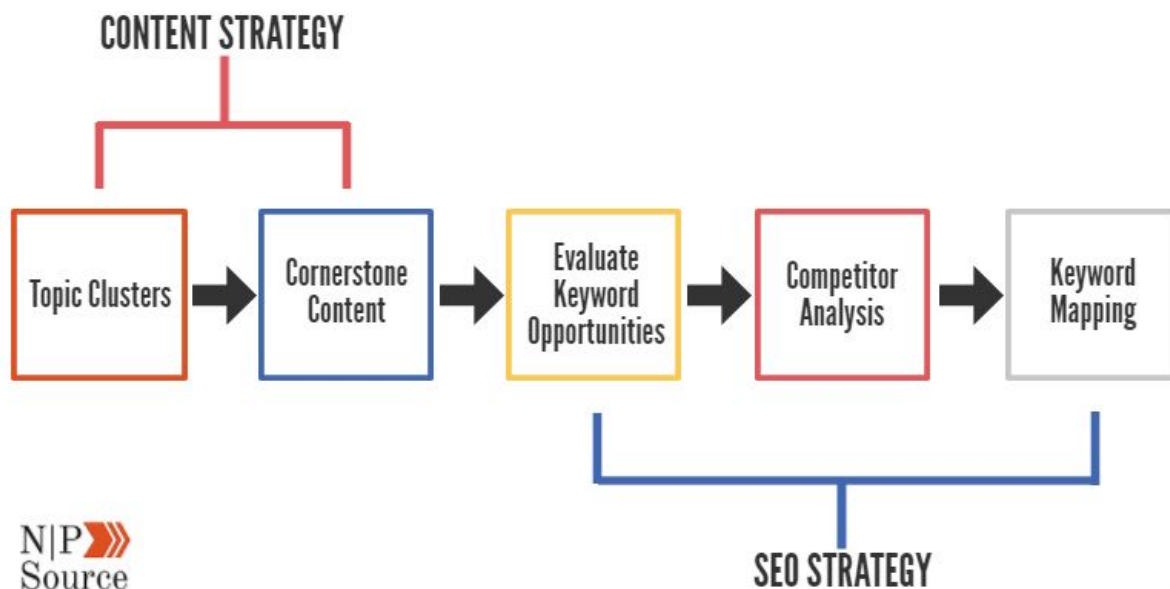
Creating A Content Marketing Strategy

My approach to content marketing is to inform, educate and convert visitors into leads.

A lead on this site is an email address and the mechanism used to convert that visitor is a [content upgrade](#) (the digital marketing plan template above).

For this content strategy to work we're going to be leveraging search traffic.

In other words, traffic that comes to your site from search engines like Google, Yahoo, or Bing.



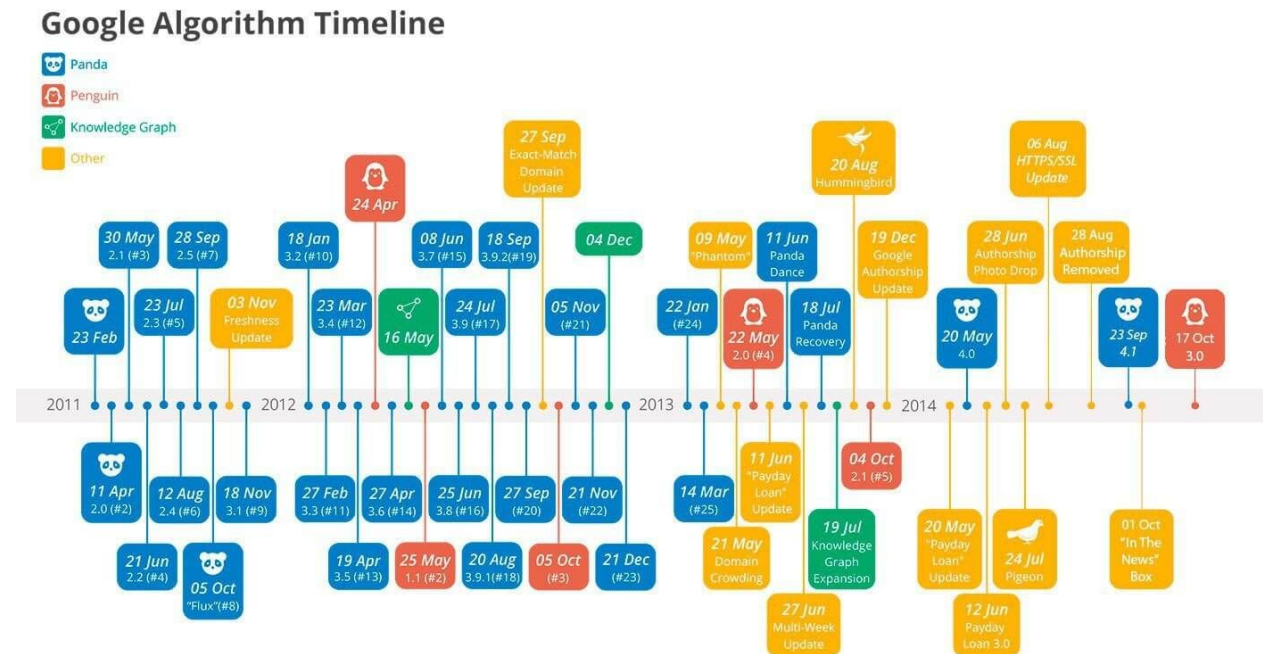
If you're interested in learn some of the benefits of SEO then jump to the [next chapter](#).

For now, let's dive into how topic clusters aid in distributing your content online.

1. Identify Topic Clusters

SEO is constantly evolving, which makes it tough to keep up with the latest marketing trends.

In the past, releasing updates required a manual launch date to roll out significant changes to Google's algorithm:



Some of that changed in 2015 with the launch of Rankbrain, Google's machine learning artificial intelligence system, which helps process its search results.

This means Google is now making changes to their algorithm in near real-time.

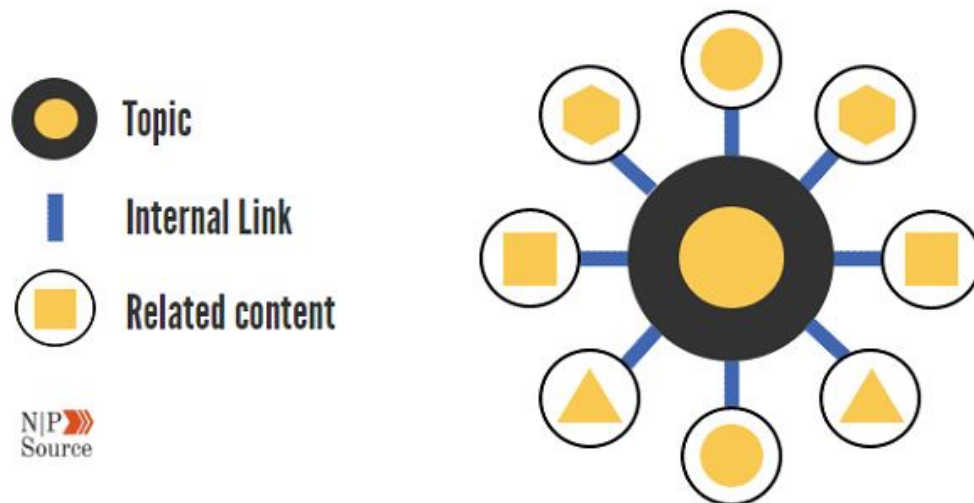
Marketers, in turn, need to adapt their digital strategies to these changes if they want their content to be found online.

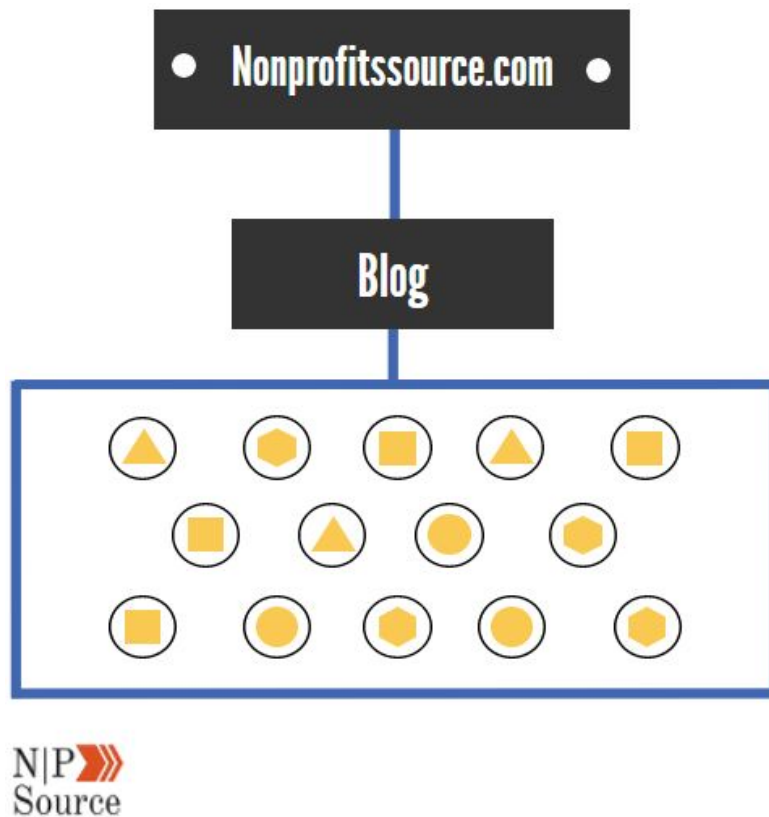
Recent research from HubSpot suggests a solution.

In their article, they say search engines are encouraging marketers to [create content that focuses on topics over keywords](#).

The goal here is to build authority and trust online by positioning your website as a subject matter expert:

Topic Clusters





By interlinking your pages you're helping search engines better understand how to crawl and rank your site.

It's that simple. Without internal links your content becomes isolated from the rest of your site.

This isolation runs into issues of publishing pages and articles that cover similar topics.

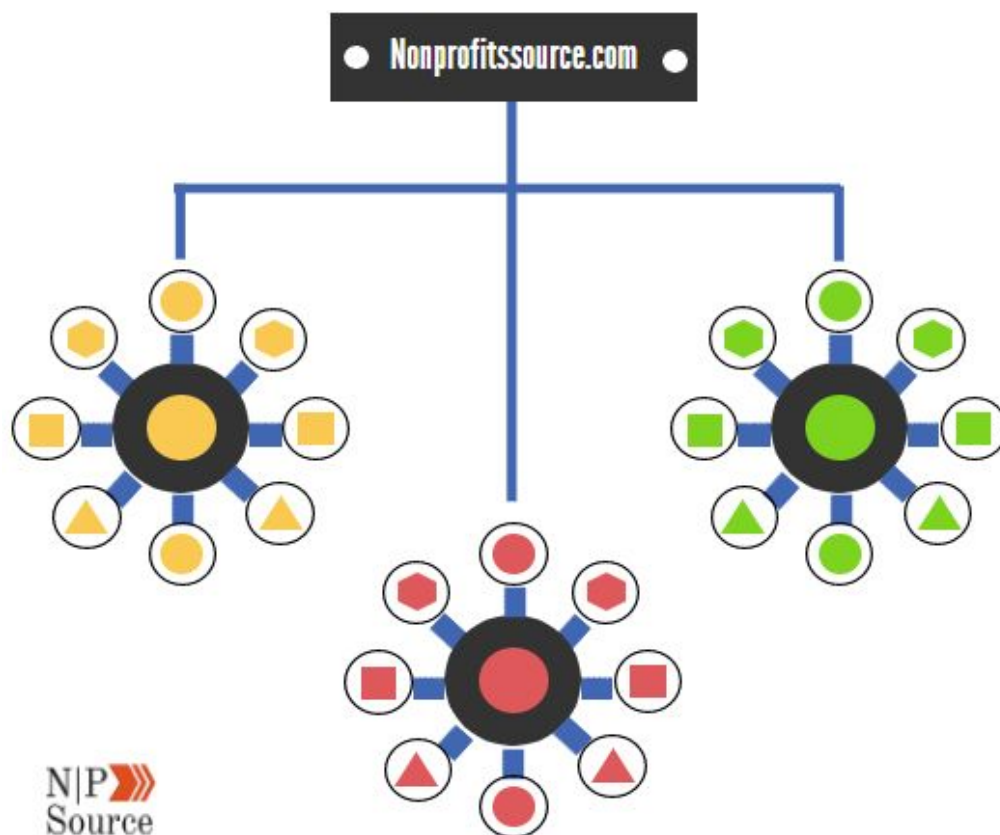
When that happens your pages fight against each other in search results minimizing the reach of your content.

But what HubSpot found next is what really piqued my interest:

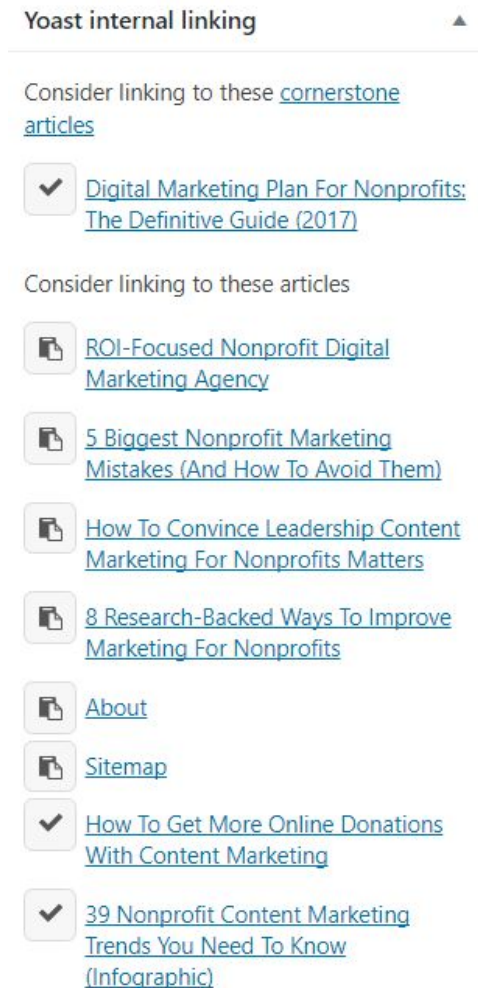
After adding internal links to older posts on their website **they saw a noticeable boost in search rankings.**

They didn't stop there.

HubSpot restructured their entire website around multiple topic clusters all of which linked out to related content:



If your site is built on WordPress then I recommend checking out the [Yoast SEO plugin](#) as it has a feature to suggest articles or pages that you should link out to.

A screenshot of the Yoast internal linking plugin interface. At the top, there's a header 'Yoast internal linking' with a small upward-pointing triangle. Below this, the text 'Consider linking to these [cornerstone articles](#)' is displayed. A list of suggested links follows, each with a checkbox on the left. The first checkbox is checked, and the link is 'Digital Marketing Plan For Nonprofits: The Definitive Guide (2017)'. The second checkbox is unchecked, and the link is 'ROI-Focused Nonprofit Digital Marketing Agency'. The third checkbox is unchecked, and the link is '5 Biggest Nonprofit Marketing Mistakes (And How To Avoid Them)'. The fourth checkbox is unchecked, and the link is 'How To Convince Leadership Content Marketing For Nonprofits Matters'. The fifth checkbox is unchecked, and the link is '8 Research-Backed Ways To Improve Marketing For Nonprofits'. The sixth checkbox is unchecked, and the link is 'About'. The seventh checkbox is unchecked, and the link is 'Sitemap'. The eighth checkbox is checked, and the link is 'How To Get More Online Donations With Content Marketing'. The ninth checkbox is checked, and the link is '39 Nonprofit Content Marketing Trends You Need To Know (Infographic)'.

It also keeps track of how many internal links each of your pages have.

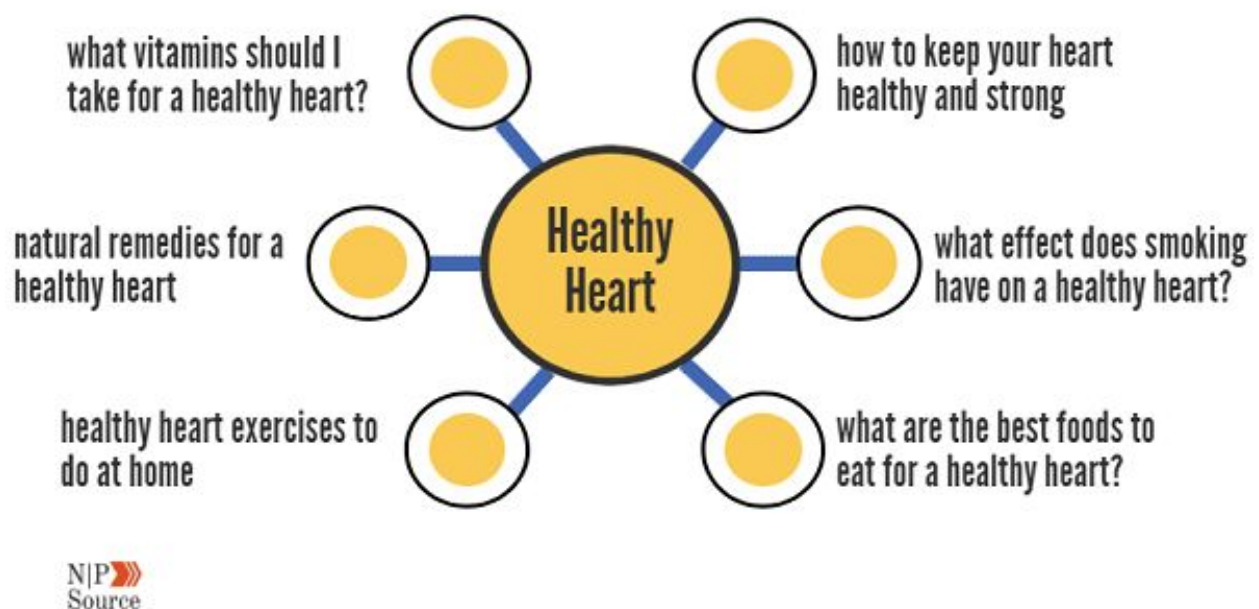
Next, we're going to take a look at the heart of each topic cluster, also known as **cornerstone content**.

2. Create Cornerstone Content

Cornerstone content is a specific article or page on your site that you want to rank in search results.

They typically cover a broad topic that then links out to a number of sub-topics.

In turn, your cornerstone page builds authority and trust on that given topic.



In this case, the cornerstone content, “**Healthy Heart**,” links out to related topics to reinforce topic authority.

When you use internal links to relevant pages or posts from your cornerstone content (and vice versa from related articles to cornerstone content) you begin to spread topic authority.

For example, when Google crawls this article and follows a link to my digital marketing plan post, Google will take those related topics and keywords into consideration.

While my focus keyword is, **digital marketing plan**, I can still rank for the phrase, **digital marketing strategy**, even if I am not targeting the phrase with on page SEO.

Digital Marketing Plan For Nonprofits: The Definitive Guide (2017)

<https://nonprofitssource.com/digital-marketing-plan/> ▼

Jun 23, 2017 - The most thorough digital marketing plan for nonprofits online. Learn how to create an online strategy that gets results in this expert-written ...

One tool I've found to help with topic relevance is actually provided free by Google. It's called the [Data Highlighter tool](#) and it can be found in your Google Search Console.

There are 6 areas to highlight including:

1. Title
2. Category
3. Author
4. Date published
5. Image

6. Ratings.

Here I've taken my cornerstone content and labeled the category, **Digital Marketing Plan**, to tell Google the topic of this article.

Likewise, I will use the same category in the data highlighter tool for all chapters of this guide.

Digital Marketing Plan For Nonprofits: The Definitive Guide (2017)

Jun 23, 2017 | Posted by Jason

Digital Marketing Plan

Category

Does your nonprofit have a **digital marketing plan**?

Or, are you throwing a ton of content on the web hoping someone will find it?

I get it.

Lack of resources, expertise, leadership buy-in, choosing the right software tools (or the right strategic partners) all while trying to stay current on the latest trends is **overwhelming**.

It's also helpful for searchers and by extension your search traffic.

Take a look at how the search results appear for crisp spring roll recipes:

Crispy Spring Rolls recipe | Epicurious.com



www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/crispy-spring-rolls-232437 ▼

★★★★★ Rating: 3.5/4 - 19 reviews

The **recipe** and introductory text below are excerpted from Mai Pham's book The Best of ...
Light and crispy, **spring rolls** are traditionally wrapped with rice paper.

How to Make Vietnamese Fresh Spring Rolls - Step by Step Recipe



notenoughcinnamon.com/.../how-to-make-vietnamese-fresh-spring-rolls-... ▼

Mar 17, 2013 - Learn how to make authentic vietnamese fresh **spring rolls** with this easy to follow, step-by-step tutorial.

How to Make Spring Rolls | Fresh Vietnamese Summer Rolls



whiteonricecouple.com/recipes/how-roll-fresh-spring-rolls/ ▼

Photographs showing how to wrap, roll **spring rolls**, and serve. ... How to Roll Fresh Vietnamese **Spring Rolls** – Photo Tutorial & Recipes. by Todd & Diane. Pin.

Which one would you be most likely to click on? Chances are it's the one with 19 reviews and a 3.5 rating.

You also have the option to create custom highlights in case the words on the page are not visible.

That's what I had to do for my main post page.

Add missing tags for this page

Manually enter tags that can't be highlighted on the page

Author ▼	Jason	X
Category ▼	Nonprofit Marketing	X

[Add another](#)

Save

Cancel

[Learn more](#)

The next part of the framework shifts from content strategy and into keyword research.

Here we'll be looking at how to integrate your content around SEO to get ranked in search results.

3. Evaluate Current Keyword Ranking Opportunities

Before diving into new keywords you want to first evaluate your current rankings to uncover opportunities.

To do this, start by analyzing your **search analytics** in Google Search Console.

You'll need to [connect your search console with Google Analytics](#) to collect and populate this data.

Once you're in the search analytics tab scroll to the bottom of the page to download a .CSV file of the list:

46	online fundraising ideas ↗	590	\$3.00	0.78
47	digital marketing strategy for nonprofit ↗	20	\$3.02	0.66
48	get online donations ↗	20	\$1.67	0.71
49	how to get more donations ↗	30	\$2.29	0.23
50	easy online fundraising ideas ↗	10	\$5.64	0.92

Download

Your focus here is to filter out existing keywords and phrases that rank within the top 50.

If you have thousands of keywords then it may be easier to filter by the top 30 or 20.

