



SMALL BIZ

DIGITAL TRAINERS

Improve Your Understanding of SEO to Raise Your Ranking in Organic Search Results



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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Main Street America is helping small business owners gain new skills through a team of digital marketing experts who provide free training to small business owners across the country.



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Learn more at: mainstreet.org/resources/small-biz-digital-trainers

AGENDA

- Understanding SEO Basics
- How Search Engines Work
- Key SEO Components
- Why Backlinks Matter
- How Quality Content Improves Visibility
- Free analytics to measure marketing efforts



UNDERSTANDING SEO BASICS



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WHAT IS SEO AND WHY IT MATTERS

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of **optimizing** your website to **rank higher** on search engines

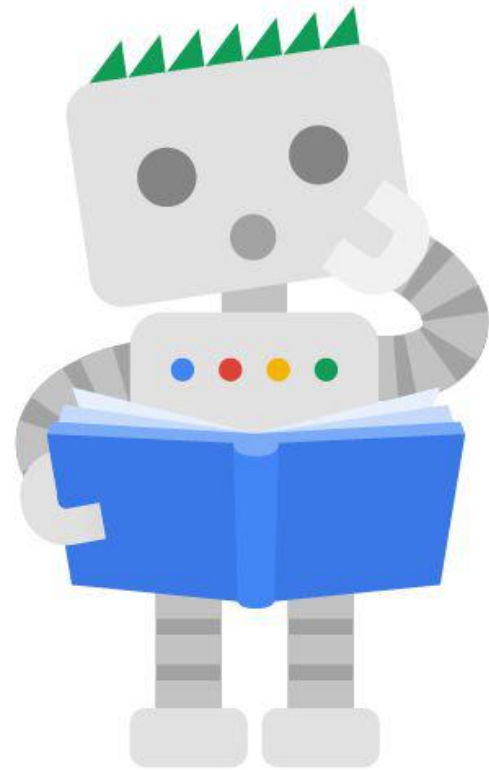
SEO Goal is to **increase visibility** in organic (non-paid) search results.

The **higher a website appears** on search engine results (SERPs), the more likely it is to receive clicks and attract visitors.

Builds credibility, trust, and long-term visibility.



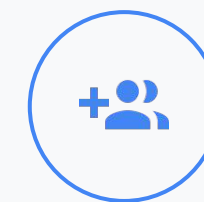
WHY SEO IT MATTERS



Make your website more visible to people searching for products, services, or brands.



Connect with consumers actively looking for products and services you offer.



Increase potential sales by appearing more prominently in the search results.



