

# A Guide to Press Release Optimization

**Engage-Inform-Share**



Standards for optimizing a press release are always changing as social media, mobile behavior and search engine algorithms evolve. In this SEO guidance report, we show you technical tips to properly optimize a press release while writing for human consumption. We provide tips that show you how to engage, inform and share information with your audience in a meaningful and measurable way.

# A Guide to Press Release Optimization

If you write for human consumption, search engines will recognize and reward your content.

## Engage—Inform—Share

### 10 Tips to Optimize Press Releases for Search Engines

A key element of distribution and discovery today is a mix of proper optimization and social interaction that increases the probability that your news will appear higher in search results for the key phrases used by the audiences you want to reach. Often referred to as **search engine optimization**, or **SEO**, the standards for effectively optimizing a press release to rank higher in search results continue to evolve. In this guidance report, we explain the search engine algorithm changes that affect press release SEO and provide guidance on how to craft a well-written press release that connects with target audiences and improves search performance.

Once considered the primary focus in optimizing a press release, inserting targeted keywords with unnatural links is no longer a best practice for your organization's communications plan. Instead, optimize your press release with well-written, brand-relevant content that piques the interest of your target audience and appeals to reporters, analysts, employees, customers, brand fans and more. Include compelling, consumer-friendly multimedia content, make sure your press releases are effective on mobile platforms and that they encourage social media engagement. Gaining media coverage and third-party endorsements is an important factor in improving search performance.

This guidance report shows you how and why your press release should engage, inform and share information of relevance to your brand and your audience. If you write for human consumption, search engines will recognize and reward your content.

Here are ten tips to help you optimize your future press releases.

## SEO Tip 1: Research and Learn “Real Time” User Behavior

### How People Search

Wouldn't it be great to know what your target audiences found interesting about your news before writing a press release? Imagine how useful that information would be in writing compelling copy, driving social shares and gaining influential coverage. Let's look at some **free** online resources that provide you with this valuable insight.

### Autocomplete

In August 2009, Google launched the Google News Autocomplete feature. Autocomplete suggests the most popular search phrases related to the words you type into the search field. The feature proved to be so useful and popular to search users, it is now used on most websites and platforms. That means you can use autocomplete on a search engine for broader audience insight (on Google, for example) or on a specific site to gain targeted search behavior from that platform's audience queries. Reviewing autocomplete suggestions are a powerful way to quickly survey what is of interest at the moment to the millions of users on that search engine or website, helping you write a press release that cuts through the clutter by addressing timely topics of importance to your intended audiences.



Source: Google

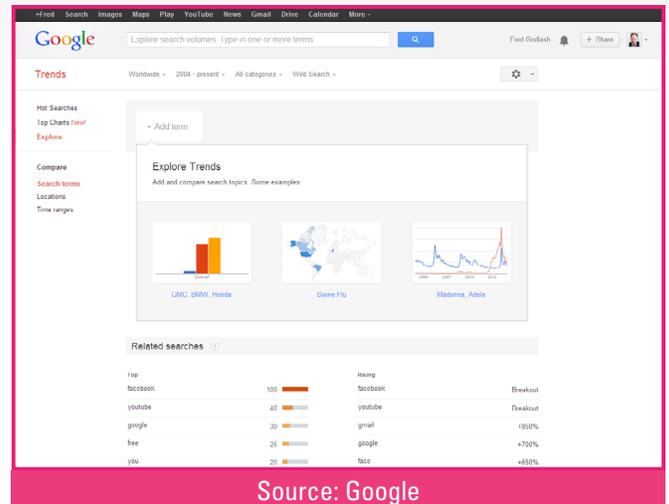
Here is an example of how autocomplete works: if you are writing a press release for an oil company that uses fracking as a way to extract petroleum from the ground, it may be helpful to see how people are searching beyond just the word “fracking.” In the query (see picture), the top result shows that the majority of people searched for “*fracking is good.*” This does not necessarily mean that the majority of people searching on Google believe that fracking is good, but it does mean that more people are searching this on Google. That may inspire you to write a press release titled “Is fracking good for the community?” knowing that this is a popular search and therefore of potential interest to your audience.