Alternatively, you can choose to only target keywords that are relevant to a specific topic you want to rank for.

Regardless of the criteria, you've set the next step is to use a keyword analyzer tool like [Moz](#) or [Ahrefs](#).

These are paid tools but they do have free trial options available.

Moz, in particular, has a 30-day no-risk trial that provides use of all their analytics tools.

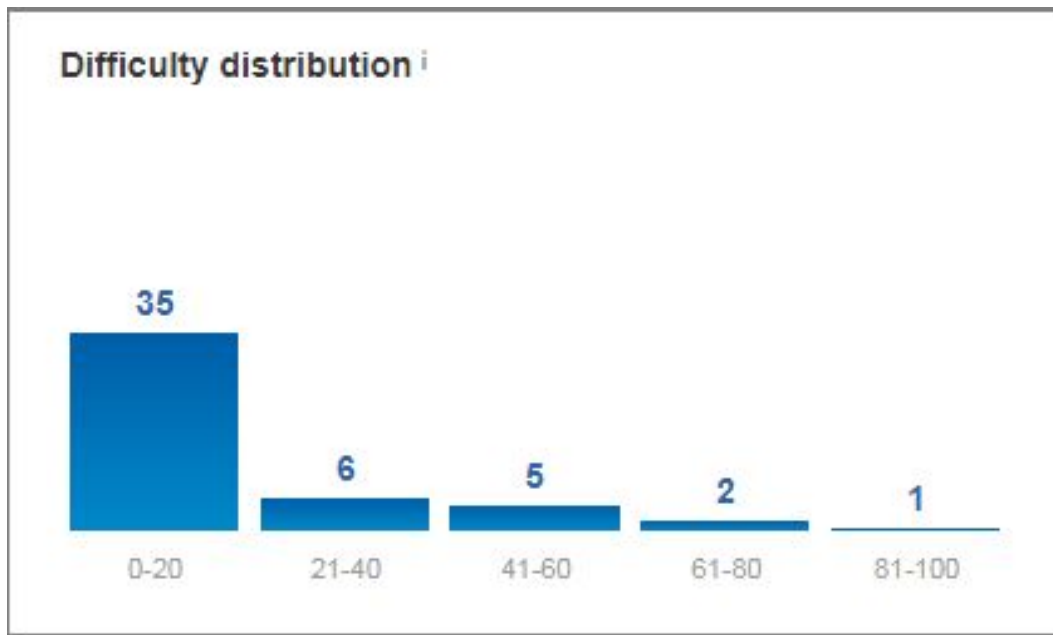
The goal here is to get a graphical understanding of keyword difficulty:



Keyword difficulty looks at the top 10 page results for a given keyword, analyzes their metrics, and then calculates a score based on a weighted average.

Every keyword tool works a little differently in how they calculate difficulty, but that's the general idea.

What's most important is to **identify a range of difficulty that your site is capable of ranking for.**



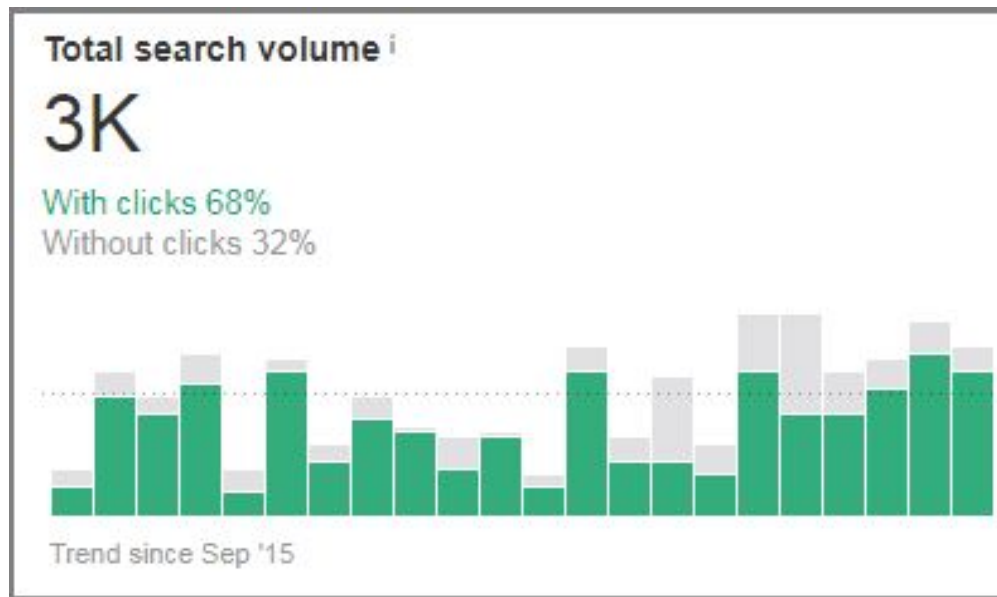
The picture above shows the difficulty distribution of keywords in my Google Search Console.

As you can see, the majority of keywords that I rank for have a relatively easy difficulty (0-20).

This tells me that if I want to rank my website on Google then I need to target easier keywords first.

Just because a keyword or phrase has an easy difficulty doesn't mean it can't drive a significant amount of traffic to your site.

When I combine the top 49 keywords my site ranks for it adds up to over 3,000 organic searches per month:

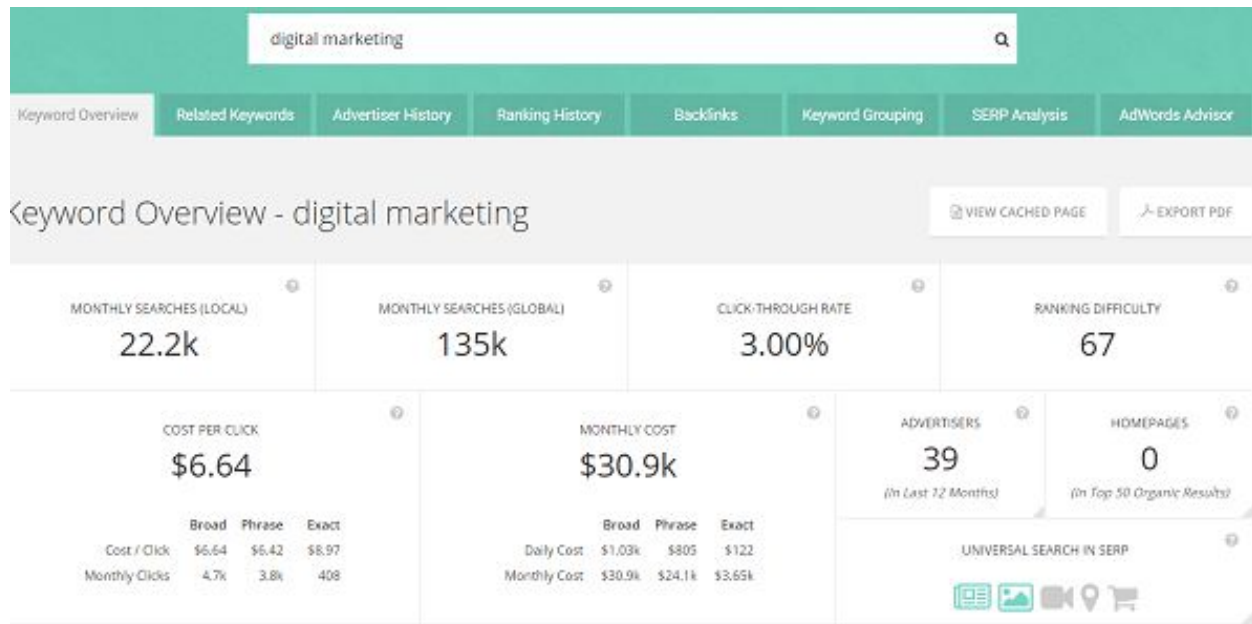


The point of the research is this:

If your site ranks on the first page for a keyword with a difficulty of 35, then you should be okay ranking for words of similar difficulty.

Likewise, you may want to avoid phrases that are out of your reach.

In my case, the keyword, **digital marketing**, is twice as difficult as my average rankings:



Note: Keyword difficulty should only be used as a guideline. Some of the [biggest marketing mistakes](#) come from over-relying on tools and data to make decisions.

Just because the difficulty of a phrase is lower than the average you rank for does not mean you'll dominate search results.

Remember, Google takes into account topic authority.

It wouldn't make sense for me to rank my website on the topic of healthy hearts (even if the phrase is a difficulty of 13) because I have not established authority.

We can take keyword research one step further by reverse engineering first page results of competing websites.

4. Spy On Competitor Keywords

According to a [study](#) by Advanced Web Ranking, the **top five results in Google account for 67.60% of all clicks**:



So how do you rank your pages on the top of the first page to get those clicks?

I've found reverse engineering competitors rankings to work extremely well.

Here's my approach:

- Analyze backlink profiles and organic search volume
- Look for gaps to [create unique content](#)
- Check on page SEO to see if they follow best practices
- Research content sharability (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc)

First, Google your target keyword and copy the top 10 URLs into a spreadsheet.

[\[PDF\] 7 Steps to Creating Your Best Nonprofit Marketing Plan ... - Resources](#)

[www.fundraising123.org/.../7%20Steps%20to%20Creating%20Your%20Best%20Non...](#) ▼

It is up to you to decide exactly which tactics are needed to successfully implement the chosen **strategies**. A good **nonprofit marketing** plan is interlinked from top to bottom. Without good tactics, a **strategy** will not successfully complete an objective, rendering the success of a goal limited.

You've visited this page many times. Last visit: 5/16/17

[Non Profit Marketing Strategies | Chron.com](#)

[smallbusiness.chron.com › Advertising & Marketing › Marketing Strategies](#) ▼

Nonprofit organizations must promote their causes and objectives to potential donors and volunteers. ... A **strategic marketing** plan outlines how an organization will effectively convey its mission and goals to others to incite viable action on its behalf.

[Marketing Strategies for Nonprofit Organizations - The Balance](#)

[https://www.thebalance.com › Small Business › Marketing › Small Business Marketing](#) ▼

The road to **marketing** your **nonprofit** in eight easy steps.

Next, use a marketing analytics tool like Moz, SEMrush, or Ahrefs to dive into the site metrics.

Here I've analyzed the website in the first position for the term **nonprofit marketing plan** using Ahrefs:



The page has a healthy backlink profile from 68 different websites.

This tells me that it might be difficult to rank above this site unless I build a number of [high-quality backlinks](#) to my page.

However, when you take a more granular look at the phrase it appears to be relatively easy to rank for:

Overview: nonprofit marketing plan

Keyword difficulty ⁱ



You'll need backlinks from ~3 websites to rank in top 10 for this keyword ⁱ

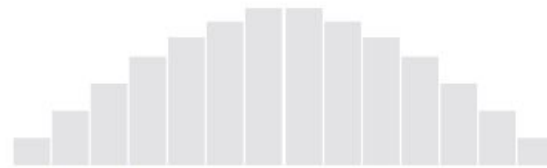
Search volume ⁱ

200

With clicks 81%
Without clicks 19% ⁱ

Return rate ⁱ




1.35



Not enough data to calculate this trend

Despite the competition from the first position, I still have an opportunity to rank my site on the first page for this term.

I can also view how much organic traffic each keyword the page ranks for receives:

Keyword		Volume ⁱ	KD ⁱ	CPC ⁱ	Traffic [↓] ⁱ	Position ⁱ
nonprofit marketing plan		200	2	4.50	111	1
non profit marketing plan		250	3	3.50	94	1
marketing plans for nonprofits		150	3	4.00	46	1

Next, I want to look for content gaps.

This requires reading competitor content to see if there are areas that you can:

1. Expand upon sub-topics
2. Improve or update for freshness
3. Repurpose into a different medium (infographic, video, slide deck, etc)

In my case, I saw an opportunity to expand sub-topics as well as improve the overall value of the content.

My articles are also typically 2,000 words or more in length with detailed examples on how to apply the material learned.

While I'm reading through competitor content I also want to check their on page SEO.

Here you're looking for areas in which your competitors are slacking to give your page a ranking advantage.

I recently came across [SEORCH](#), which is a free website analysis tool that looks for on page SEO best practices.

Simply enter the URL of the website you want to analyze along with the focus keyword:

The 4 most important OnPage SEO factors

Title - <title> Tag			HELP? ?
The <title> Tag is too long: 66 characters . Should be 57 characters max.	SHOW ME	i	
The <title> Tag has the correct number of words: 8 .		✓	
3 keyword(s) found in the <title> tag.		✓	
Meta Description			HELP? ?
The Meta Description has the right length: 150 characters .	SHOW ME	✓	

You can also click the, “**Show Me**,” button to expand on the specific areas of your competitor's page.

Finally, I like to use [Buzzsumo](#) to see how shareable the topic or keyword is.



The purpose of this is less competitive analysis and more about topic relevance for your audience.

If you notice a particular keyword has a high volume of social shares then it could indicate how important that topic is.

Likewise, you can use [Google trends](#) to show how often a particular search term is entered relative to the total search volume.

Once you've identified keyword opportunities and researched the competition the last part is to map them to your content.

5. Optimize Your Content For Keywords






Mapping content to keywords works by developing a strategy around phrases that people search for instead of publishing articles in the hope they'll be found online.

We shared an example of this in chapter 1 with how Habitat for Humanity targets the phrase, “**where to donate furniture**,” to generate over 10,000 monthly views to their site.

We also showed how branded keywords can impact SEO with the phrase, “**Ice Bucket Challenge**.”

To start I recommend selecting 50-100 keywords at a time that you intend to rank for.

185 Keywords

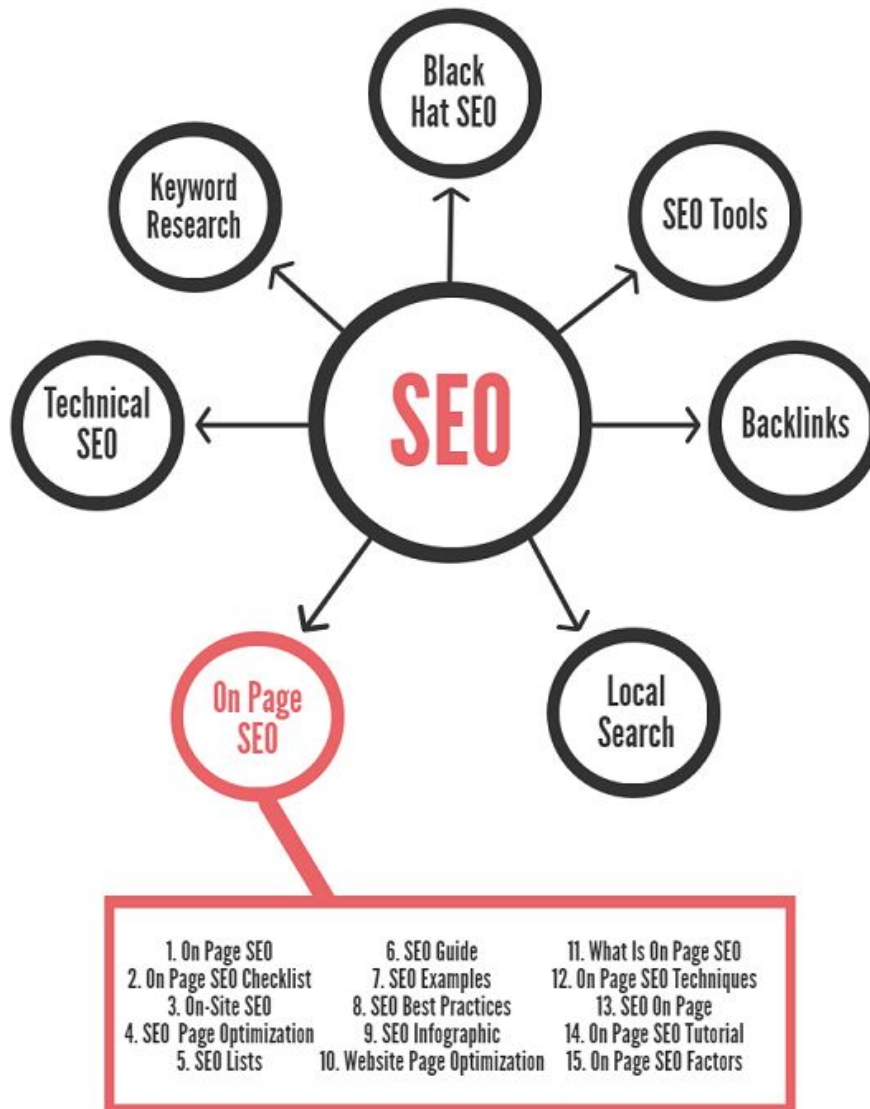
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword ⁱ [⌵]	Monthly Volume ⁱ [⌵]	Difficulty ⁱ [⌵]	Opportunity ⁱ [⌵]	My Score ⁱ [⌵]	Priority ⁱ [⌵]	Analyze/Search
<input type="checkbox"/>	Electronic Toys United States - en-US	501-850	43	82%	6	69	Analyzed 6/6/2016 
<input type="checkbox"/>	android geeky gadgets United States - en-US	0-10	56	78%	5	41	Analyzed 6/6/2016 
<input type="checkbox"/>	apple geeky gadgets United States - en-US	no data ⁱ	51	89%	5	31	Analyzed 6/6/2016 
<input type="checkbox"/>	awesome gadgets United States - en-US	851-1.7k	26	83%	7	77	Analyzed 6/6/2016 
<input type="checkbox"/>	awesome geeky products United States - en-US	no data ⁱ	56	93%	8	36	Analyzed 6/6/2016 



Next, you want to use topic clusters and cornerstone content to assign keywords to specific pages or posts.

Here's how I've mapped keywords to a sub-topic article with the cornerstone content of SEO:

HOW TO CREATE A CONTENT MAP



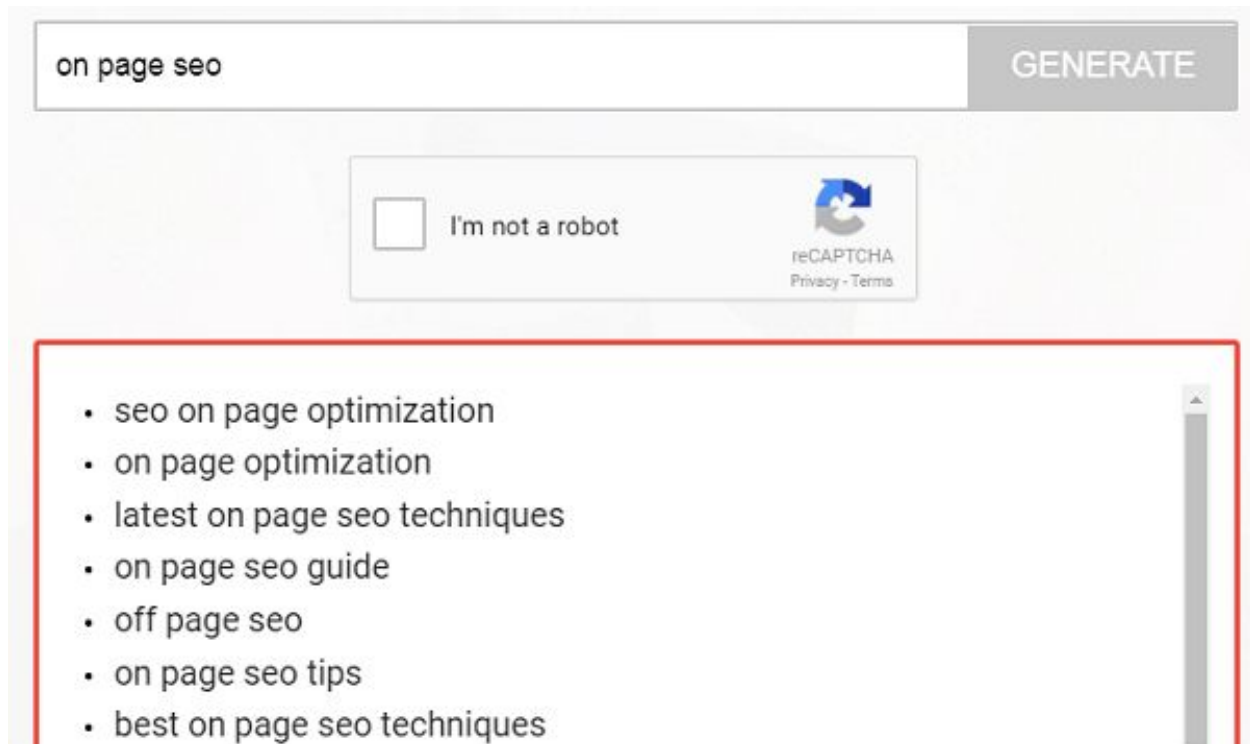
In this example, we're using Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI), which are related keywords, to target phrases you want your page to rank for.

This is important because related keywords:

- Avoid keyword stuffing
- Create new ranking opportunities
- Broaden the reach of your search results
- Makes content flow and sound more natural

You can use [LSIGraph](#) for this part of the research.

It's quick, easy to use, free and the results are as advertised:



The screenshot shows the LSIGraph website interface. At the top, there is a search bar containing the text "on page seo" and a "GENERATE" button. Below the search bar is a reCAPTCHA verification area with a checkbox labeled "I'm not a robot" and the reCAPTCHA logo. Below the verification area, a list of search results is displayed, enclosed in a red rectangular border. The list includes:

- seo on page optimization
- on page optimization
- latest on page seo techniques
- on page seo guide
- off page seo
- on page seo tips
- best on page seo techniques

Even after following all of the steps in this content marketing strategy the next challenge is to get your message in front of the right people.

For that, you'll need to create a [digital promotion strategy](#) that integrates across multiple marketing channels.

Good work! You've just completed chapter 2 on how to create a digital marketing plan for nonprofits!

Here's a quick recap of what we learned:

1. **Topic clusters** – help search engines better understand how each of your pages and posts relates to one another.
2. **Cornerstone content** – is centered at the heart of each cluster to reinforce topic authority across sub-topics.
3. **Evaluate current rankings** – to set a baseline for keyword difficulty.
4. **Analyzing competitor websites** – metrics provides a data-backed approach when making key SEO decisions.
5. **Content mapping** – helps to assign keywords (and related keywords) to maximize your reach in search results.

Chapter 3: Digital Promotion Strategies (That Get First Page Results Fast)

If you want to drive a successful digital marketing campaign than a **digital promotion strategy** is the best way to get your message heard.

Let me ask you a question:

Is there anything more frustrating than publishing content online that nobody can find?

The truth is if you don't show up on the first page of search results, then are you're missing out on opportunities to grow your brand's recognition and revenues online.