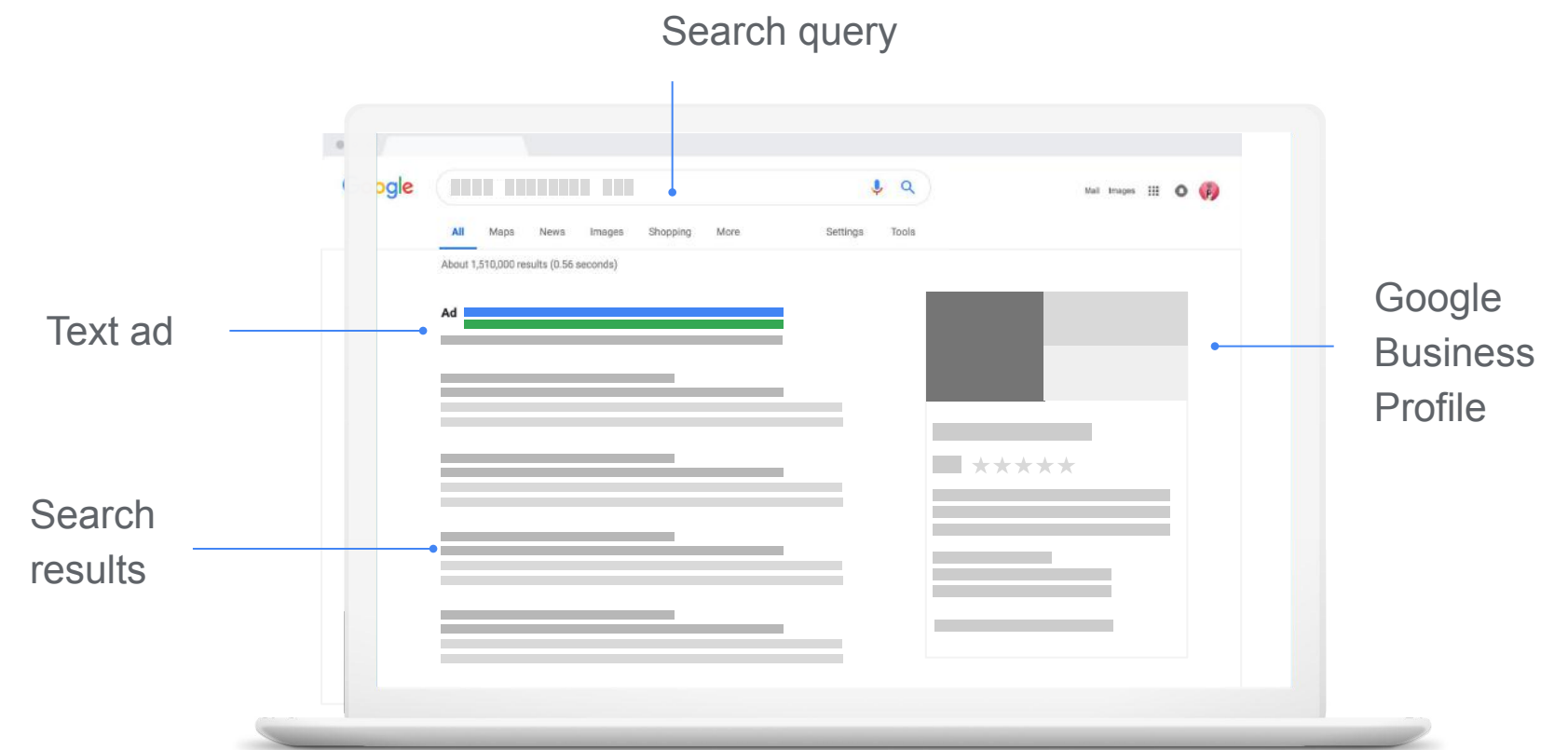
ORGANIC VS PAID SEARCH RESULTS

Organic Search results appear below the ads on a search engine results page (SERP)

Paid Search Results are the ads you see at the top of the page. (PPC)

Organic search result is a *long term investment*.

Businesses can use both SEO and PPC to gain maximum exposure.



WHY SEO IS CRUCIAL FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Competitive Advantage - helps you rank for **niche** keywords or **local** search

Cost-effectiveness - once you've optimized your website-invested money and time-the traffic is free

Building Trust - customers trust higher ranked organic search results



**93% of online
experience begins
with a search engine**

**46% of all Google
searches are looking
for local information**



HOW SEARCH ENGINES WORK



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HOW SEARCH ENGINES FIND YOUR WEBSITE



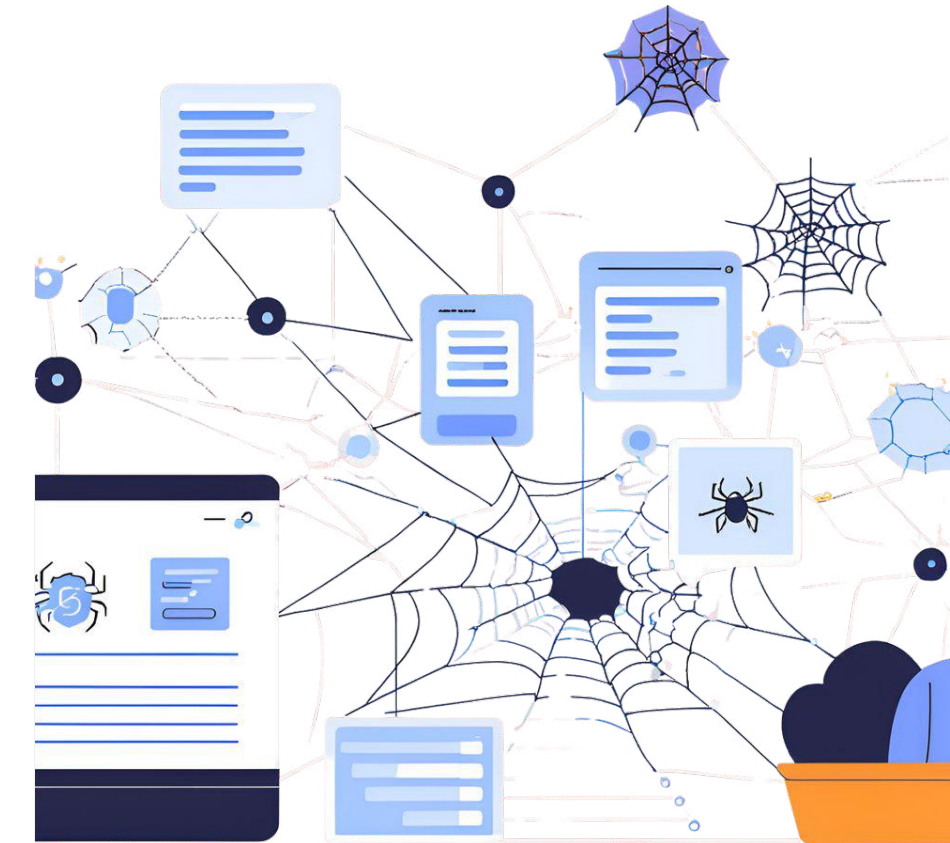
Crawling

A process through which search engine **searches and discovers** the update content on the sites, pages.



