SEO OPTIMIZATION

Utilizing Yoast

INTRODUCTION

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) feels like an overused buzzword, but it still serves as an important marketing tool for your non-profit. Simply put, SEO is the act of helping Google (or another search engine) understand what your website is about. This way Google knows to show your website when people are searching for causes or non-profits related to you.

There are three main areas of SEO — technical, on-page, and off-page. Here's a quick overview of what each means:

Technical
Technical SEO is making sure all the correct buttons and levers are set correctly on your website. It can seem overwhelming but we'll walk you through the steps to get it all setup.

On-page
One-page SEO refers to the content on your website (words and pictures). You want to make sure the content is relevant to what potential donors may be looking for.

Off-page
Off-page SEO is all about other relevant websites referencing your website. If important websites are linking to your website, Google sees that as validation that your website is a realible source.

For this guide, we'll be discussing the Yoast plugin, which is mostly focused on helping you improve the Technical SEO of your website.

ASSUMPTIONS

For this guide we're assuming your website is built on Wordpress, you know the basics of navigating Wordpress, and how to install a plugin.

If your website is not built on Wordpress this guide is still very helpful — but the examples may not be quite as relevant. When possible, we've included sidenotes for those not using Wordpress.

COMMON MISTAKES

One of the first things we want to look at are the most common mistakes. Simply fixing these mistakes can have a big impact on your SEO.

Note: Even though the mistakes outlined below mention specific Wordpress settings, you're website builder may have similar settings.

Search Engine Visibility Checkbox

WordPress comes with a built-in option to hide your website from search engines. The purpose of this option is to give you time to work on your website before it's ready to go public.

A common mistake is having this checked when you go live.

To locate, log in to the admin area of your WordPress site and visit Settings » Reading page. Make sure the box is *unchecked*.
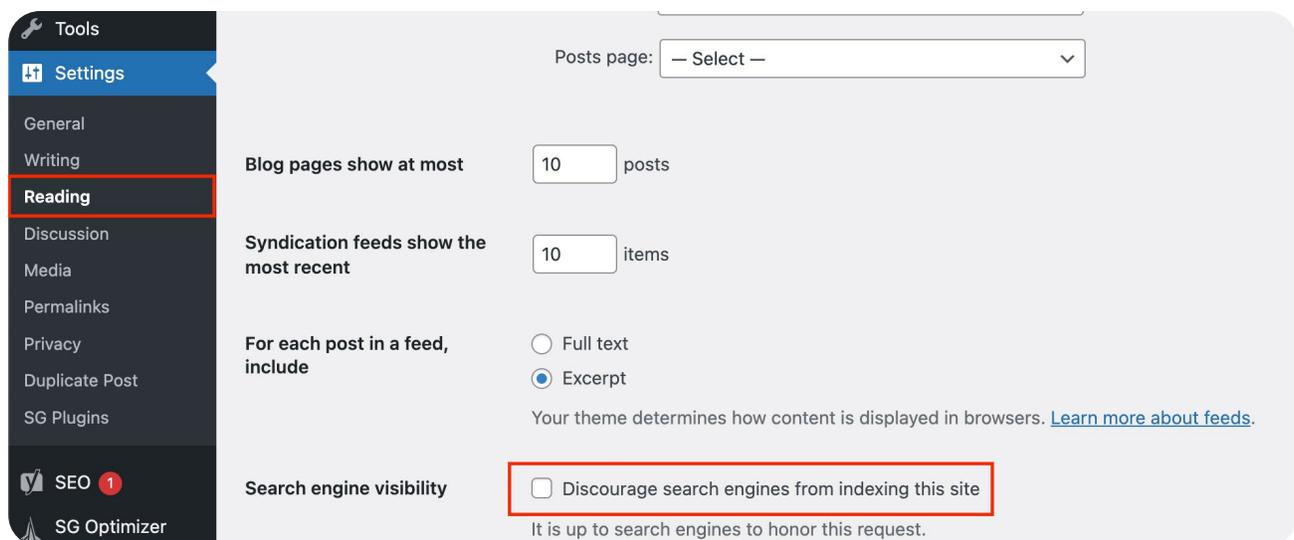
Permalinks
You need to visit the Settings » Permalinks page.

Select the 'Post Name' option and then click on the 'Save Changes' button to store your settings.

You want your URLs to look like:
http://example.com/sample-page

WORKING WITH YOAST

INSTALLING YOAST

There are several good SEO plugins out there for WordPress, but Yoast is our recommendation because we feel it is the leading industry standard and has lots of great features.

Note: If you're not using Wordpress you can skip this section.

1. To install Yoast go into the 'Plugin' section of Wordpress.

2. From here, click the 'Add New' in the upper left corner.

3. Enter 'Yoast' in the search bar and then hit 'Install Now' on the Yoast SEO plugin.

4. Once the plugin is downloaded you'll need to hit the 'Activate' button.

5. Now you're ready to configure Yoast.

CONFIGURING YOAST

Downloading and activating Yoast is just the first step. Now you'll need to configure the plugin to make sure everything is set up correctly. Don't worry, we'll walk you through this step by step.

Note: Even if you're not using Wordpress it's important to read through these instructions. The logic behind these configurations are still applicable to any SEO tool that provides the same functionality.

