

# On Her Majesty's Secret Search Engine Optimization 2016



This autumn the James Bond movie franchise turned 50 years! Not bad for her majesty's Secret Service agent with a licence to kill, philogyny and an undeviating loyalty to shaken (not stirred) martini. You would probably ask how the heck James Bond will help me with my SEO strategy for 2016. We mean to say that you should serve your customers like James Bond serves her Majesty.

## Follow our step-by-step strategy to succeed in digital marketing in 2016

### 1 *FROM CONTEXTUAL SEARCH WITH LOVE*

The way you did keyword research in 2014 and before has become outdated. Back in 2013, Google released the Hummingbird algorithm update that was specifically designed to better understand verbose (conversational) queries and smooth incorporation of semantic search into the Google SE. Keyword research and optimization moved, therefore, to a new thorough level, with longtail keywords and phrases on the cutting edge. But in late October 2014, Google unleashed its first post-Hummingbird machine learning system RankBrain. It is the first artificial intelligence system that helps [process search results](#) in order to interpret and find relevant web pages that might not have exact match keywords and phrases that were searched for. In other words Google thinks it's found the way to read searchers' minds. RankBrain is now considered to be a part of the Hummingbird algorithm and it's one of the most important ranking signals behind backlinks. It is responsible for processing the 15% of searches that are specifically unfamiliar and never seen before search queries.

Because of the big shift from needing to optimize for exact match keywords to focusing on topic-focused long-tail keywords (from "strings to things"), you should now go further than just putting keywords in the right places (title tag, H1, ALT and meta description tags). You should start building your site pages around topic-focused LSI (Latent Semantic Indexing) keywords.

## A logical question arises: How do I conduct semantic (LSI) keyword research in 2016 and what tools can help me with this?

Start small, analyze the **KEYWORDS THAT ALREADY BRING TRAFFIC** to your site. Go to your Google Analytics account and delve into the Queries report from the Search Engine Optimization section. Then, go to the Google Search Console >> Search Analytics >> Queries report tab in order to build a complete picture. Note that Google Analytics doesn't provide full data on your search queries. A number of keywords are hidden under ([not set](#)) results at the top of the SEO Queries report of Google Analytics.

Go one step further and pull more strings with the help of additional **RELEVANT SUGGESTIONS** based on keywords and phrases already used on your site and, of course, used by **COMPETITORS**.

Track your targeted **USERS' SEARCH INTENT** by conducting manual research of discussions and questions related to your business keywords they want answers for. Track this on Q&A platforms, topic-related forums and personalized media platforms.

Learn what users say about your product on **ONLINE REVIEW SITES**. User reviews are a great source for real human language enriched in emotional triggers based on your customers' direct feedback. Be sure to use your customers' reviews on your product in order to describe your product and prove its value. Do you know where your software is mostly reviewed? Use Google Search to find out what review platforms you are listed on. If your product has a small number of reviews, ask your customers to leave feedback on the most popular review sites, such as: Google My Business reviews, Yelp, G2 Crowd, Amazon customer reviews, TrustRadius, Facebook ratings and reviews etc.