When using Google's autocomplete, we recommend that you not sign in to any Google services like Gmail, YouTube, Adwords, etc., as this will bias results based on your location and prior personal search history. For the best results, use a browser that you do not use on a regular basis—for example, if you are a daily *Chrome* user, use *Firefox* for your Autocomplete suggestions.

Search engine algorithms are very important to a successful digital press release strategy.

### Using Google Trends

Another best practice is to identify the trends most popular at the time you craft your press release. The *Google Trends* tool lets you gauge the interest of your press release topic. The search results are a strong measure of topic popularity, providing you an opportunity to tie your press release to a relevant popular trend.



## SEO Tip 2: Make Friends with the Algorithms

### The Evolution of Algorithms

Search engine algorithms are very important to a successful digital press release strategy. Algorithms utilize mathematical equations to determine how relevant your story is to a given search, with the goal of matching the right content with the specific needs of the person doing the search. Over time, the factors used in search algorithms have changed dramatically, impacting content creation and linking strategy intended to improve SEO.

In an effort to improve the relevance of search results, Google introduced **PageRank**, its first algorithm, in 1998. Named after Google founder Larry Page, PageRank counted the number of links to a web page or content to help determine the importance of that page or content. With this search ranking criteria as a guide, *keyword stuffing* became commonplace. This now-discredited practice, focused on inserting keywords and links throughout copy, often with little or no relevance, with the goal of manipulating search results. PageRank is regularly refined and now uses more than 200 indicators in its criteria, including social media interactions and quality of content to provide more relevant search results.

### The Google Zoo

Beginning in 2011, in its ongoing effort to improve the user experience and reduce the influence of SEO-manipulative content, Google introduced three new algorithms: Penguin, Panda and Hummingbird.

The **Panda** algorithm, introduced in February 2011, focuses on content quality. It lowers PageRank for bad practices like duplicate pages, content farms, irrelevant material, and an overall poor user experience. This update primarily went after websites that copied content from other sites without adding value to the content. The Panda algorithm marked a clear change in the way Google ranks content by promoting it based on relevancy and not the number of times it appears or is linked to from sites. With this update, BusinessWire added canonical tags to all press releases distributed via its network. Since BusinessWire posts press releases to thousands of third-party news sites, the canonical tags continue to tell Google and other search engines to ignore the added postings, avoiding a duplicate content penalty.

The **Penguin** algorithm, introduced in April 2012, focuses on *Black Hat* SEO practices. Black Hat, a term borrowed from the bad guys in Western movies, focuses on manipulating search algorithms with tactics like unnatural links, keyword stuffing, link schemes and cloaking, where the page content is different than what is displayed in browser results. Penguin goes deep into internal pages on a website and looks for comment spam, spam directories, blogroll links and link networks, penalizing these spam sites. This change drastically improved the search experience.

The **Hummingbird** algorithm, introduced in September 2013, moves closer than ever to understanding search concepts and meaning when processing a search term. A major change for Google and content distributors alike, Hummingbird tackles the challenge of understanding more frequently used longer search terms. Amit Singhal, Google's senior vice president of search, described Hummingbird as "trying to keep pace with the evolution of Internet usage. As search queries get more complicated, traditional 'Boolean' or keyword-based systems begin deteriorating because of the need to match concepts and meanings in addition to words."

Here is an example of how Hummingbird works. If you enter the search "How far is it from here to New York?" Google now recognizes the meaning of the keyword "here" in context as a location request and displays a map showing the distance of your current location to New York. With this update, Google acknowledged that users were searching with more conversational terms and phrases. Google's goal with Hummingbird is to provide more highly targeted results based on the meaning of the entire search phrase, not each individual keyword.

### Good Writing is Rewarded

The good news for public relations professionals is that Hummingbird rewards **good writing**. The algorithm is not looking for individual keywords placed in copy, but more broadly at your content in context with other content you produce and that your audiences use and share. Focus on writing for humans and creating a good user experience, and Google Hummingbird will take note. Including relevant terms continues to be important, but they need to be in context with your story.