Turning Features On

On the sidebar in Wordpress you'll see an icon and words that say 'SEO' — this is the Yoast plugin. Click the icon to start configuring Yoast.

1. In the sidebar under 'SEO' go to the 'General' section.

2. In 'General' settings you'll see tabs near the top of the screen. Go to the 'Features' tab.

3. Go in and turn on all the options under this tab.

Note: Having XML Site Maps turned on is critical — you'll need to submit this to Google. Even if you're not using Yoast you'll want to
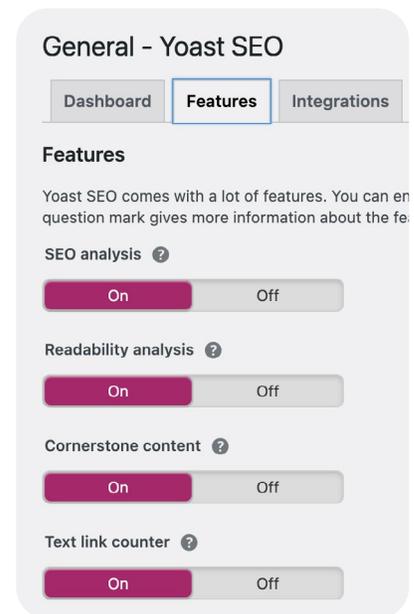
Schema

Now it's time to go to a new section in Yoast to update your Schema info. Schema helps provide info to search engines so they can better understand what your website is about.

1. In the sidebar under 'SEO' go to the 'Search Appearance' section.

2. Make sure you're on the 'General' tab.

3. Scroll down to the 'Knowledge Graph & Schema. org' section.

4. Select 'Organization' from the drop down menu

5. This will then bring up two fields for you to enter additional information

6. Enter in your Organization Name and upload your logo for the Organization Logo field.
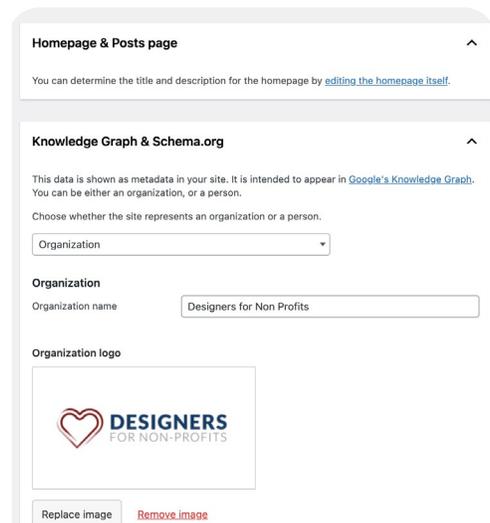
Note: If you're not using Wordpress see if your website provider allows you to edit your Schema info. see if your website provider has the ability to generate an XML Site Map.

Breadcrumbs

Breadcrumbs are a type of secondary navigation that shows the user where they are in the website's structure.

1. Stay in the 'Search Appearance' section.

2. Go to the 'Breadcrumbs' tab.

3. Select 'Enable' under the Enable Breadcrumbs setting.

How to insert breadcrumbs in your theme

Usage of this breadcrumbs feature is explained in our knowledge-base article on breadcrumbs implementation.

Note: You can always choose to enable / disable them for your theme below. This setting will not apply to breadcrumbs inserted through a widget, a block or a shortcode.

Enable Breadcrumbs for your theme

| Enabled | Disabled |

Note: *Even though you've enabled Breadcrumbs in Yoast they may not display on your website if your theme of website design does not allow them.*

Note: *If you're not using Wordpress you're website provider should have a breadcrumbs feature for you to enable.*

DESIGNERS
FOR NON-PROFITS

USING YOAST

The primary way you'll interact with Yoast is by adding in meta data to each page and post on your website. Meta Data is what Google and other search engines display in their search results. This data is critical for two reasons:

- It helps search engines better understand what your page is about.

- It acts as a quick pitch to people scrolling through search results that your page is the one they should click on.

Adding Meta Data

To add Meta Data to a page (or post) simply go to the editor for that page and scroll down. You'll eventually see the area for Yoast.

The two main things we want to edit are the 'SEO title' and 'Meta description'.

For the 'SEO Title' field you'll want to add the name of the page. This will change your page's title in the search engines, so make sure it's a clear, catchy title.

For the 'Meta description' you'll want to write a quick pitch about what your page contains and why someone should come to it. If possible, it's good include any keywords you think users may search for — but make the inclusion feel natural.

Yoast will help you determine the correct length for your 'SEO title' and 'Meta description'. It is important to have these fields not exceed the recommendation character limit. If you exceed those limits it's likely that your title and description will be cut off by search engines.

Note: Most website builders will allow you to edit the meta titles and descriptions for each page, so make sure to take advantage of this option. It makes a big difference in how often someone chooses your website over another.

CONCLUSION

This guide is only first step in understanding how to improve the SEO for your nonprofit's website. We have additional blogs and resources to help you market your nonprofit.

Simply go to designersfornonprofits.us/resources/ to learn more.

As always if you have any questions or would like a free consulting session please make sure to reach out to us — we're here to help!