There's also growing concern in the decline of organic reach that social media posts used to receive, leaving marketers little choice but to invest in online advertising as a means to reach their audience.

But don't lose hope...

In chapter 3, we're going to share examples of digital promotion strategies we use to:

1. Rank on the first page of Google for a competitive keyword
2. Earn multiple 90+ domain authority backlinks
3. Grow our social media followership
4. Build relationships with industry websites

What Are Digital Promotion Strategies?

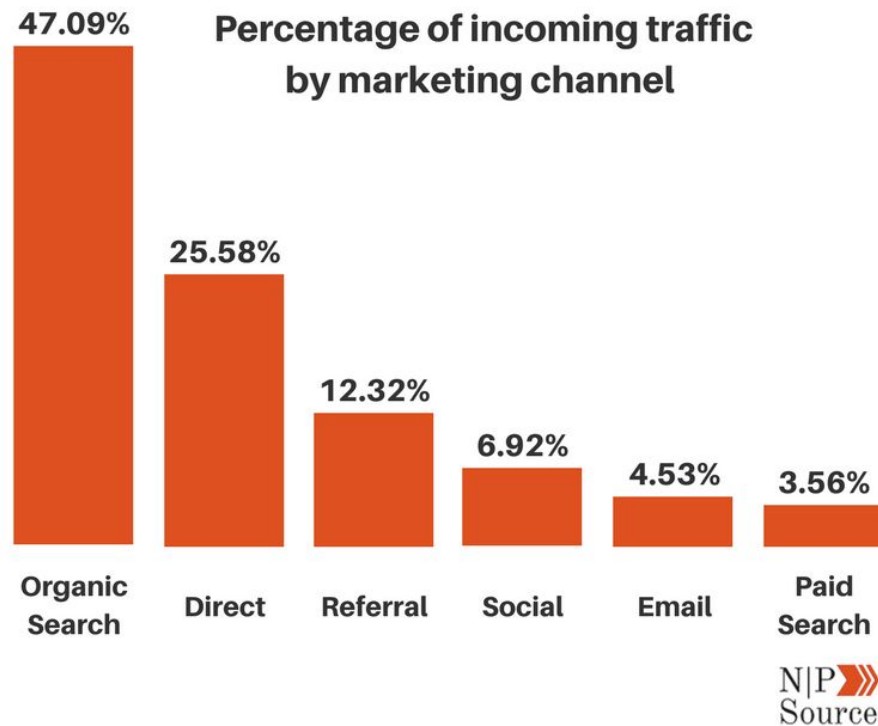
Promotion strategies take a multi-channelled approach to distributing content, news, and offers.

In theory, you want to be active on as many channels as resources allow.

However, since we're talking about digital marketing I'd like to focus on the long-term growth potential from organic search.

Why?

Because **47% of all traffic** to the top nonprofit websites come from organic search.



How To Grow Your Organic Search Traffic

I've said this in previous articles, but it's worth mentioning again:

Backlinks are one of the [top three Google search ranking factors](#).

If you want first page results, especially for competitive keywords, you need people linking to your site.

The reason backlinks are so important is because search engines use them as a sign of authority and trust.

Therefore, earning backlinks from authoritative sites increases the trust and value of your content.

Remember, it's in the interest of search engines to show the best possible results for every search.

You might be wondering:

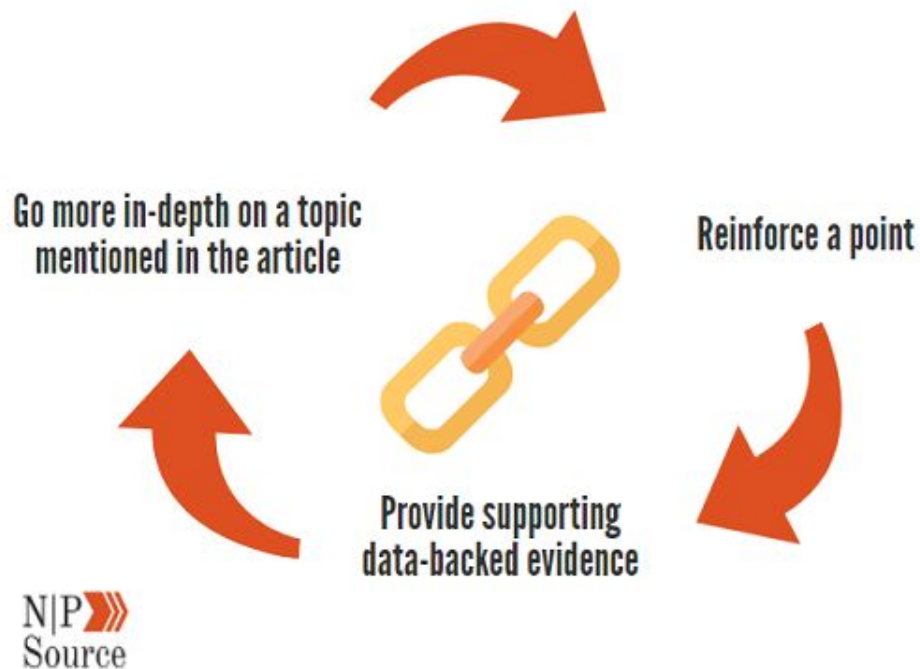
“What do I need to do to earn links to my site?”

Create linkable content.

Webmasters often link to external sites because they:

- Reinforce a point
- Provide supporting data-backed evidence
- Go more in-depth on a topic mentioned in the article

Think of these as value signals.



In other words, webmasters want to link to your content because it adds value to their website.

Of course, there are other reasons.

For instance, websites that earn links are more likely to return the favor.

The theory sounds nice, but let me show you how it works in practice.

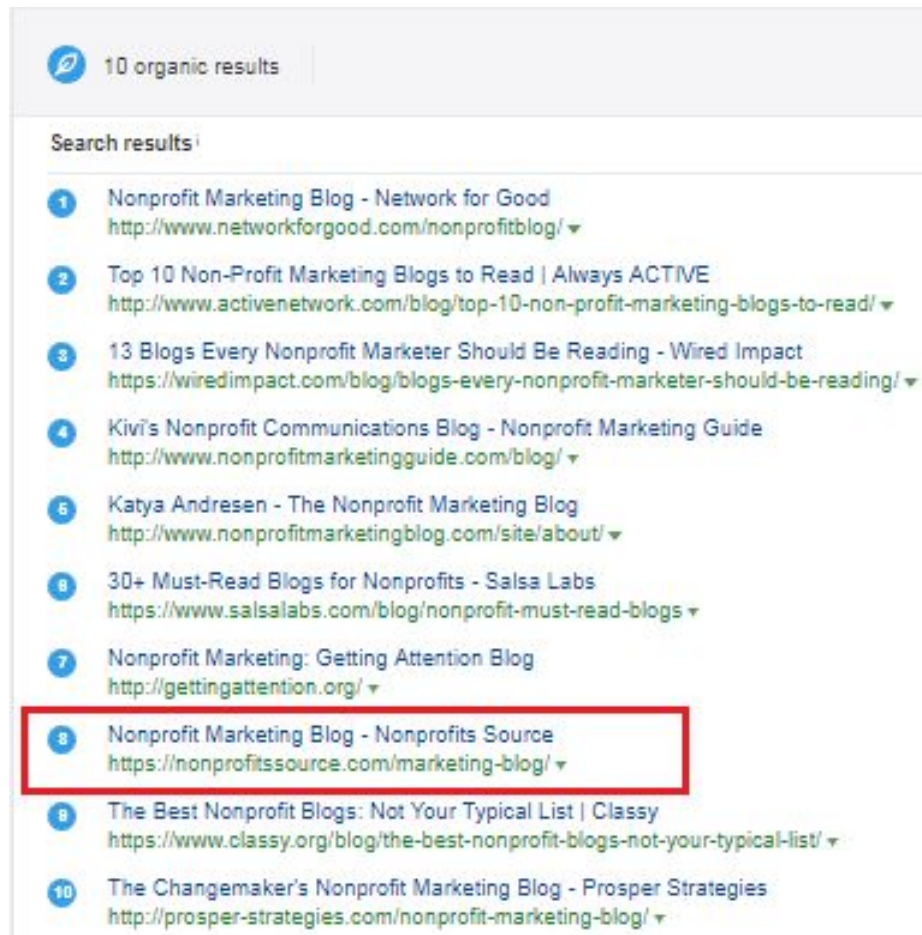
How I Earned A 94 DA Backlink

If you ask digital marketers what their goals are most will say:

Get on the first page of Google.

It may sound lofty, but what if I told you it was as easy as sending a single email?

Here's how I did just that to rank for the term **nonprofit marketing blog** in 3 months:



One of the first things I looked at was the keyword difficulty score.

This gives me an idea of how many backlinks I'll need to earn in order to rank the page.

Using [Ahref's Keyword Explorer](#), the results show a medium difficulty of **41/100** and recommends I build backlinks from 58 websites.

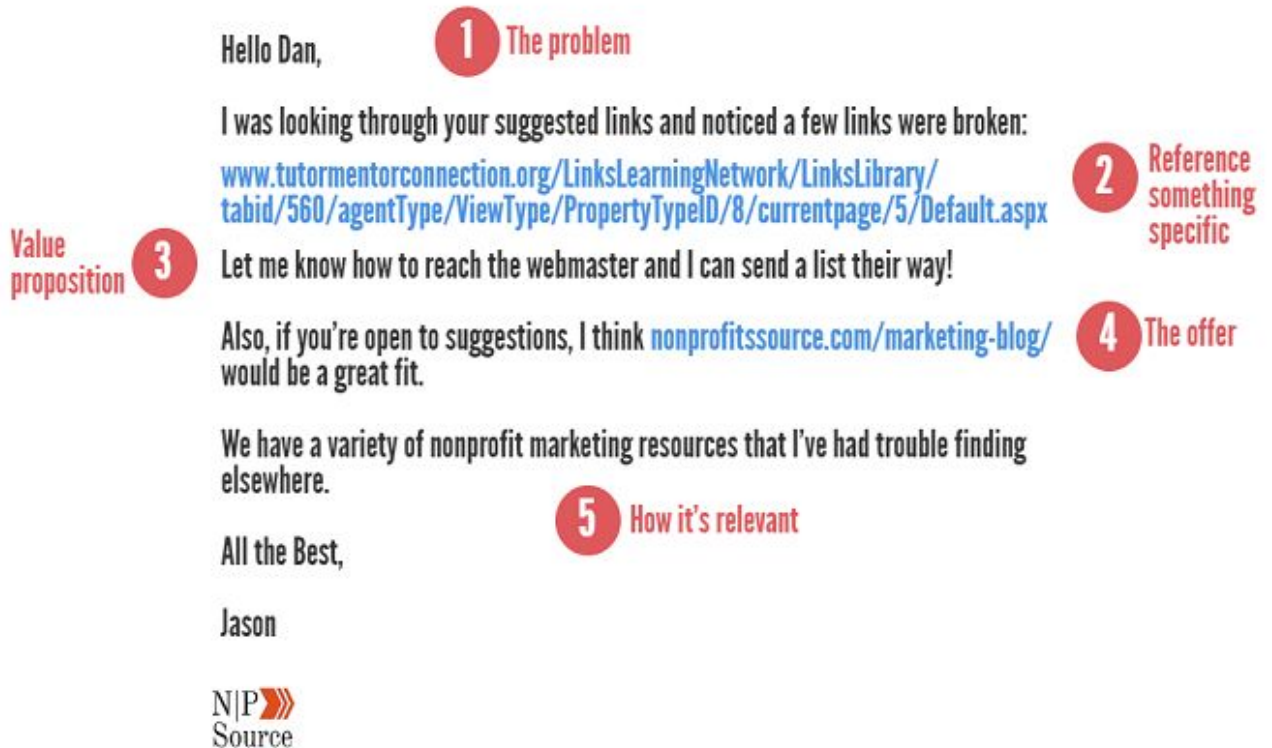
Overview: nonprofit marketing blog

Keyword difficulty ⁱ



Note: Don't obsess over this number. Recall from chapter 2 that [topic authority](#) also plays a role in how Google ranks pages. Instead, focus on creating great content that people will want to link to.

After researching the keyword I drafted an email template to send to webmasters about my blog...



The Problem – Explain why you're reaching out in as few words as possible.

Reference something specific – Being specific in your request will make the receiver more familiar and receptive to you. This reference could be a link, the name of an article, or a topic the webmaster might find interesting.

Value proposition – Here I'm using a [broken link building technique](#) with the promise of providing a list to help webmasters fix URLs that aren't redirecting properly.

The offer – Notice my offer isn't a direct ask, but instead a solution to the webmaster's problem. If you're too aggressive with your ask then people might question your motives. Instead, focus on building trust by delivering on value.

How it's relevant – Whatever your offer is, make sure it's **relevant** to the audience their site serves. If it's not related to the topics the site covers then there is no value in linking to that page.

The key to email outreach is to make it short, but actionable. Finally, make sure to follow-up.

I've found it most effective to reach out once per week for at least one month. Two months if it's a government, university or media site with a lot of authority.



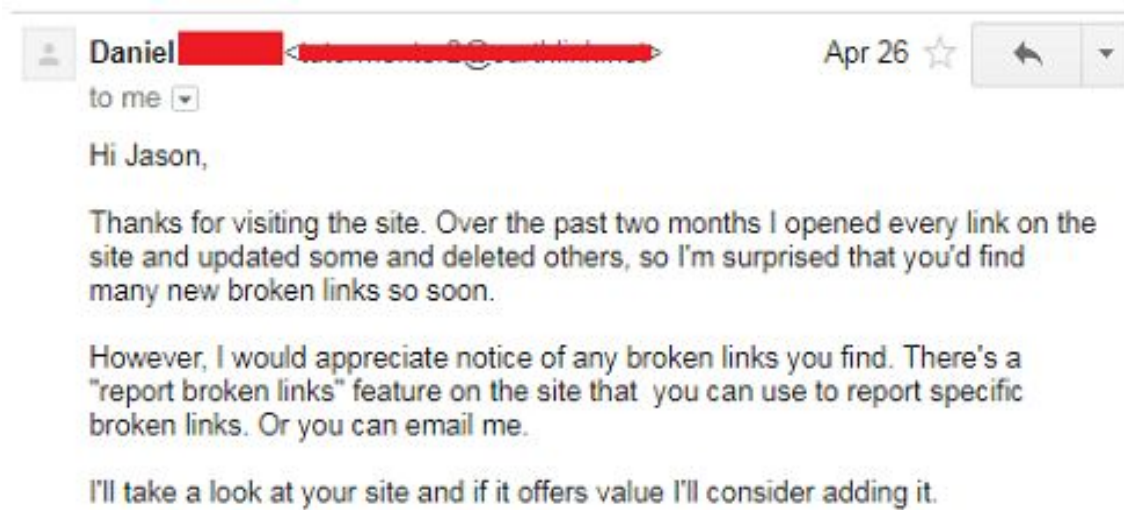
Hi [Name],

I'm following-up to see if you had the opportunity to read the email regarding the broken links on your website that I sent last week. I've gone ahead and attached the full list that I found. I'd be happy to offer a few suggestions for replacement links if you'd like.

Best,

Jason

A few hours after sending my initial email I received the first response:



Here it shows the webmaster does check for broken links and is more than happy to receive my list.

What I do next is important:

In my first email, I mentioned that I had found a few broken links on a specific page.

After conducting a site-wide analysis I found 230 additional broken links that I was more than happy to share.

I also provided additional resources on tools the webmaster could use to find and fix future issues:



Jason Firch <jfirch@gmail.com>

to Daniel ▾

Hi Dan,

As promised, I've attached a list of the broken links I was able to find on your site.

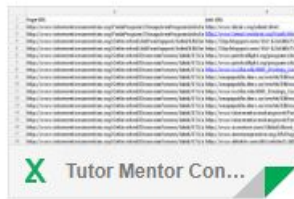
Here are a few suggested tools you could consider using in the future (I am not affiliated with these companies in any way):

-[SEMrush](#)
-[Ahrefs](#)
-[Check My Links](#)
-[LinkMiner](#)

I appreciate you considering our article. Would love to know what your thoughts even if it doesn't quite fit with your audience.

Thank you,

Jason



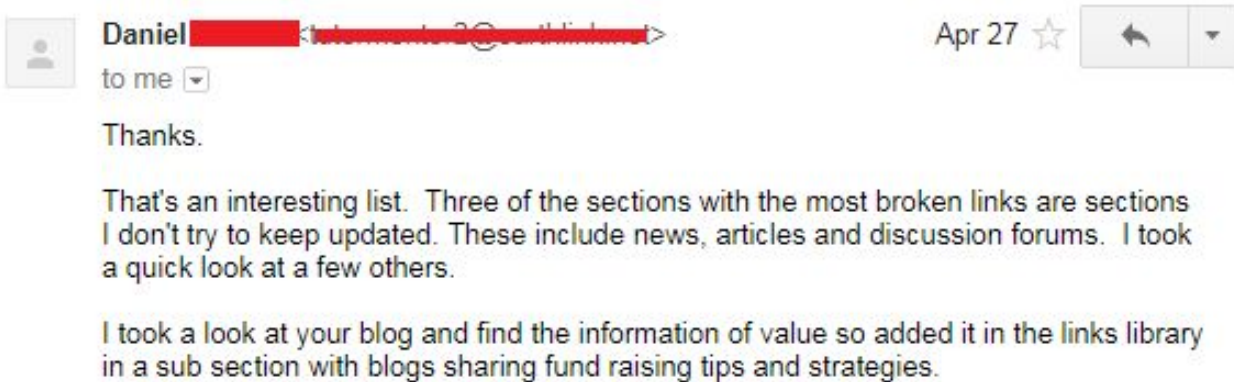
I did this because I wanted to go above and beyond expectations to deliver on my value.

My main goal here is to avoid being seen as an interruption.

Yes, I am helping the webmaster out, but he still has to take time out of his day to read my emails.

For this reason, I want to take advantage of any opportunity to continue to add value to the conversation.

I was able to get a backlink to my site just one day after sending my first email:




A month or so after getting that link I noticed my search rankings for the term, “**nonprofit marketing blog**,” jumped from the 5th page and hovered between page 2 and 3. But it didn’t stop there.

Somehow my blog page was visible enough to be recognized in a link roundup of the [top 75 nonprofit marketing blogs](#):

74

Nonprofits Source + Follow



nonprofitssource.com/marketi..

📍 Bethesda, MD

About Blog - Read our nonprofit marketing blog with tips to improve your content and digital strategy that will grow awareness to your mission.

Frequency - about 1 post per month

GET EMAIL ALERTS

That second link was all it took to push my blog on to the first page.

Around the same time, I sent an email to the [Oxford University Press](#) using the broken link technique:



Jason Firch <jfirch@gmail.com>

Apr 25 ☆



to orc.help ▾

Hello there,

I was hoping to speak with a webmaster regarding one of your pages:

http://global.oup.com/uk/orc/busecon/business/sargeant3e/01student/a_intro/ch03/

I noticed a few links were broken and wanted to reach out to provide a list of them, but couldn't find a direct email on your site.

All the Best,

Jason

The list that I provided was enough to earn a backlink with a [domain authority](#) of 94.

Mission Statements

There are many online resources to aid you in the development of an appropriate mission statement. The following links provide general guidance to nonprofits.

A Stanford Social Innovation Review article about the writing of mission statements:

(https://ssir.org/articles/entry/mission_matters_most).


A website and blog of a variety of Non-profit Marketing Resources:

(<https://nonprofitssource.com/>).

A list of 50 successful non-profit mission statements:

(<https://topnonprofits.com/examples/nonprofit-mission-statements/>).

The article by Janel Radtke is also a helpful resource, summarizing the key issues to consider when developing a mission statement for a non-profit:

( <https://www.tgci.com/sites/default/files/pdf/How%20to%20Write%20a%20Mission%20Statement.pdf>).

At this point you might be thinking:

“This sounds great, but how do I get those kinds of results for my website?”

To which I say:

It’s pretty easy if you develop a **content outreach campaign!**

Earn Links With A Content Outreach Campaign

An outreach campaign is your action plan for spreading the word about your organization.

First, start by identifying your campaign goals so you can measure progress.

For example, after publishing a new article you might want to:

- Earn 5 backlinks
- Receive 500 social shares
- Have 5,000 views
- Appear on the first page results in 3 months

Now that you've set your goals it's time to create a list of websites that are relevant to your content offerings.

I chose to analyze the metrics for the phrase, **nonprofit marketing**, in Ahrefs, because it's related to the phrase I want to rank for.

The top 10 search results in Google will then populate:

Search results ⁱ	
1	Nonprofit Marketing Guide http://www.nonprofitmarketingguide.com/ ▼ ▶ 4 site links
2	Nonprofit Marketing Blog - Network for Good http://www.networkforgood.com/nonprofitblog/ ▼
3	What is Nonprofit Marketing? - The Balance https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-nonprofit-marketing-2295530 ▼
4	4 Challenges Facing Nonprofit Marketers in 2016 (And How To Beat ... https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/challenges-facing-nonprofit-marketers-in-2016 ▼
5	Nonprofit Marketing 2017: Challenges, Strategies & Examples http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2017/06/nonprofit-marketing-2017/ ▼
6	5 Things That Can Make Nonprofit Marketers More Effective [New ... http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2015/11/nonprofit-2016-content-marketing-research/ ▼
7	10 Marketing Lessons for All Nonprofits Classy https://www.classy.org/blog/10-marketing-lessons-for-all-nonprofits/ ▼
8	7 Steps to Creating Your Best Nonprofit Marketing Plan ... - Resources http://www.fundraising123.org/files/training/7 Steps to Creating Your Best Nonprofit Marketing Plan Ever.pdf ▼
9	Getting Attention: Nonprofit Marketing http://gettingattention.org/ ▼
10	Marketing Tools for Your Nonprofit and When They're Effective ... http://nonprofitshub.org/featured/marketing-tools-for-your-nonprofit-and-when-theyre-effective/ ▼

You can accomplish the same thing with tools like Moz, SEMrush, or Majestic, but I prefer Ahrefs because they update their backlink data more frequently.

Next, I take each URL and place it in Ahref's Site Explorer tool.

In this example, I'm using a link from the [Content Marketing Institute](https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2017/06/nonprofit-marketing-2017/).