With each search query, Google's algorithms now use hundreds of indicators to serve up the most relevant search results. Think of your press release as a term paper being evaluated by Google and other search engines—the more indicators you address correctly, the better your search ranking. According to SEO specialist Bruce Clay, "The goal is to be least imperfect." Your press release is competing with content from blogs, reporters and competitors, among others, so identify how you expect your audiences to search. Use the tools previously cited, such as *Autocomplete*, to help guide your writing and content creation. The more optimization indicators you successfully incorporate, the better your press release and other content will perform in searches against competing content addressing the same subject.

Last year Google made between 500-600 algorithm updates. [Danny Sullivan from Search Engine Land](#) puts these updates in context: "Hummingbird is like Google's entire ranking engine, whereas Penguin is like a small part of that engine, a filter that is removed and periodically replaced with what Google considers to be a better filter to help keep out bad stuff."

### SEO Tip 3: Make Format Improvements

#### Headlines and Sub-Headlines

Headlines should be clear, concise and about 70 characters long. Remember to write your press release headline for a human, not a search engine. The initial key performance indicator of a press release is to encourage your reader to click through the headline, read, engage and share your content. While the content of your headline is only one of many factors determining your release's visibility within search results, it is often the deciding factor in whether readers click through to your story.

While your headline must be compelling, do not hyper-focus on headline keywords to enhance SEO; instead use your headline and sub-headline to reinforce the theme and relevance to your story, thus improving viewer interest and open rates. Google favors quality content with a concise headline that gives the user a better experience and reduces content ambiguity. Your sub-headline can be longer and may contain relevant keywords, but must stay true to the theme and story.

Don't just think "who, what, when, where, and why," but use this valuable space to state a strong point of view that grabs and holds the reader's attention.

### Place Descriptive Information in the First Paragraph

As with traditional newspaper stories, the first paragraph of the press release is the most important. Today's search engines typically show a snippet of your news release, including your headline, sub-headline and first paragraph (the meta description) to aid search users in finding relevant information. Don't just think "who, what, when, where, and why," but use this valuable space to state a strong point of view that grabs and holds the reader's attention.

### SEO Tip 4: Use Natural Links

#### Using Natural Links in Press Releases

*Natural links* are links from other sites to your content that have not been solicited but rather earned. The links are considered natural as the third-party sites are linking to your press release or other content because they find it useful and interesting.

*Natural anchor text links* are hyperlinks added to a word or phrase in your press release. Natural anchor text links should benefit the user by being relevant and useful in your copy. Google best practices encourage natural anchor text links within a press release as long as they enhance your story by directing users to additional relevant content.

Here's an example of the proper use of natural anchor text links in a press release about a bicycle company selling to children interested in motocross. Adding a hyperlink to the phrase "*Kids have embraced BMX bicycle racing since the 1970s*" leads the user to relevant information on your company site about "bike racing" and enhances the reader experience with your press release and brand. The more relevant the content, the greater chance readers will share it, providing you with *earned* endorsements and increased inbound traffic.

If your press release is successful and generates news coverage, blog posts and social media engagement, it will generate earned links that boost SEO authority.

### How Often and Where You Link

Below are a handful of best practices in regards to natural anchor text links.

- ▶ Use links sparingly. Excessive linking diminishes the importance of all your links and actually reduces click-through rates.
- ▶ Use quality links. Links in a press release will not help SEO unless people find them useful.
- ▶ Use phrases and calls-to-action links that point to relevant content.
- ▶ Omit self-serving and overly promotional links that don't add value.
- ▶ Move vanity links to the boilerplate. While it is acceptable on your company home page to include hyperlinks on the names of individuals, products or subsidiaries, move them away from the coveted first paragraph and header of your press release unless they provide contextual value earlier in your copy.
- ▶ Remember, if a human finds your press release link valuable, Google will recognize it as a good link.