Indexing

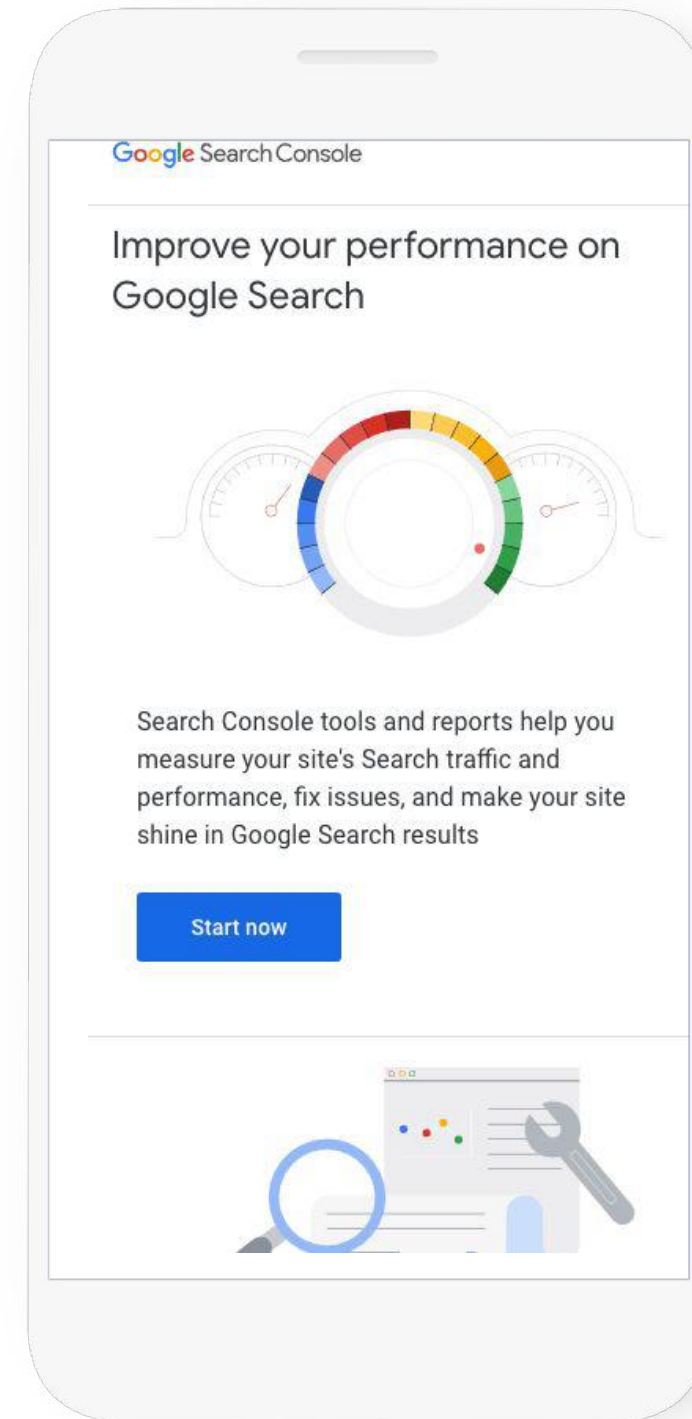
Once crawling complete, the search engine **compiles** a massive database or indexing of pages that are retrieved instantaneously.



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BONUS TIP: GOOGLE SEARCH CONSOLE

- Confirm that Google can find and crawl your site
- Request indexing of new or updated site content
- View Google Search traffic data for your site
- Receive email alerts when Google encounters site issues



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HOW SEARCH ENGINES RANK YOUR WEBSITE

Key Ranking Factors:

- Content Relevance
- Keyword usage
- Backlinks
- Mobile friendliness
- Site speed
- User experience



Rankings

Search Engine then queries indexed pages to **match** the searched keywords. Each webpage is then scored based on which rankings of the page are decided.

Ranking algorithms prioritize websites that meet search intent.



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OPTIMIZATION AND RANKING STRATEGIES

User Experience:

- Do visitors stay on the site and engage?
- Easy to navigate, fast loading times, and mobile responsiveness
- Metrics like bounce rate and time on page show how useful visitors find your site.

Relevance:

- Does the content match the searcher's query?
- Creating quality and popular industry-wide content should be the primary goal to improve rankings
- Keywords, headings, and meta descriptions help search engines understand content

Authority:

- Is the site trustworthy and reliable?
- Backlinks from reputable sites help establish authority.



