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SEO in the website creation

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis's purpose is to give the reader theoretical knowledge about the benefits, challenges and methods on building a search engine optimised website. It uses varies books and articles as its source material and has a dialog between them to have as broad image on the subject as possible.

Another purpose of the thesis is to create a website creation plan for the thesis's commissioner Erkki Pulkkinen who desires to create digital marketing for his upcoming company. The plan is in the implementation part of the thesis.

This thesis is a development task which uses Erkki's company, EP-Tone, as a case study. It finds the purpose of development, finds theoretical information and orientates the reader in to the topic, then moves on the empirical studying and finally presents the solution or the product for the development task.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The world has gone through a quick evolution and a drastic change when discovering how businesses are reaching their clients today. In the early days of marketing, getting products and services sold was purely about going to the marketplace and setting up a stand or to have a physical storefront business so that the clients can find goods and services for themselves. Social interaction through word of mouth and attraction of by passers on the streets was the marketing activity of the time. Later, development of posters and advertisement in newspapers and the technical development made advertisement more effective than what it was before. Especially advertisement on radio and television changed the world of marketing, yet the next revolution was the coming of computers and internet. This happening cultivated the advertisement and marketing field. Now marketing and advertising is cheaper, precisely targeted and it relies on uniqueness and customisation. It is positive to have a business website or a Facebook profile but, it is critical to be easily located as well stand out from competitors. Easy access, attractiveness and interaction are key factors which create competitive advantage for businesses to be successful. Being born pre-google I have personally seen and experienced this development, and realised the potential and importance of making the best of digital marketing.

1.1 Background and purpose of the thesis

This thesis concentrates on digital marketing and its theories moreover, on *search engine optimisation* (SEO). Consequently, the purpose of the thesis is to be a development task for understanding how to create a search engine optimised website, what tools to use, in which order the steps should be made and how to develop and manage business's digital marketing.

This development task and website creation plan which this thesis examines is designed for a real starting company and moreover, uses it as a case study and as an example. The company in question is a single guitar builder from the city of Kuhmo, Finland. The company's name is EP-Tone which comes from the name

initials of guitar builder Erkki Pulkkinen. Making a living from the passion for building guitars has become Erkki's long term goal thus, making this thesis help him to establish a website for his upcoming company.

1.2 EP-Tone the commissioner

EP-Tone is the brand name of the guitar builder and the name comes from his initials and "*tone*" is a musical term for sound. In the 70's while being a teenager, Erkki started building guitars as a result of wanting to have the same kind of guitar sound as Jimi Hendrix (a famous American guitarist during 1960-1970). The guitar he had did not support this heavy distortion sound which Hendrix was using so young Erkki had to alter it, and thus began his humble career as a guitar builder.

During his time in adulthood Erkki has worked as a wood boat builder and been building guitars for his own pleasure. Rate that he has been producing guitars has regularly been two instruments a year. Sales are mostly done by request. There is one music shop in the city of Tampere which has been selling Erkki's guitars. According to Erkki some customers have been asking about EP-Tone in Tampere but inconveniently the music store has answered poorly to their questions. Furthermore, since EP-Tone does not have a website, it has been hard to reach.

EP-Tone mainly produces electric and half electric guitars. Bass guitars, acoustic guitars, ukuleles, and traditional Finnish kannel (jouhikko) have also been built by Erkki. The woodwork shop where Erkki manufactures the instruments is in his home town of Kuhmo. The workshop is a humble 15m² in size and has the basic wood work equipment. The work phase is heavily depended on weather and seasons. He can only paint during the time when the weather is right and also, he has to be very careful with the air temperature and relative humidity.

Making the acquaintance with Erkki Pulkkinen furthermore, learn the business intentions of EP-Tone, happened to me personally when I got a work offer from a regional development company called Kainuun Etu Oy. The offer was dealing with consultant related work as a guitar expert helping Erkki to make a business

case from his guitar building passion. The relationship with guitars on my behalf is special since I am a guitarist therefore, having abundance of knowledge on guitars and experience playing at concerts and in studios. Even though my long unprofessional career as a guitarist, I had no education in building guitars however, it was not an obstacle. My job was to play the guitars in an authentic environment in such manner that the business case gains subject matter and insight. Two of the EP-Tones guitars became my assessment items. Later two more.

During the time I started my practical training in Kainuun Etu Oy, EP-Tone became my client. From then our partnership with Erkki grew furthermore, developing EP-Tone's business case. Afterwards, I offered to build him a website and help with marketing, there was no argument against. So therefore EP-Tone is the commissioner of the thesis. There is no website for EP-Tone nor any other form of marketing at the moment. Previously, producing the guitars has been largely for his own pleasure however, as of this moment, the desire of making a living out of it is the main goal of EP-Tone. Therefore, my thesis's ultimate purpose is to help him to search engine optimisation along with the website creation and there grow revenue for a sustainable business venture.

2 SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

Before internet and Google, searching a goods and services was about doing research. Talking to people, reading articles and going physically to places was the way to find out about things. The searcher had to go to the information, now the information comes to the searcher in matter of milliseconds. It is quite futuristic when thinking about it but, people have adopted to that quickly. If something is not in Google, it does not exist.

When a person wants to find something on the internet they are presumably using a search engine before entering any websites. Search is done before retrieving the information and for that reason, search engines should understand the website which is providing the information the audience wants to find. (Fishkin & Høenhaven 2013, 2-3.) Search engines have become like doors to the internet. For example, looking at Google, the highest ranked search engine in the USA (Ratcliff 2016). For bringing back the right information, search engines use different programs for searching the internet and then from that search they construct an index and a database of the internet (Wynne 2012, 12).

These programs or robots are called *spiders* and *crawlers* and they work by updating their database by going through websites and then reading which sites are usable for audience. The programs update their index from hypertext, headings, title tags, and *content* of the website. They also index user's previous searches and their history of websites visited. When the search engine users type in words to the search bar to get results, the search engines' index containing those words and terms and the users' associated websites is accessed. Then, search engines' algorithms show relevant results in the search page by determining which sites rank higher depending on the user and also from website's fresh content, localization, metadata, semantics, fonts displaying prominence. (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 12.) When searching something on Google, the search is not from the internet, it is from the index of Google's online list of websites. (Chapman 2015, video) For that reason, it is necessary to figure out how these search engines genuinely work nevertheless, how to adjust websites to seem attractable, readable, and accessible for them.

Search engine optimisation, (SEO) in a nut shell is constructing the website in such way that it is compelling for search engines (Dodson 2016, 7). But moreover, it describes activities which increase the number of desired visitors using the search engines. (Grappone & Couzin 2011, 13). In that sense, it is optimising the website for the customers interest, which is a new way of marketing rather than the old one which was more about pushing the products and services to mass audience. This new way of marketing which, is dealing with the fact that the marketers and website owners want the customers find them with the customer's own terms, is called *inbound marketing* which is more or less a marketing strategy thus making SEO an inbound marketing tactic. (Fishkin & Høenhaven 2013, 1-3.) SEO in the end it is about making the search engine adequate to help the customer to the right place.

2.1 Benefits of creating SEO

The benefits of completing a sound SEO strategy are numerous. First and foremost, it creates visibility to a massive audience and consequently, guiding more traffic to the site thus, ranking the website higher. Studies have shown that people click on the first to third link on the search page so the better the SEO, the bigger the traffic. Secondly, when SEO is done properly the results will be rather permanent. Paying google for ad space, the ads will be there as long as the payment is done but, when ranking higher with just SEO it is not necessary to pay for visibility. (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 5.)

The usability of the SEO by the reason of SEO and user experience go hand in hand. Today and in the future, SEO supports creating a user improved experience for example, internal links on the website pointing to relevant pages and content helps search engines crawl the site also those links result in effortless navigation on the website. Eventually SEO utilisation should not concentrate on search engines but rather on the user's demand and motivation. This broad picture of SEO's purpose in head, attracting users with interesting, engaging and unique content and design which creates amazing user experience. For example, Google enjoys mobile favourable sites and thus, ranks them higher because

smartphones have become the hottest platform for business compared sites which are fixed for regular computers. (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 5.)

Lastly, content *marketing* and *branding* improves since entrepreneurs have to give attention to what their brand looks like online and since they want to attract customers to their site they need fresh content which, then leads to *conversion*, sales and sustainable business. This is very important for small and medium sized companies (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 5).

In a nutshell the benefits are increased online traffic, cost effectiveness and brand awareness moreover, for small and medium sized companies to gain market visibility online, find new customers and primarily create sustainable business practices.

2.2 Challenges of creating SEO

SEO has a lot of benefits such as cost effectiveness and visibility, but there are some challenges as well and things which entrepreneurs should avoid. These challenges are revolving more on the website creator's attitude rather than complex technical aspects. These challenges can create problems for the entrepreneur as well.

Time constraints

There are no quick results in doing SEO when doing it the honest *white hat* way as a consequence, it takes weeks or months for positive results. Cheating which is known as *black hat* behaviour comes with penalties. (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 6.)

Keywords stuffing

The website creator should focus on quality content which incorporates a *keyword strategy*. Googles *Hummingbird* update takes the whole content into account in its algorithm, so just writing keywords without context is not going to work. (Gilmore 2017.) Keyword stuffing is about having a webpage full of keywords with little value for the user and relevance to the content. To avoid this is

to have a strategical way of putting keywords into a rich content. (Keyword Stuffing: what it is, and how to avoid it 2014).

Avoiding irrelevant, spammy content:

“*Content is king.*” That is what all the educated people in digital marketing say. Content should be for *target audience* and for search engines since, they like fresh content. It should not be misleading or nonsense. (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 6.)

Not including SEO when making website:

This means that when composing a website, the SEO aspect is left for later days. Search engine optimisation and website creation should happen at the same time. It is challenging to implement SEO after the website is already done. (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 6.)

Heavy duty sites:

Too much content makes the page load longer and work slowly. Less is more in this instance. Proper exercise of the white space, efficient site architecture, user-friendly design and relevant content are factors which helps to create the most optimal website. (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 6.)

Not making the website mobile friendly

Google is ranking mobile friendly sites higher than one's which are not and also, they are launching mobile website indexing. Luckily many sites have option already inside them to quickly fix the website for mobile friendly version. (What are the Biggest SEO Challenges for 2017? 2017.)

2.3 Search engine results page

When composing the SEO properly, it further improves the *search engine result page* (SERP) positioning. This indicates how the website in question positions itself on the Google's page when carrying out a web search. The SERP shows the *paid results* first and below them are the *organic search* results (Dodson 2016, 9-

10). Paid searches mean *pay-per-click* advertisement which a person or a company has paid to Google in order to gain visibility. (Wynne 2012, 14-15). *Google AdWords* is the program for doing this and it works by bidding on the keywords and phrases for visibility (Ledford 2008, 75). So, according to the literature; Google ranks these searches higher than webpages which have not paid Google therefore, organic search results signify that their position depends on how much Google “likes” the website and how well the search terms correspond to the website’s *keywords*. When a result of an organic search appears on the first page of Google moreover, ranking higher than the its competitors, this indicates the SEO is competent. (Dodson 2016, 9-10; Wynne 2012, 14-15; Ledford 2008, 75.)

The image shows a Google search interface for the query "digital marketing courses". The search bar is at the top, and below it are navigation tabs: "Kaikki", "Kuvahaku", "Videot", "Kartat", "Lisää", "Asetukset", and "Työkalut". Below the search bar, it says "Noin 12 700 000 tulosta (0,67 sekuntia)".

The search results are divided into two sections:

- Paid searches (highlighted in red):**
 - INSEAD Digital Marketing Prg - Taught by experts in the field**
www.insead.edu/executive-edu
 Boost your digital knowledge with our 3-day executive course. Learn more
 40+ Top Exec. Programs · Largest Exec Edu Provider · Top-tier Business School
 Courses: General Management, Corporate Governance, Leadership, Finance, Strategy
 Open enrolment programmes · Customised Programmes
 - Digital Marketing Courses - 24 Ore Business School in Rome**
bs.ilssole24ore.com/Master
 Marketing, Digital & International Strategy. Build Your Career. Apply Online Now
 Summer Schools · Study Tours · Full Time Programs · International Programs
 Courses: Digital Marketing, Luxury Management, Fashion Communication, Art Management, Digital T...
 Business School · Register · Training Programs · Scholarships & Financing
 - Social Media Strategies - sdabocconi.it**
www.sdabocconi.it/Digital_Marketing
 For Marketing Communication Online Course. Learn more!
 Innovation & leadership · Executive education · Expand your skills · Professional growth
- Organic searches (highlighted in green):**
 - Digital Marketing Course – Google Online Marketing Challenge** ✓
<https://www.google.com/onlinechallenge/dmc/> · Käännä tämä sivu
 Students that plan to undertake the Google Online Marketing Challenge are encouraged to complete the Digital Marketing Course, as the skills learned in this ...
 Prizes · Search Advertising · AdWords Certification category · Display Advertising
 - Digital Marketing Institute: Digital Marketing Courses & Training** ?
<https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/> · Käännä tämä sivu
 The Digital Marketing Institute is the global standard in digital marketing & social selling education with over 20000 professionals worldwide.
 Professional Diploma in Digital ... · Digital Diagnostic · For Students · Courses

Figure 1. Example shows paid search results and organic (Google search 2017)

Figure 1 explains the different positioning of the paid and organic search results. Paid results appear above and have been put into a red box, and the organic search results are below them and they are in a green box.