### Importance of Quality Links

While Google doesn't positively weigh links from within your press release in its search algorithms, it and other search engines do positively react when those links are shared or included in third-party references to your story. If your press release is successful and generates news coverage, blog posts and social media engagement, it will generate **earned** links that boost SEO authority.

SEO expert Danny Sullivan from Search Engine Land says, "What you want is to be linked from places where there's an actual audience that might see your link and click on it directly to visit." According to a [survey conducted by Moz.com](#) in July 2013, after the Penguin 2.0 algorithm update, the top influencer of search results was **links** associated with the website, with the key difference now being the quality of the links and the domain's reputation. In other words, Google is cracking down on over-optimized material by changing how it views and rates press release and website links. Not surprisingly in the MOZ survey, Google weighs relevant links to and from their own social network, Google +, higher than Facebook and Twitter.

In short, your focus should be on link quality over link quantity. Focus on linking to enhance the user experience with the goal of getting shared.

## SEO Tip 5: Press Release Keywords

### Long Tail > Short Tail Search

Search behavior has changed dramatically in the last few years. More users now conduct searches with *long-tail queries*, which include three or more keywords or complete questions. Google reports that *short-tail* searches containing just one or two keywords are on the decline, possibly due to an increase in searches on mobile devices. In general, people use a short-tail search to do a broad query, and a long-tail query for a more precise search. An example of a short-tail search is “LAX Flight Delays.” An example of a long-tail search is “Will Flight 457 on XYZ Airlines be delayed out of LAX?” Because long-tail searches are more specific, they return better, more targeted results that are much more useful and relevant to the search user, generating a higher click-through conversion rate.

When planning and writing keywords for the body of a press release, the more specific your subject or demographic subset target, the more precise your press release language needs to be to answer long-tail queries. However, if you are trying to reach as many people as possible to increase awareness of your news to a wider, more general audience, press releases with broader subject appeal that focus on short-tail search keywords may be appropriate.

The ranking of your press release in search results is impacted by your organization’s search authority for your targeted long-tail and short-tail terms across owned, earned and shared media.

Google is transitioning from providing generic results that simply match strings of keywords to being a knowledge engine that understands the relationships between ideas; **this supports a long-tail knowledge approach to writing a press release.**

### Google Analytics: “Not Provided”

In 2013, Google Analytics removed valuable user data from reports on keywords and replaced it with a “Not Provided” notation. As search engines transition to secure platforms (Identifiable by *https:* preceding the website URL), the availability of keyword data and the effectiveness of analytics tools for keyword research is declining. Google Autocomplete, mentioned earlier, is one alternative to analytics tools for keyword research. Google Keyword Planner, available to Google Adwords subscribers, provides insight into the popularity of keywords and search terms by advertisers. Other fee-based third-party platforms still provide keyword data. Put keywords into natural phrases that are useful to the reader and flow with the theme of your story.

“I would love it if people could stop focusing on keyword density.”

-Matt Cutts  
Head of  
webspam team,  
Google

### How Google Views Keywords in Your Press Release

Since Google search is based on phrases and not just keywords, be mindful to write for human consumption, not for search engine algorithms. Excessively repeating keywords and overusing natural anchor text links reduces the readability of your press release, likely causing search engines to flag and penalize your content in search results.

According to Matt Cutts, head of Google’s webspam team, “When the keyword is mentioned the first time the algorithm will take notice, the second time it is looking for relevancy, the third time it may diminish your results. Think of the keywords you would like in your copy in a natural way. My recommendation is to read it out loud, read it to someone else, or have someone read it to you. Look for something artificial that does not read right. I would love it if people could stop focusing on keyword density.”

In short, don’t overuse keywords and don’t choose keywords based on high-volume usage alone. You will have better success ranking with focused terms that are searched less often but are more relevant to your story. Always include content that is appropriate to your audience and write with a natural, persuasive voice. Today’s search platforms succeed by providing meaningful content to their users. Help them and you help your efforts.

- ▶ Write content (not keywords) that are likely to be used by journalists and shared by influencers and customers.
- ▶ Be mindful of keyword density.
- ▶ Do not choose a keyword based on high-traffic analytics alone – relevancy is key.