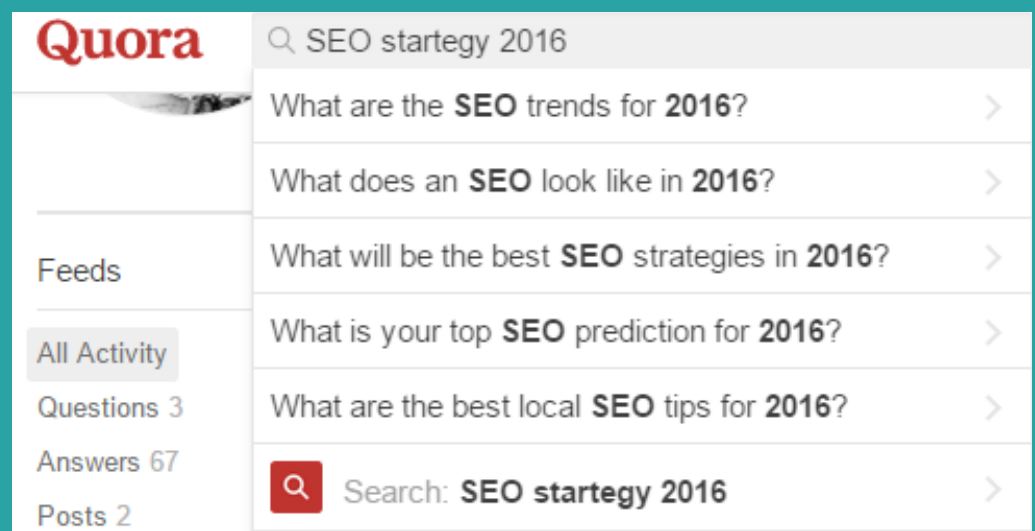
Use the **STRUCTURED DATA MARKUP** to provide direct visibility for your content on SERPs. With the more advanced semantic search algorithms, Google now shows a higher preference for websites that provide additional semantic information and give direct answers to user search query questions via [rich snippets](#). According to [Stone Temple Consulting](#) Google provides rich answer results to 19% of queries. The most popular content properties that websites optimize with structured data markup are: reviews, product information, prices, working hours, ratings, events, articles, phone numbers etc.

Various studies show that websites with rich snippets can see a **30%**  increase in the click through rate. >>

Build a strong **INTERNAL LINK MAP** with semantically rich anchor texts in order to provide your users with additional relevant content and user-friendly navigation. Internal link optimization is one of the cornerstones for on-page optimization for semantic search. By optimizing your new website pages for newly revealed keywords and connecting them to already existing high ranking pages, you will give Google bots strong internal link incentives for faster indexation and enhanced crawlability of new content. Proper internal linking also passes some link juice from your higher authority pages to new less authoritative ones.

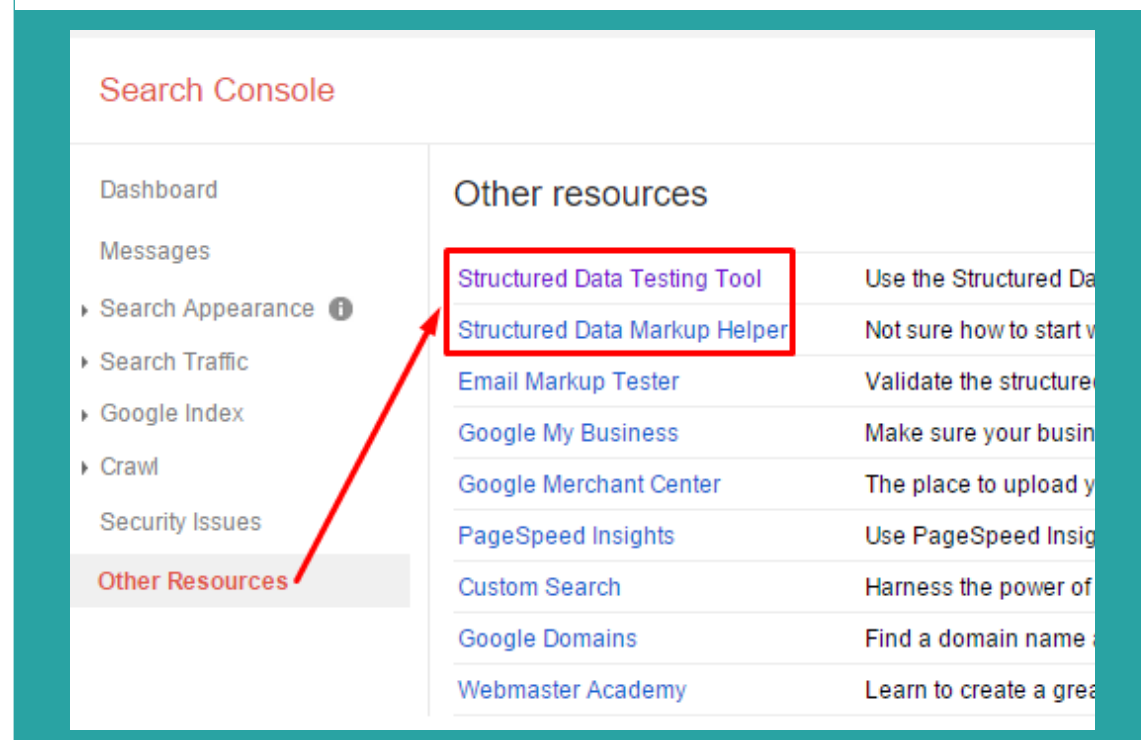
## Free/Paid Tools to Assist:

- **Google Autocomplete Keyword tool** is a basic tool to get some initial suggestions on your main keywords provided by Google suggest. Just go to Google and start typing in keywords and look at what's suggested.
- The **Amazon Keyword Tool** – is the right tool to build strong keyword seeds for those who have an eCommerce site with multiple positions and categories.
- The **brickSEO Keyword Research Tool >> Get Suggestions + Spy on Competitors** – a multi-level keyword research tool that allows working with groups of keywords and lists, provides insightful key metrics per keyword (global and local searches, search trends, KEI and bid competition), and fully integrate keywords into landing page SEO analysis and SERP tracking tools.
- **Quora** is a goldmine for LSI keyword research. Here you can harvest a lot of long-tail keyword ideas and keep yourself updated by following this or that question. Just simply typing some of your main keywords or phrases, you will be provided with a handful of relevant questions and answers to them.



Moreover, you can yourself ask someone from your targeted audience and bring on discussion around your question. Can you think of a simpler way to read your targeted audience search intentions and find new content ideas?

- **Yahoo! answers** has been overused, but it is still a good source to listen to your niche specific discussions and the problems people want to solve by asking real-time questions in the most conversational way. Picking the right category that replicates or is somehow related to your business niche will help you to hit your targeted audience.
- The easiest way to structure your content with semantic schema vocabulary is to use your Google Search Console account and go to the **Structured Data Markup Helper** and **Structured Data Testing tool**.



- Use the **brickSEO Internal Links Optimization tool** and follow this [step-by-step guide](#) in order to get the most from your internal linking and benefit in the era of semantic search optimization.

Like we said at the beginning, everything you do on and off your website should be done with her Majesty, the Customer in mind. According to the Econsultancy [Customer Experience Optimization survey](#) report, 41% of companies and 26% of agencies consider user experience (UX) as critical to their organizations of surveyed companies will focus on customer experience as a competitive edge by the end of 2016 (Gartner). The way your customers see your website reflects the way how their see your business.

**41%** of companies  
**26%** and  
of agencies  
consider user  
experience as critical

**To make sure that your customers feel comfortable while interacting with your website, you should constantly optimize different SEO aspects of your website performance, design a user-friendly interface and improve your customer service.**



Create **BUYER PERSONA PROFILES** for your brand, personalize customer journey maps and conversion funnels for each of them from across multiple traffic channels (desktop, mobile, social, mobile app). To get to know and humanize your targeted customer, you should run your market niche research, conduct customer surveys and analyze data about your customers (i.e. demographics, interests, on-site traffic behavior, social media intelligence data about your fans/followers). By understanding your targeted audience, you will be able to appeal to your customers like the real people they are, provide a more personal approach and increase loyalty and retention to your brand.

Run a **TECHNICAL SEO AUDIT AND LANDING PAGE SEO ANALYSIS** on a regular basis. Make sure your website is free of any crawlability and accessibility issues, broken links, slow time responses, incorrect URL redirect implementation, duplicate content and mobile SEO issues.

Run **A/B TESTING** of your website design (interface) elements and landing page layouts in order to understand the visitor behavior on your website and apply acquired knowledge to user experience optimization. There are four key benefits of providing a positive user experience: *a high conversion rate, a low bounce rate, superiority over competitors and a strong reputation* in the eyes of customers.

Improve your **CUSTOMER SUPPORT SERVICE**. About 47% of surveyed consumers consider fast response to enquiries and complaints as one of the key elements of a positive customer experience ([source](#)). Create a well-organized and detailed FAQ section (page) with comprehensive answers and links to relevant resources. Live chat with a call button will much improve your customer experience satisfaction rate.