The location of the user who does the search also affects the SERP result (Dodson 2016, 10). Advertisement can be tied to a certain location. This activity is called *geo-targeting* and it means advertisers can specify where the ads show from countries and regions to IP addresses within a small radius. This feature is available in Google AdWords and it makes the targeting advertisement efficient. (Wynne 2012, 77-78). In addition to that, when the website's address and location is part of the SEO process it will connect people searching goods and services in that area to the website and, if the keywords they use have the location in the search it will also affect the SERP positively (Ledford 2008, 217). From this one can gather that, if someone for instance searches guitars from Finland, Google takes this into account thus, the searches which appears first are in Finland. However, the keywords the person uses makes more difference than the location and paid advertisement for those users who would be target market would see advertisement directed to them.

Figure 2 is showing an example of a Google search done in the city of Kajaani for S-markets. Google shows the S-markets closest to the location of the search in the SERP. This proves that the location is one factor which is to taken into consideration in making SEO.

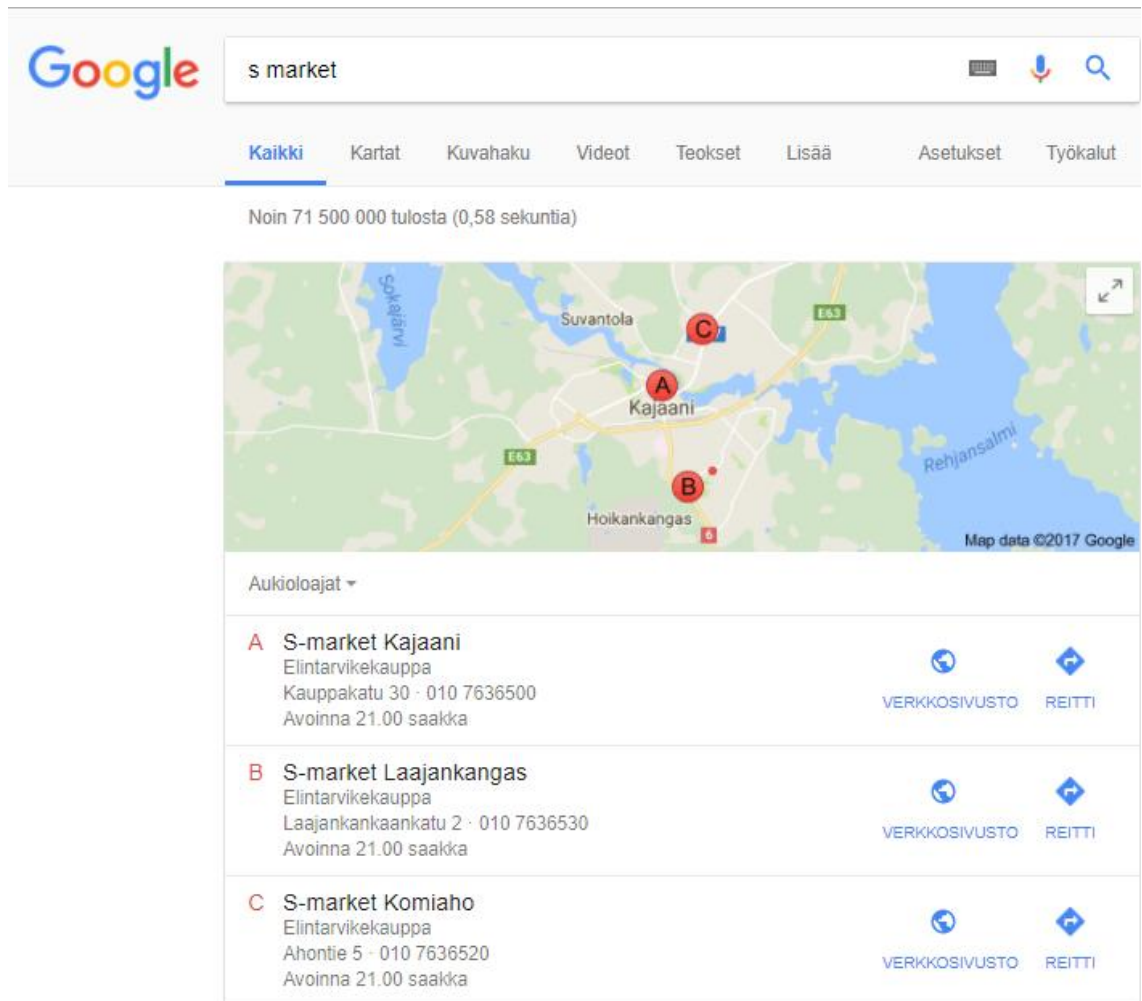


Figure 2. Example of a search which takes location in consideration. The search was done in Kajaani (*Google Search*)

2.4 Online search behaviour

Before the start of the SEO process, it is essential to understand *online search behaviour*. This can be figured out from the information which is gathered from the users who leave pieces of data behind them when they are using the internet. (Dodson 2016, 12.) This activity helps to make conclusions relating to customer needs which leads to strategic solutions for creating a successful online strategy. Dodson (2016) emphasise the importance of knowing the *three players* in the SEO process: *the searcher, the website owner, and the search engine* (Dodson 2016, 12). All these players should perform jointly for higher SERP results. The searcher should be interested in looking for the website owner's website which should embody the same keywords which the searcher uses. This signifies how essential it is to recognise the right keywords, know who the potential

customers are and also, the content of the website should be interesting and attractive for the user and furthermore, the search engine should understand what the website is about so it can show it in the search results. More about the keywords and content in later chapters. (Dodson 2016, 12).

Understanding the online search behaviour in the end comes down to knowing the customers and their needs which is eventually imperative for any successful business, moreover in a successful online marketing campaign. Wynne (2012) emphasises that it also affects marketing media, channels, messages, layout and structure, content, language and words (Wynne 2012, 4). This is true since the marketer's job is to find a way to attract the customers so, finding the methods which improve that job is imperative. Luckily, there are methods and already established ways how to get information about the search engine users. For example, people using search engines leave small amount of personal information about them behind with every search. There is a model which helps to understand and categorise visitors, it is introduced next. (Dodson 2016, 12).

2.5 Customer insights model

Dodson's model (2016) is called DMI's 5 P Customer search insights Model, it helps in understanding and categorizing customer segments. The 5Ps in this model are:

Person. This consists of information dealing with person's socioeconomic information, such as; sex, age, nationality, language, socioeconomic group.

Place. Where this person is from? Country, region is in the city or rural area.

Product. This information indicates what the person is looking for when they write their search on the search bar of some search engine. The search can be: a topic, interest, subject, the need or pain which the web search could solve.

Priority. What is the urgency of the need or pain or product they search

Purchase. How and where users are buying and what stage of purchasing are they in. If a person writes a date when they are needing a certain product or service. (Dodson, I. 2016, 12-15.)

Wynne (2012) highlights that building a customer profile is important. It also suggests customer profile should be done before finding out about the search behaviour which is of course smart if the website does not yet exist so, user data is quite hard to get. The emphasis is in mapping the user, focusing on building the customer's persona. For doing this, there are several factors in consideration:

Age	Education level
Experience level	Technical, mechanical and industrial ability
Online aptitude	Relationship status
Financial status	Products they buy
Publications they read	Where they network, social media
Channels they visit, TV, radio, internet.	

(Wynne 2012, 5.)

The search result depends on these factors and the most relevant search result appears highest. This emphasises that the customer search behaviour is important to examine when trying to understand the customer when completing SEO. It is about forecasting what the possible customers are looking for and

how, and the understanding who the customers are and what kind habits they have online and how to deliver their needs and solve their problems so that they turn from website users into loyal customers. (Dodson 2016, 13).

***Google Analytics** is a freemium web analytics service offered by Google that tracks and reports website traffic. (Wikipedia 2017)

3 FOUR STEPS IN SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

According to Dodson (2016) the search engine optimisation has been divided in to four steps which are introduced in this part individually. The four steps are; Goals, On-page-optimisation, Off-page-optimisation and Analysing.

3.1 First step: Goals

The first step is *setting goals*. Before setting goals the benefits of making a successful SEO should be clear, acknowledge what is achievable and what are the benefits of the SEO (Dodson 2016,14). The benefits of making SEO was introduced in the chapter 2.1 of the thesis.

The goals vary from the situation and needs of the business and the customer therefore, knowing the benefits from those specific goals helps to set them in a realistic but also challenging way for gaining the highest value back from the SEO efforts (Ledford 2008, 17). The goals have value for the both the business and the users and should acknowledge the pains and needs of both (Dodson 2016,14). From the literature it is translatable that in this thesis's case the customer knows little to nothing about EP-Tone and the company does not have enough sales to sustain itself with selling its products and so for that reason setting a goal such as doing the website's SEO properly would benefit both. (Dodson 2016,14; Ledford 2008, 17.)

Consequently, goals are the key drivers for creating a SEO strategy. Dodson points (2016) that goals should be tangible, realistic, and measurable so that the follow up becomes easier to make, therefore motivating to direct the daily tasks more carefully, rather than just going forward without a clear plan. (Dodson 2016, 15). Likewise, Wynne (2012) points out that goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timed, moreover breaking the goals into smaller ones. This makes sense because it is about efficiency and practicality. It seems that completing the SEO by following a clear schedule with as any kind of daily activity is beneficial.

Goals can vary from business to business depending on their current situation yet engagement, visibility, and conversion are the most common goals. *Conversion* is the most valued goal, meaning the interaction between the user and the website moreover, the action what the website wants the visitor to do, making conversion the reason why the website exists (Ledford 2008, 28). Conversion by definition is: *“A completed activity that contributes to the success of the business. This could be represented by a range of different things; for example, a sale, or signing up for a newsletter”*. (Dodson 2016, 291.) Usually goals link back together meaning that, goals such as online visibility for example, advertisement leads to conversion and engagement leads to back visibility. All these aspects are desirable for online business, but it is the website creators’ choice which goal is first.

Here are goals and benefits which are good to acknowledge when doing SEO.

<p>Engagement. This means that people are visiting the page and spending time there.</p>
<p>Conversion. People are doing what the website is there for them to do. This can be sales, subscriptions, likes, shares.</p>
<p>Visibility. Attracts people to the website sometimes just from curiosity or they have been affected by the marketing of the website. This leads to more traffic and hopefully to conversions.</p>
<p>Reputation. With good reputation, the users do the marketing for the website. Reputation carries far if it’s strong, reliable, and approachable. Bad reputation can destroy even the strongest brands.</p>
<p>Market leadership. Standing out from the competition will make the listing higher and reputation stronger.</p>
<p>Competitive advantage. Making sure that SERP is higher and engagement is more attracting than competitors. Making them hard to be on that same level.</p>

(Dodson, I. 2016, 15)

3.2 Second step: On-Page-Optimisation

After the goals are clear the second step in the SEO process is *on-page-optimisation*. (Dodson 2016, 16). This means all the technical activity inside the website to make it attractive for search engines moreover, helping them to understand what is inside the website. Technically it means, that the code on the website such as, title tags, keywords, headings, content, image optimisation and internal links are part of the SEO thus making the SERP show higher result.

(Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 16.) According to Dodson (2016) in the beginning of on-page-optimisation is the *keyword research*. This will affect heavily on the other elements of the page such as content, style, and other elements. (Dodson 2016, 16.)

3.2.1 Keyword research

Keywords can be words or phrases which have a connection to the product or service in question (Dodson 2016, 17). For example, EP-Tone's website could have keywords such as: "Finnish handmade guitars", "guitars", "Finnish custom design" and "high quality instrument". Right keywords significantly cause the website to show better SERP ranking when the keywords match with the search terms which potential customers use for finding a website. Moreover, *long-tail keywords*, also known as non-competitive keywords, are more specific keywords or phrases than ordinary keywords (Ledford 2008, 94). Using long-tail keywords makes the search accurate and helps the customer to find what they are looking for. With long-tail-keywords, *niche* keywords give also opportunities to stand out. (Soulo 2017) The case mentioned above is a sound example of using long-tail and niche keywords considering that the people who are interested in handmade guitars in Finland are more likely to search with those terms, rather than just using a single word such as: "guitar" in their search. Besides, using long-tail keywords lowers competition, since they are specific search words which rule out more websites therefore, making the search enhanced for higher chance to solve the user's problem (Ledford 2008, 94). Therefore, long-tail keywords guide qualified traffic to the website.

There are two ways for doing keyword research, they are online and offline. A few offline methods for finding suitable keywords are brainstorming, existing marketing collateral, customer surveys and listening to customers. These two techniques come about useful and simple ways to find the right keywords. *The offline keyword research* relies on already existing words in the company's terminology. The technique is convenient and less time consuming as there is no need to introduce completely unfamiliar words for the customer. For instance, already existing marketing material, such as posters, leaflets and articles are convenient for finding keywords which are already used in some form of marketing therefore existing in the minds of the customers. Additionally, finding which words relate to the customers their ideas should be heard by organizing customer surveys together with simply listening to the customers. Even if it may be the most time consuming, it definitely gives accurate results and is very direct. (Dodson 2016, 17-18.)