### SEO Tip 6: Focus on Quality Content

#### Content is King

Google has evolved beyond serving results for a simple string of keywords; today the search engine is capable of answering complex user queries. As we’ve shown, an effective optimized press release no longer contains keyword-stuffed content. Instead, it is a focused story that provides content that users want to read and share with others. By far, the best way to build SEO-valuable natural link authority is by creating respected content that establishes your press release as a quality source of information that is written about, discussed and shared.

When writing a press release, think like the reporters and editors at your target news organization and include content that sparks conversations and interaction.

The most critical information in the press release is *above the fold*, a term originally referring to putting important news or photographs in the upper half of a newspaper. For press release SEO, above the fold means the headline, sub-headline and first paragraph in a press release. Search engines weigh the above the fold content of your press release in a manner similar to a descriptive website metatag, displaying this information in search results.

Because search engines put such a disproportionate amount of importance on the content above the fold, it is crucial to include your most compelling material in this section.

When writing a press release, think like the reporters and editors at your target news organization and include content that sparks conversations and interaction. Provide a story-driven press release of interest to their specific readership, with compelling visuals and multimedia that enhance the user experience. Don't be afraid to deviate from the traditional press release structure of who, what, when, where, why, quote, and boilerplate.

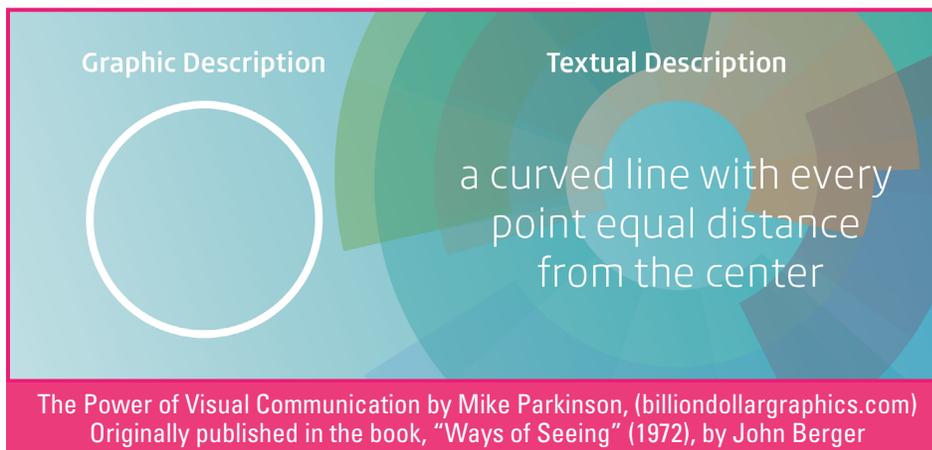
### Call to Action

After you create a newsworthy, optimized press release, make sure to include a call-to-action that directs the reader to your desired next step. Work with colleagues to ensure your call-to-action supports broader communications objectives and provides the opportunity to collect relevant measurement data. Google Analytics enables you to add tracking code to press release links so you can track how the reader engages with your press release and website. Marketing platforms like Pardot and Marketo let you build press-release-specific landing pages, forms and other content to capture valuable engagement information. Include a call-to-action that drives traffic to a desired piece of content, such as a newsletter subscription, product spec page, purchasing form, contest or social media promotion. Successfully engaging your audience in this manner increases your online exposure, rewards your brand within the search engines and provides measurable marketing data.

## SEO Tip 7: Always Include Multimedia

### Multimedia

The inclusion of multimedia is more than just a good idea, it's an SEO necessity. Based on John Berger's book "Ways of Seeing," Mike Parkinson illustrates how difficult it is to textually explain a circle compared with graphically showing a circle. A similar study sponsored by 3M and conducted at the University of



Minnesota by Douglas R. Vogel shows that visuals are processed by humans 60,000 times faster than text. Think beyond graphics and photos, however, to engage consumers in a visual manner.