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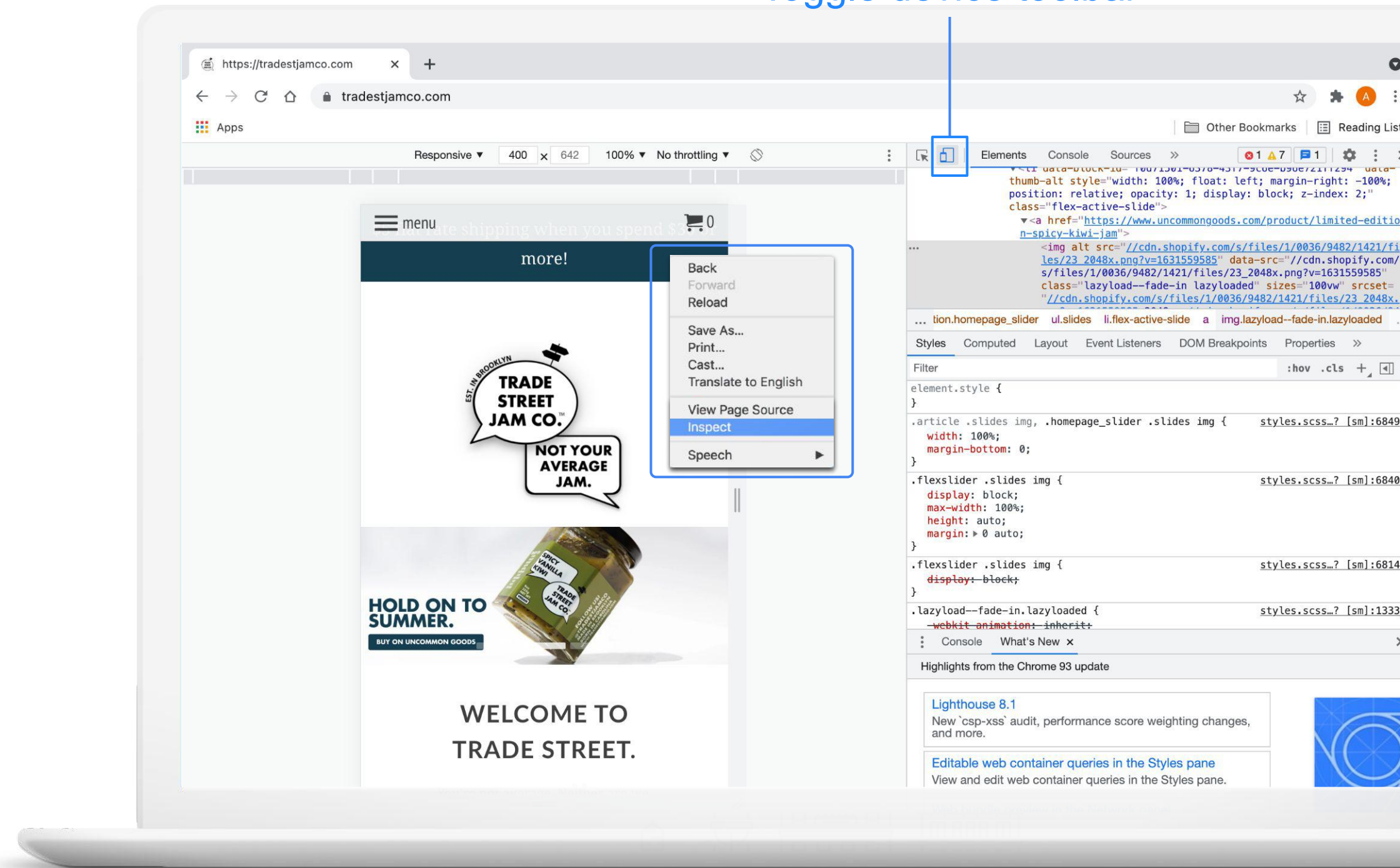
BONUS TIP: IS YOUR WEBSITE DESIGN RESPONSIVE?

Mobile-friendly websites

can perform better in Google's mobile search results.

Use the **Chrome Inspector** tool to test your website's compatibility with all devices.

Toggle device toolbar



IMPORTANCE OF KEYWORDS



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KEYWORDS MATTER

- **Why Keywords Matter**

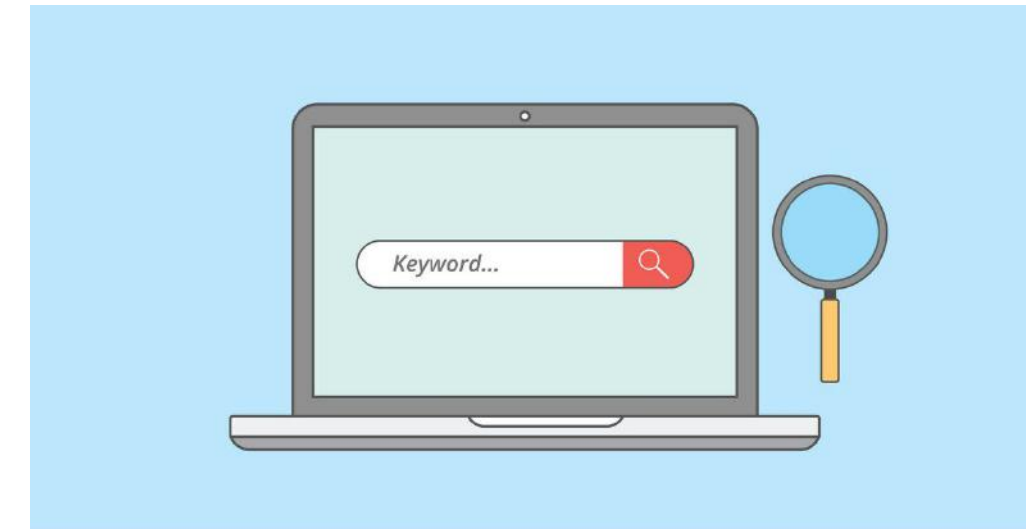
- Connects your content with what people are searching for.
- Helps search engines understand your website's relevance.