Online keyword research is a more technical way of finding keywords than offline. It is about using different programs and tools and commonly using and testing the search engine. *Google's autocomplete* is a simple way to test online keywords, especially long-tail keywords. When typing a word into Google's search, it will automatically try to finish a sentence or give other words that relate to the subject. This gives logical and relatable keyword ideas which are already favourable to Google. (Dodson 2016, 18-19.)

Another way is to use Google AdWords' *keyword planner*. It starts at first by creating a profile for the website and then deciding a budget, which varies from the need of the user. After creating the profile, it gets interesting when trying the actual keyword planner. When deciding the keywords and the location of the target market, clicking the *get ideas* will report top listings for keywords which were used by people searching something online and it gives suggestions on other keywords. Also, once doing this the listing shows *average monthly search* and the *search term*. From these factors, it is easy to determine which words have high competition and low competition. This helps with getting ideas for keywords. Keywords with low competition listing the possibility of page-one listing on the SERP is higher (Dodson 2016, 18-19.)

Th figure 3 is showing an example of a keyword research with the Keyword planner. It shows monthly searches on those terms, what is the competition level and how much the bid should bidding be. Also, it gives suggestions on keywords based on the search term.

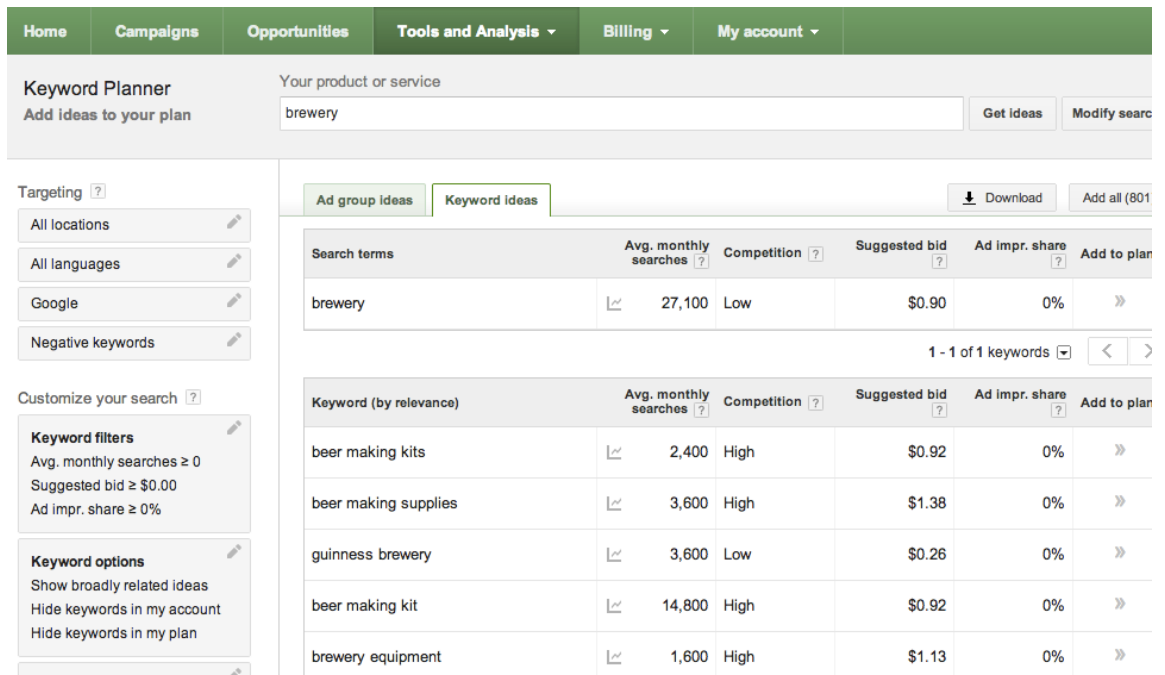


Figure 3. Example of keyword ideas on keyword planner. Case brewery (Google Trends)

Google Trends is also one of Google’s useful tools for monitoring how online searches on Google change. This tool can tell if some keyword is losing popularity or is some keyword gaining popularity thus with this information, it is easier to stay ahead of the competition. (Dodson 2016, 19).

Also, one clever way of finding keywords is to go to forums and Q&A websites (Keyword Research Ideas for SEO, 2016). From there following and engaging in conversation the website creator is changing the latest topics of day the talking to possible customers. From there retrieving the vocabulary of the target audience is very valuable.

3.2.2 Content of the website

Content can be a lot of things and it might be expensive or cheap to produce. The important thing to consider is that will the customers enjoy, like and share the content. Here are most common and important types of content:

1 News and blog content

This type of content simple and cheap to produce. News and blogs can be posted in a different variety of times, but it should be orderly. A blog post's length should be around 1000 words and news article's length about 2500 words. So, if there is not that much time to post daily, maybe once or twice a week would be more suitable.

2 Features, guides and interviews

This is a shorter form of a blog post and does not need to be as regular as blogs with the posting time. These types of posts are informative in addition to a result of customer questions, issues or the company maybe announcing an article about the company. Also, these posts can tell special information dealing with features of products and services.

3 White papers

These imply detailed data regarding the products, services or researches about the company which are downloadable on PDF from the website.

4 e-books

E-books are similar to white papers. Books have naturally more information and are bigger entities than white papers nevertheless the basic concept is the same.

5 Infographics

These are graphical representations of research data and facts which are complex when written down using only words. These usually are of interest to other companies and experts of some field of business.

6 Video

This might be the most important and popular type of content with a large number of business. Videos are an excellent way of telling stories, informing and engaging customers. In videos the image, sound and text work together to forming an effective way of sharing content. On the other hand, videos are demanding and time consuming to produce however, it is worth the effort. Videos should made so that it can be shared in multiple platforms of social media and playable with variety of devices.

7 Photographs

“A picture tells more than thousand words”. With pictures, it is effortless to share information and add value to a story also, it makes the shared content simply more attractive than just words. (Ryan 2014, 312-314)

3.2.3 Content Strategy

When creating content, a sufficient plan and a strategy is significant considering being without a plan. There is a danger that the content is not consistent and lacks image and is not serving the user. (Ledford 2008, 178.) When planning the content strategy, the first thing is to determine.

- ❖ Who do I want to target?
- ❖ Is there a specific topic or niche where we want to excel?
- ❖ What do I want those I target to associate with our brand?
- ❖ What information are my customers looking for?
- ❖ What type of content do my customers look for?
- ❖ How can I keep existing customers happy?
- ❖ How can I attract new customers?
- ❖ What do we like/dislike about competitors' content strategy?
- ❖ Is there anything I do not want to highlight about our brand?

- ❖ What overall business objective I want to achieve from my content marketing?

(Ryan 2014, 309).

These questions help finding the right content for the right audience and also getting new audience. The idea is that the content is serving both the content creator and the content user, so creating the right content is critical. If the content is bad, people will never visit the website again (Ledford 2008, 178). The focus on also marketing the content should be an action itself. This is called *Content marketing* and the idea is to make the customer more valuable informed about the products and services using the content. It is highly focused way of marketing to a certain target group and works as an open channel between the customers and the company (Laurea, University of Applied Sciences, 2016.) This form of marketing is recommended for EP-Tone as well since, its products and customer segment are niche consequently, marketing the content whether it is in a form of informational videos of the products or blogs about the process of building the guitars, it is a form of content marketing and it gives both product descriptions, story-telling and entertainment for a targeted audience.

3.2.4 Optimisation process

After finding the right keywords and the website creator has started producing content, the next step in the on-page-optimisation process of the SEO is to put those keywords in their right places. This does not mean repeating the keywords multiple times and putting the same keywords on every page because this noxious activity is called *keyword stuffing* and above all, the search engines condemn this. Keyword stuffing is black hat behaviour and this kind of demeanour could result in backlash from Google. (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 7). Black hat behaviour is sinister and it trusts in results in the short term, ultimately these tactics are dealing with tricking and cheating. (Ryan 2014, 137.)

So, where do all these attractive keywords belong? Their place is in content, headings, in the metadescription, the title and in the tags but before inserting the keywords anywhere, the first thing to do is a calculated structure as well as a

clear hierarchy of the website so that it is easy to navigate by both the user and the search engine (Dodson 2016, 22). This means that there should not be over than four levels of pages with content for the reason that, it might be difficult for the search engines to read it through and there is a risk that customers do not bother to look any further and probably *bounce* right back to the search engine to find a website which are easier to navigate.

The figure 4 explains that the main page or the home page is where the navigation starts, then it flows from the main sections to the subsections where the actual content usually is. If the content on the website is not appealing to the user they are likely to bounce. This affects the SERP negatively, since Google thinks high *bounce rate* indicates a lousy website. Keeping the user on the website is the next step of the optimisation process. (Dodson 2016, 22).

The user is not going to the website only to stay there for a little while once they have had the trouble of finding the website as they want to receive something

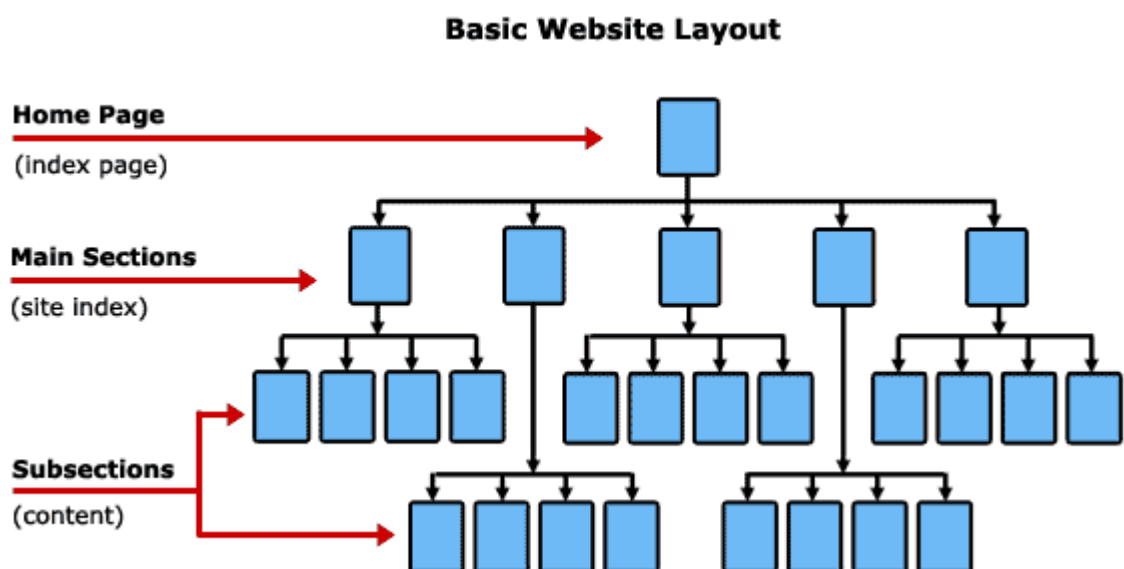


Figure 4. Example of a website structure (<http://mickeyengel.com/cs/miscLessons/webHosting.php?course=cs1>)

from it. This something is content. Content in any relevant website should be up-to-date, unique and relevant. This means not just text, but also other media such as videos, images, slides, anything which might interest the user for staying a little longer. (Dodson 2016, 20-21.)

Technical mechanisms

After the keyword research and website structuring, keywords should be inserted into the technical mechanisms of the website. Here are the main places where keywords should be also, few other technical tips for better SEO. All these actions help in SEO process making the page navigation easier both for the users and the search engines.

URLs

(Uniform Resource Identifier) It is the address of the website. Adding keywords in the URL and *title tag* helps the search engine to understand the website and possibly rank higher (Ledford 2008, 10). Besides, the address appears tidy when instead of leaving symbols such as “%&145” there should be keywords which furthermore, helps to remember the page’s name. (Dodson 2016, 22). Here is an example:

“EP-Tonehandmadeguitars.fi/index.php?option_fi_content&view=article&video=145&item=34% “

“EP-Tonehandmadeguitars.fi/guitars/videomaterial/acoustic-guitar-demo-song/”

The later example is more readable than the upper one giving relevant information about the website and the destination of the webpage’s link.

Page names

Name of the website should be relevant and devoted to the content as well work as a label which is meaningful to the targeted user, easy to remember and unique. Deciding the name is not necessary easy but it would help to look at the keywords which are already in operation. (Dodson 2016, 22-23).