As 3M discovered, one minute of video equates to

1.8 million words because visuals transmitted to the brain are processed exponentially faster than text, making it the single most powerful communications tool available. With global multimedia consumption at an all-time high, including imagery and video in your press release improves the likelihood of triggering a positive response by journalists, analysts and consumers alike.

Search engines understand and weigh multimedia differently than textual press releases. In addition, as smartphone usage and adoption increases, multimedia consumption on these platforms continues to grow at staggering rates. According to a recent study from the *Cisco Visual Networking Index*, consumer video traffic will be 69 percent of all global consumer Internet traffic by 2017, up from 57 percent in 2012.

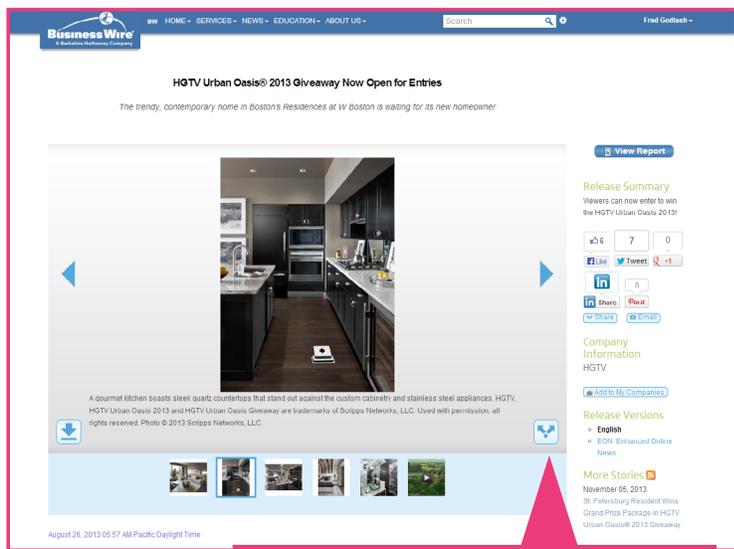
For your press release to both engage users and rank well in search results, it is essential to include relevant, compelling multimedia.

Business Wire's internal data shows that press releases including photos and video regularly draw larger audiences and are shared more often than text-only press releases. The increased engagement improves your content and webpage authority, trust scores, quality relevant links and *buzz*, all factors that help your news rank better with search engines.

Properly formatted multimedia includes photo captions and video descriptions that tie into your press release, reinforcing the keyword terms used in your news. Properly optimize your video before you submit it to your wire service or embed it in your press release. When possible, your video script should incorporate the keyword phrases used in the press release. In a quote from WebmasterTools, Google says,

“After determining the content of the video using our spidering technology, Google then combines sophisticated text-matching techniques to find videos that are both important and relevant to your search. Our technology examines dozens of aspects of the video’s content (including number of hits and rating) to determine if it’s a good match for your query.”

YouTube indexes the title, description, and closed-caption text to your videos, which may show up in the search engine results. Choose a content distribution network, such



Share multimedia to increase engagement

as Business Wire, that supports multimedia across multiple device formats and content platforms.

If you embed a video within your press release, make sure it loads with minimal wait time. Technical problems, like a long wait time for the page to load, will cause viewers to flee, and damages SEO. Include tracking links, as discussed in Tip #6, to analyze and improve future efforts.

Include a range of media formats to drive higher engagement and sharing of each piece of content. While broadcast and print media require high-resolution media, online news platforms, blogs and social media platforms thrive on smaller files and embed codes that render multimedia quickly on desktop and mobile devices. If you are distributing your press release on a third party site, make sure they effectively monitor, display and share your multimedia.

Monitoring conversations and engagement provides you with valuable insight to build press releases around relevant trending topics.

## SEO Tip 8: Use Social Media Strategically

Social media is no longer an optional component of an effective SEO press release strategy. Nearly every news organization uses at least one form of social media, from interactive blogs to Twitter. Reporters, investors, consumers and other individual influencers are active on social media platforms as well. Search engines now weigh social engagement in their search factors.

### Listen and Learn First

To properly form a press release strategy to drive social sharing, you need to first listen and learn about your core audience. Become familiar with various social platforms they utilize, research conversations and determine where your influencers gather and how they interact.