- **Types of Keywords**

- **Short-Tail Keywords** (e.g., “bakery”): High search volume but more competitive.
- **Long-Tail Keywords** (e.g., “gluten-free bakery in Oakland County”): Lower search volume but more specific and targeted.

- **Using Keywords Effectively**

- Include in your website's titles, meta descriptions, headers, and content.
- Don't overstuff! Prioritize natural, user-friendly content.



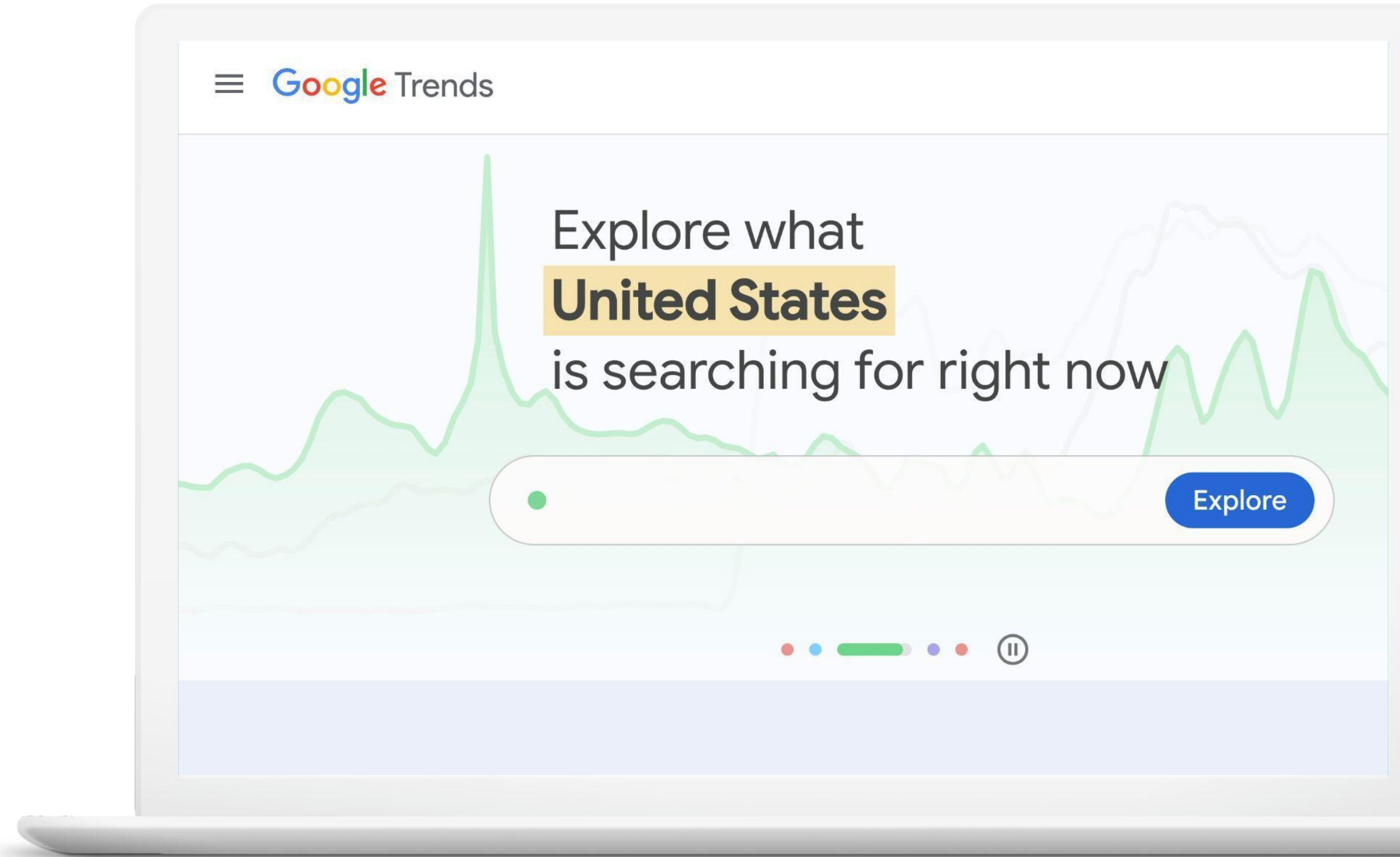
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USE GOOGLE TRENDS TO LEARN WHAT CONTENT IS POPULAR NOW

Google Trends is a free, web-based tool that shows the relative popularity of words and phrases searched on Google.