Meta tags

Meta tags are in the *HTML* which is an abbreviation of *hypertext mark-up language*. These are the codes, links, and tags which the website consists of. HTML is accessible when right clicking the website where currently on and then clicking the *source code*. This code is seen in the figure 5. Keywords in HTML should be in at least in the *title tag* and *description tag* as seen in the figure 7 for the worth of higher SERP (Ledford 2008, 10). On the other hand, Google recently

confirmed that meta keywords and description are not ranking factors anymore, but they work more as an advertising element giving a preview about the website. (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 16). These keyword additions assist the optimisation and can lead to higher ranking in the search engine, but wasting time on writing the HTML full of keywords is not recommended (Dodson 2016, 23).

```

<html lang="en">
<head id="Head1"><title>
  Finland's most proactive UAS - Kajaani University of Applied Sciences
</title><meta http-equiv="Content-type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8" /><meta
name="description" content="Kajaani University of Applied Sciences - Finland's most
proactive UAS! KAMK is a proactive, genuinely international university with a strong
regional and national profile. An international learning and development community
consisting of approximately 2000 students and over 200 experts operates in its own
compact campus area located in Kajaani's impressive natural surroundings." /><meta
  
```

Title tag in the source code

Description tag in the source

Figure 5. Example of KAMK's source code and meta tags (Kamk's website's meta description)

Kajaani University of Applied Sciences: Finland's most proactive UAS ?

<https://www.kamk.fi/en> ▼ Käännä tämä sivu

Kajaani University of Applied Sciences - Finland's most proactive UAS! KAMK is a proactive, genuinely international university with a strong regional and ...

This is the page's title

Description code is in the search

Figure 6. Example of meta tags on the search page (Kamk's website's Google search result)

Breadcrumb navigation and anchor text

These actions make it easier for the user to navigate through the website and find next content to enjoy. The breadcrumb navigation is like a trail so that the user knows where they are on the website and from which direction they got there as seen in the figure 7. *Anchor text* links content for the user and makes the transition easier to the next page or topic. Commonly they are in the form of "click here" or "here is more information about our brand". (Dodson 2016, 23-24.)

Figure 7 Example of Kamk's breadcrumb navigation

On-page headings

For completing a clear structure for the website, dividing the website into headings assembles a coherent design. Headings guide the users and the search engine for improved navigation of the website. These headings compose from primary or main headings which educate the reader about the main topic and from subheadings which give extra value to the content or information about the content. (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 16). The paragraphs and headlines should incorporate important keywords so that they draw the user to read the topics. Also, writing skills like highlighting words and the style of writing are essential when creating the content to the website. (Dodson 2016, 24.)

Images and alternative text

Alternative text describes what is in the images on the website. The benefit of doing this might be for some users who are visually impaired. They can read about the image or use some program to translate the description of the image to them so that they know what the image is about. Additionally, describing images for the search engines increases SERP and furthermore, it could match someone's search terms. On top that, it is an opportunity to add keywords into the image files and alternative text. (Dodson 2016, 26.)

Social sharing

Social sharing is about making connections between different social media and online platforms for example, enabling the website sharing on Facebook which is a useful feature. This creates free visibility and search engines typically rank the website higher when they have bigger *social media footprint*. (Dodson 2016, 26.)

Site map

HTML site map is an important technical aspect of SEO. It is a page which has the structure of the website and it has text links to every other page in the

website. Search engines can then easily go through the index of the website and then give better results for users who doing a search, thus ranking the website even higher. (Dodson 2016, 26.)

Outbound and internal links

Internal links are key feature of SEO. These links guide the user to other pages and domain on the website. The webpages should be easily accessed and not more than three clicks away from the home page according to SEO-related research. Anchor text and breadcrumbs mentioned above are internal linking. *Outbound links* are links to another websites or domain. They are used if for example, there is topic word in some article which would take a lot effort and space to explain, so easier would be to have a link somewhere it is explained already. (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 16.)

Figure 8 explains visually what on-page-optimisation is looking in SEO and what points effect the process of it (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 8).

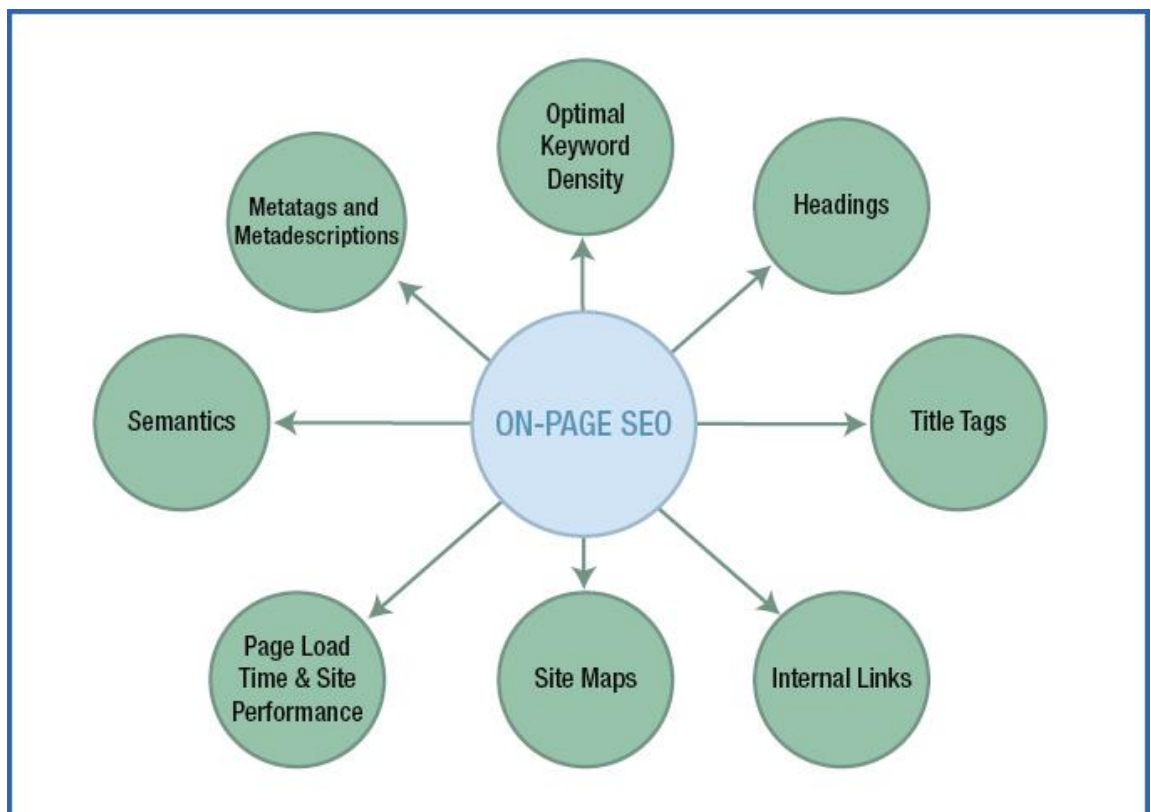


Figure 8. On-page-optimisation picture (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 8).

3.3 Third step: Off-Page-Optimisation

After completing the optimisation within the website and fresh entertaining content has been uploaded the third step is the *off-page-optimisation*. It is referring to methods for creating a better positioning in the organic search results meaning all the activity which is happening outside of the website. Key terms in this function are *link format*, *link building* and *social linking*. (Dodson 2016, 34.)

Links which link webpages to another are *inbound links* (Dodson 2016, 35). This kind of linking is significant, since it creates social visibility and affects the ranking in SERP. Search engines trust the website when it has inbound links and they determine this trust from the quality and quantity of the links. (Hussain, Shuey & Devaney 2016, 21). Links in this manner mean that the website has more channels in to it and have so called partners who are enjoy working together.

According to Dodson (2016) there are few another different link formats which are useful to recognise.

Uninformative links mean the link does not tell where it leads. It might just say *click here*. Usually the user has an idea where the link leads and commonly it is noted on text before the link that where it is transferring the user. *URL link* is simply a link to the website such as www.eptonecustomguitars.com. *Topic link* such as *guitar tuning* states the topic of the link therefore, it is a practical way of linking pages with the same subject matter together. Topic links can be also formed from anchor text. *Keyword link* is comprised of keywords. It is an excellent way of inserting more keywords and enabling better SERP and SEO. In a way, all the links should have keywords in them and usually have. (Dodson 2016, 36.)

Link Building

There are links inside and outside of the website but where exactly should these links outside the website be? They should be in such places where potential customers spend their time online such as on influential blogs, social media, and news media. (Dodson 2016, 36.) Bloggers and social media have authority in their links for example, if some guitar magazine on their Facebook page or a

guitarist who has a blog would have a link to EP-Tone's website it would declare the website creditable and interesting. Although the quantity of the links effect the SERP, *directories*, which are pages which only have links to websites, are not recommended. Search engines understand this and remove such pages from its index so, these kinds of links do not affect the SERP in any way.

(Hussain, Shuey & Devaney 2016, 23) Also *doorway pages* and *link farming*, as with directories pages are devious black hat activities and search engines punish this kind of dishonest short-term SEO practice. (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 7.)

The right honest long-term way would be focusing on building links which are in the same territory and subject matter of the website so that already right users and potential customer would see the links in related sites or sites which share the topic interest. Local sites and authoritative websites are also favourable places to have links to the website. Inbound links in those places act as a recommendation from those places to the website also, not forgetting, search engines rate those websites higher which have more inbound links than others. (Dodson 2016, 36-37).

One important thing in off-page-optimisation is *social sharing*, which is when people share the content of the website, linking it on social media and other internet platforms. (Dodson 2016, 38). In addition to free marketing and advertising, it increases digital footprint making it important that all content is possible to share across different social media platforms easily and fast. In addition, making people engage in the content by creating campaigns, questionnaires etc. for boosting visibility and brand recognition. Why leave interesting content only on the website? In the figure 9 there are off-page-optimisation factors pointed out which when used makes the SEO better (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 8).

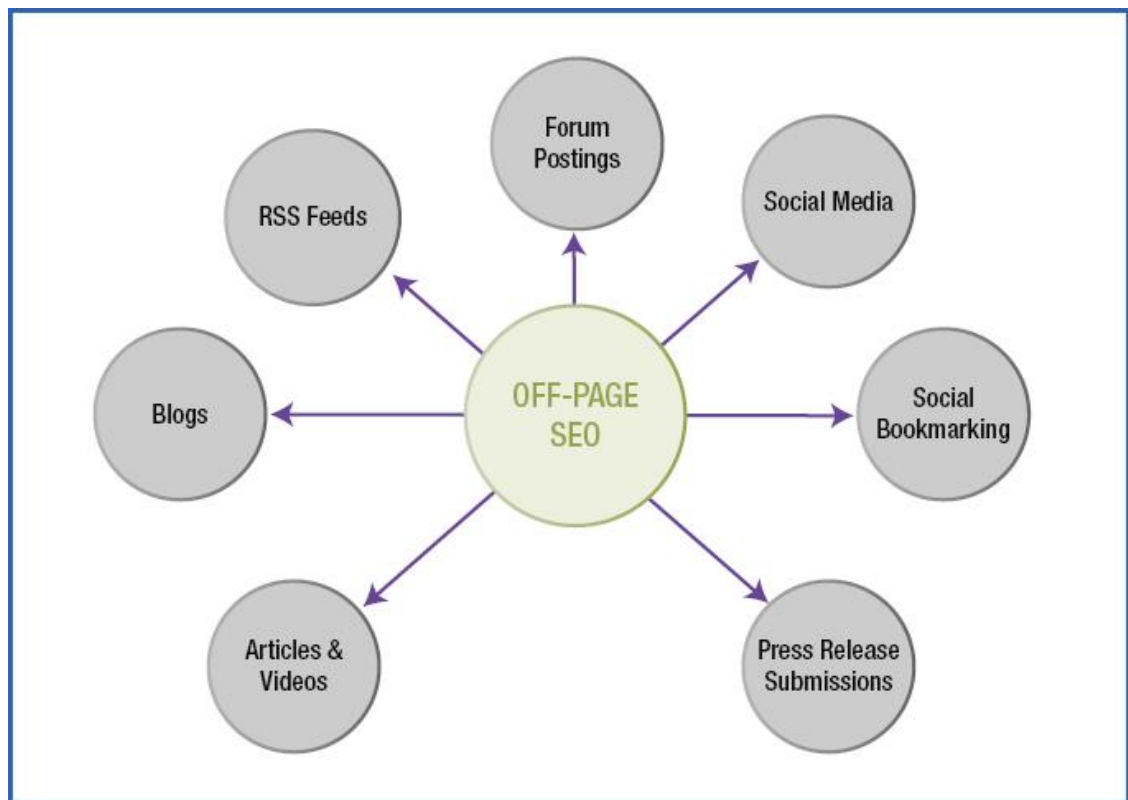


Figure 9. Picture which visualize off-page-optimisation (Shenoy & Prabhu 2016, 8).

3.4 Fourth step: Analysis

When the website structure is clear, keywords and sentences are in their right place and there are links everywhere making it impossible for the user to avoid the fresh and interesting content, what happens next? Is all the challenging work done? No, before the cycle of the SEO process starts all over there is one last step left, which is *analysis*.

The fourth step of the SEO process is *analysis* the key performance indicators (KPIs) of the website (Dodson 2016, 15, 39-40). This comes down to following the *online traffic* on the website and interpreting the data of the website, whether the online campaigns, advertising and digital marketing plans work. Are people spending time on the website, reading content and *engaging* in it and are they making *conversion*? (Ledford 2008, 271) Basically, it is reviewing the data, analysing it and deciding what changes should be done to get better results in the SERP, organic online traffic and conversion. Also in this this stage, it is time to

go back to the beginning and visually examine the goals, and compare the results with them. (Dodson 2016, 38-39).