On the site's dashboard you'll want to click on the referring domains:



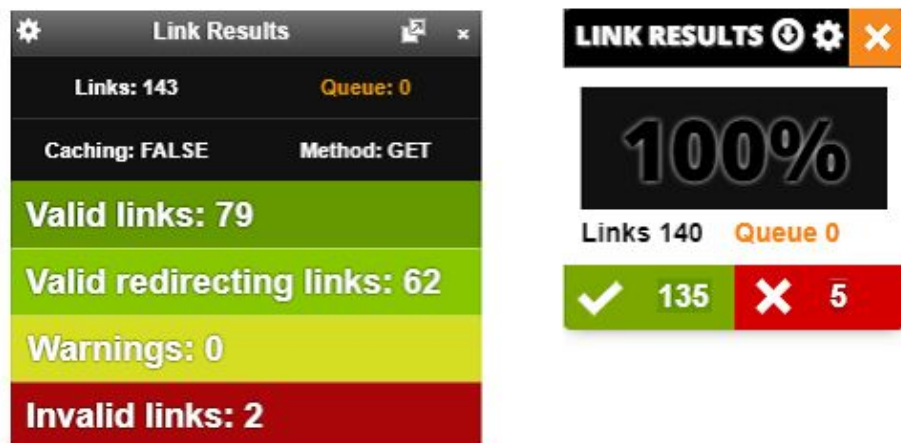
In this view I'm able to see every website that links to the article:

Referring domain	DR ↓	Ahrefs rank	Backlinks	/ dofollow	First seen
ow.ly ▼	75	577	1 ▼	0	9 Jul '17
scoop.it ▼	70	2,008	2 ▼	0	15 Jun '17
uberflip.com ▼	68	5,100	1 ▼	0	13 Jun '17
alltop.com ▼	64	12,346	3 ▼	1	23 Jun '17
alignable.com ▼	62	25,659	2 ▼	2	30 Jun '17
nuzzel.com ▼	60	50,952	221 ▼	15	11 Jun '17
dropmark.com ▼	59	58,404	3 ▼	1	7 Jul '17

The thought is simple.

If the title and contents of the article being linked to are relevant to mine, then it's reasonable to assume people might also link to my content.

Because I'm using a broken link building technique I'll have to test each page with a broken link checker:



[Check My Links](#) and [LinkMiner](#) are my tools of choice because they're built right into Chrome.

If the link is directing properly it will be highlighted in green:

POPULAR POSTS

- Nonprofit Marketing Strategy (5 Steps To Reaching Donors Online) >
- Digital Marketing Plan For Nonprofits: The Definitive Guide (2017) >
- Online Fundraising Ideas (7 Strategies & 63% More Donations) >
- How To Get More Online Donations With Content Marketing >
- How To Convince Leadership Content Marketing For Nonprofits Matters >

:

However, if it's highlighted in red then that means the link is dead.

Once you've found a page with a broken link, use the email template above and send it to the webmaster.

When you get a response I highly recommend running a full site-analysis to check for broken links.

My tool of choice is [SEMrush's Site Audit](#):

Site Audit: Nonprofits Source

nonprofitssource.com | Device: Desktop | Last update: Sun, May 28, 2017 | Pages crawled: 62/200

Overview **Issues** Crawled Pages Statistics Compare Crawls Progress

TOTAL ISSUES

ERRORS

WARNINGS

NOTICES

SELECT AN ISSUE ▼

Errors ⓘ

27 issues with mixed content | Why and how to fix it ▼

10 external links are broken | Why and how to fix it ▼

2 redirect chains and loops | Why and how to fix it ▼

1 external image is broken | Why and how to fix it ▼

You can then download all of the broken links into a .CSV file to attach to your email.

There is one thing to keep in mind.

Don't expect a flood of responses, even if you believe your content is a perfect fit.

People either:

1. Don't have the time
2. They're not interested
3. Are too busy working on other projects

For this reason, I recommend building a list of at least 100 contacts.

If you can manage 1 backlink for every 100 emails sent then consider your outreach a success.

It's tedious, but the results do pay off for the effort put in.

There are other ways, however, to achieve similar results with less work.

Build Relationships With Industry Influencers

Marketing is all about relationship building.

And not just with your audience.

If you want your organization to be seen as an industry expert then you need to reach out to those in your field.

One of the best ways to do this is by delivering content that aids in the understanding and advancement of knowledge in your industry.

The Society For Human Resource Management (SHRM) for example:

- Surveys and reports on industry trends
- Educates members on HR practices
- Advances the knowledge of HR professionals

Here are three methods I've used to get 2,000+ social shares on a single blog post and earn backlink from industry websites.

1. Reach Out To Influencers On Social Media

When I published my article, “[How To Get More Online Donations With Content Marketing](#),” I never expected it would [receive over 2,000 shares on social media](#).

How to Get More Online Donations With Content Marketing
nonprofitssource.com

1.7K



361



45



2



-



Total Shares: 2.1K

All it took were two messages to industry influencers on Twitter...



John Haydon
@johnhaydon



Mar 14 ✓



Send

Notice that I'm not asking for anyone to share the article, but instead asking for feedback.

As a result, the article was retweeted out to 90,000+ followers:



But sometimes the direct ask can work if you've got something of real value.

And influencers are more than happy to share your content to their information hungry audience:





If you mention someone in one of your articles then make sure to let them know!



These are neat tactics to promote your content and hopefully gain a few new friends.

However, building meaningful relationships with industry websites is more impactful.

2. Earn Backlinks On Influencer Websites

The biggest honor a website can give to another is a link. It's also a clear way to measure the value of your content.

Our new friends at [Sashaendoh.com](https://sashaendoh.com) were willing to give us that honor in an article they posted in July:

MARKETING

- [10 Little-Known Facebook Marketing Features and Hacks You Can Try Today](#)
Don't know if all 10 are little-known but definitely great tip and trick in this article for those of you using Facebook to market your nonprofit.
- [Nonprofit Facebook page templates: What you need to know](#)
That's right, Facebook rolled out page templates and one new option is the nonprofit page template. Learn about it here.
- [Digital Marketing Plan For Nonprofits: The Definitive Guide \(2017\)](#)
We love Nonprofits Source's marketing content! This is just the first chapter in their 6 chapter series and already lots and lots of great advice. A must read and must follow for future content.

So how do you build these relationships?

Try doing something helpful for someone with zero expectations of getting anything in return.

Back in April, I tweeted a link to a content offer from their site that received over 10,000 impressions:



I also make an effort to share their articles on a regular basis.



I can't say for certain that the social shares were the reason my content earned a link, but at the very least it was enough to get noticed.

3. Be Active Where Your Audience Is Active

Every now and then I like to get involved in the #NPChat hosted by [Give](#).

This chat reaches tens of thousands of impressions across hundreds of accounts that are relevant to the industry my website serves.



Give
@GiveWP

Following



Q1 What does 'Staying on Target' mean to you or your organization? [#NPChat](#)

10:10 AM - 9 Aug 2017 from Dana Point, CA



It's the perfect opportunity to get exposure, build my brand, and establish myself as subject matter expert.



Nonprofits Source @NonprofitSource · Aug 9



A1. Having a consistent message across all channels and ALWAYS delivering on value first - above all else. [#NPChat](#)




2






Sometimes you'll also get attention from other participants, like our friend [@Carol_Stephen](#):


Nonprofits Source @NonprofitSource · Jul 12

A6. Big fan of CoSchedules's headline analyzer tool: bit.ly/2n8pFrq We're able to quickly test and improve opens [#npchat](#)




Write Better Headlines: Free Headline Analyzer Fro...

Free headline analyzer that will score your overall headline quality and rate its ability to result in social shares, increased traffic, and SEO value.

coschedule.com

1
2


Carol Stephen @Carol_Stephen

Following


Replying to @NonprofitSource

Yes! I love CoSchedule's headline analyzer tool. Use it for blog posts all the time!

[#npchat](#)

10:55 AM - 12 Jul 2017


1


Nonprofits Source @NonprofitSource · Jul 12

Replying to @Carol_Stephen

As do we :) Don't get too allured by the score though. Writing for people will always yield better results [#npchat](#)

2
2


Carol Stephen @Carol_Stephen · Jul 12

You're right about that! It's just a number, and doesn't tell the whole story.

[#npchat](#)

1

Relationship building is key to mastering any form of marketing.

And having more friends online makes it easier to distribute your content and improve search rankings.

As a result, our [Twitter profile](#) has grown to over 1,200 followers who happen to be involved in nonprofits and/or digital marketing.

In chapter 4 I'm going to show you how to [create a digital marketing process](#) that will teach you how to write content your audience will love.

Nice work! You've just completed chapter 3 on how to create a digital marketing plan for nonprofits

Here's a quick recap of what we learned:

1. **A digital promotion strategy** – provides a way to distribute content online.
2. **Earning backlinks** – is an essential component to getting first page results on Google.
3. **Create an outreach campaign** – using a broken link building technique is an effective way to create value for webmasters.
4. **Reach out to influencers on social media** – to get your content shared and build brand trust.

5. **Form meaningful relationships** – with industry websites help earn links and gain industry exposure.

Chapter 4: This Digital Marketing Process Will Make You Write Better Content

Do you have a digital marketing process in place to manage your content, social, email, and engagement activities?

I know at times it may feel like a lot to juggle.

But if you're like me, you constantly find ways to maximize your productivity to get the job done.

In this article, I'm going to share a content marketing process that, when followed, will help you **create content your audience will love**.

Best of all, this 7 step process is easy to learn and will free your time to focus on more value-adding activities.

The Strategic Marketing Process

I'm a big fan of the [marketing process and its fundamentals](#).

So much so that I wrote about it 3 years ago on LinkedIn:

Traditional Marketing Is Dying: Why Is It Taught In School?

Published on August 20, 2014

[Edit article](#)

[View stats](#)



Jason Firch



1,611



40



13



If you stay within the lines of a traditional marketing curriculum, you will not reach your full potential, or what is expected of you with current marketing trends. You have to get out, become involved with every opportunity you can, and learn through experiential learning. It was these outside experiences, and challenges I accepted, which allows me the ability to become a digital marketer.

My formal training in marketing taught me the foundation, but by no means gave me the keys to be successful in my field. Traditional marketing techniques should be offered as an introduction to the field, and not part of the core curriculum. Marketing has changed, and so should schools which offer a marketing major.

Looking back, I was quick to jump to conclusions of how marketing has changed.

For instance, we know Twitter is a great forum to share ideas and consume new content, while Facebook has become the most popular platform for B2C consumers.

However, despite this shift in audience platform preferences the marketing process itself hasn't changed much in the last 100 years.



Research – Learn what customers want and how they behave/interact with your brand. To a large extent, understand the market forces at play that help or hurt your chance for success; think [SWOT analysis](#) and [marketing mix](#).

Planning – Align research with business goals and capabilities (often limited by resources) to attract leads into a paying customer or donor.

Implement – Identify and create content offers and promotion strategies that will get your message out to a qualified audience.

Measure – [Prove to leadership](#) that the investments made are yielding incremental results toward your goals.

Optimize – Report on goals and refine your strategies that increase the productivity of input > output. Then double down on investment in areas that show promising results.

What Is A Digital Marketing Process?

A digital marketing process is a broad term to explain any number of steps you take to achieve a digital strategy.

You might have a digital marketing process to curate content, schedule posts, and engage with your audience as part of your [social media strategy](#).

And another process could be used in developing your lead nurturing campaigns as part of an [email marketing strategy](#).

For example, we use MailChimp to automate email workflows, list population from contact forms, as well as scheduling emails in advance.

In an ideal situation, you want these steps to build upon each other so efforts are being supported to achieve your goals.

Of course, not every marketing process will immediately achieve the goal of optimization.

It's through experimentation, tweaks to your approach, and being patient and persistent that we improve.

If the last year of experimenting with content has taught me anything it's that translating thoughts into words is difficult.

Through this period I've struggled to understand how best to tackle the content marketing process, until now...

7 Step Marketing Process For Writing Better Content



1. Structure Content With An Introduction, Body, And Conclusion

As mentioned, thoughts are tough to translate into words.

There's writer's block, competition for our attention in the form of social media or our phones, and who can forget about the 50 other responsibilities we have on our plate.

Our ideas float freely in our minds and the challenge comes when we have to organize those thoughts into ideas that others can comprehend.

This is what makes structure such a critical component of any [content marketing process](#).

It may not be as sexy of a topic as implementing voice or VR technologies into your marketing strategy, but structuring your ideas is what constrains our thoughts to adherable guidelines.

When there are no rules, our minds are free to wander to thoughts of the future, or perhaps dwell on a particular issue of the past.

All of which impedes our ability to **write great content**.

That's just one component.

Another is the need for your content to persuade readers to take an action.

It doesn't necessarily need to be a direct ask, as digital marketing is often about small wins that build up over time.

A like here, a comment there, and a link back to your site can, with time, have a huge impact on search rankings.

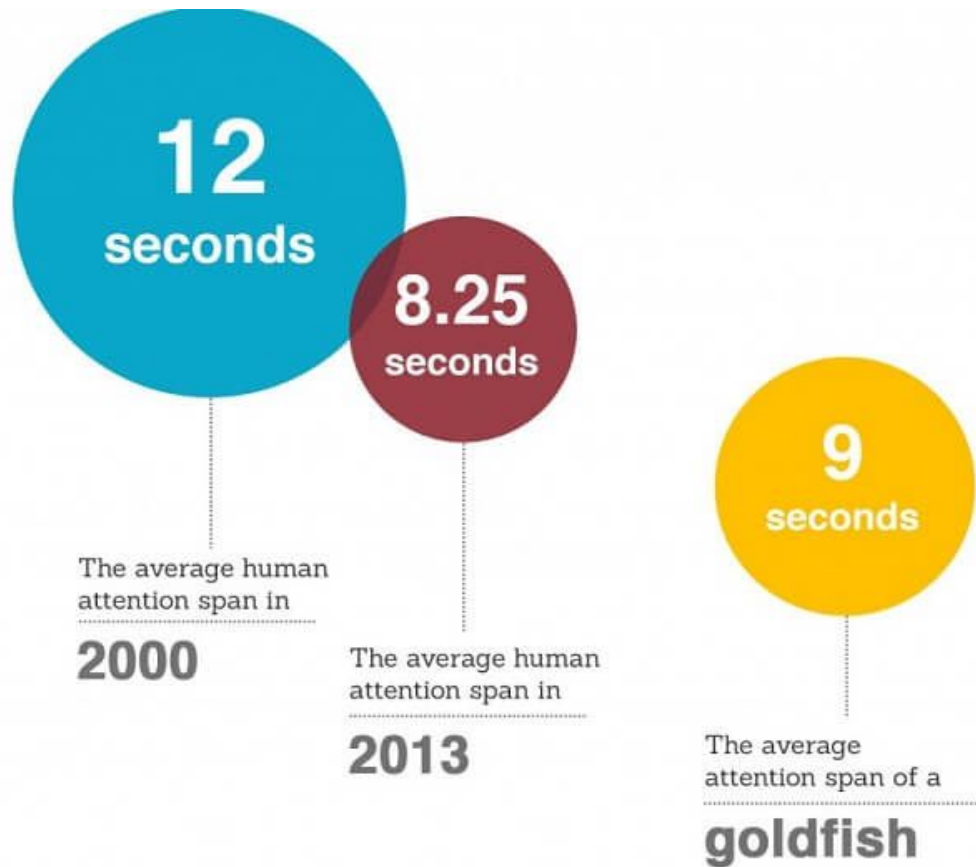
But how do we structure content in a way that it is both great and persuades a visitor to take an action?

Introduction

The introduction of your article is a 30-second sales pitch, whereby you have to deliver the promise of value in order for the conversation to continue.

There's just one problem...

You have about 8-seconds to grab and retain a visitor's attention before they leave your site.



I've found that in order to capture attention your introduction must have three key elements:

1. An Agreement Statement
2. Acknowledging A Problem
3. Offer Promise Of A Solution

Here's how we can apply this framework:

- 1** Wouldn't you like to write better content? I'm talking about the kind that attracts and converts visitors to your site into paying customers or donors. Of course, you would, who wouldn't?
- 2** There's just one problem... Who has time to write content, optimize it for SEO, and distribute it in a way that will drive meaningful results for your organization?
- 3** Don't worry, we've got you covered. This 7 step digital marketing process is easy to learn and will pay big dividends when implemented into your content strategy. Best of all, you'll actually save time so you can focus on bigger and greater things.

I would also add that your introduction should be short – between 100 and 150 words.

This is both good for the reader and for you as it forces the idea to be concise.

Storytelling is good, but no one likes to read a paragraph where a single sentence would do.

Body

The body is the meat of your article and where the logical step-by-step flow of your content comes into place.

Each headline and subsequent sub-headlines should lead the reader to the conclusion you are trying to make.

A good framework to follow, especially if you want to show the impact your nonprofit makes, goes something like this:

- Give an example of a success story by highlighting results.
- Next, with as much detail as possible, provide step-by-step instructions on how the results were achieved.
- Finally, use statistics, industry sources or research that supports your point of view to build authority around your article.

Conclusion

The conclusion of your article is a condensed summary of your major points and if possible should be no longer than 2-3 sentences, or about 50-75 words.

A conclusion helps in two main ways:


1. **Re-engage Readers:** Help your audience remember what they've read so it resonates with them.
2. **Satisfy Scanners:** Research suggests that people tend to scan articles instead of reading the full content.

Moreover, visitors are likely to scroll to the bottom of the page as soon as they land on your site.

By condensing your entire article into the conclusion you provide learning objectives or outcomes to readers.

This acts as a form of insurance for your audience to ensure they are about to read something of value.

I'd also recommend including a call to action, preferably a content upgrade, to capture email leads:



14 ONLINE FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES checklist

1 CUSTOM FACEBOOK ADVERTISING

- Leverage your email list to advertise your online fundraisers to your custom Facebook audience
- Identify your Facebook ad manager and create a new custom audience
- Advertise your registered group using a 10% off code

Need a big question for you?

Is your organization really maximizing its use of social advantage and its members' growth opportunities?

While online fundraising can provide the most compelling evidence, it doesn't have to be.

Are you getting the most out of your 14 online fundraising strategies? Let us know your online fundraiser's success!

Free Step-by-Step Checklist:
Leverage these techniques for your site (+7 BONUS strategies not found in this post)

Email

DOWNLOAD

If you want to drive more engagement in the form of comments you can try asking a question of your reader:

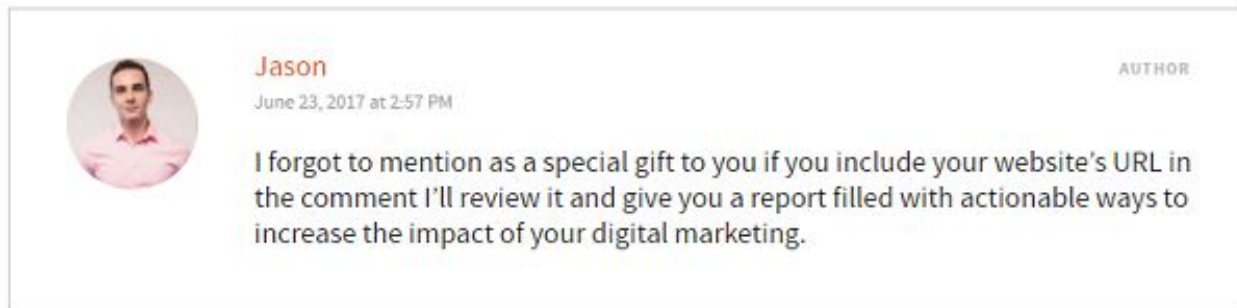
Now I've got a question for you... Are you ready to give one of these fundraising strategies a shot?

Taking advantage of even one of these online fundraising ideas can make a huge impact for your nonprofit.

Skyrocketing your donations, membership sign ups, and awareness of your brand.

Let us know which strategy you plan on using by leaving a comment down below!

Finally, if you have something of great value, like a webinar, a promotional offer, or a free giveaway, then posting a comment on your blog is a great opportunity to gain exposure:



2. Outline And Research Before You Start Writing

Now that you have the structure down the next step of this digital marketing process is to outline and source your article.

It's worth investing time into creating an outline before you dive into writing content because it clarifies and aligns your ideas with a high-level approach.

It's easy to get bogged down in the story such that you detract away from the key points you want your article to focus on.

By outlining your article, you're able to stay on track while referring back to it as a guideline.

A good rule of thumb to keep in mind is the rule of three's.

That's to say that every main point, or section header, should be constrained to three sub-sections.

Step 4: Create Your Own Images

- The value of image search
- Build brand awareness
- Avoid copyright infringement

In terms of research, I highly recommend you source all of your material before you start writing.

This also includes developing an internal linking strategy.

The purpose of this is to prepare yourself as much as possible to avoid distractions from impeding on your writing process.

In addition, by sourcing the material early, you're able to formulate your content around research instead of trying to make it fit into your narrative.

This will go a long way to avoiding revisions and a lot of headaches.

3. Write A Headline People Want To Click

Your headline is the first thing people see when your article pops into their social feeds, inbox or however else it's found.

In truth, the title of your article is an evolving process as your ideas are transformed into words.

I tend to brainstorm headline ideas as I write and make adjustments up to the moment I hit publish.

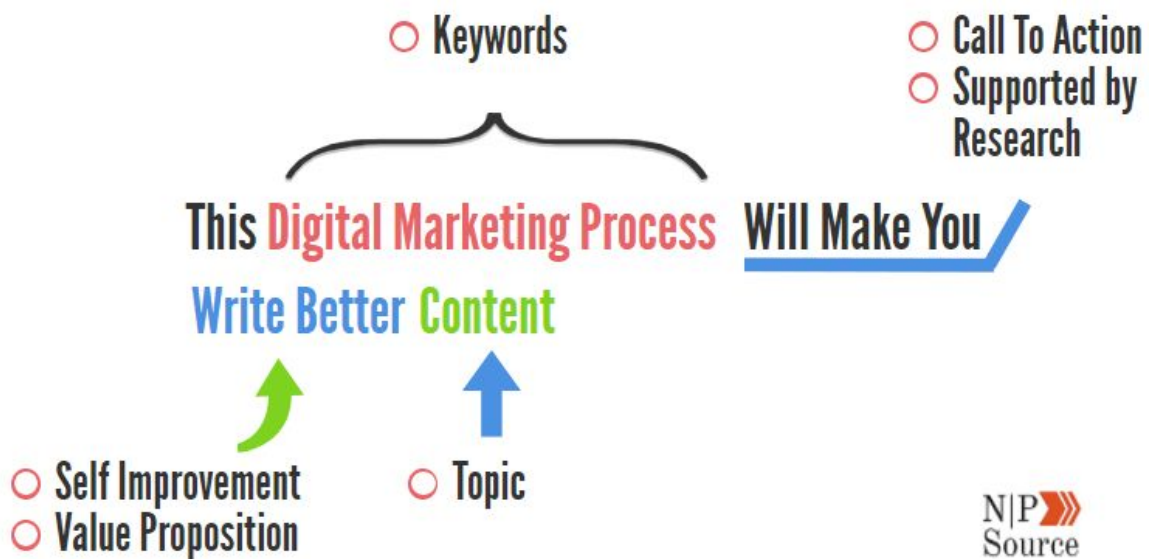
Here are a few iterations I went through while drafting this article:

- This Strategic Marketing Process Will Make You A Better Writer
- The Best Digital Marketing Process (7 Steps To Write Better Content)
- Strategic Marketing Process (How To Write Better Content)
- How This Digital Marketing Process Will Make You A Better Writer

The benefit of doing this is to shape the headline around the content itself so I don't get trapped into forcing a narrative around a 70 character sentence.