Quick Tip:

Find popular search terms on Google [g.co/trends](https://www.google.com/trends)



KEYWORD BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

Brainstorm a list of 5-10 keywords or key phrases customers would use to search for your business and products

Search how these words are trending using Google Trends

Share with 2-3 participants



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KEY SEO COMPONENTS



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KEY SEO COMPONENTS

- **On-Page SEO**

- Optimizing your [website's content](#) and HTML structure

- **Off-page SEO**

- Building [backlinks](#) and promoting your website from authoritative sites

- **Technical SEO**

- Ensuring search engines can properly access, crawl and understand your site. Including factors such as [fast load times](#), [mobile friendliness](#), and [proper indexing](#)



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ON-PAGE SEO

Content

- High Quality
- Relevant
- Regularly updated

Keywords

- Strategic use in content, heading and meta tags

Meta Tags

- Optimizing title tags and meta descriptions

URL Structure

- Using descriptive, keyword-rich URLs

yourwebsite.com/organic-shampoo

VS

yourwebsite.com/product/12345



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OFF-PAGE SEO

Backlinks

- Building high-quality inbound links from reputable websites to boost your site's authority

Social Signals

- The role of social media in driving traffic and influencing search rankings

Trustworthiness

- Building trust with search engines through domain authority, good reviews, and secure websites (HTTPS)



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TECHNICAL SEO

Site Speed

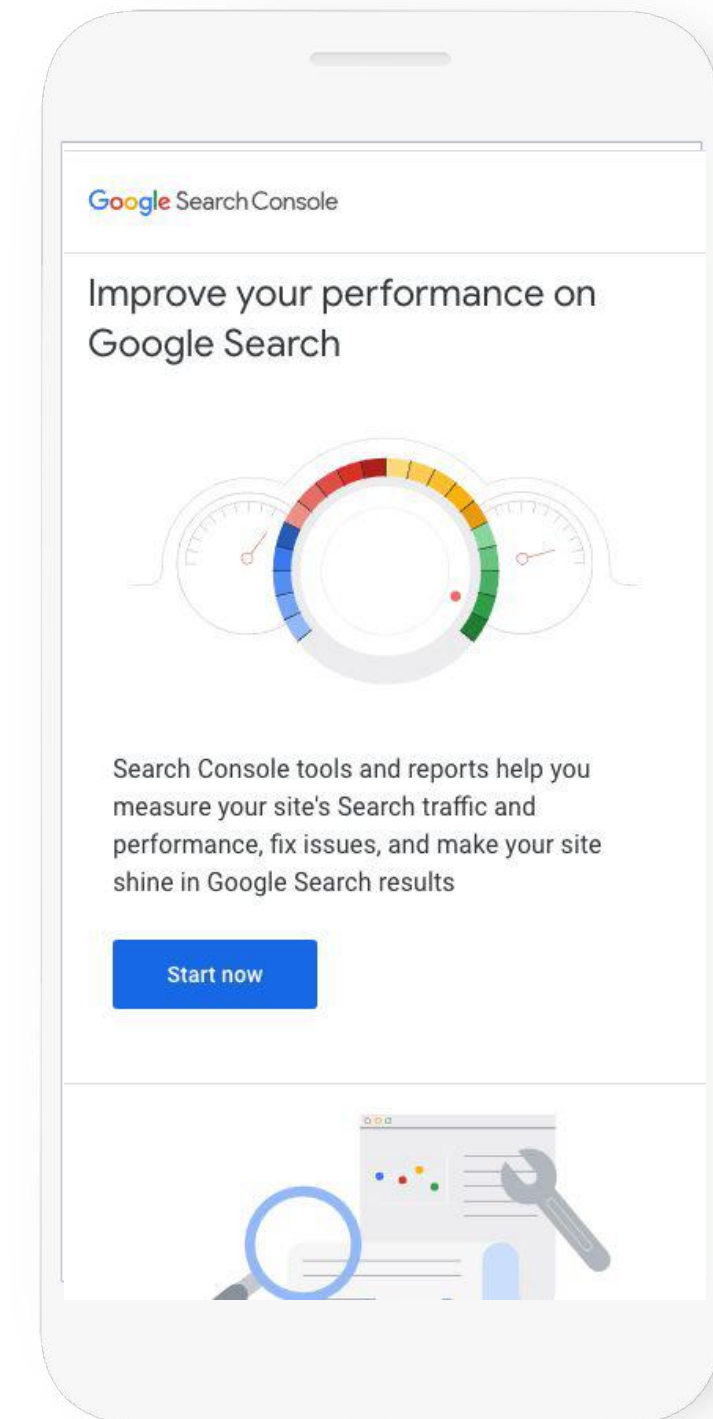
- Fast loading pages improve user experience