For this follow up *Google Analytics* program is great. It is free to use and it gives a lot of diverse and detailed data about the KPIs. Before starting to make any changes to the website, the statistical information should be counted. (Ledford 2008, 272-275.) Here are few important KPIs and factors to look at when analysing:

Average number of visitors.	It is possible to track the number of visitors coming to the website daily, weekly and monthly. This information is convenient for understanding if the SEO actions are working in gaining an audience. (Ledford 2008, 273)
Page Views	The view count for displaying the whole page on the website. From this one can deduce if some webpage is more popular than another. (Aletsch & O'Brien 2013, 106.)
Session	This means how much time users spend on the website (Aletsch & O'Brien 2013, 106).
Bounce Rate	Means that users go on a single page and then leave. Not necessarily a negative aspect since, it might indicate that the user found what they were looking for. The session time reveals are the users spending time on the webpage. (Aletsch & O'Brien 2013, 106.)

Click-Through Rate	Indicates what percentage of users click the link after they have seen it. For instance, the first link on SERP has a higher click through rate (CTR). (Aletsch & O'Brien 2013, 107.)
What is the SERP position?	This information tells how Google understands the website and shows it when doing a search moreover, telling how it ranks among other sites. With the right on-page and off-page optimizing the SERP position gets higher. Also from this one can decipher which sites rank higher and then figure out a way to out rank them. (Dodson 2016, 40.)
Keywords	This factor tells how the website was discovered. It tells the keywords and phrases that users type when finding the website. It more helps with keyword optimisation. (Dodson 2016, 40.)
Conversion.	Which content is gaining conversion? Conversion means the activity which the website wants the user to do. Is it sales, newsletters, competition, emails? (Dodson 2016, 40.)
Traffic.	It is possible to follow where is the traffic coming (<i>click path</i>) from and what this traffic is. How many users, which social group, location, which referring sites etc. (Dodson 2016, 40.)

From all this information, it can be deciphered that can the website be found, how visible it is who are the people visiting it and what they want from the website.

After discovering how the website performs, a report concerning the outcome is smart (Dodson 2016, 40). It is an imperative part of analysing process in the long scale and helps understanding patterns in online behaviour hence making upcoming online campaigns effortless to do. Upcoming meaning that SEO actions never stop, whether it is looking at user data or competition, it is an ongoing process. (Ledford 2008, 275.) When managing a website, it should be a regular thing to do follow up measurements, create links, create additional content, grow a following and stay fresh. A calendar is a recommendable thing to do.

4 CASE STUDY

This chapter explains what is a development task which development task approach was used in this thesis. My development task was to create a website creation plan for my commissioner Erkki Pulkkinen. I used the case study approach in the development task.

4.1 What is development task?

Development tasks are used in companies, enterprises and other organisations to create new modes of operations, processes, products and services from the need of the environment or from the need of the companies (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2014, 11). It is about solving practical problems or develop new processes and create new knowledge for practical working life. These things are also development task's goals. Information gathering in a development task is done systematically and then critically assessed so that the practical knowledge is supporting the development task. It is basically a process of creating something new. It starts from planning then it goes to implementation and finally to assessment. It is important to recognise which is the target of the development. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2014, 17-23).

The steps for the creating a development task process according to Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti (2014) is divided to six steps. They are:

- 1 Recognition of the development task and setting the first goals.
- 2 Familiarisation of the development target in theory and in practice.
- 3 Defining the development task and trimming the development target.
- 4 Gathering the knowledge base and planning the approach and methods.
- 5 Implementing and publishing the development task in different forms.
- 6 Assessing the development process and outcomes.

4.2 Website creation plan's development

My research development work had its start when I was talking to my client, Erkki Pulkkinen and we figured out that his upcoming company would need some marketing work. As of this point it was still unclear whether the development task's full goal was to create digital marketing campaign or just a search engine optimised website. It was later defined more specifically to focus to the SEO and maybe incorporate some digital marketing aspects or strategies inside the SEO process such as content marketing. In the theory of development task, it is critical to pinpoint the goals of the development task before starting the process of information gathering. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2014, 32-32).

The approach which I decided to use was at first was a case study. Since I had a real company to whom this thesis was appointed to and this development work was to create a website for the company it falls to the category case study development task. Case study's purpose is to produce some development proposal and the development task can have an example company what to look while doing the development task (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2014, 52). This case study is focusing on the problem that EP-Tone does not have any marketing for its company so, creating a website therefore answering to the need of the environment and current time where digital marketing is necessary in order to have sustainable business.

Case study started from stating the problem or development task which is to be answered. After stating the development task or problem the case study journey went into orientating and researching theory about the problem's or development task's phenomena. Then gathering the empirical material and analysing it further helped to create the solution for the problem or a model or development proposal for the development task. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2014, 53-54.)

In this case the problem was not having a website or the need to have one. It fits in to the case study approach of development task. Then orientating to the topic was done with reading and researching around the topic of website creation, moreover focusing on the SEO aspect of the website creation and also structuring the main focus of the thesis and also the development task. Then the empirical information gathering was done using open interviews and meetings with Erkki where

we then decided more carefully about the final outcome of the development task's purpose. From these meetings it was also crucial to realise that which information was not serving Erkki's needs and which topic needed more research. This helped eventually the building the solid theory part and moreover the final plan implementation part. From these altogether the final implementation plan emerged and it was also reviewed with the case company EP-Tone.

The development task of thesis also resembles the constructive research approach since it gives a concrete solution to the development task or problem of the case company. But since the website was not fully operational it falls short from some of the factors of constructive research which are testing and assessing the concrete results of the development task. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2014, 65-67.)

4.3 Schedule of the development task

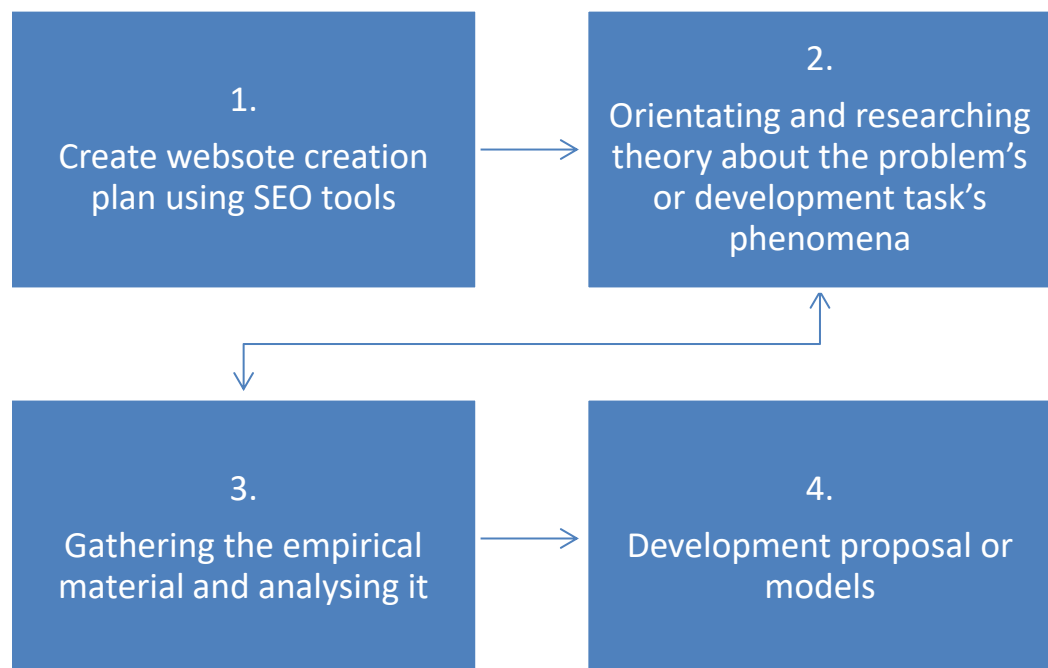


Figure 10. Case study approach

1. Identifying the development task or problem

Around the time when I first met with Erkki in December 2016, but after talking about the business endeavour he wanted to pursue the problem of not having a

website arose and it was in February 2017. At that time, I was looking for a thesis subject because my plan was to start writing the thesis in the summer of 2017. So, I started ideating the thesis plan slowly in the spring. Then in the first meeting with Elina Jääskeläinen the development task was identified more specifically. It changed from creating a full digital marketing plan to create a plan to build a search engine optimised website.

2. Orientating and researching theory about the problem's or development task's phenomena

When the topic of the development task was clear I did research on SEO. I read literature, watched videos and talked about the phenomena with people. I was writing a sound theory packet for supporting the future website creation plan. This happened during the summer and autumn. I had a break during June and August because of work.

3. Gathering the empirical material and analysing it

This process happened simultaneously with the theory gathering. We had meetings with Erkki during the summer and autumn which then defined what necessary steps were to improve and which information was not in the interest of him. In these meetings we also agreed on the website creation plan and were drawing sketches of the plan and discussing which steps and actions are important. During the meeting in October it came clear that the actual creation of the website was not happening in time. So, then after doing the plan it was reviewed with the theory part so that all the steps would resonate what is highlighted in the theory of making the search engine optimised website.

4. Development proposal or models

After carefully reviewing the theory with the empirical information, the actual plan was then constructed. This happened in November.

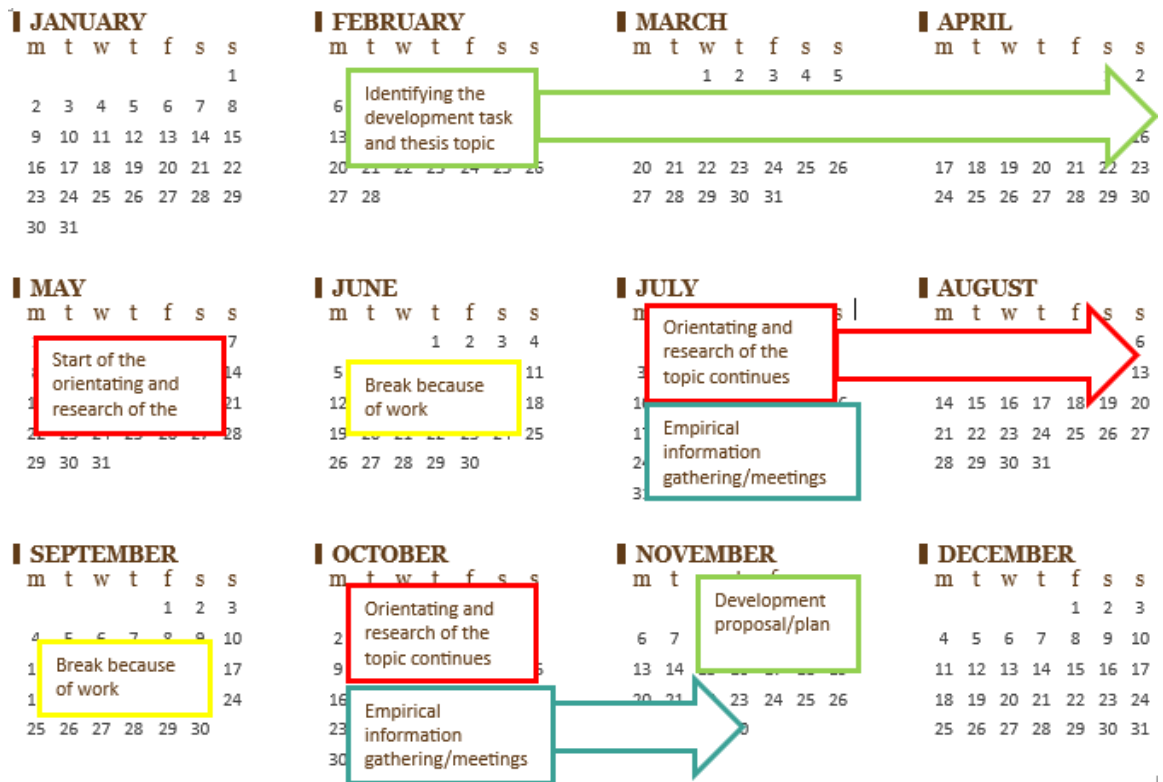


Figure 11. Schedule of the development task

The figure 11 is explaining my schedule for writing the thesis and creating the development plan. It started going forward in February when Erkki agreed to that I would write him a digital marketing plan and help him with website creation. Then in May I started gathering information and orientating myself the to the topic. Also, that time I adjusted my development task aim to only focus on SEO and website creation. Then during the time on summer 2017 I met with Erkki on several occasions and also research on the topic. I had some work brakes but the thesis was going forward nonetheless. Then on October the development task had its final direction set, when it came clear that the website creation was not going to happen this year. That is when I only focused on the plan and not making the actual web-site. Then on November the plan was ready and accepted by the commissioner.

5 ROAD MAP FOR CREATING THE WEBSITE

The implementation part of thesis starts with identifying the objectives. This helps the website creator to understand what things are achievable with the proper actions of making the website. After that the thesis goes on to more specific plan in the form of step programs and timeline charts of the actions which are recommended and backed by the theories mentioned previously in the thesis.

