

13.4: User Experience

User Experience

The first and most important set of factors related to **user experience**, or “a person’s perceptions and responses that result from the use or anticipated use of a product, system or service” (ISO 9241-210, 2010). Please note this standard is revised: [ISO 9241-210:2019](#). To put it in very simple terms, *Do your visitors like the experience of your page, and does it meet their expectations?* Since we are looking at ranking pages, we can see expectations as answering the need associated with the search people are doing. Hence, the first set of factors on user experience relates to whether or not your page answers the searches that people are doing and does so in a way that is enjoyable for visitors.

This is a crucial element in understanding SEO: We are not optimizing pages for the sake of optimizing pages. We are optimizing pages to answer people’s specific search queries. Optimizing a page should thus be about creating the best page possible to answer a specific search query. We should optimize pages with users in mind.

This approach makes sense if we look at the specific factors above. Direct visits mean that people click on your link when they are on the SERP. We can optimize our page to maximize site visits by creating [page titles](#) and [meta descriptions](#) that incite people to click on our links. Let’s look at the screenshot below, produced by the search “how to bathe my cat: (Conductor, 2024; Moz, 2024a).

How Meta Tags are Displayed on Google SERPs



Figure 13.3 How Meta Tags are Displayed on Google SERPs

If a user is searching for “how to bathe my cat,” the goal is to find information that will help achieve this task. As a website owner (and perhaps a brand that sells bath products for cats), your objective is to provide me with a page to help me achieve my goal. By doing so, you are creating value in my life. We will discuss later on when introducing conversion-based marketing how this type of value creation by offering free content to people brings visitors and offers opportunities to turn these visitors into leads.

When creating webpages and positioning them on specific search queries, we have only a few options for communicating with consumers. Three of these are the page URL, the page title (which shows up on SERPs and is what you read in your tabs next to the website icon), and the page description. These are resources that you create when creating webpages. They are part of what is called the “[meta element](#).” Meta elements are tags used in HTML and XHTML documents to provide structured metadata about a Web page (Wikipedia, 2024b).

Ideally, you want to write your page title and page description in a way that will incite people to click on your link rather than the links of your competition. Your title and description so thus directly address a specific search query, show that the page has the information required, and provide a call to action to incite people to click on your link. In this case, the page title repeats the exact same keywords I used in my search. This is great because it makes me feel that this page is exactly what I am looking for! The description could be optimized, but it provides me with first-hand experience and the start of a tutorial on how to bathe my cat. At least I know that if I click this link, I’ll be given instructions on how to bathe my cat. Perhaps a better description could have been (keeping in mind that description should be about 150 to 160 characters so that they fully fit in SERPs) (Moz, 2024b):

Learn how to bath your cat easily! Your cat will love it! No scratches! Easy 5-step tutorial so that you and your feline buddy have a fun time.

Let’s break this down: [Start with a call-to-action] Learn how to bathe your cat easily! [Express some benefits associated with your content] Your cat will love it! No scratches! [Tell people what’s on your page] Easy 5-step tutorial so that you and your feline

buddy have a fun time.

In short, optimizing for users means having people in mind when creating your pages: what are they searching for, how can you best answer their needs and goals, and how can you easily tell them that you are doing so?

This will help address the rest of the user experience factors: time on site, page per session, and bounce rate.

Time on site is the time a user spends on your site. If your page is well-designed and readily answers a query, we can assume that users will stay and spend time on your site.

Bounce rate is the “percentage of visitors who enter the site and then leave rather than continuing to view other pages within the same site” (Wikipedia, 2024c). Again, if people have a nice experience, this should lower the bounce rate.

Because bounce rate and **page per session** (the average number of pages a person views in a given session, where session here can be substituted to a website visit (i.e., the average number of pages a person views once they click your link on a SERP) are associated with moving between pages on your website, it helps if you provide incentives for people to do so.

Typically, this is done by practicing **cross-linking** or linking pages of your own website to one another (Kaushal, 2024). We often see two ways through which websites do this.

One way is to insert links within your pages that bring visitors to other pages of your website. Take [this example for this page](#) (Horace, 2021). The page is titled "How to do a mask," and it provides a link to a face mask within the text sold by the website. If you click on this link, you will be visiting another page on the same website, increasing the average number of pages visited per session.

A cleansing mask, for example, absorbs impurities and leaves skin deeply purified, even more so than with just regular cleansing. Our [purifying face mask](#) is made with kaolin clay, which deeply purifies the skin to leave it clearer and more radiant.

Another way that websites invite you to go through multiple pages is through recommended articles. Having a lot of content is quite important in maximizing your ranking for many reasons, one of which is to keep people on your site for a longer period and having them visit many pages.

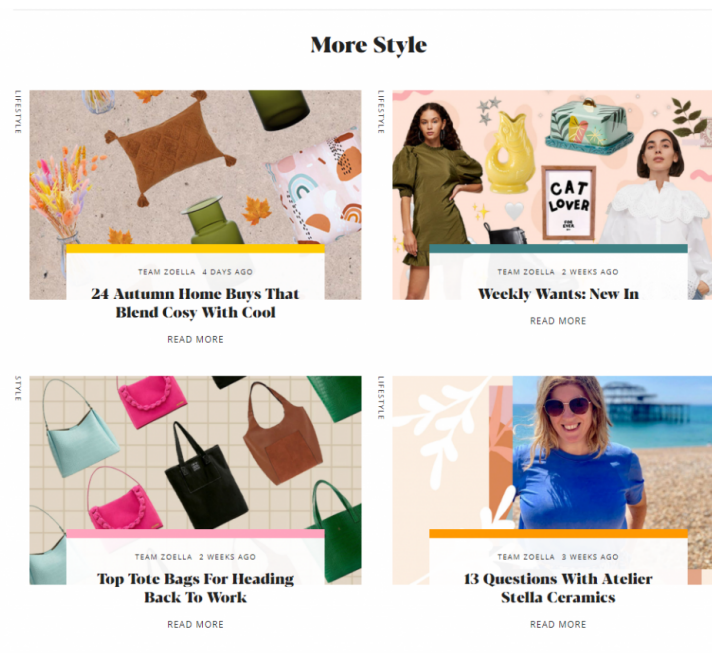


Figure 13.4 Cross-Linking Example

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