Mobile-friendliness

- Websites must be optimized for mobile devices to rank well

Security

- HTTPS and SSL certificates build trust and improve rankings



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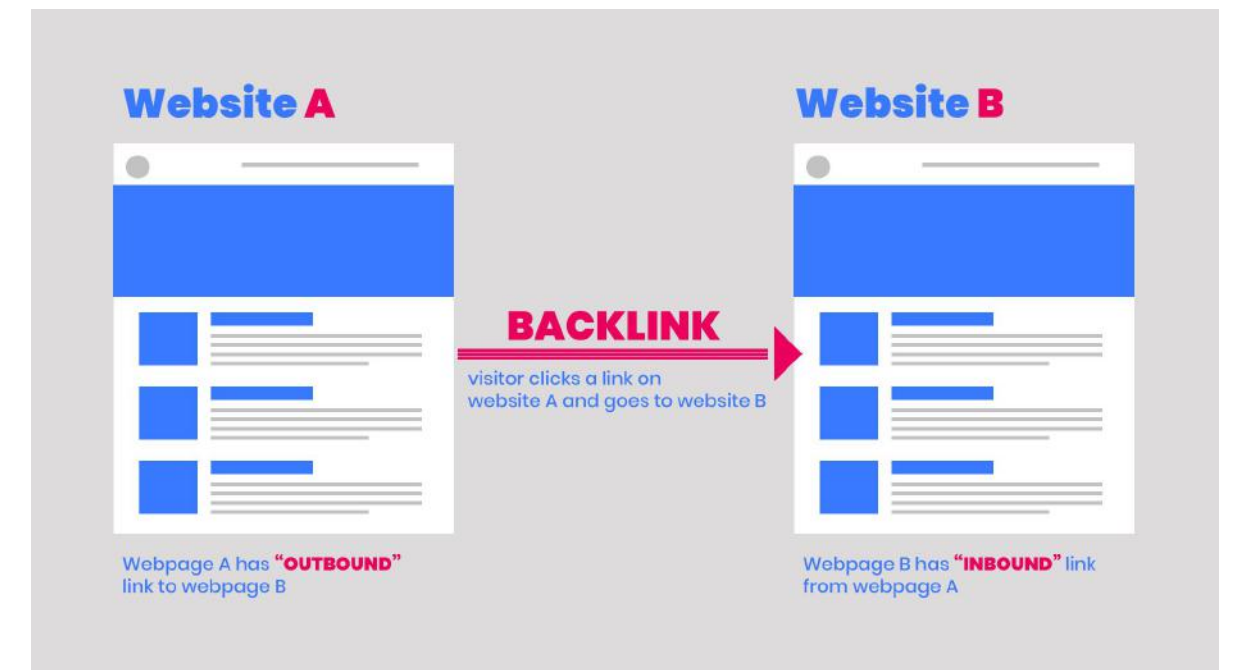
WHY BACKLINKS MATTER



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UNDERSTANDING BACKLINKS

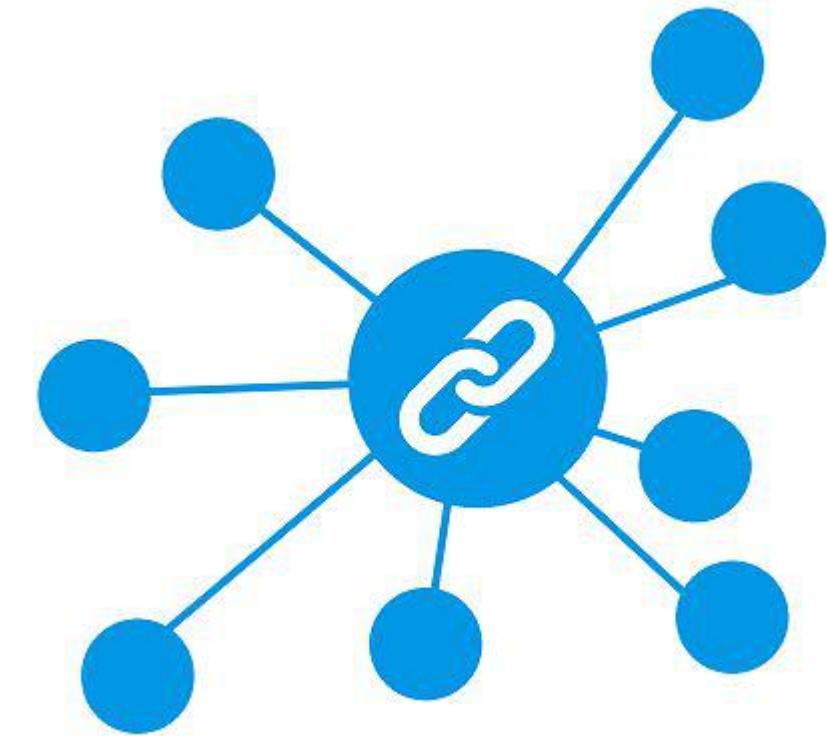
- A Backlink is a link from **one website to another**, serving as a vote of confidence.
- Backlinks **improve SEO** by enhancing authority, increasing visibility, and driving traffic.
- **Quality** vs Quantity