5.1 Objectives of creating the website

The objective of creating the website in this case is mainly for gaining visibility for the business. In addition, secondary objectives are strengthening the brand image and recognition through increased attention. The idea is to raise the awareness of the company, acquire recognition of its high-quality products and elevate the company's potential as a respected producer of handcrafted guitars in Finland. The marketing should not be limited only to Finland but to all across the globe, for the reason that the purpose is to create the website also in English and perhaps also in Russian. Through gained visibility and brand recognition the ultimate objective in the completion is to get customers and create a sustainable business case.

The second objective of creating the online strategy is to have continuity. This means that once the website is complete the digital marketing continues as part of the business; it should not stop once the website is finished. For this objective it is central to understand and know how to manage digital marketing. That is the reason why the implementation of the calendar and the constant creation of new content are parts of the plan.

The more digital marketing is done, the easier it becomes and it transits itself from a new business development opportunity to more of a daily or weekly routine. The result, however, is immense since the digital footprint grows larger and also the online visibility expands further. This means that the digital marketing stays at the core of conducting business activities and founds itself the steps of making strategical decisions.

Here are the objectives listed down:

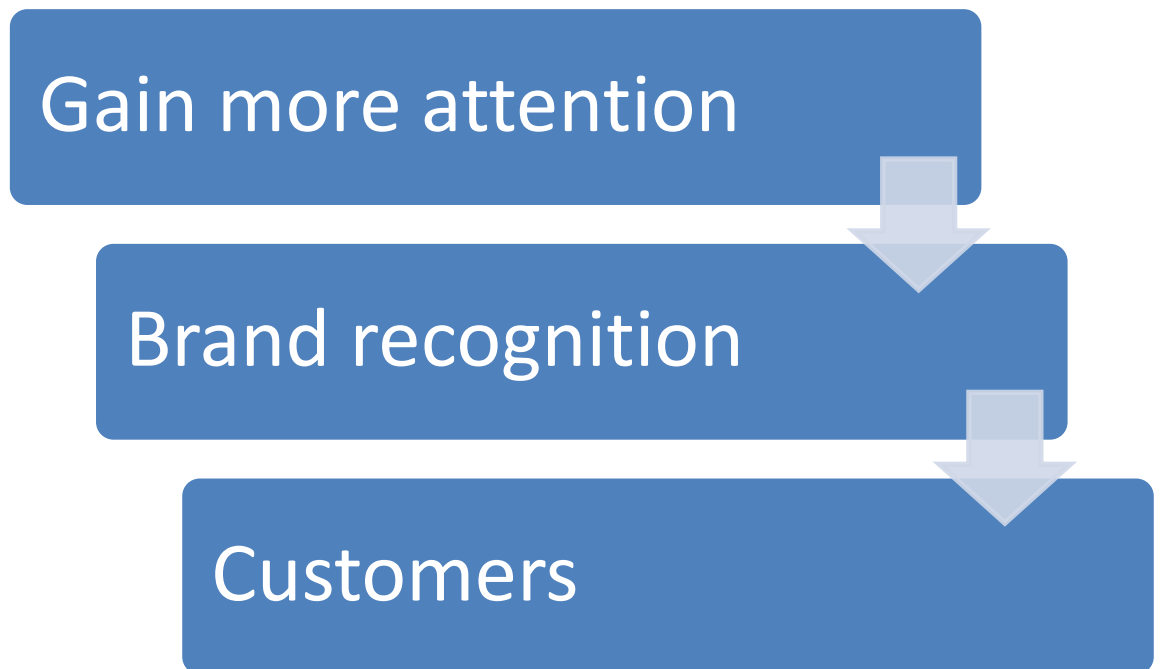


Figure 12. Objectives of the website creation

Knowing the steps for a comprehensive online marketing strategy is important. The figure 12 explains that attention leads to recognition and hopefully to customers.

5.2 Challenges

The challenges of doing SEO need to be taken into consideration just before dwelling into the practical part so that mistakes can be avoided. It is important to acknowledge what constraints lie ahead and what threats are there. These challenges dealt with more detail in the chapter 1.2 Challenges.

Time constraints:	SEO is time consuming so one must be patient for getting results. Also, cheating is punishable.
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Avoiding irrelevant, spammy content:	<i>"Content is king."</i> Content should be relevant and the reason why people visit the website
Not including SEO when making website:	SEO and website creation come hand in hand.
Heavy duty sites:	Less is more. Too much heavy content and the page load too long. This might result in high bounce rate.

5.3 Start the website creation!

Now it is time to focus on the practical part of the work. In this section the implementation of this theory comes into play in a form of step programmes and timelines which suggests the right actions at the right time. These actions are gathered from, and justified with, the theory part of the thesis. Also, the step programmes and timelines have been approved by the client of the thesis, EP-Tone, in our meeting in Kuhmo.

The implementation can be divided into four main parts. They are:

1. Create website
2. Incorporate SEO
3. Create content
4. Continuum plan

These actions are in a logical order; however, they might also occur simultaneously. For instance, no. 1 and 2 should happen at the same time, for the reason that they are very convenient to do at the same time rather than doing them separately. The idea behind that is that the website should be done hand in hand with the SEO. For instance, when writing a headline for some article the article's

name should have keywords in it and also the article itself should have keywords.

5.3.1 Create website

Here is a structured plan that shows in which order to implement the online strategies and tactics for a successful website construction, and also breaking down the four steps mentioned above. This plan was approved by Erkki in our meeting in November.

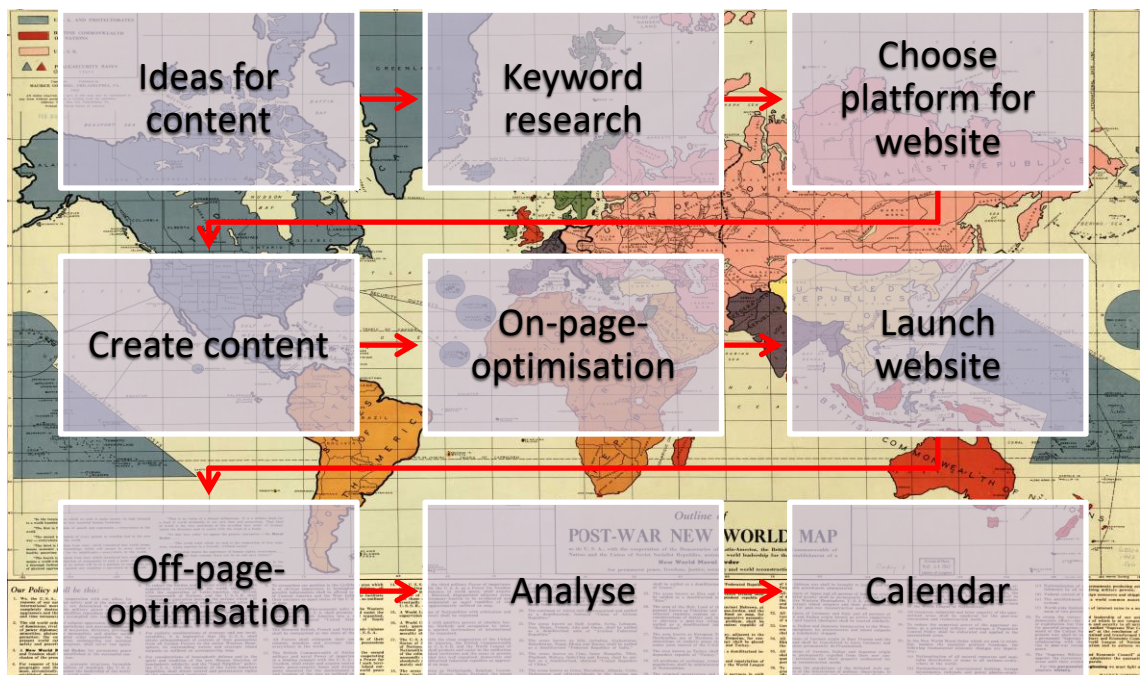
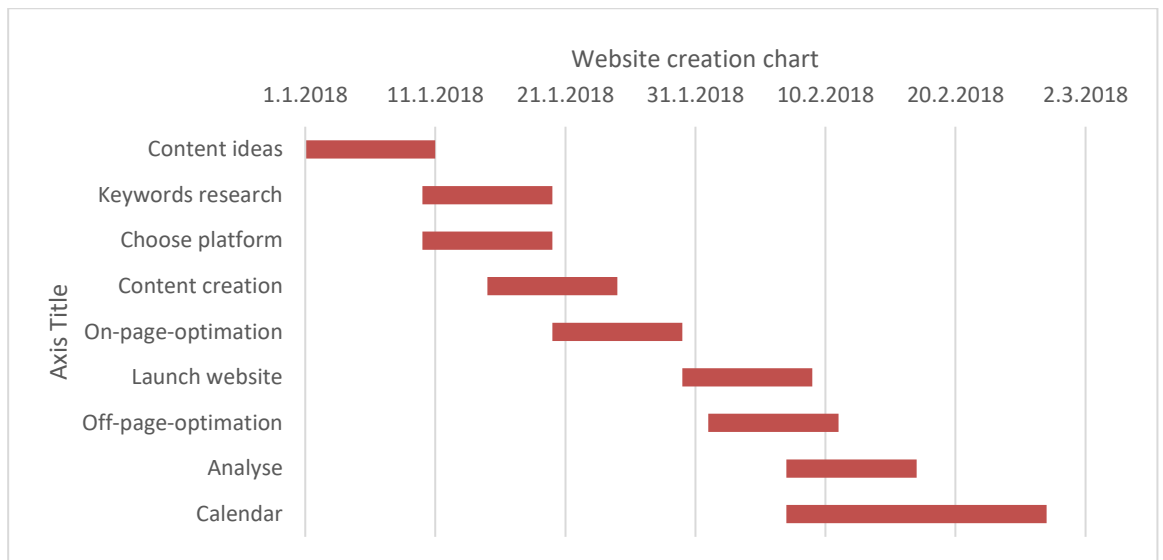


Figure 13. Step program of website creation

Chart 1. - Implementation Gantt chart



This Gantt chart is explaining the simultaneous actions of the website construction. It starts hypothetically from January the first, for the reason that weeks and months are taken in to consideration in this timeline. This does not mean that it should be done on January.

Content ideas

Before doing anything else it is a good idea to have some idea about the content which is supposed to lure and keep the visitors on the website. Without content the website is like an empty canvas and there is little to nothing to do on the website. Content defines the website and makes it stand out from others, so for that reason it is useful to focus on the content creation in the early phase. Consequently, creating ideas and writing them down helps the content creation in the future. It is good to have great content ideas in the storage. Also, this step is relatively easy to put to action, since it only requires imagination and ideation. Content was introduced in theory in chapters 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

Keyword research

This is essential for good SEO and it is clever to do before creating the website, because the content, website structure, headings and basically all the text on the website should contain keywords so they should already be in the mind of the website creator. Also, strong keyword base is a signal of an established brand, therefore thinking and researching for keywords challenges the website creator to find and identify words and phrases which resonate with the brand. It definitely

helps to mould the brand image, since those keywords which are used on the website are connected with the brand by the website users, so it is imperative to have an idea what kind of word base the website creator wants to use in order to sell the brand. Also, content creation helps a lot with keyword research meaning that for instance, writing a blog and having certain words and phrases used there which could also serve as keywords. This way the website creator does not need to do keyword research that much and can find keywords from their own material.

Choose platform

Choosing the suitable platform for the individual need is recommended. Some might do with just a simple and informative platform and some might need more unique features to support their content. For this case we, me and Erkki have decided to use The Wix because it is simple to use and supports video and customisation. Also, it is very mobile friendly. So, the platform is like a frame where the website is the constructed. The website which best serves the needs of the creator should be carefully selected. There are many options and most of them have free trials and tutorials so it is not expensive to try out many different platforms and find the most suitable one. Also, the platform should be chosen before the content creation because the website creator should know what kind of content is supported by the website platform. It is smart to go forward with the framework of the website platform rather than trying to fit something in the website which does not work.

Create content

Before launching the website, there needs to be some form of content for publishing and also it is good to have some in stock. As mentioned before, content is king and is the reason why people go to websites. The content should be ready before the website is published and then afterwards content creation should be rather consistent so that the flow of traffic does not experience a negative gap.