I've also found that making a few simple adjustments to your headline process can dramatically improve audience response rates as well as organic search results.

Let me show you how:



Identify Keyword Opportunities

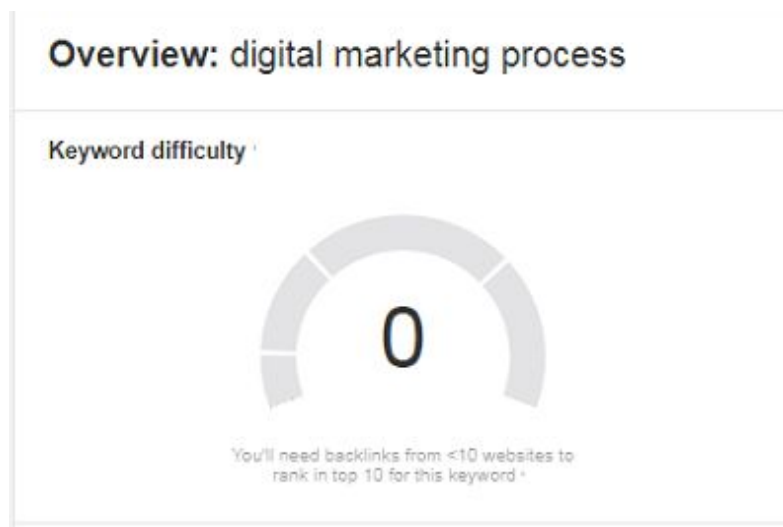
Before I start brainstorming a list of headlines I need to know the exact phrase I want to rank for.

Afterall, keywords are the backbone of SEO.

Now, recall in Chapter 2: Nonprofit Marketing Strategy when we evaluated keyword ranking opportunities based on difficulty.

Following this, I found the keyword, “**digital marketing process**,” to be a relatively easy phrase to rank for with 300 monthly searches.

To get started, I entered the phrase into three different keyword difficulty scoring tools: **Ahrefs**, **Moz**, and **KWFinder**.



Ahrefs

Keyword Overview: digital marketing process

15

Difficulty ⁱ [Learn more](#)

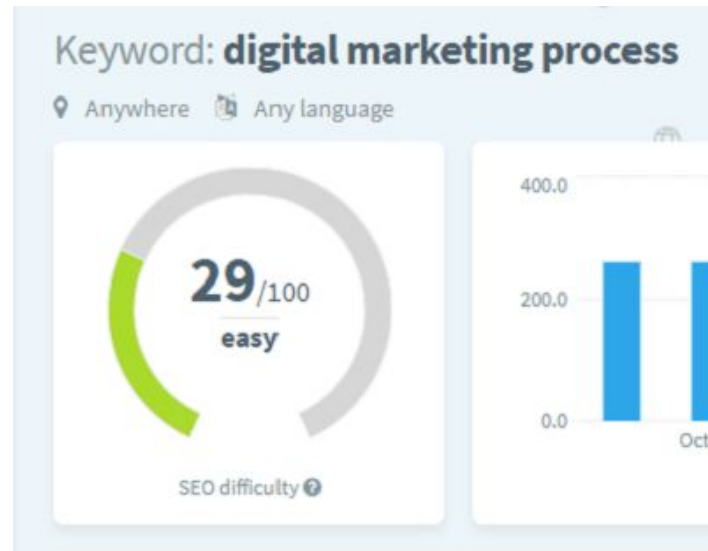


34%

Opportunity ⁱ [Learn more](#)



Moz



KWFinder

Next, I analyzed competitor metrics and backlink profiles of those who rank on the first page to determine if I stood a chance of ranking for them.

This Digital Marketing Process Will Make You Write Better Content

<https://nonprofitssource.com/digital-marketing-process/> ▼

The Emarkable 6 Step Digital Marketing Process - Emarkable.ie

<https://www.emarkable.ie/our-process/> ▼

7 Steps to a successful digital marketing plan for your eventsensov ...

<http://www.sensov.com/question/how-can-a-digital-marketing-plan-improve-my-event/> ▼

Five Levels of Digital Marketing and the Sales Process - The Balance

<https://www.thebalance.com/five-levels-of-digital-marketing-and-the-sales-process-2294872> ▼

Planning a Digital Marketing Campaign | Digital Marketing Institute

<https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/planning-a-digital-marketing-campaign> ▼

Digital Marketing: Complete Process in a Nutshell - Delhi School of ...

<http://dsim.in/blog/2014/01/09/digital-marketing-complete-process-in-a-nutshell/> ▼

7 Digital Marketing Strategies That Work: A Complete Guide

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/digital-strategy-guide> ▼

The Digital Marketing Process - SlideShare

<https://www.slideshare.net/gzones1974/the-digital-marketing-process> ▼

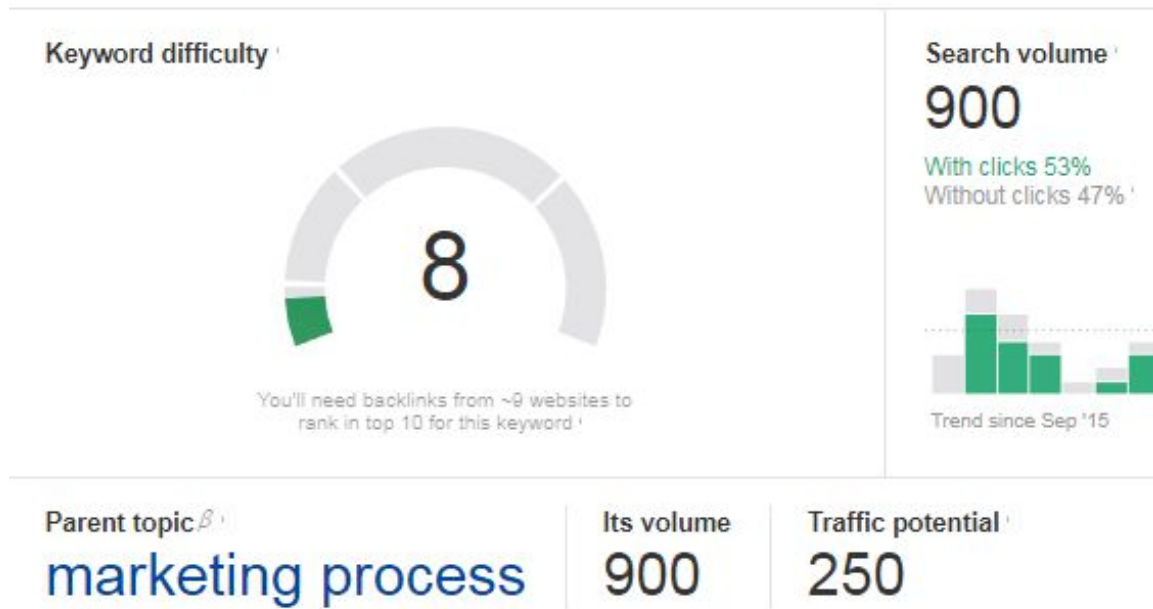
Breaking Down the Main Steps of the Digital Marketing Process - Blirt

<https://www.blirt.com.au/blirt-blog/breaking-down-the-main-steps-of-the-digital-marketing-process> ▼

I also took a look at the quality of the content to ensure what I was offering could compete with the top results.

Lastly, I repeated the exercise for the phrase, **marketing process**, to see if I could rank for a related keyword.

Overview: marketing process

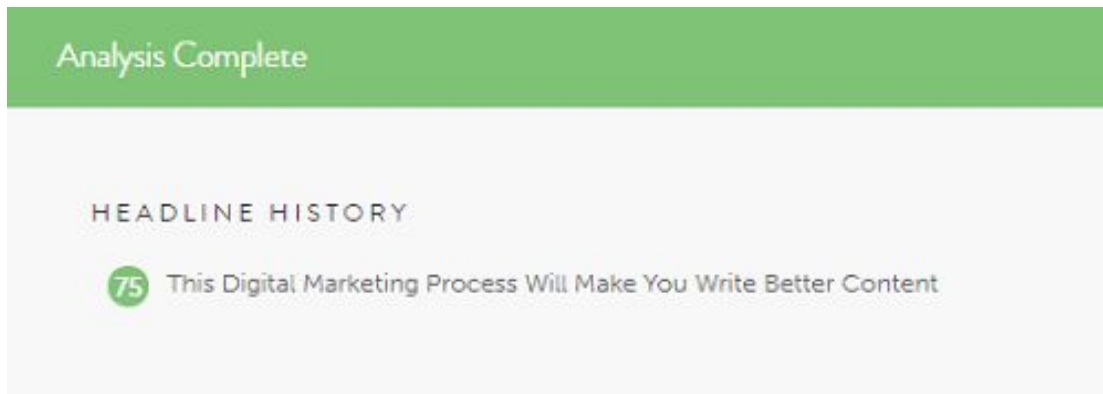


Use Emotion As A Call To Action

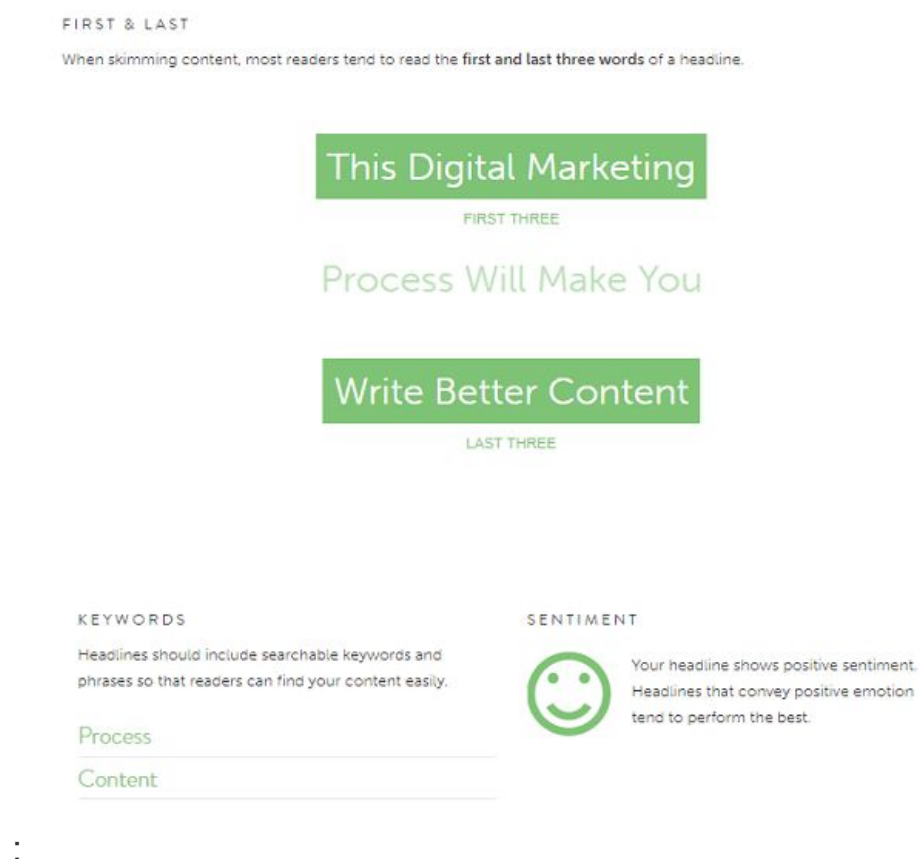
Once I've finished researching keywords my next stop is CoSchedule's Headline Analyzer.



This free digital marketing tool analyzes your headline and calculates a score based on the words you use.



It then highlights the main phrases or words that are most likely to resonate with the readers:

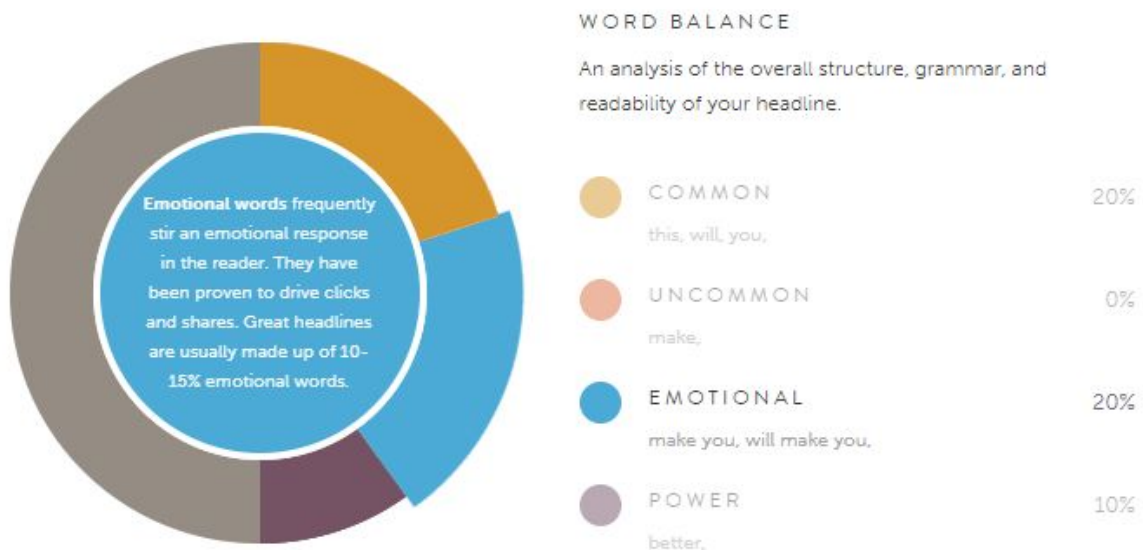


Finally, the analyzer breaks down every word into four high-level categories.

- Common
- Uncommon
- Emotional
- Power

According to industry research, [emotional headlines drive more click and shares](#) to your content.

This Digital Marketing Process Will Make You Write Better Content



The Value Proposition

Think about when you're scrolling through Twitter, Facebook, or your preferred media sites.

What compels you to click on those headlines?

What were you seeking in the exact moment when you clicked on this article?

Whether consciously or subconsciously, you made a decision to invest your time into reading this article.

In a sense, the value proposition of your headline is a clear intent of what your audience can expect to gain after reading your content.

Your ability to add value to the conversation, whether by facilitating a thoughtful discussion or by presenting industry changing data, is what gives your content meaning.

Looking at the headline of this article, in particular, the word “better” implies an alternative way of doing something that you may not have tried before.

Define value for the reader in a way that is meaningful to them and they will want to click your headline.

4. Create Your Own Images

Writing content is time-consuming enough without adding image creation into the mix.

I know the whole purpose of this marketing process is to save time, but trust me when I say creating your own images is worth it.

And don't worry about not being a graphic designer.

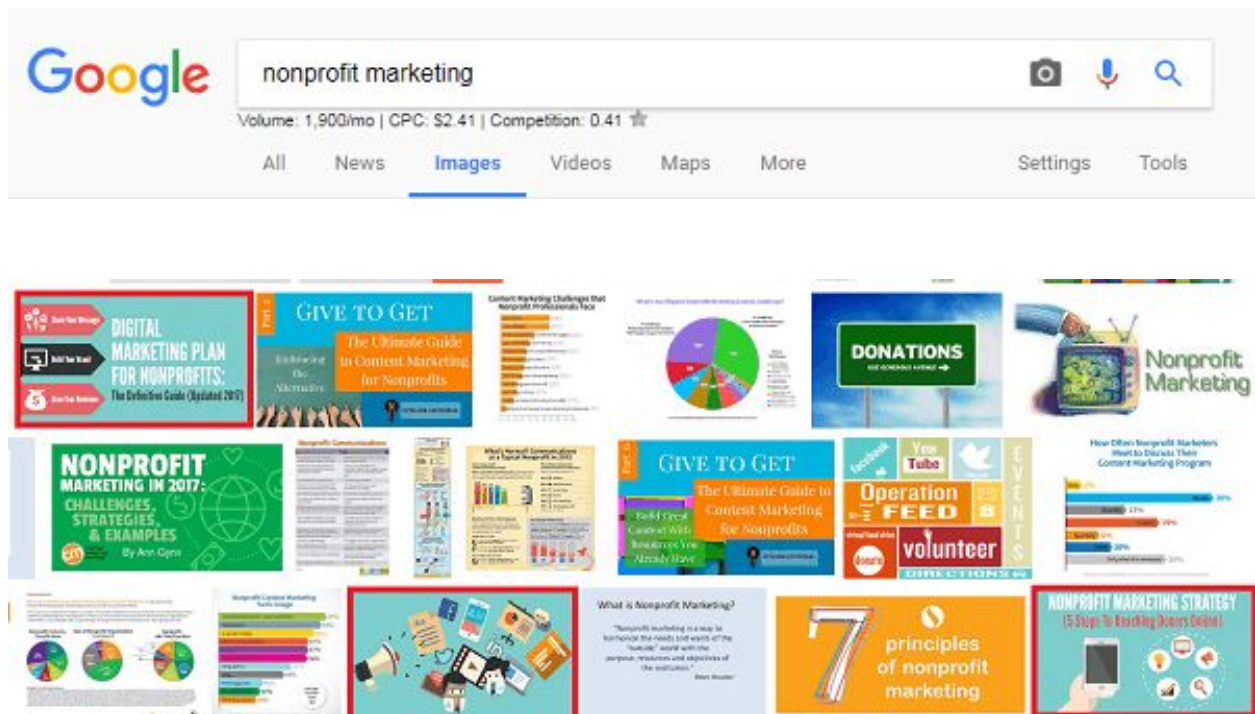
Free design tools like [Canva](#), [Piktochart](#) and [Microsoft's Paint 3D](#) make creating visually appealing images feel effortless.

The Value Of Image Search

Would you be surprised to learn that [images account for 26%](#) of the 40–60 billion searches that happen on Google each month?

That's a lot of traffic that you should be taking advantage of.

If you search the phrase **nonprofit marketing** you'll see three of my images appear at the top of the pack:



How do I do it?

Every single one of [my images have an alt text](#).

This provides Google's crawlers with context for what topic that image relates.

This means Google is better able to serve relevant images in search results as well as better understand the topics your site focuses on.

Another reason to consider including media-rich content in your articles is the fact that [relevant images get 94% more views](#) than content without images.

Build Brand Awareness

One of the most challenging tasks of writing an article is finding the perfect images to pair it with.

I've sometimes spent hours searching Google with nothing to show for it.

It's frustrating, time-consuming, and builds no equity to my site.

However, when you create your own images you're free to do anything you want.

This means accurately visualizing the information in your article for the audience.

My only rule here is consistency in colors and style.



You'll notice my color pallet doesn't change too much on my site.

My goal here is for people to associate my brand with every graphic I create.

For example, an infographic could be a great way to [earn backlinks to your site](#) while building brand awareness to your mission.

In terms of style, I like to keep things simple.

For me, this means the use of icons, simple shapes, and text-overlays to support the image.

Avoid Copyright Infringement

Whether you're [using images for social media](#) or for a blog post, it's good to know if you have the rights to reuse an image.

A single misuse of an unlicensed image, even if by accident, can [cost you \\$8,000](#) and damage to your reputation.

The best way to avoid this type of action is to ask for permission or purchase a license.

If you're using Google to source images, then I recommend filtering out copyrighted images under the tools section.



[Flickr](#), which is a platform designed to share online photos, is another great way to source images that are labeled for reuse.

5. Involve Your Team In The Marketing Process

If you've ever spent time on LinkedIn you're bound to come across influencers.

These are often researchers, thought leaders and social CEO's.

There's good reason for why these CEOs are flocking to publishing platforms.

In a [recent study](#), social CEO's have been shown to enhance the reputation of their firms, attract talent and increase sales.

This isn't different in the realm of nonprofits as donors say they want to receive [regular updates from the CEO/Executive Director](#).

When it comes to content your entire team should be involved, not just the marketing department.

Employees at all levels of your organization have a perspective to add to the conversation.

Whether client facing, manning the front desk, or in the boardroom developing strategies to guide the organization forward.

From a marketers perspective, it's a lot easier to clean up and optimize a rough draft than it is to write an article from scratch.

Outside of content creation, your team also has a wide [social network to champion your content](#).

I would recommend the next time you publish a piece of content that you send it to co-workers and encourage them to share.

6. Reuse And Repurpose Old Content

The most time-consuming part of any content marketing process is writing the material.

Lucky, your website already has an abundance of content that can be reused and repurposed to save you time.

Reuse Old Content

I tend to run into a lot of similar topics when writing a new piece of content.

They might be software tools, marketing strategies, or SEO tactics that I've mentioned before.

Instead of writing new content, you can pull bits and pieces from old articles and then rework it into your current post.

There might be a different angle that you haven't explored or it might be used to add context to the conversation.

Here's an example of me talking about backlinks in the first chapter of this guide:

Backlinks, according to Google, are one of the top 3 search ranking factors.

I've already seen SEO results by ranking on the 4th page for my target keyword in the first 2 months:

<input type="checkbox"/> Keywords	Rank	KD	URL	Check
<input type="checkbox"/> online fundraising ideas	41 / 5	19	https://nonprofitssource.com/online-fundraising-ideas/ ▼	17 Jun '17

By defining my goal and aligning strategies behind it, I was able to identify:

- A content offers that both converts and is shareable
- My most valuable digital channel for this campaign
- Ranking opportunities to sustain long-term growth

And again in chapter two:

I've said this in previous articles, but it's worth mentioning again:

Backlinks are one of the top three Google search ranking factors.

If you want first page results, especially for competitive keywords, you need people linking to your site.

The reason backlinks are so important is because search engines use them as a sign of authority and trust.

Therefore, earning backlinks from authoritative sites increases the trust and value of your content.

Outside of saving time, reusing old content is a great way to lift your internal linking strategy by referencing direct links within the pages of your website.

It also builds topic authority, which Google uses to rank websites for specific keywords.

Repurpose Content Into New Mediums

There are so many different mediums to choose from when publishing online.