HOW TO BUILD BACKLINKS

Local Listings and Directories

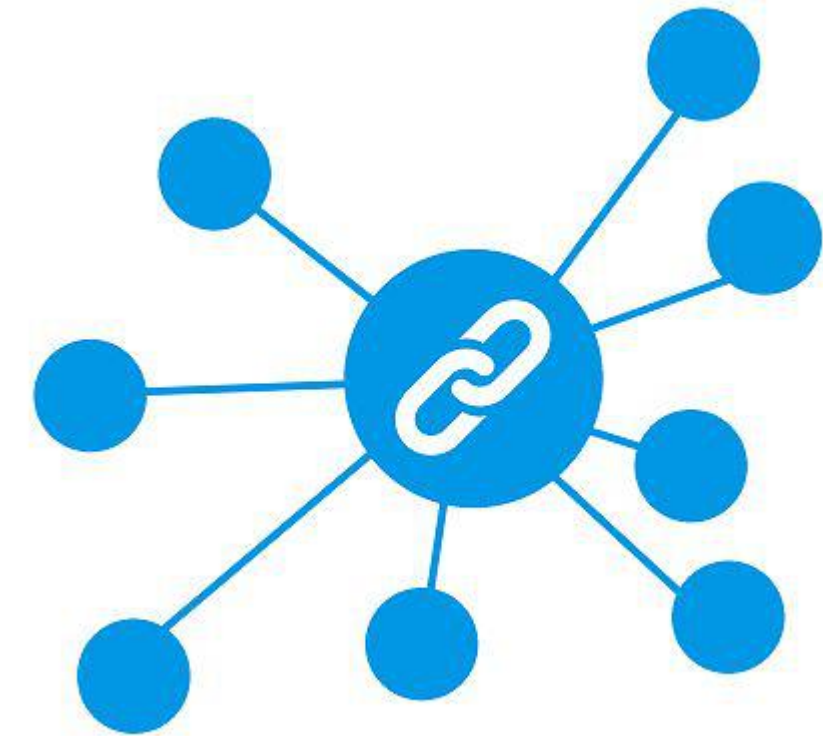
- Google Business Profile, Yellow Pages, Yelp, Social Media Profile, Neighborhood, City
- **Niche based/Industry Specific Directories**
 - Relevant to your business
- **Existing Relationships**
 - Partners, Clients, Suppliers; Value in exchange (Success story, review)
- **Donations/Sponsorships**
 - Local sources; especially brick and mortar



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HOW TO BUILD BACKLINKS (CONTINUED)

- **Content Creation**
 - Developing shareable, high-quality content that naturally attracts links
- **Guest blogging**
 - Writing for other websites to earn backlinks and enhance credibility
- **Networking and Outreach**
 - Building relationships with influencers and bloggers in your industry



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BACKLINKS THAT DON'T WORK

- Paid Links
- Spam Links
- Reciprocal Links
- Quantity over Quality



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BACKLINK ACTIVITY

Write down 3-5 potential sources of backlinks

Research any potential websites

If time, create an outreach plan



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MEASURING YOUR SEO EFFORTS



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MEASURING SUCCESS WITH FREE ANALYTICS TOOLS

Understand how users interact with your website

Key Metrics to Track

- **Traffic** - the number of visitors coming to your site; Organic search, Social Media, Direct, etc.
- **Bounce rate** - the percentage of visitor who leave your site after viewing only one page
- **Average session duration** - How long users are staying on your site
- **Conversion rate** - The percentage of visitors who complete a desired action; filling out a form, or making a purchase

Critical measures of how well your site is achieving its business goals.



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GOOGLE ANALYTICS

- Monitor visitors from search engines
- Evaluate which pages are performing well
- Evaluate how visitors interact with your site



<https://analytics.google.com/>

DEVELOPING YOUR SEO ACTION PLAN

- Identify your SEO goal
 - Clarify what you want to achieve with your SEO efforts
- Conduct a Website audit
 - Assess current SEO performance and identify areas for improvement
- Create a Content Strategy
 - Plan content creation around identified keywords and user intent
- Backlinks
 - Research and create a backlink strategy



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RESOURCES AND TOOLS FOR CONTINUED LEARNING

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Starter Guide

<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide>

Educational Resources

- Online courses, YouTube, webinars, and blogs

Networking opportunities

- Join SEO forums, local meetups, industry conferences



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FREE GOOGLE TOOLS

Google Analytics - <https://analytics.google.com/>

Google Console - <https://search.google.com/search-console/about>

Google Trends - g.co/trends

Chrome Inspector - Right Click on Website; Inspect



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QUESTIONS?

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