## Free/Paid Tools to Assist:

- **Google Search Console** is one of the most comprehensive and trustworthy collection of tools for website owners and webmasters to monitor website performance. It provides tools for easy detection of crawl errors, HTML metadata issues, mobile usability and page speed issues etc. With the help of its “Fetch as Google” tool you can see your website pages like Google sees them.
- The **[brickSEO Analysis tool](#)** is a great SEO tool to complement the Google Search Console. It provides in-depth easy-to-read SEO reports on your sitewide issues, landing page SEO performance, page speed and mobile optimization issues, with detailed handy advice on how to improve or fix things. It can also assist you with running [landing page A/B tests](#).
- **Google Analytics** (Audience reports) provide great insight into characteristics of your visitor audience.
- **Facebook Insights** and **Twitter Analytics** provide comprehensive data on the audience that interacts with your brand on Social Media.
- **Crazy Egg Heatmaps** is one of the best tools that provides visual reports of what areas of your website are more or less clickable.
- **Touchpoint Dashboard** and **Smaply** will help you with building persona profiles and customer journey maps.
- **Survey Monkey** is the world’s most popular tool for collecting real-time customer feedback in order to find out what things your customers are satisfied with and what things need alteration.
- **Google Analytics Experiments** lets you set up to ten versions of a landing page and deliver them from separate URLs.

Backlinks, like diamonds, will never lose their value. However, proper link building and evaluation processes in 2016 will be different from those in previous years. The Penguin 4.0 Update will be released after celebration Christmas holidays. Unlike its kin versions, this Penguin version will be real time and continuous. With the update dealing with a live index, there are several **SIGNIFICANT CHANGES** that you should adjust your content and link building strategies to in order to succeed in 2016:

- ▀ Link cleaning processes will be applied immediately, so if your backlink profile has low quality backlinks, you may notice some fluctuation in your rankings;
- ▀ Once you find any toxic links pointing to your site and remove them manually or via the Disavow tool, you won't have to wait until the next Penguin update (which could take months to release). You will see a quick recovery.
- ▀ Spammy link building techniques will fall to decay, because Google will be able to detect them on the fly.

If you have not yet prepared for the upcoming Google 4.0 Penguin Update, these useful recommendations on [how to keep your backlink profile ever clean](#) will help a lot.

**Wonder what LINK BUILDING TACTICS  
will help you avoid real-time Penguin  
penalties in 2016?**



## CONTENT MARKETING

This may sound trite, but chances are that creating original, useful and timely content will bring you higher rankings and more authority than a one-word link or citation pointing to your site from a third-party publisher's article. Also, according to the [Content Marketing Institute](#), 80% of users prefer to make decisions based on article content vs. advertisements.

## LINKS FROM REVIEW SITES

Reviews and ratings almost always show up when we search for some product, service or local business. According to BrightLocal, 92% of consumers read online reviews, and 68% of respondents trust a local business more that has positive reviews. If backlinks mainly direct traffic to your site, real human experience reviews speak volumes for your products' proven quality and persuade people to select it. Build a strong customer review strategy in 2016 by delivering high level customer service.

**92%**  
of consumers  
read online reviews,  
and **68%**  
of respondents trust  
a local business  
>>

## IMPLIED LINK BUILDING

[Non-link brand citations](#) are no less an important ranking signal than a hyperlink pointing to your site. With the super smart RankBrain (hopefully this is not the Skynet apocalypse knocking at the door ☺) and an enhanced Knowledge Graph, Google now better understands ambiguous, hidden connections between search queries and plain (non-linked) brand mentions. Google uses this to establish its idea of the contextual relevance and authority of web pages.

## SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT DISTRIBUTION

Since the average amount of time people spend on social media platforms constitutes 28% of all time spent online, old school link building can smoothly shift to social share building. Does your brand have high user engagement on Facebook and Twitter? If not, reconsider your social media marketing strategy for 2016. Be sure to get lots of likes and shares for posts that have your domain name linked in them.