For example, you can take 5 related blog posts and combine them into a massive ebook or white paper to distribute as a [content upgrade](#) and build your email list.

Or, if you're feeling trendy, you can convert an existing piece of content into a video.

According to HubSpot, 43% of people want to see [more video content from marketers](#).

The cost to get started is relatively affordable (under \$300.00) and you don't need incredible editing skills to piece everything together.

Here's a list of equipment and software I've used in the past to create 5-10 minute demo videos:

- Microphone: [Audio-Technica](#)
- Pop Filter: [Earambler Pop Filter](#)
- Software: [Adobe Premier](#), [Audacity](#), [ScreenCast-O-Matic](#) (only if you plan to capture video of your desktop)

- Video Recording: Most mobile devices work well, but may require a stabilizer tripod

Now all you need is to convert your blog post into a script and you'll be ready to post your new video in no time!

7. Ask For Feedback Before Publishing Content

You've just put the final touches on your article...Combed through every sentence to find errors...Double checked your outline to ensure everything flows.

Now it's time to hit publish...Right?

Before you do, consider this:

Edit Your Content

Microsoft word is a great tool for spell checking and pointing out small grammar mistakes.

But the English language is complex and basic word processing tools don't understand the use of passive voice or complex sentence structures.

This is important because it aids in determining the readability of your articles.

The [Hemingway app](#) does just that:

Hemingway App makes your writing bold and clear. **Hemingway**
Editor

The app highlights lengthy, complex sentences and common errors; if you see a yellow sentence, shorten or split it. If you see a red highlight, your sentence is so dense and complicated that your readers will get lost trying to follow its meandering, splitting logic — try editing this sentence to remove the red.

You can **utilize** a shorter word in place of a purple one. Mouse over them for hints.

Adverbs and weakening phrases are **helpfully** shown in blue. Get rid of them and pick words with force, **perhaps**.

Phrases in green have **been marked** to show passive voice.

You can **format** your *text* with the toolbar.

Paste in something you're working on and edit away. Or, click the Write button and compose something new.

Readability
Grade 6
Good

Words: **133**
Show More ▼

- 2** adverbs, meeting the goal of 2 or fewer.
- 1** use of passive voice, meeting the goal of 2 or fewer.
- 1** phrase has a simpler alternative.
- 1** of 11 sentences is hard to read.
- 1** of 11 sentences is very hard to read.

This free marketing tool lets you copy and paste your article and then highlights errors.

However, if you have the resources, I highly recommend outsourcing the entire editorial process to freelancers.

A quick search for **content editors** on [Upwork](#) shows consultants starting as low as \$20.00/hr.



Haley S.
Editor/Content Specialist

\$30.00 / hr

\$2k+ earned

97% Job Success

Whatever your project, I can help you polish your writing so that it clearly fit ...

Suggested because they worked on 7 jobs that match your search.

The rating and review system on the platform acts as insurance to ensure you avoid hiring the wrong person for the job.

When used on a continuous basis, consultants on Upwork are relatively inexpensive, while freeing your staff's time to focus on higher priority tasks.

Share Content With Industry Influencers

Feedback, when constructive, is an invaluable asset for content marketing.

It's also a great promotional strategy.

For example, sharing your article with industry influencers before it's published may give your work the exposure it needs to reach your audience.

In addition, influencers may offer useful insight on the topic or it may turn into a content collaboration project.

Whether you use an excel spreadsheet or Google Drive, having a rolodex of people who are receptive to sharing or contributing to your website is a must.

Try to build a list of 50-100 people and then cycle through them offering content that they may find interesting or valuable for their audience.

Once you have a good amount of feedback and have made revisions to your article it's time to publish your content!

In the next chapter, we're going to show you how to get your nonprofit higher rankings on Google by mastering [search engine optimization](#)

Chapter 5: SEO For Nonprofits: A Beginners Guide To Digital Marketing Success

The time has finally come to **demystify Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for nonprofits.**

In the last step of this digital marketing plan, we're going to share SEO strategies and tactics we use to increase search rankings on Google.

Join us as we take a deep dive to explain:

1. What SEO is and how it works
2. Why nonprofits should be investing in SEO
3. The top 12 on page SEO factors for content marketing
4. The top 9 technical SEO factors to get higher rankings
5. How to measure and track digital marketing success

What this guide is: An introduction to the top 21 SEO best practices that will help get your content ranked in 2018, including:

- **On page SEO factors** – factors that are visible to your audience at the page level. (e.g. keyword optimization, mobile optimization, or anchor text links).

- **Technical SEO factors** – factors that are behind the scenes and used by search engines to communicate to with your site (e.g. page speed, structured data, or inbound links).

What this guide isn't: There are a ton of SEO factors that aren't mentioned in this guide and is intended to help beginners learn and navigate through the best practices. We make no claims to suggest that SEO is a silver bullet, but instead, insist that SEO should be part of an integrated marketing plan to gain exposure online.

What Is SEO And How Does It Work?

One of the first things you learn in principles of marketing is the marketing mix, or the four Ps of marketing: **Product**, **Price**, **Promotion**, and **Place**.

Creating strategies around these four pillars work to establish the foundation of your marketing plan. Over the years these terms have evolved to fit the adoption of new marketing channels.

For example, **Place** use to be limited to a physical storefront and the value of its location measured in foot traffic.

But along came the internet and e-commerce, which forced the traditional definition to evolve and include website properties.

Just as physical stores fight for prime real estate in heavy foot trafficked areas, so do websites to gain search impressions and clicks.

In other words, when people search for a keyword that is valuable to your brand you want to be the one ranking on the first page to drive more traffic to your site. So how do you get those first page results?

With **search engine optimization**.

Think of SEO as the language used by search engines to communicate with your website. Web crawlers scan the internet indexing websites and following any linked resources it has access to.



Search engines like Google, Bing and Yahoo then use complex search algorithms to index and rank content.

The purpose of this is to ensure every search query on their platform delivers the best possible answer for the user.

By optimizing your website's content for search engines, you make it easier for their web crawlers to understand your content and the topics you write about.

Of course, this only begins to scratch the surface of understanding how SEO works.

There are at least 200 ranking factors on Google alone and it's likely that there are more we don't know about.

While this may sound overwhelming, don't let it discourage you.

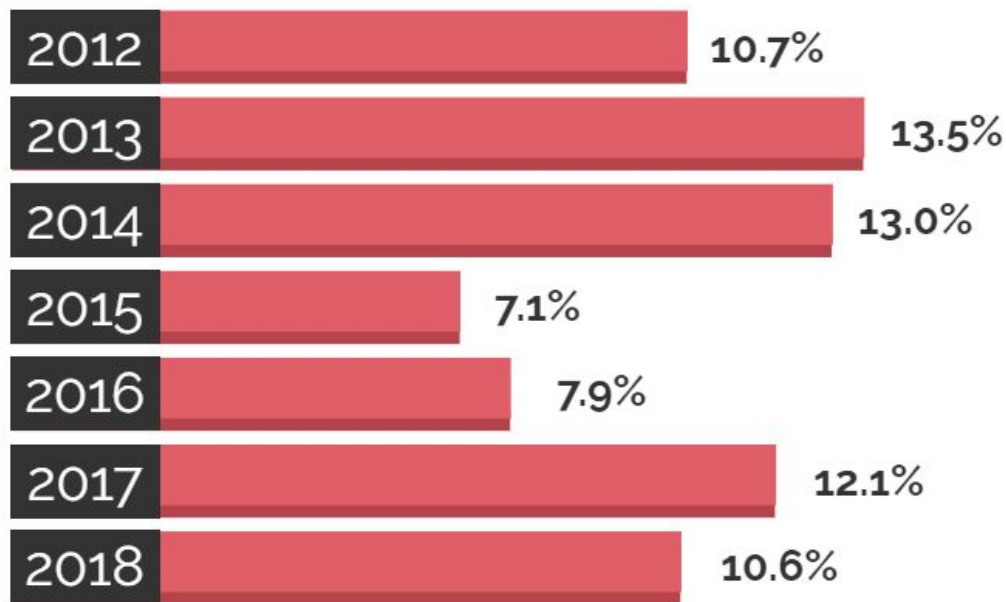
Having a solid understanding of the basics covered in this guide can make a dramatic impact on the search visibility of your website.

Before we dive into those factors, I think it's important to discuss why SEO is important for nonprofits and how donor preferences are driving the need to invest in search.

Why SEO For Nonprofits Is Important To Online Growth

Donors are shifting their [preferences to online giving](#) as their preferred method of donating to causes they care about.

Last year saw a 12.1% increase in online donations made to nonprofit organizations:



Online giving is up 10.6% so far through April 2018.

So how are nonprofits tapping into the evolution of donor trends?

- 67% of nonprofits across the globe are set up to accept donations on their website
- 34% of nonprofits have paid for [advertising on social media](#)
- One nonprofit used online channels to [surpass their year-end fundraising goals](#)

Now, more than ever, nonprofits are turning to online platforms as an inexpensive and effective way to reach a broader audience.

This includes adopting pay per click (PPC) ads as part of their promotional strategy to increase revenue and create brand awareness.

And while PPC can be an effective marketing tactic, it's not a replacement for an **integrated digital marketing plan** where cross-channel promotion is used to maximize exposure.

I won't pretend to tell you search engine optimization (SEO) is a silver bullet—nothing is.

But when integrated with the rest of your digital marketing strategies you begin to build the framework to foster sustainable long-term growth online.

It's easy to understand why organizations are hesitant, or at the very least overwhelmed, by SEO, especially since the investment often takes years to prove its value.



Furthermore, it's a time investment for staff to learn how to introduce SEO into the content marketing process.

However, if you're already invested in content marketing as a means to promote your nonprofit's mission, then SEO is a key component to the success of your marketing plan.

On Page SEO Factors

1. Create User-Friendly URLs

Industry studies show that short URLs with your target keyword or phrase rank better than long URLs.



nonprofitssource.com/blog/2017/October/post?ID=10344&kw=digital+marketing



nonprofitssource.com/blog/2017/October/digital-marketing-plan-for-nonprofits



nonprofitssource.com/digital-marketing-plan

The first URL is difficult to remember, and it doesn't give context to what the article is about.

After all, **digital + marketing** is a very broad category.

While the second URL is cleaned up, having the date and year in subfolders doesn't add any benefit to rankings unless you're publishing content frequently like a media organization.

If you want to maximize the chances that visitors will remember and share your URL, then having a clean structure with your focused keyword or phrase is the best way to go.

Another consideration is the great [subdomain vs. subfolder debate](#).

The most important thing to know about this is that you're naming makes sense for visitors and is relevant to the content they are expecting to read.

For example,

<https://nonprofitssource.com/digital-marketing-course/digital-marketing-goals/>

The subfolder tells me that this is a digital marketing course and the topic is on digital marketing goals.

If instead, you wanted to create a subdomain it might look like courses.nonprofitssource.com/digital-marketing-goals/.

2. Include Your Keyword In The Title

When Google's search bots crawl a page they typically look at the title page first to understand the content and context of the information being presented on the page.

 **Target Keyword**
Digital Marketing Plan For Nonprofits:
The Definitive Guide Updated (2017)

It then uses that information along with the combination of phrases within the text of the page when deciding where your content should rank.

My thought is that search engines are smart enough to understand word patterns and usage.

The idea is by including your keyword or related phrase in multiple tags and within the body of the content, then it will reinforce the importance and relevance of those phrases when search engines rank my page.

3. Insert Keywords In Your Heading Tags

Use heading tags to help Google understand the structure and text on your page.

In most cases, the H1 tag will be the title of your article.

Sub-headings are then used to categorize your page into topic sections.

For example, under the H2 tag **on page SEO factors**, Google knows the text proceeding the H2 tag is related to the topic of on page SEO.

**<H1>SEO For Nonprofits: The Beginners
Guide To Digital Marketing Success</H1>**

<p>this is a paragraph</p>

<H2>On page SEO factors</H2>

<p>this is a paragraph</p>

<H3>Create SEO friendly URLs</H3>

<p>this is a paragraph</p>

**<H3>Begin the page title with your
keyword</H3>**

<p>this is a paragraph</p>

Likewise, when I begin a new H2 tag, the proceeding content will be related to that topic.

An ideal page structure should have no more than one H1 tag and at least one H2 tag should include your target keyword.

4. Include Your Keyword In The First 100 Words

Adding your keyword in the first 100 words provides search engines with clues on the topic of your page.

This is helpful for search engines, which are constantly looking for patterns to assign relevance to the topics you write about.

Bold your keyword



Does your nonprofit have a **digital marketing plan**?

Or, are you throwing a ton of content on the web hoping someone will find out?

I get it.

Lack of resources, leadership buy-in, choosing the right software tools (or the right strategic partners) all while trying to stay current on the latest marketing trends is overwhelming.

Pro Tip: Bold at least one of your keywords within the body of your content.

While this is not a direct ranking factor, it may have implications for visitors who land on your page to quickly give them context on what they're about to read.

5. Image Alt Tags Are Important

1/3 of all searches on Google are images.

Not only that, but 12.5% of SERP results show image pack results:



About this result Feedback

You should also add a description to the alt tag of your images.


```
<a href="https://nonprofitssource.com/online-giving-statistics/">
  
</a>
```

Search engines can't understand images in the same way humans do.

They require a written text in order to categorize an image within the billions of images that exist on the web.

Fortunately, there are only three step you need to follow to optimize your images for SEO:

1. Make the description specific and relevant.
2. Include your keyword or phrase in the image alt tag.
3. Include your keyword or phrase in the image file title.

```

```

6. Build Responsive And Mobile Optimized Pages

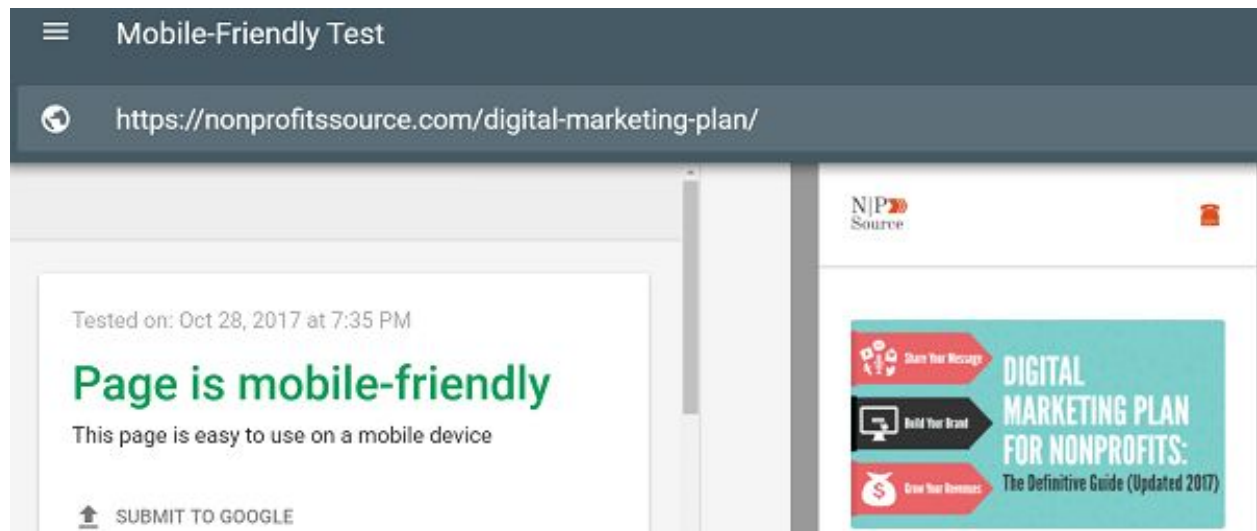
If there's one thing I see the community adopting quickly, it's optimized pages for mobile devices.

And there's are compelling reasons to do it, outside of creating a professional web experience:

- 51% of people who visit a nonprofit's website do so on a mobile device.
- 1 in 4 donors use mobile devices to discover nonprofits they were previously unaware of
- 25% of donors complete their donations on mobile devices

While mobile optimization isn't a direct Google ranking factor, it indirectly benefits SEO by reducing bounce rates in addition to giving your website the perception of professionalism.

Google's [mobile-friendly test tool](#) is a quick way to check whether or not your pages are optimized for mobile devices:



Three of my images appear on the **first page** in the image slider because I include the keyword in the alt tag.

To rank for image packs you may also want to consider adding your keyword to the image file name.

Let's answer the next burning question you might have:

“Is image search valuable?”

According to Jump Shot's data, [1/3 of all searches on Google](#) are performed in Google image search.

In addition, ranking your image provides an opportunity to get a link back to your site if someone reuses it on their site.

7. Meta Descriptions Likely Affect Search Rankings

No, adding your keyword to the meta description will not influence your search rankings.

However, data collected from Moz suggests that organic click-through rates do.

The more clicks your page receives the more relevant the content must be to answering a visitor's search.

What does it mean for marketers? It means optimizing your meta descriptions for clicks.

8. Link To Outbound Sources

A study found that pages with outbound links to external sources have a positive impact on SEO.

Search engines will crawl these external links to learn more about your website.

For example, if you write about a shortage of clean water in the world and then link to a website that is dedicated to providing clean water to children in Africa, then Google will read your page as clean water shortage + Africa.

For visitors that land on your site, these links help support our argument to persuade people to your point of view.

9. Use Internal Links To Relevant Pages

These links help to build page and topic authority on the content topic while improving site navigation to relevant topics.

If you notice that you link to a particular page or source often across multiple pages or blog posts, then perhaps it makes sense for you to create a page on your site that covers that topics more in-depth.

It's also a great way to come up with new content ideas that will help reinforce rankings around topics,

10. Include Keyword Rich Anchor Text

When you start building out your internal link building strategy it's important to consider the words you use within the text of the link.

This is also known as the anchor text link.

Digital marketing plan



<https://nonprofitssource.com/digital-marketing-plan>

Google assigns authority to the text within the link to provide context for the pages you're linking to.

In this example, the anchor text in the link is an exact match to the keyword I want to rank for.

While it may sound like the logical thing to do, it will cause issues with search engines.

In the past, people would try to game the algorithms by spamming anchor text links to artificially increase their rankings.

Google caught on to this trick and now penalizes websites that abuse this tactic.

To avoid this penalty I recommend using related keywords.

In the example above you might try using:

- Digital marketing plan for nonprofits
- Nonprofit marketing plan
- Marketing plan for nonprofits


11. Use latent Semantic Indexing (LSI) To Rank For Related Search Terms

Latent semantic indexing, or LSI for short, are words and phrases that are related to the keyword you want your page to rank for.

There are a few reasons to add related keywords to your content:

1. You avoid keyword stuffing penalties from Google
2. As a result, your content will sound more natural to readers
3. There is potential to rank your content for related keywords in search

[LSIGraph](#) is a free tool that provides a list of related keyword suggestions based on your keyword:

☐ I'm not a robot
 

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)

- seo on page optimization
- on page optimization
- latest on page seo techniques
- on page seo guide
- off page seo
- on page seo tips
- best on page seo techniques

This suggestion tool does have the downside of not providing information like keyword difficulty.

I would recommend testing your LSI words using a keyword difficulty tool like [SpyFu](#) to assess potential ranking opportunities.

Keyword Overview - on page seo

VIEW CACHED PAGE

EXPORT PDF

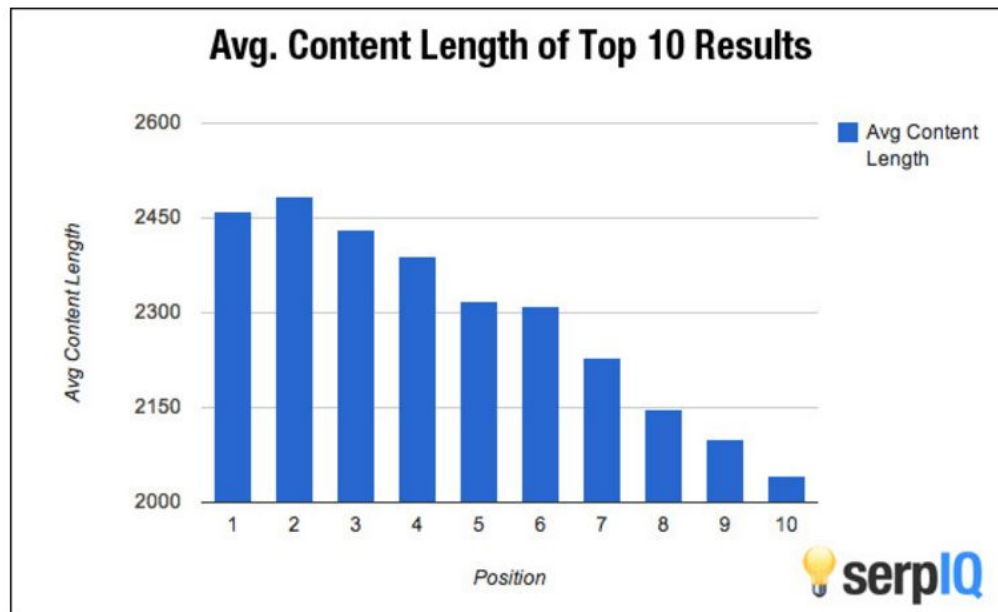
<div>MONTHLY SEARCHES (LOCAL)</div> <div>870</div>	<div>MONTHLY SEARCHES (GLOBAL)</div> <div>5.40k</div>	<div>CLICK-THROUGH RATE</div> <div>7.00%</div>	<div>RANKING DIFFICULTY</div> <div>53</div>
<div>COST PER CLICK</div> <div>\$4.75</div> <div><div><div></div><div>Broad</div><div>Phrase</div><div>Exact</div></div><div><div>Cost / Click</div><div>Monthly Clicks</div></div><div><div>\$4.75</div><div>3</div></div><div><div>\$5.82</div><div>7</div></div><div><div>\$4.01</div><div>3</div></div></div>	<div>MONTHLY COST</div> <div>\$15.00</div> <div><div><div></div><div>Broad</div><div>Phrase</div><div>Exact</div></div><div><div>Daily Cost</div><div>Monthly Cost</div></div><div><div>\$0.50</div><div>\$15.00</div></div><div><div>\$1.47</div><div>\$44.10</div></div><div><div>\$0.53</div><div>\$15.90</div></div></div>	<div>ADVERTISERS</div> <div>9</div> <div>(in Last 12 Months)</div>	<div>HOMEPAGES</div> <div>0</div> <div>(in Top 50 Organic Results)</div>
		<div>UNIVERSAL SEARCH IN SERP</div> <div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div>	

12. Write Long Form Content

There are plenty of reasons to write long-form content in 2017:

- It provides an opportunity to dive deep into a topic
- Visitors who find the information of value will stay on your site longer
- More words equal more keyword ranking opportunities

Industry studies also show that longer form content tends to rank better in search results.