Most social media platforms provide tools to search public conversations. Google Analytics data, for example, includes impact of content on social media efforts, especially on Google+. Bing WebmasterTools automatically includes social media user data from Facebook. Third-party services, such as Business Wire's [NUVI](#) platform, offer insight into both Google and Bing analytics platforms as well as a wide array of other social channels, providing real-time engagement analysis. *Business Wire is a partner with NUVI and offers real-time analytics and engagement tools and press release-specific reports.*

It's important to continuously monitor various social channels to see if and how audience behavior changes over time. Positive mentions and sharing improve your search rankings, while negative mentions can hurt your SEO efforts. Monitoring conversations and engagement provides you with valuable insight to build press releases around relevant trending topics. It also provides early warning signals for you to address a potential problem before it turns into a full-blown crisis.

### Establish and Maintain a Strong Social Presence

Build and maintain a strong presence on the social media platforms that matter most to your audiences. SEO-influential platforms like Google+, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest provide an opportunity to engage current and prospective brand fans with platform-appropriate content by sharing links back to your press release. Building SEO-valuable authority on social platforms takes time and effort, and is not accomplished with a single press release.

Today's search algorithms are sophisticated enough to recognize and reward mentions based on organic (natural) engagement with your content. Search engines strive to reflect the social sentiment of your content as part of their algorithm considerations.

Don't post your press release to social platforms and expect an instantaneous or even positive response from your target audience. Rather, provide press release elements that are platform appropriate. For example, pin a photo from your press release to your Pinterest board and include relevant tags for users to find and share it. Include a tweet with a link to additional content in the body of your press release that users can grab and share. Make sure to include relevant hashtags and leave enough characters unused so users can easily retweet without having to edit below the 140-character maximum. Be more informal in your Facebook posts and offer content that poses a question to increase discussions or prompts fans to share. Remember that social platforms use their own algorithms to rank and display content to users based on each fan's interaction. User comments and the frequency they share your content are important factors for subsequent content showing up in their news feeds.

### Social is About Influence

Just as earned news media coverage is SEO-friendly, social media can reveal brand influencers that may improve your search efforts. Building strong relationships with highly relevant blogs and vertical news sites, and understanding their content needs is a core component to an effective SEO-friendly public relations strategy. These platforms provide a concentration of highly relevant and engaged users. Tailor individual pitches to each targeted blog or vertical and link back to the more complete content of your press release. Gaining earned coverage provides authoritative links back to your brand and is more likely to result in meaningful engagement and sharing by their users, who are your ultimate targets. Natural mentions and links that sway public opinion are valuable factors in search ranking.

If your site or your press release is not employing responsive design, you may be damaging your SEO efforts.

## SEO Tip 9: Use Responsive Design for Mobile

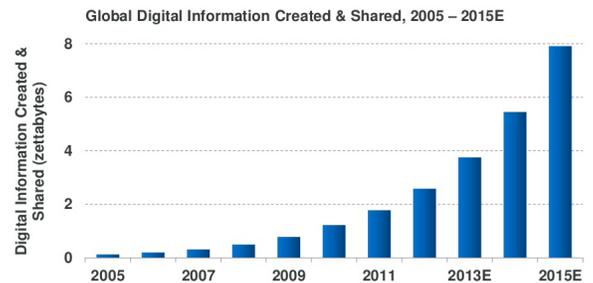
The world is going mobile and the search engines know it. Google and other search engines now factor how your site functions on different platforms, including mobile devices and tablets, as well as the speed with which content loads. If your site or your press release is not employing responsive design, you may be damaging your SEO efforts. *Responsive design* adapts the web layout of your content to the mobile viewing environment, reordering and sizing content as necessary to optimize the user experience for whichever device they are using. Search engines recognize the growing use of tablets and mobile phones in accessing web content, and rewards responsive content. A February 2013 [Cisco research report](#) shows that global mobile data traffic grew 70% in 2012, with mobile video traffic exceeding 50% for the first time and mobile network speeds more than doubling in 2012.