**28%**  
of the time  
people spend  
online is on  
social media >>

## Free/Paid Tools to Assist:



- [Hootsuite/ Buffer/ SlideShare/ YouTube/ LinkedInPulse/ Reachli](#) are great for sharing, distribution and the promotion of blog posts, presentations, videos, infographics and images on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Pinterest etc.
- The [brickSEO Backlink Quality Check tool](#) for monitoring your backlink profile quality while conducting a toxic links evaluation with necessary disavows on a regular basis.
- The [brickSEO Web Buzz Monitoring tool](#) for monitoring your website reputation and tracking non-link brand mentions.

## 4

GOOGLE IS NOT ENOUGH 

The fast growth of eCommerce features on Social Media, such as the rolling out of new ad formats and enhanced audience targeting options, has made everyone less dependent on Google search marketing. According to the recently released report from [Ignition One](#), Facebook is slowly hammering Google in the Display Ad war. While Social Media may not directly affect your website ranking profile, it has a great role in terms of brand recognition and customer relationship building.

Here is a snapshot of our Google Analytics report that shows the conversion rate per channel. You can see that Social Media has one of the highest percentages of conversions out of the total number of visits.

| Default Channel Grouping | Sessions ? ↓                                | Online Registration (Goal 8 Completions) ? | Dashboard Summary (Goal 5 Conversion Rate) ? | UX: Opened 3+ tools (Goal 12 Conversion Rate) ? | UX: SMTP (Goal 13 Conversion Rate) ?      | UX: Ranking-Scan-OK (Goal 14 Conversion Rate) ? | UX: Connected GA (Goal 15 Conversion Rate) ? |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
|                          | 176,603<br>% of Total: 100.00%<br>(176,603) | 9,208<br>% of Total: 100.00%<br>(9,208)    | 25.05%<br>Avg for View: 25.05%<br>(0.00%)    | 1.88%<br>Avg for View: 1.88%<br>(0.00%)         | <0.01%<br>Avg for View: <0.01%<br>(0.00%) | 1.89%<br>Avg for View: 1.89%<br>(0.00%)         | 2.14%<br>Avg for View: 2.14%<br>(0.00%)      |
| 1. Direct                | 47,425 (26.85%)                             | 926 (10.06%)                               | 33.26%                                       | 2.32%                                           | <0.01%                                    | 1.52%                                           | 1.09%                                        |
| 2. Organic Search        | 45,844 (25.96%)                             | 1,772 (19.24%)                             | 28.32%                                       | 1.96%                                           | <0.01%                                    | 1.74%                                           | 1.44%                                        |
| 3. Referral              | 32,709 (18.52%)                             | 2,055 (22.32%)                             | 30.16%                                       | 1.78%                                           | 0.01%                                     | 2.13%                                           | 4.03%                                        |
| 4. (Other)               | 27,937 (15.82%)                             | 2,236 (24.28%)                             | 10.01%                                       | 1.47%                                           | <0.01%                                    | 1.92%                                           | 2.35%                                        |
| 5. Generic Paid Search   | 11,151 (6.31%)                              | 901 (9.78%)                                | 7.96%                                        | 0.91%                                           | 0.00%                                     | 2.00%                                           | 2.04%                                        |
| 6. Display               | 6,221 (3.52%)                               | 194 (2.11%)                                | 4.57%                                        | 0.66%                                           | 0.00%                                     | 0.93%                                           | 0.82%                                        |
| 7. Social                | 3,567 (2.02%)                               | 1,011 (10.98%)                             | 31.09%                                       | 3.45%                                           | 0.03%                                     | 7.43%                                           | 8.72%                                        |
| 8. Branded Paid Search   | 1,702 (0.96%)                               | 109 (1.18%)                                | 31.79%                                       | 3.58%                                           | 0.06%                                     | 2.35%                                           | 2.82%                                        |

Here are several social media marketing trends that will complement your SEO strategy in 2016 and help you increase targeted audience engagement, brand awareness and better reach.



## FACEBOOK CONTENT MARKETING

Facebook is no longer just a social community network, where you connect with people and see their newsfeeds with regular updates and photos. It has grown into powerful marketing platform that provides serious advertising options, in-built video uploading and Live Broadcasting features for sharing live videos and collages, Instant Articles etc. If you have not yet tried these powerful Facebook features in your marketing strategy, it is high time you start.