The top 10 results on Google's first page average 2,000 – 2,500 words in length.

But does this mean you should also produce long-form content on your website?

As always, the answer is: **it depends.**

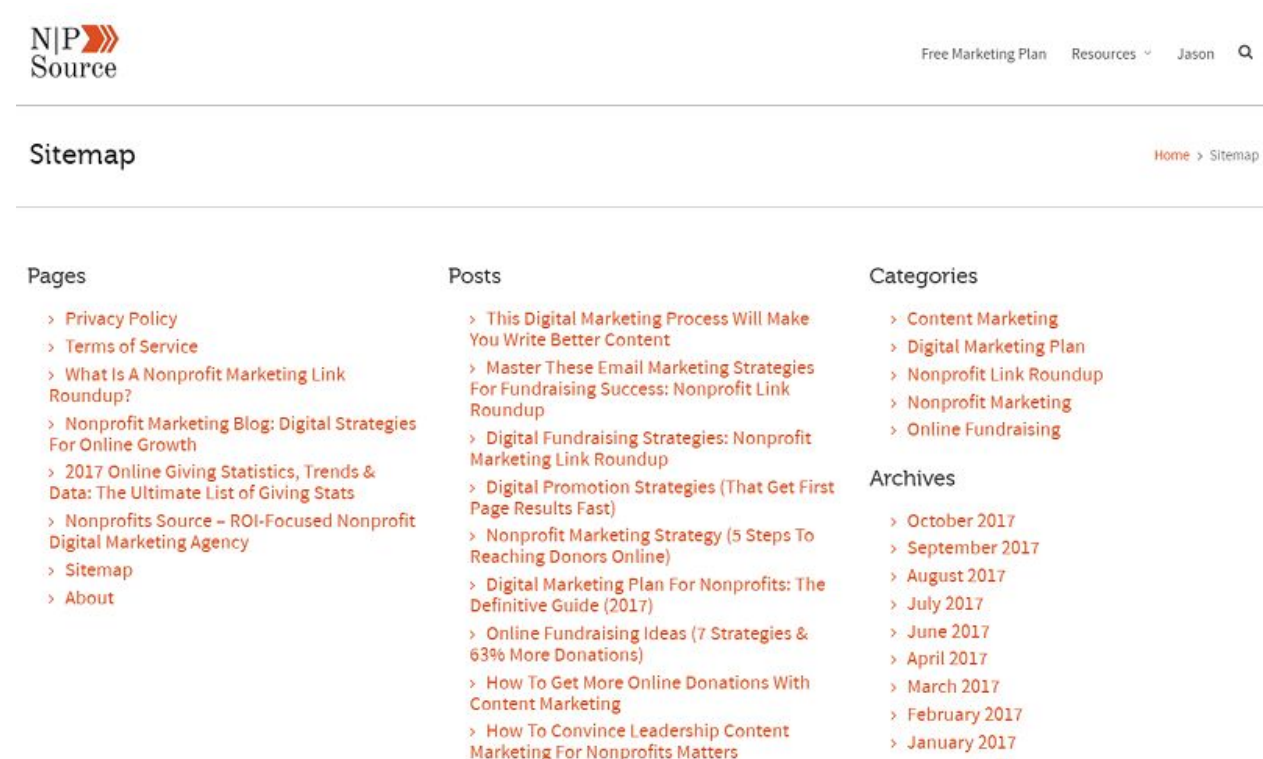
You should never sacrifice audience engagement for the sake of search engines.

Take time to understand what your audience needs are and their preferences for consuming your content.

Technical SEO Factors

1. How To Add A Sitemap To Google And WordPress

A [sitemap](#) is a hub on your site that contains links to every page.



Sitemap [Home](#) > [Sitemap](#)

Pages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Privacy Policy > Terms of Service > What Is A Nonprofit Marketing Link Roundup? > Nonprofit Marketing Blog: Digital Strategies For Online Growth > 2017 Online Giving Statistics, Trends & Data: The Ultimate List of Giving Stats > Nonprofits Source - ROI-Focused Nonprofit Digital Marketing Agency > Sitemap > About 	Posts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > This Digital Marketing Process Will Make You Write Better Content > Master These Email Marketing Strategies For Fundraising Success: Nonprofit Link Roundup > Digital Fundraising Strategies: Nonprofit Marketing Link Roundup > Digital Promotion Strategies (That Get First Page Results Fast) > Nonprofit Marketing Strategy (5 Steps To Reaching Donors Online) > Digital Marketing Plan For Nonprofits: The Definitive Guide (2017) > Online Fundraising Ideas (7 Strategies & 63% More Donations) > How To Get More Online Donations With Content Marketing > How To Convince Leadership Content Marketing For Nonprofits Matters 	Categories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Content Marketing > Digital Marketing Plan > Nonprofit Link Roundup > Nonprofit Marketing > Online Fundraising Archives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > October 2017 > September 2017 > August 2017 > July 2017 > June 2017 > April 2017 > March 2017 > February 2017 > January 2017
---	---	---

The purpose of having a sitemap is to make it easier for Google's web crawlers to sort and index your website.

It also helps these crawlers understand how each link on your site relates to one another, which is an important part of an internal link building strategy.

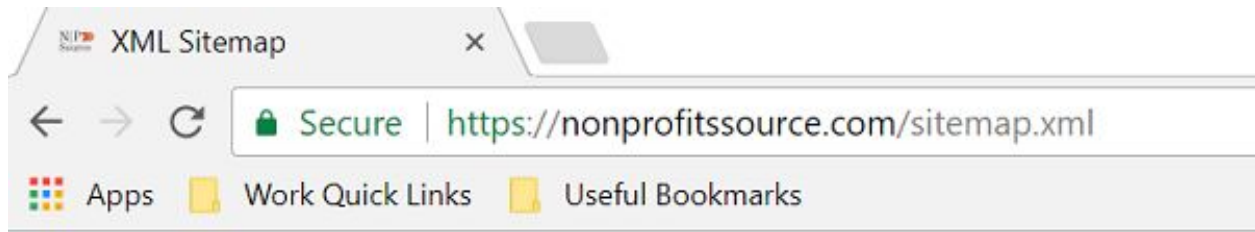


In short, having a sitemap is extremely helpful in getting your content ranked.

It's also incredibly easy to get set up.

A quick test to tell if you have a sitemap that is easily crawled by Google is to type the following into any web browser:

`www.YourSiteName.com/sitemap.xml`



XML Sitemap Index

This is a XML Sitemap which is supposed to be processed by search engines. It was generated using the [WordPress](#) content management system and the [XML Sitemap plugin](#). You can find more information about XML sitemaps on [sitemaps.org](#) and [Google](#).

This file contains links to sub-sitemaps, follow them to see the actual sitemaps.

URL of sub-sitemap	Last modified (GMT)
https://nonprofitssource.com/sitemap-misc.xml	2017-10-11 11:23
https://nonprofitssource.com/sitemap-pt-post-2017-10.xml	2017-10-11 11:14
https://nonprofitssource.com/sitemap-pt-post-2017-09.xml	2017-09-08 14:31
https://nonprofitssource.com/sitemap-pt-post-2017-08.xml	2017-10-11 11:23

Depending on the XML Sitemap tool you use, a list of your website pages will populate.

I'd recommend using the [free Google \(XML\) Sitemaps plugin](#) if your site is built on WordPress.

Just download the plugin and activate it and you're all set.

Once you have your sitemap generated submit it to Google Search Console for indexing.

2. Robots.txt File

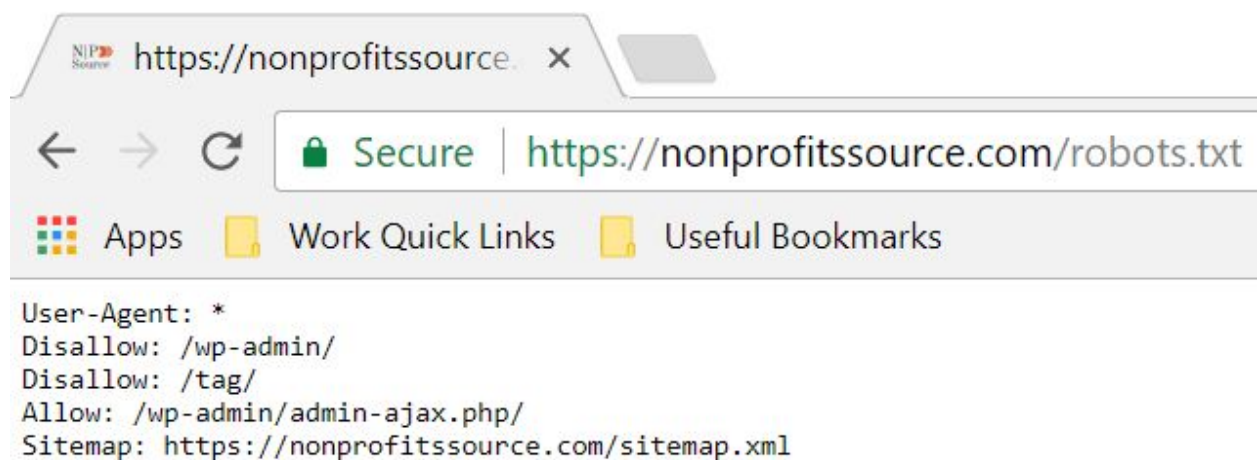
Another easy win for technical SEO is to create a Robots.txt file.

This file helps Google's web crawlers find and index your website while also giving the option to ignore pages from being indexed.

To get started, type the following into a browser of your choice:

www.YourSiteName.com/Robots.txt

It should look something like this:



The framework for this file goes as followed:

User-Agent: *

Allow:

Disallow:

Sitemap: <https://YourSiteName.com/sitemap.xml>

With the allow function, you can specify pages or folder directories that you want Google to index and crawl.

If you have member only pages or ones that you prefer not to appear in Google's index you can use the disallow function.

For example, I don't want my **/wp-admin/** or **/tag/** folders and sub-folders to be indexed by Google, so I disallow them.

Within Google Search Console you can test URLs to see if the allow/disallow rules you've created are working as intended, as well as check for any errors.

Finally, be sure to reference your sitemap within your Robots.txt file as another way for Google to crawl your site.

3. Include Structure Data (Schema Markup)

Structure data is what tells search engines, at a high level, what your content is about.

Here's a screenshot of the structured data from **chapter 1: Digital Marketing Plan**:

```

691         <article id="post-8149" class="-post-format single post-8149 post type-post status-publish
format-standard has-post-thumbnail hentry category-digital-marketing-plan" itemscope
itemType="http://schema.org/BlogPosting">
692             <div class="featured-image">
693                 <a data-title="Digital Marketing Plan For Nonprofits: The Definitive Guide (2017)"
href="https://nonprofitssource.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Digital-Marketing-Plan-For-Nonprofit.png"
rel="prettyPhoto">
694                     
695                     <div class="item-overlay"></div>
696                     <div class="item-overlay-text">
697                         <div class="item-overlay-text-wrap">
698                             <span class="plus-sign"></span>
699                         </div>
700                     </div>
701                 </a>
702             </div>
703
704             <!-- BEGIN .single-post-content -->
705             <div class="single-post-content">
706
707                 <!-- BEGIN .post-header -->
708                 <div class="post-header">
709                     <h1 class="title entry-title" itemprop="headline">Digital Marketing Plan For
Nonprofits: The Definitive Guide (2017)</h1>
711
712                 <!-- BEGIN .post-meta-info -->
713                 <div class="post-meta-info">
714                     <span class="blog-author minor-meta">
715                         <span class="post-date date updated">
716                             <time datetime="2017-06-23T04:26:16+00:00" itemprop="datePublished">Jun 23, 2017</time></span>
717                             <span class="text-sep">|</span>
718                             <span class="text-sep">|</span>
719                             Posted by
720                             <span class="entry-author-link" itemprop="name">
721                                 <span class="vcard author">
722                                     <span class="fn">
723                                         <a href="https://nonprofitssource.com/author/jfirschmail-
com/" title="Posts by Jason" rel="author">Jason</a>
724                                     </span>
725                                 </span>
726                             </span>

```


Don't get too intimidated by the lines of code.

In a moment, I'm going to show you a free tool that anyone can use to structure their web content for search engines.

First, let's define the fields:

- **Title:** Defines which headline should appear in results.
- **Author:** Who is responsible for publishing the article.
- **Date Published:** When was the article published. This is how websites display the date stamp in search results.
- **Image:** What image should be served in the image packs.
- **Category:** This tells Google what topic your article or page is about.

We covered the importance of building topic authority **chapter 2:**

Nonprofit Marketing Strategy.

Each of the fields above help Google to further understand how your website relates to the keyword being input so that it can serve the best possible results to the end user.










It also gives control to webmasters, by telling Google exactly what to serve when the content is pulled.

There are two ways to edit your structured data.

1. You can go to [Schema.org](https://schema.org) and create the structured data based on their guidelines. This requires you to hard code the data onto your website.
2. An easier and non-technical solution is to publish your page using [Google's Data Highlighter tool](#).

Head to the **Data Highlighter tool** within your search console under the **Search Appearance** drop-down menu.

Here you can see I've submitted all of my articles using the tool:

Overview			About
Data Highlighter			
Filter 	Unpublish	Delete	
Page set	Data type	Status	
<input type="checkbox"/> This Digital Marketing Process Will Make You Write Better Content 	Articles	Published	
<input type="checkbox"/> Front Page 	Articles	Published	
<input type="checkbox"/> The Ultimate List Online Giving Statistics 	Articles	Published	
<input type="checkbox"/> Master These Email Marketing Strategies For Fundraising Success: Nonprofit Link Roundup 	Articles	Published	
<input type="checkbox"/> Digital Fundraising Strategies: Nonprofit Marketing Link Roundup 	Articles	Published	
<input type="checkbox"/> The Best Nonprofit Marketing Articles (Link Roundup) 	Articles	Published	
<input type="checkbox"/> Digital Promotion Strategies (That Get First Page Results Fast) 	Articles	Published	
<input type="checkbox"/> About Jason 	Articles	Published	

You'll have to wait until after Google has indexed your page before you can begin highlighting.

I've noticed this can take anywhere between 2 to 8 hours, but you can always speed things up by using Google's fetch tool.

Once indexed, enter the URL of a page and begin highlighting:

Digital Marketing Plan For Nonprofits: The Definitive Guide (2017)

Jun 23, 2017

Clear tag

Digital Marketing Plan | 1 comment

Does your

Title

Digital marketing plan?

Or, are you

Author

content on the web hoping someone will find it?

I get it.

Date published

Image

Category

Lack of re

Average rating

leadership buy-in, choosing the right software tools (or the right strategic
ay current on the latest marketing trends is overwhelming.

My Data Items (1)

Article

Title:

Digital Marketing Plan
For Nonprofits: The
Definitive Guide (2017)

X

Author:

Jason

Date published:

Jun 23, 2017

Image:

https://nonprofitssource.
com/digital-marketing-
plan/

Category:

Digital Marketing Plan

Average rating:

Rating:

Votes:

Once you're done hit publish and you're good to go.

According to Google, either 1) Schema.org or 2) Data Highlighter are an acceptable method for structuring your website's data.

4. Increase Your Page Speed Load Times

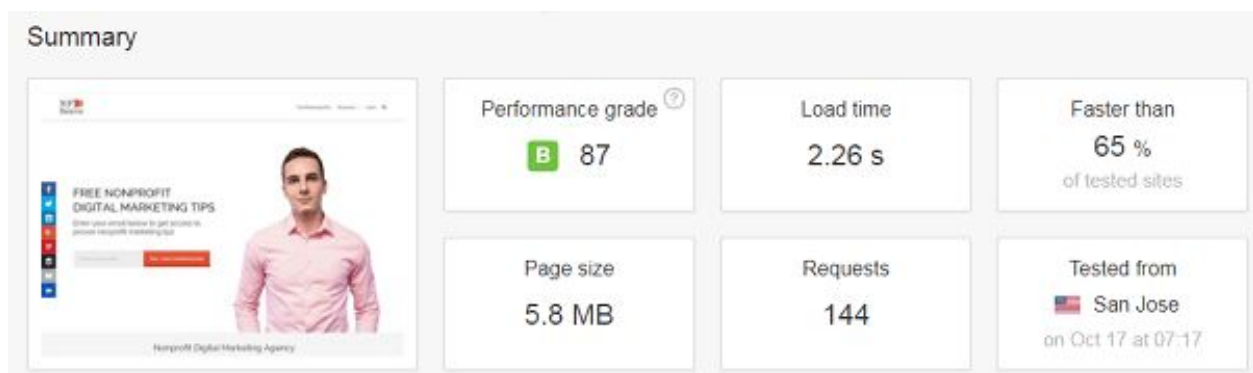
Websites have become obsessed with page speed and so has Google.

While page speed is not explicitly stated as a ranking factor by Google, it does have implications for people clicking through to your site.

According to one [study](#), people expect a site to load within 2 seconds.

Any longer and you risk visitors abandoning your page.

[Pingdom](#)'s page speed tool is a great way to test your site's load time:



It even breaks down the score to show areas of where you can improve the performance of your website.

Performance insights		
GRADE		SUGGESTION
F 48		Remove query strings from static resources
B 82		Leverage browser caching
B 87		Serve static content from a cookieless domain
B 89		Minimize redirects
A 93		Specify a cache validator
A 97		Specify a Vary: Accept-Encoding header
A 100		Avoid bad requests
A 100		Minimize request size

I'd also recommend checking out any of these free page speed WordPress Plugins:

- [W3 Total Cache](#)
- [Autoptimize](#)
- [EWW Image Optimization](#)
- [Fast Velocity Minify](#)
- [Lazy Load](#)

Lazy load, for example, requires the visitor to scroll down to the image before it is loaded o the page, reducing the number of requests a page needs to perform when a visitor lands on your site.

Less request equal faster load times, which means fewer opportunities for visitors to abandon your site.

5. Mobile Page Speed Is A Ranking Factor For Mobile Searches

[Google](#) announced that on July 2018 page speed will be a ranking factor for mobile searches.

Just as web pages need to be serving fast load times on desktop clients, so should your mobile pages.

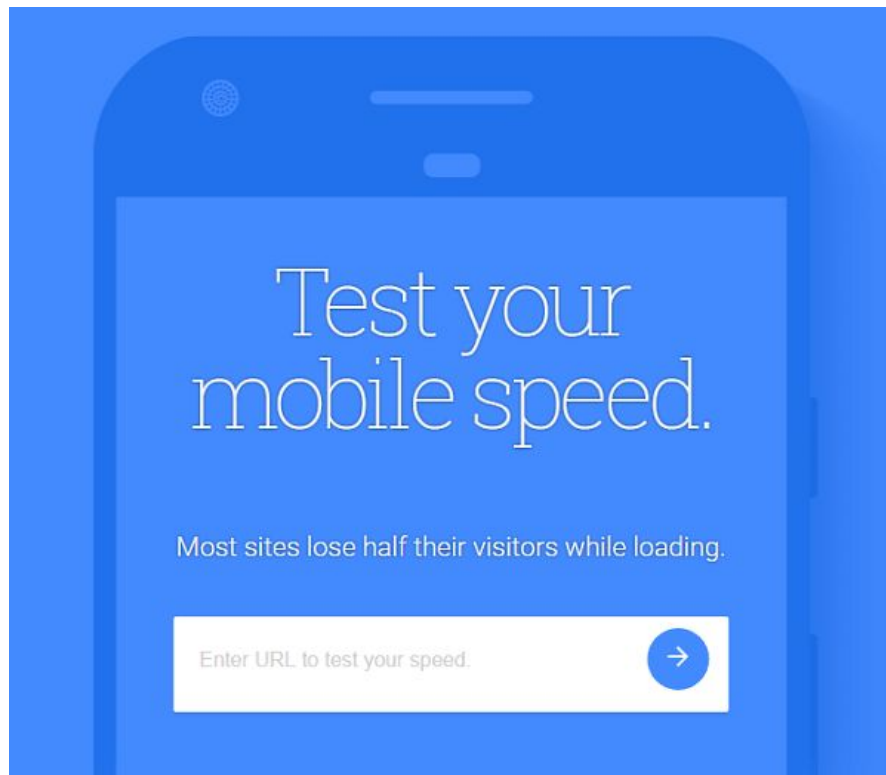
We live in an increasingly mobile world, so much so that it's estimated that by 2018 57% of all internet traffic will be conducted on a mobile device.

To keep up with these trends and to better serve user queries, it makes sense for Google to want to score mobile search results based on page speed.

This is part of a broader initiative called the [Mobile First Index](#), which was announced by Google back on November 4th, 2016.

In other words, Google will begin crawling, indexing, and ranking content based on the mobile version of your site – not the desktop version.

As a first step towards the mobile first initiative, Google launched a [mobile page speed tool](#).



In addition to analyzing the overall health of your mobile page, the tool also provides remediation steps to take to improve page load times.

Of course, none of this is new and we've been talking about the crossover from desktop to mobile viewing for the last 3-5 years.

What is interesting is that mobile development tends to stop at screen optimization and page speed.

For example, mobile-optimizing your site doesn't make filling out a lengthy donation form any easier on a smartphone.