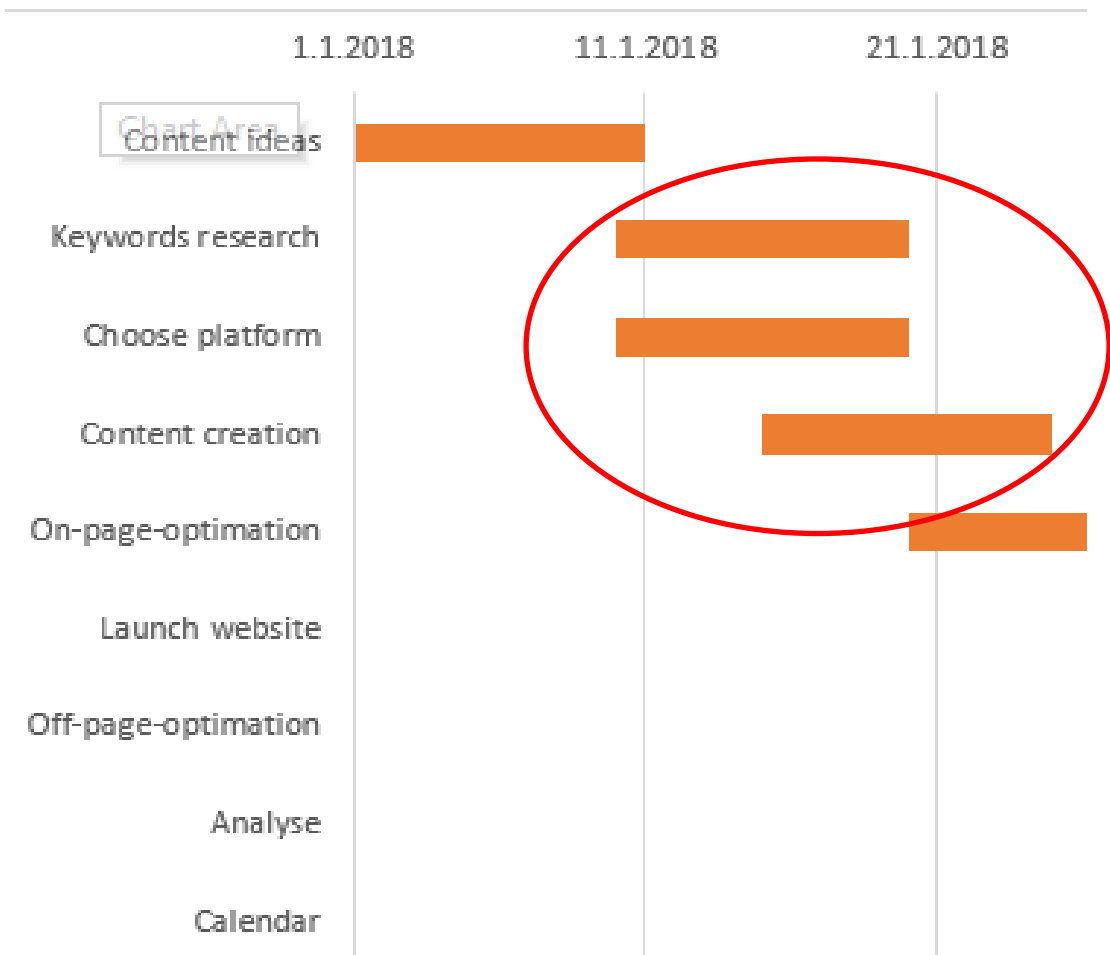


Figure 14. Explanation of simultaneous actions

Keyword research, choose platform and content creation which are shown in the figure 14 can happen at the same time as it makes the whole website creation faster and also these actions are backing each other. While creating content on the website the creator should focus on keywords at the same time. Whether the keywords come from the content or content is affected by new keywords is not relevant but the idea that they should work together is. Also, another point that choosing the platform and content creation can and should happen simultaneously is that some platform might not be suitable for some content and vice versa. When choosing the platform and testing whether the content works the

creator should have an idea what kind of content they want to produce in the first place. In addition, some platforms might give great content ideas which are not possible on other platforms.

On-page-optimisation

Just before launching the website this should be incorporated. Although, it might be already done within the content. Still final fixes on headings, articles and etc. are to be checked. This action is happening also at the same time of creating the content and the inside look of the website. On-page-optimisation is to be taken in to action when creating headings, naming links, writing blogs and other things where keywords could be incorporated. In short it means inserting carefully selected keywords in the website and making the website easy to use for the user and the search engine.



Figure 15. Explaining simultaneous actions

Launch website

After the content is ready and the on-page-optimisation is adequate the website should be launched. This does not necessarily need any fancy marketing campaigns; the real marketing is in the next step.

Off-page-optimisation

This is about linking the website to social media and with other websites and so create more online visibility. So, right after launching the website it should be linked to a lot of places. It is important to find partners who could link the website forward, so that even more people would be influenced. This linking is an ongoing process and it should not stop at any point. Finding new partners and social media places for sharing content and links should be an action which happens as a routine. This action ultimately creates more visibility which leads to traffic and hopefully to the conversion which the website is for.

Analysing process

The results of the SEO should be then carefully analysed. While doing off-page-optimisation, the analysing process should be also started as it is important to know if the social linking is doing any good for the traffic. It is possible to track where the traffic is coming from so the links which are not increasing traffic versus the links which are is valuable knowledge. It helps the social linking process in the future by telling in which kind of websites the traffic is most likely to bounce to the website in question. Google Analytics is a good program for this operation. Analysing should also be frequent so that it becomes a habit.

Calendar

After all these actions they should be marked up to a calendar and it is a good idea to do even before anything is even done. Calendar gives a sense of structure in planning so it is easier to meet deadlines. Moreover, the emphasis of a calendar in the future is that this is a long-term plan and it should be done in cycles. For that reason, a calendar is recommended since it is crucial to track the action in order to outperform one-self in the future. Here the content creator can set up weekly/monthly tasks what do with the website. For instance, a blog in every two weeks, video once a month and analysing website performance once a week. It really depends how much gain and effort the web creator wants to put in to it.



Figure 16. Explanation of simultaneous actions

5.3.2 Continuum plan

After the first launch and the optimisation the structure can look like this:

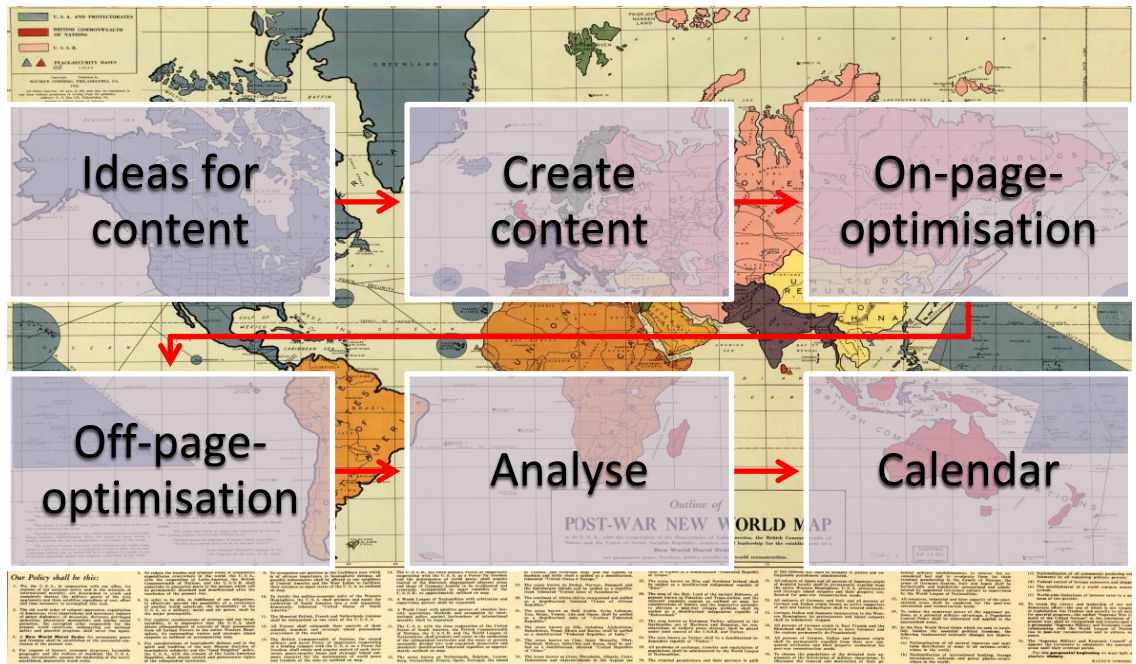
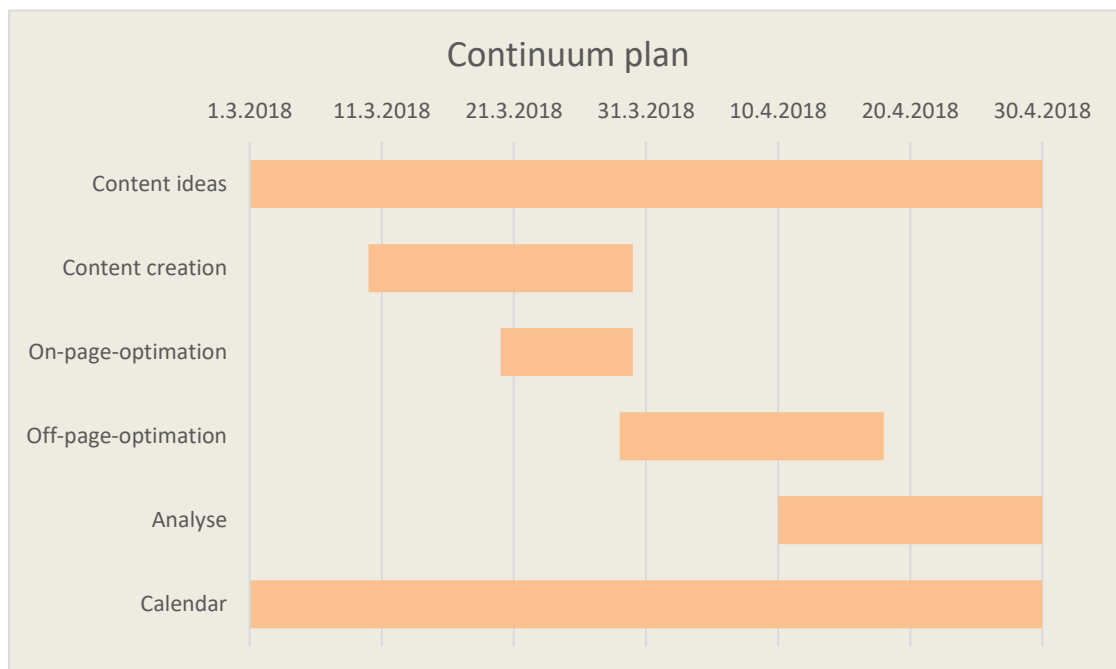


Figure 17. Step program for website management

Mainly how it differs from the other one is that it is missing: “choose platform”, “keyword research” and “launch website”. These actions do not remain necessary anymore if they are completed properly already; but for instance, on-page-optimisation is still a useful factor to consider as new content is uploaded, it is important that the content is discoverable by search engines and the users. Keyword research excludes itself as action of its own, but still the owner of the website should consider checking the keywords from time to time by following trends and making sure that he/she is using the right keywords. Also, keyword research is part of on-page-optimisation.

Chart 2 - Website management Gantt chart



This graph shows how some of these actions work simultaneously and that the calendar should be an action which is constantly working. Also, it divides these actions into two categories which are happening inside the website and outside the website. Inside actions are: Ideas for content, create content and on-page-optimisation and outside actions are: off-page-optimisation, analysing and calendar.

Content ideas

After the website is done and it has already rich and engaging content, new fresh content should be in the making. Flowing ideas for new and fresh content makes the content creation easier. This phase can, and should, be constantly on for instance it is hard to predict when the next good idea comes to mind. It does not necessarily mean that when a good idea for content arises that it needs to be done immediately. It can be written down for later produce or it can stay in the back of the mind to be someday figured out. The idea is more in the mindset that never stop thinking and ideating new innovations.

Content creation

Creating content and publishing it makes the site more interesting and makes more visitors come in. This should be a continuous action so that the flow on content creation does not stop once the website is published. Constant flow of ideas and content creation makes it become more like a routine rather than a special job which requires extra effort. Also, active content publishing creates more visibility and a bigger digital footprint which then in the best scenario leads to more traffic.

On-page-optimisation

When publishing and creating content, it is also important to keep the SEO in mind. Every time something is published on the website, planning the keywords is very important. This is the reason why content creation and on-page-optimisation are appearing to happen simultaneously.

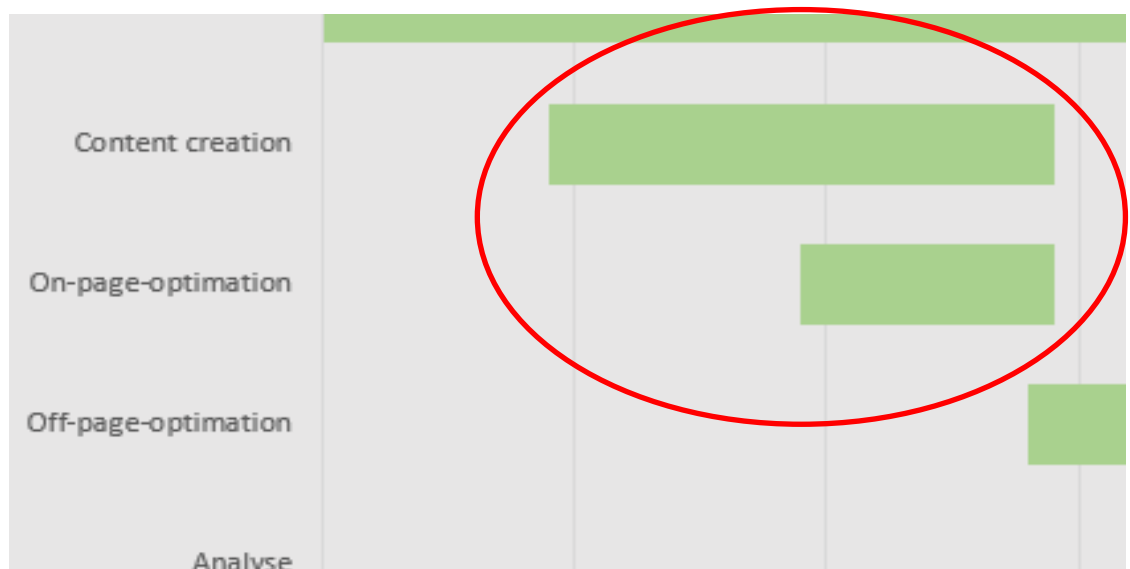


Figure 18. Explanation of simultaneous actions

Off-page-optimisation

Whenever some new content is posted it should also be shared across the web. Ideally the website creator wants as many views of the content created as possible. So, maintaining good relationships with partner sites, and having social media connections for sharing interesting content is recommended and they should be used shamelessly.