- /// Boost clicks to your website
- /// Promote your FB page call-to-action (Sign Up, Call Now, Shop Now, Watch Video etc.)
- /// Boost likes of your FB business page
- /// Encourage your fans to provide reviews and ratings of your products
- /// Set up [retargeting ads](#) to reach the visitors who once visited your website
- /// Make use of the new FB [lead ads](#) in order to get high quality leads for your business without leaving Facebook.
- /// Use [carousel ads](#) for running rich image and copy ads to showcase multiple features, benefits and prices of your products. Multi product ads are great for eCommerce businesses, but other businesses can also get fantastic results from them if they are used in the right way.

## VIDEO MARKETING

The reason why you should start doing Video Marketing in 2016 is that 90% of consumers have confirmed to researchers that video helps them make buying decisions. Video content has been integrated into major social media platforms and continues to flood the web in the form of live-stream video mobile apps and cloud-based platforms like Periscope, Meerkat, Twitch, Facebook Live Streaming videos, DaCast. etc.

Build a solid Video Marketing strategy by making, publishing and promoting video content that features your product solutions and value, tutorials, explainer videos, user-generated video ([RedBull and GoPro](#) do this very well). Distribution outlets for this include YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vine etc. Each of these platforms has its own guidelines and [strategy](#) and you should create and optimize your video content in accordance with them.

Videos  
help to make  
buying decisions for  
**90%**  
of consumers **4**

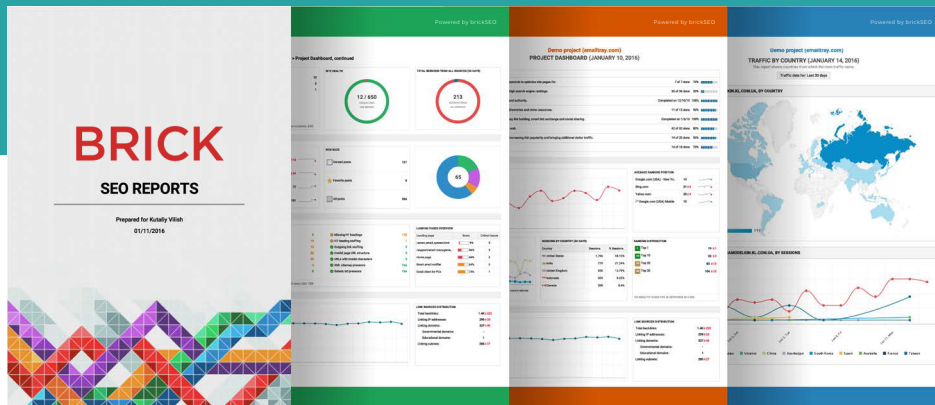
## Free/Paid Tools to Assist:

- **YouTube** is the most popular video hosting platform that allows you to cross-promote your video content channel via the different social media networks, email, Google Adwords campaigns, blog posts etc. It has its own search engine algorithm rules and if your videos are well optimized you can be ranked high in the list.
- **Brightcove** is the industry-level video content management platform that is designed for publishing, monetization, social media sharing and live streaming your video content.
- **Vimeo** is a popular video sharing site that has a smaller audience reach than YouTube, but a more engaged and artistic one. It hosts creative ad-free films and short videos, documentaries, instructional videos etc.
- **brickSEO RankTracking** is one of the most accurate keyword rank trackers that not only shows organic, paid and local SERP results, but also allows you to monitor your YouTube video rankings.



In 2016, make sure that your SEO efforts are driven by user-focused keyword research, personalization and optimization of your customer experience, quality content marketing, as well as mastering new ways of digital marketing via multi-channel social media advertising.

Hopefully this Digital Marketing strategy primer and the **brickSEO** tools will help you to serve her Majesty, the customer via Search Engine Optimization in 2016.



Bring Your 2016 SEO Strategy to Life with

# BRICK | SEO

Use Pro SEO Tools Now

Follow us on social media