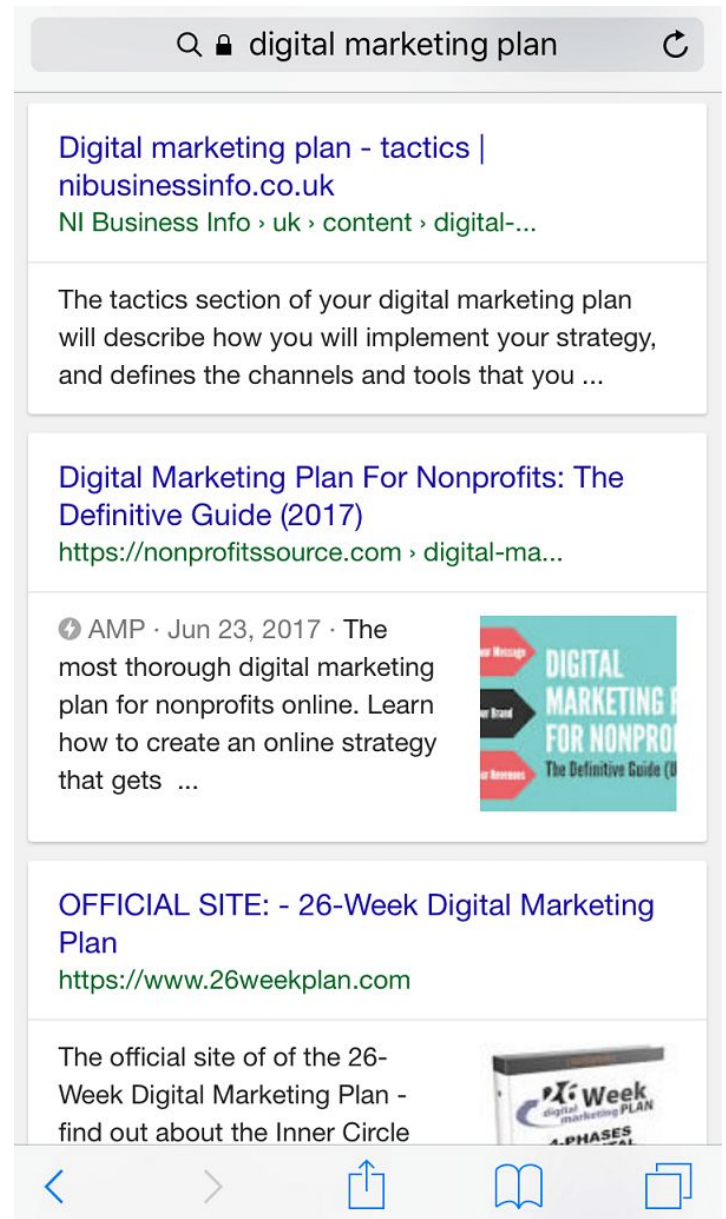
I predict websites will, and already have begun to, serve different versions of their site entirely, dependent on how the user is viewing the page.

6. Create Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP)

Accelerated mobile pages or AMP, is a project developed to deliver fast mobile content.

AMP serves an HTML stripped down version of your website.

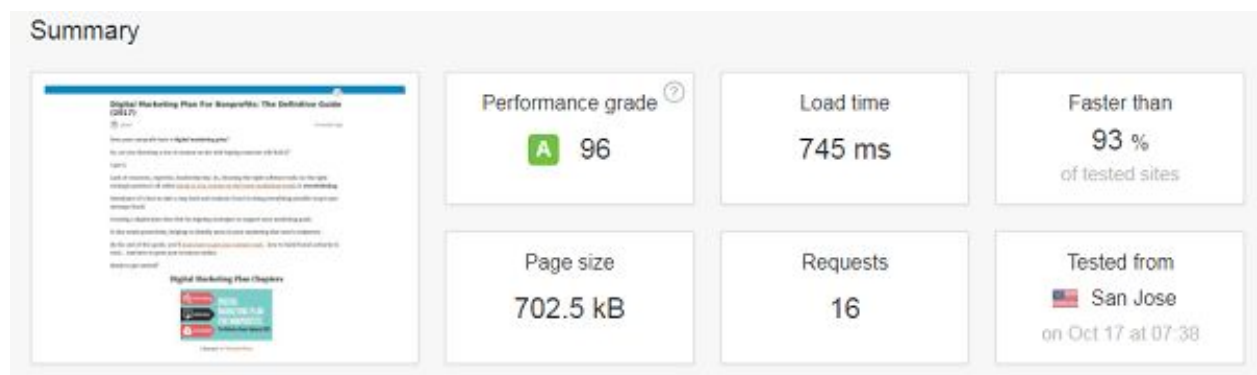
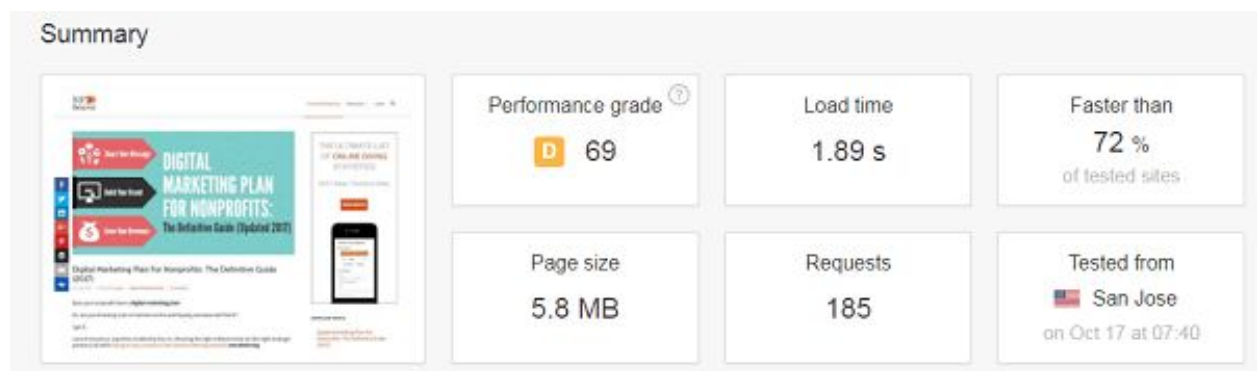
This means all of your fancy scripts that add to functionality or design are removed in order to display content FAST.



Take a look at the difference between a non-AMP and it's AMP counterpart for chapter 1 of this guide:

- <https://nonprofitssource.com/digital-marketing-plan/>
- <https://nonprofitssource.com/digital-marketing-plan/amp/>

If you compare the two pages side by side using the Pingdom tool mentioned in the page speed section above, you'll see a noticeable difference in performance:



The AMP size is **8x smaller**, sends **169 fewer requests** and loads **1 second** faster than non-AMP.

Now, Google has said that [AMP is not currently a mobile ranking factor](#).

Some interpret that to mean AMP **might** become a significant factor in the future.

In my view, it doesn't matter whether or not AMP offers a ranking benefit.

It's all about user experience, which I believe AMP does well by providing the most simplistic way for people to consume your content.

One of the easiest ways to set up AMP is with the WordPress AMP plugin by [Automattic](#).

Give search engines a few days to index your pages before checking to see if they were implemented correctly.

You can go into your Google search console and use the **Accelerated Mobile Page tool** to check for errors as well as the number of indexed pages:



Accelerated Mobile Pages

Fix applicable issues in your Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) in order to have them prominently served to mobile users. [Learn more.](#)

Status: 10/15/17

■ 9 Indexed AMP pages ■ 0 AMP pages with critical issues



Congratulations, you have no AMP page errors

I also came across an [accelerated mobile page validator tool](#) that lets you test multiple URLs at once:

🔗 URLs (Desktop or AMP versions):

👤 User Agent:

URL	Status Code	AMP?	rel="amphtml"	Valid?	schema.org	Canonical URL	rel="amphtml" (from canonical URL)	Implementation
https://nonprofitssource.com/digital-marketing-plan/...	200	✓	N/A	✓	Article			✓

While accelerated mobile pages don't influence rankings, it is a sign of where SEO is going.

I recommend taking a look at implementing AMP onto your site as a low-medium priority.

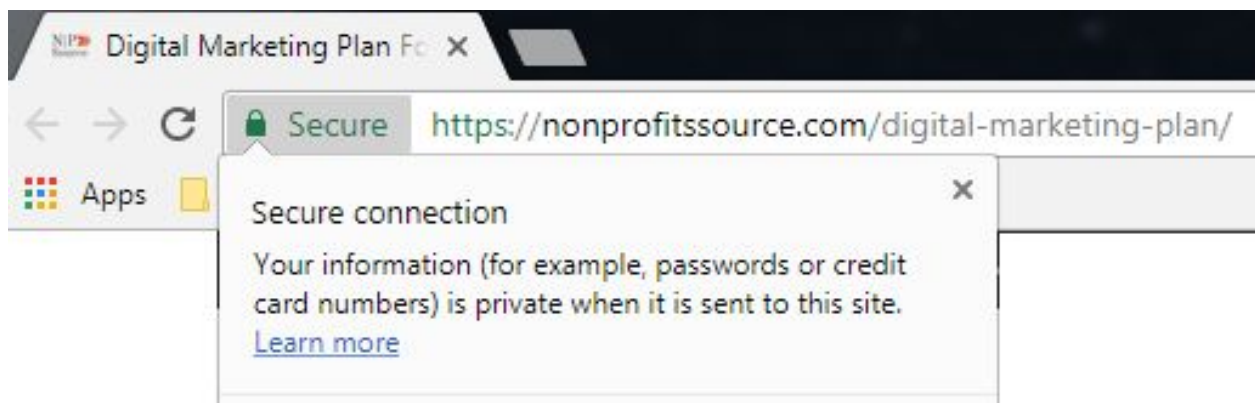
7. Website Security (HTTPS) Is A Ranking Factor

Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) is the connection between your browser and the website you're trying to reach.

The “S,” stands for secure, whereby the connection between your browser and the website is encrypted.

First and foremost, HTTPS provides trust for your customers, donors, or members.

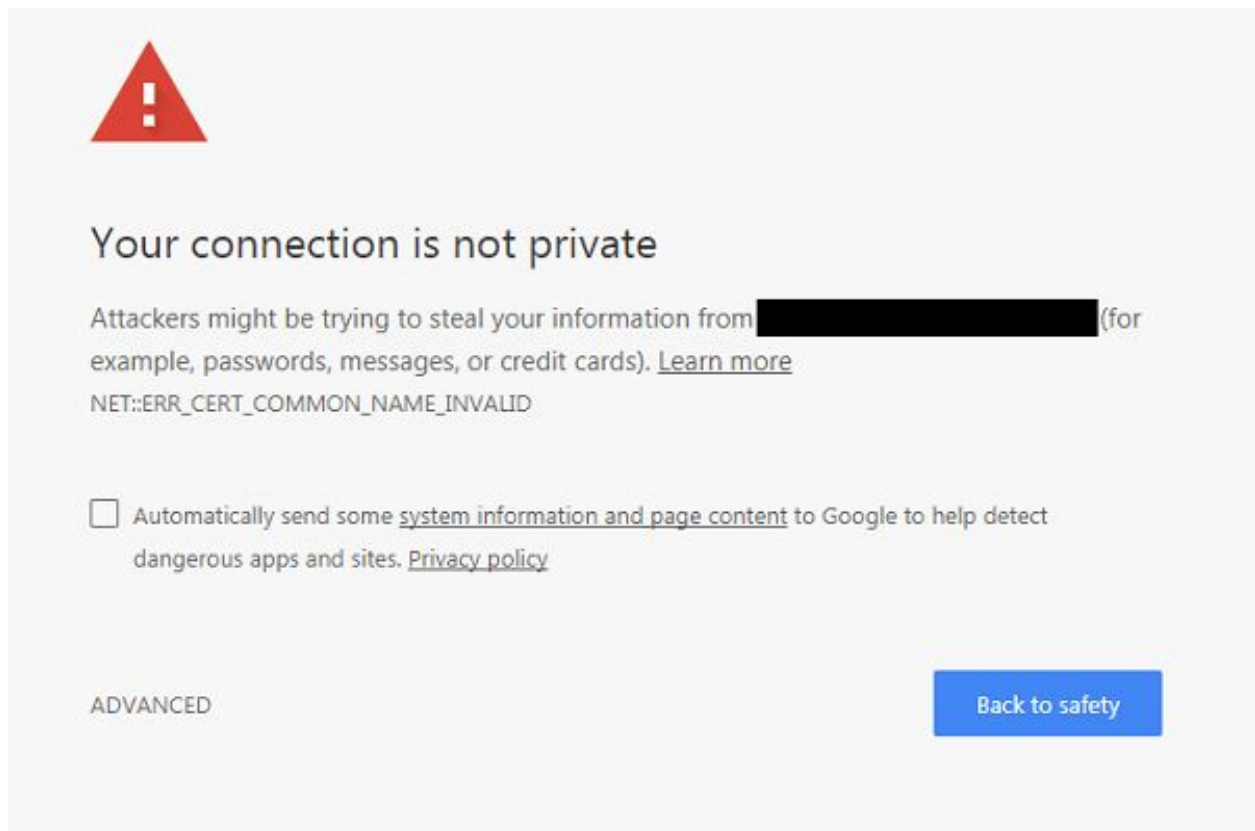
It's also a requirement for [PCI \(Payment Card Industry\) compliance](#).



We're in an interesting period of time where companies, nonprofits, and even world governments are at risk of falling victim to a cyber attack.

By moving your organization to HTTPS, you're creating another layer of defense to safeguard donor payment information and personal data from being stolen.

Google's perspective is that all user connections between its browser and the website should be secure, so much so that they introduced [HTTPS as a ranking signal](#) back in 2014.



Getting HTTPS set up on your website is extremely easy and inexpensive.

Most hosting providers offer a service to purchase and install an [SSL certificate](#) on your website for \$50.00 per year.

Once you have the certificate installed you will need to create a 301 redirect from every HTTP page to HTTPS.

This is important because when you apply HTTPS across your website, the HTTP versions stay published.

If Google's web crawler stumble upon these pages you risk being penalized for having [duplicate content](#), although it's rare.

As a WordPress user, I found the [Really Simple SSL](#) plugin to get the job done quickly – and it was free.

It created all of the 301 redirects as soon as I activated the plugin.

It also converted all of my pictures from HTTP to HTTPS, which helped fix the mixed content issues I was having.

In short, HTTPS is important to building trust, safeguarding against cyber attacks, and to getting high rankings on Google.

8. Develop An Inbound Link Building Strategy

Link building has quickly become one of the most talked about practices in the digital marketing community.

Ever since Google announced links as one of their top 3 ranking factors, marketers have been developing strategies to earn those links to their site.

You might recall us going into detail in **chapter 3: Digital Promotion Strategies**.



Think of links as a mention of authority that gives your content credibility.

The more high-quality links your content earns, the more valuable the information must be.

In addition, links from websites that have related topic authority reinforce your own.

For example, a link from [Nonprofit Technology](#) tells Google that the topic of my website is focused on nonprofits.

The infographic is titled "Group" and shows two parallel paths of segmentation. On the left, "Giving History" leads to "Current Donors", "Lapsed Donors", and "Sustainers". On the right, "Environmental Activist" leads to "0-6 month activist", "6-12 month activist", and "12+ month activist".

**Online Fundraising Ideas
(7 Strategies & 63%
More Donations)**

Nonprofits Source
APRIL 19, 2017

I'm going to share 7 insanely easy **online fundraising ideas** that are making a huge impact for nonprofits. First I'll show you how the Environmental Defense Fund used their email list in a creative way to increase **online** donations by 63%.

⊕ Giving 31

Likewise, a link from a related marketing website will generate topic authority around marketing.

From a non-search perspective, having links to your site from websites that are in your industry is a great way to generate referral traffic, build your audience and grow your brand.

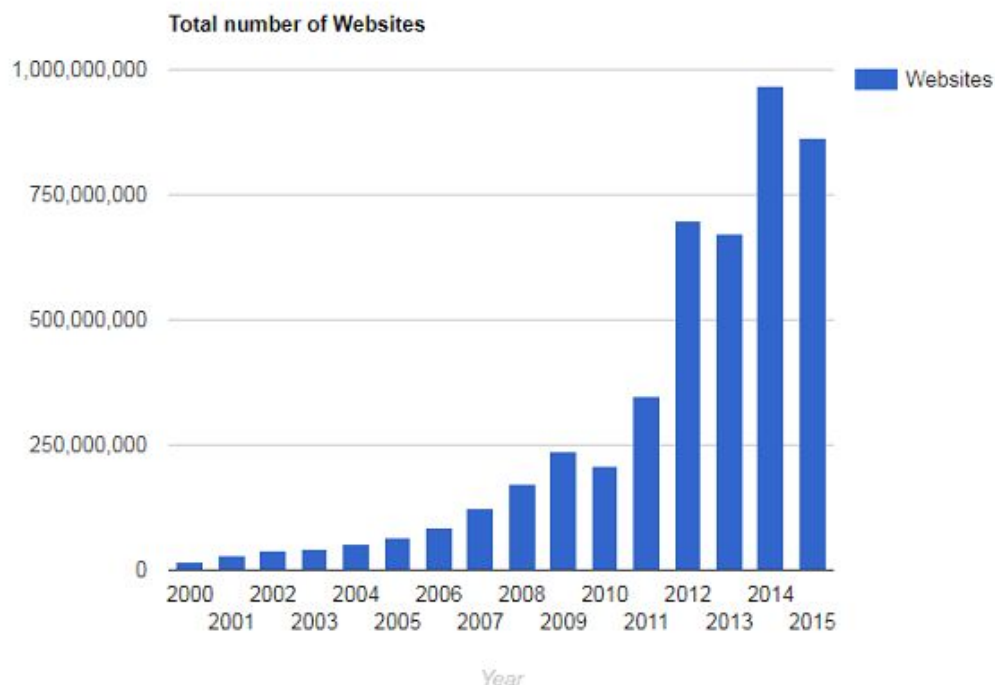
9. Structure Your Content Around Topics

The search landscape today is dramatically different from how it was 10 years ago.

Following on page SEO best practices used to be enough to get first page rankings for highly profitable keywords.

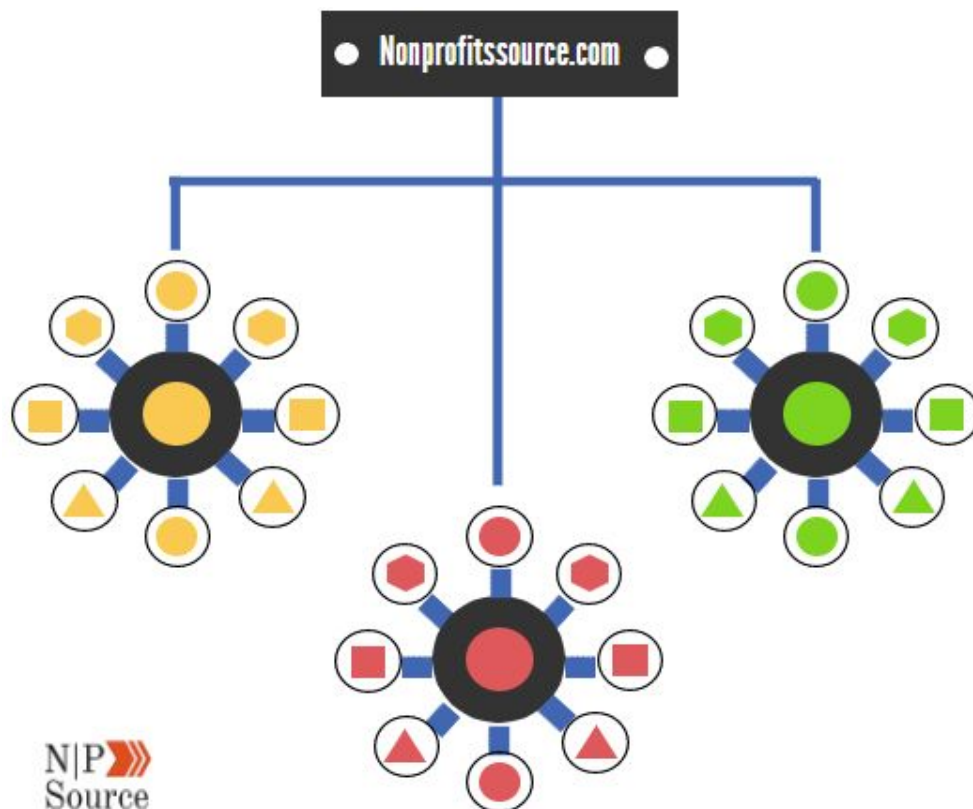
But times have changed and search engines are constantly working to improve results for users.

This has partially been brought about by how easy and inexpensive it is for companies and individuals to create websites.



With more websites being created, the need to quickly and accurately sort information forces search engines to evolve.

A key component of this evolution is structuring content around topics.



When developing a content strategy, it's easy to focus on topics for articles or rush head first into keyword research.

However, how you structure your content plays a significant role in SEO.

Take this guide as an example.

Each page is inter-linked, which passes topic and internal link equity, in addition to including relevant keywords to each page.

As a result, I've been able to rank on the second page for a highly competitive term: **Digital marketing plan**.

How Is Digital Marketing Success Measured?

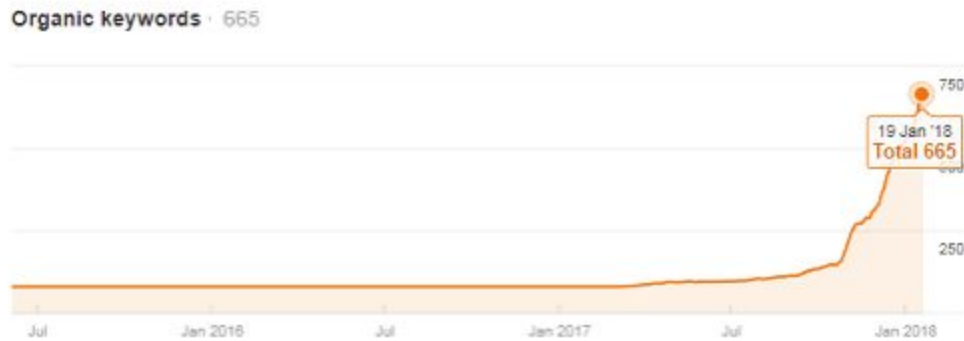
SEO can be an incredibly frustrating process because of how long it takes before the investment proves its value.

So it makes sense to want to know how to measure if your SEO strategies are working.

The obvious answer is to measure organic traffic growth or increases in conversions on paid services, form fills, or donations that can be tracked back to search.

Another way is to look at keyword ranking growth.

For example, in September the total number of ranked keywords on my site was 67:



By January 18th, that number has jumped to 665.

My keyword rankings from the 11-50 page position have also risen 7X from 35 to 278.

I'd highly recommend investing in a keyword tracking tool like Ahrefs, Moz, or SEMrush to measure these results.

The platforms are relatively inexpensive and offer a lot of value, but in this case, you'll be able to easily measure the progress of your digital marketing activities.

In the final chapter of this digital marketing plan, we're going to share **free and paid marketing tools** you can use to achieve your nonprofit's online goals.

You just completed chapter 5 on how to create a digital marketing plan for nonprofits!

Here's a quick recap of what you learned:

1. **How SEO works:** search engines crawl websites looking for clues to index, sort, and rank content with the goal of providing the best results to match the user search query.
2. **Why SEO for nonprofits is important:** donors are shifting their preference to online sources as a means to give to the causes they care about. Increasing your search visibility is a cost-effective way of reaching your audience where they spend most of their time.
3. **On page SEO:** at the heart of on page SEO is keyword optimization, whereby you include exact keyword match and related keywords to different elements of your page including page title, within the body of your page, and in the meta description.
4. **Technical SEO:** these factors help search engines navigate through the backend of your website digging deeper into the relevance of your content on the topics you write about.
5. **Measuring digital marketing success:** track keyword growth to measure the success of your content and SEO strategies.