That means your audiences are increasingly engaging with your press releases and other content on mobile devices with varying network speeds. Videos and multimedia content embedded in your press releases hosted on responsive design platforms now provide a positive user experience from a technical perspective, adding SEO value to your efforts.

Increase viewership by including mobile alerts functionality on your press releases and online newsrooms, so users can subscribe to your news feed and get notified by text each time you issue a press release. Mobile engagement is a significant factor in search algorithms, so it is important that you serve this content in a mobile-friendly format. *Business Wire employs responsive design for its site and its client press releases.*

### World's Content is Increasingly Findable + Shared + Tagged - Digital Info Created + Shared up 9x in Five Years

Amount of global digital information created & shared – from documents to pictures to tweets – grew 9x in five years to nearly 2 zettabytes\* in 2011, per IDC.



KPCB

Note: \* 1 zettabyte = 1 trillion gigabytes. Source: IDC report "Extracting Value from Chaos" 6/11. 11

Source: Pew Internet

Effective press release SEO works in conjunction with broader communications strategies to help raise your organization's search authority.

## SEO Tip 10: Choose the Proper Distribution Method

When using a wire service like Business Wire to distribute a press release, the authority of the hosting site does influence search results. Make sure the service you choose employs the guidelines from Google and other search engines to enhance and not harm your SEO efforts. For example and as previously noted, Business Wire follows Google's best practices guidance by using *no follow links* and *redirect tags* to direct Google searches to source content and not duplicate content. Press releases are built and hosted using responsive design. Content is structured using HTML 5 and NewsML, enabling you to capture and define each piece of content, from videos to photos, so search engines understand their significance to your overall story. The company you keep is also an indicator for search engines, increasing the importance of using a reputable content delivery service.

As we've shown, when it comes to effective SEO, quality matters. A reputable press release wire service that incorporates the latest search engine best practices will enhance your press release performance. Consider these additional factors in your review:

- ▶ Does the wire service embed your multimedia into the press release to increase engagement? Just inserting links to multimedia content is not enough, as it requires additional steps for users and decreases engagement opportunities.
- ▶ Does the wire service push multimedia to news organizations to boost the opportunity for earned media hits? For example, Business Wire's photo distribution service includes 4,000 AP digital subscribers and all AFP subscribers worldwide, providing huge potential in both coverage and sharing.
- ▶ Does the wire service enable the sharing of multimedia to social media networks, key for triggering word-of-mouth sharing?
- ▶ Does the wire service employ human editors that spot errors and reject sub-par content that would be dinged by search engines?
- ▶ Does the wire service provide measurement and analytics on each press release so you can evaluate performance and adjust subsequent messaging as needed?
- ▶ Do search engines consider the wire service to be a trusted news source?

Take the time to craft a press release with great content that engages your target audience and the search engines will reward you.

A compelling, relevant press release with engaging multimedia content distributed via a reputable wire service ensures your news reaches your audiences via the sites and platforms they choose. The resulting earned and shared media coverage you gain provides a meaningful enhancement to your SEO efforts that factor in the latest Hummingbird, Penguin and Panda algorithm updates. Effective press release SEO works in conjunction with broader communications strategies to help raise your organization's search authority.

### Looking Forward

Search engines are now placing more emphasis on content authorship. Anonymous content is being discounted in favor of content that can be sourced to an author via a legitimate social media or other authenticated account. Comments, reviews and mentions by search-engine-identified authors will carry more weight than anonymous content, and their positive or negative sentiment will have a greater impact. Look for algorithm updates, similar to Penguin, that filter out social media spam like fake reviews, fake "likes" and other manipulated social endorsement signals.

Follow Google's algorithm updates closely. As the leading search engine, the changes they make are typically adopted soon after by their competitors. Take the time to craft a press release with great content that engages your target audience and the search engines will reward you. Effective press release SEO means engaging, informing and sharing compelling content for humans, not robots.

For more information about SEO best practices for press releases, contact Fred Godlash at 310.820.9473 or [fred.godlash@businesswire.com](mailto:fred.godlash@businesswire.com).

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