Analyse

Analysing process should be like a routine and especially after publishing something it is good to follow the traffic. It further helps to understand the people who visit the website, what they like and moreover, helps the website creator understand online behavioural patterns. So, following up should happen when there is something new happening on the website so that the website creator can see that if there is an increase in traffic and has the new content drawn audience. Also, after social linking it is reasonable to follow which outbound links are increasing traffic and which are not.

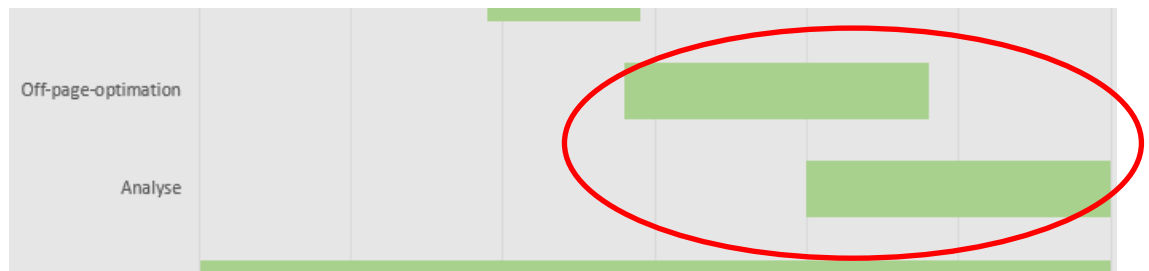


Figure 19. Explanation of simultaneous actions

Calendar

For a better follow up of actions and it sets up goals and time schedules. This helps the website creator to make more things happen because without goals it is more difficult to gain results. Calendar is an on-going process which does not stop since all the actions regarding the website should be marked there.

5.4 Follow up

This part of the thesis would have focused on the results of the follow up measures if the website had been finished by the time of the thesis' completion, but unfortunately the time came to an end, so doing the follow up is not part of the thesis in practice. However, this section is about the plan of follow up and explains it in more detail.

Here is an example of a calendar which could be used in the long-run planning of simple digital marketing for a website. This is a very simple structure for the beginning and the website creator can decide their own actions what to put on to a calendar following their agenda. The idea is just to show an example.

su	ma	ti	ke	to	pe	la
1 su	1. tammi Check website Uudenvuodenpaiva	2	3	4 Check website + analyse C	5 Post blog	6 Loppiainen
7	8 Check website	9	10	11 Check website	12	13
14	15 Check website	16 Add video	17	18 Check website + analyse C	19 Post blog	20
21	22 Check website	23	24	25 Check website	26	27
28	29 Check website	30	31 Post blog long versio	1. helmi Check website + analyse C	2	3

Figure 20. Model of the calendar

In this calendar there are dates for checking the website, meaning going to the site, feeling the experience, thinking about improvements, following if conversion has happened. If something feels awkward on the website it could be changed. The point is to know exactly what is going on so that there are not uncomfortable moments for the customers. There are also dates for following the analysing part of the SEO. This means checking the website's performance online using analysing programs. From this data collection the website creator can get a grasp on patterns in the traffic, see if marketing has worked and then act accordingly to enhance the user experience even more. Posting content such as blogs, videos and other form of content should be also scheduled in order to create deadlines and goals which can then be achieved. This creates a mentality for posting regularly and not forgetting to create interest for the user to visit the website.

6 CONCLUSION

The conclusion goes through the thesis process and critically assesses how well the thesis succeeded as a development task. Also, it is looking at learning points of the writer and ponders future development points of the subject.

When focusing on digital marketing channels, i.e. website, they need to be done properly. There is a saying in business life that “everything you do is marketing” (Rautio 2017). This is also true in the digital world, particularly in regard to the SEO aspect of website creation. In order to succeed, the website owner should make a good effort in making a website. It is not enough to have a single page in the internet with contact detail in it. The website needs to invite the users and make sure that they will enjoy their time there. Also, there needs to be the deeper understanding on how people find the website in the first place. This means that the SEO is important when creating a website. What is the use of a website if no one can find it? This thesis helps to understand what is happening behind the scenes in the website creation and what are the steps of making the website attractive for the user and the search engine.

Website creation is a specific task and requires some knowledge about the matter but with simple steps it is possible to make a difference. This means that although it seems that there are so many different things to consider, there is no need to panic because small and simple actions at first can make a big difference and after doing SEO for some time the job gets more familiar and easier. The only challenge in the beginning is how to start.

When releasing a website with SEO it creates a sense of professionalism, and in practice it makes the lives of the internet users and business owners easier. Also, it is the zeitgeist of today to be online. If a business is not online it does not exist.

For the future, once the website creation is complete and the SEO part of it is a regular activity, the website owner should focus more on content creation, off-page-optimisation and growing the website. When the website has been public and has constantly grown its digital footprint, it is important to monitor the traffic so that it does not suffer suddenly a massive decrease. This is why new fresh

content should be uploaded regularly, follow up measures should track the traffic and trends on the internet so that the website owner is fully on track with what is happening in the online world both outside and inside the website. Then it might be a time to focus more on social media and incorporating it to the website and finding a channel there which serves the business best and then conversions on the website. The future endeavour is to enhance and grow with digital marketing. The SEO is just a first step and there are many more things to focus after it. Future development or research theses could be about social media marketing, content marketing or doing some digital marketing campaign.

This thesis process was enjoyable to make since digital marketing was already a familiar subject to me and also the topic interests me a lot but, moreover, because the case company is a dream company for me since I am a guitarist myself and I got to experience the art of guitar crafting first hand. I hope that this thesis is useful for Erkki Pulkkinen, and also to other people wanting to create a website and are thinking how it is done. I hope this thesis gives answers or at least guides the website creator.

What I learned from the process of making this thesis was: what a SEO is exactly and how to use it in the website creation process. Also, I learned how other factors such as content, social linking and search engines work together in order to enhance the whole customer, user and website creator experience.

What the thesis is lacking and what I personally find slightly troubling was that the website was not created and launched during the process of the thesis, meaning that the practical side of the whole website-creation process did not happen. The ultimate goal and development task at first was to create an actual website for EP-Tone along with the thesis, but since it did not happen the thesis's structure and final purpose had to be changed. This meant that the thesis was focusing on the plan of implementing the theory into action without actually completing the website. This thesis focused more on being an instructive method of doing a website.

The thesis adequately answers the question, what are important things to do when creating a website? There are obviously a lot more and different approaches, but those given in this thesis are adequately justified for a good SEO.

In that sense the thesis succeeded well in its goal to deliver a development task theory for creating a search engine optimised website. The fifth part of the thesis is made so that it can be handed out separately from the rest of the thesis to Erkki, for creating a website following the steps mentioned there. In that respect, the thesis succeeded in its goal being a development task for constructing a search engine optimised website.

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APPENDICES

Chart 1 Website creation

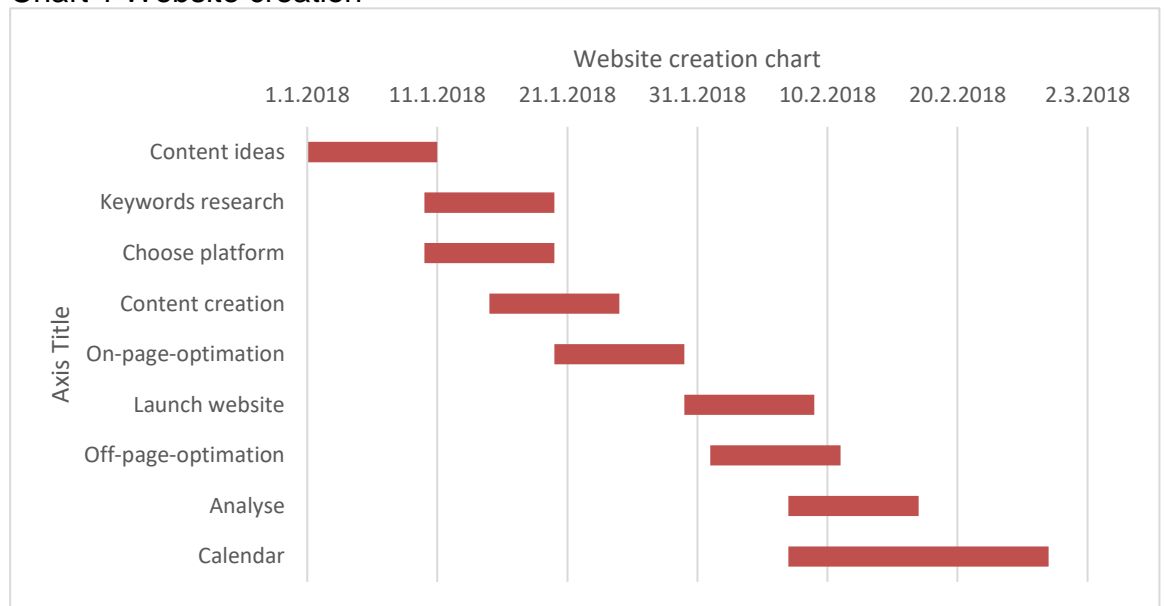
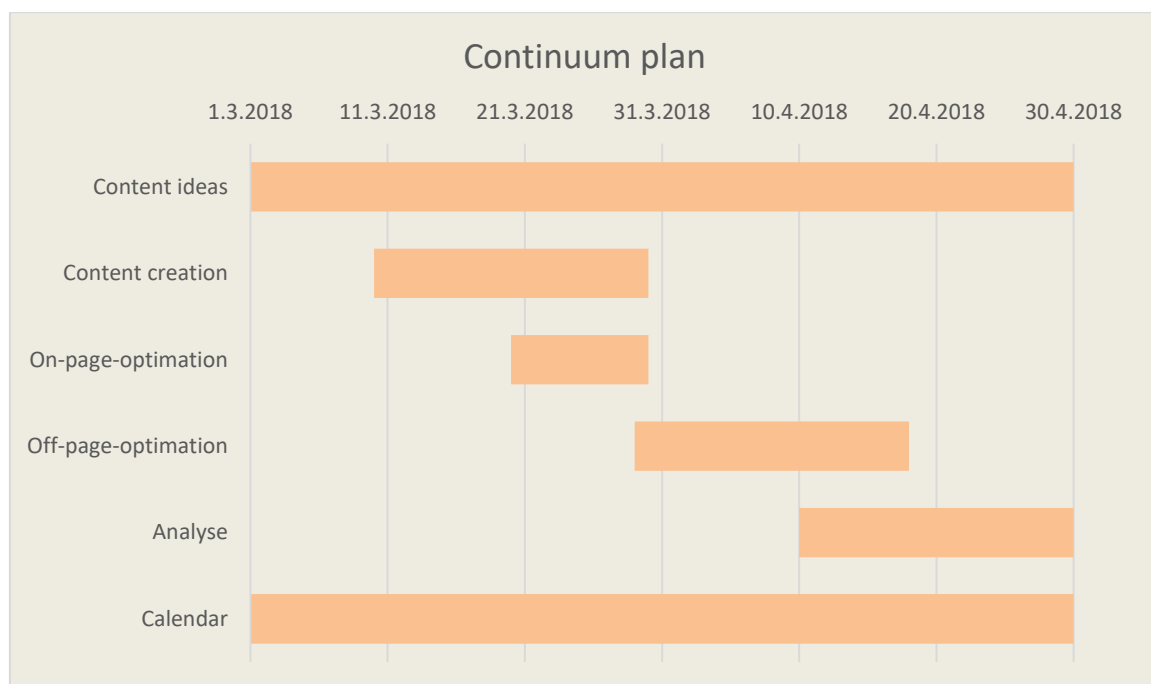


Chart 2 Website management



su	ma	ti	ke	to	pe	la
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7	8 Check website	9	10	11 Check website	12	13
14	15 Check website	16 Add video	17	18 Check website + analyse C	19 Post blog	20
21	22 Check website	23	24	25 Check website	26	27
28	29 Check website	30	31 Post blog long versio	1. helmi Check website + analyse C	2	3

Figure 20. Calendar model

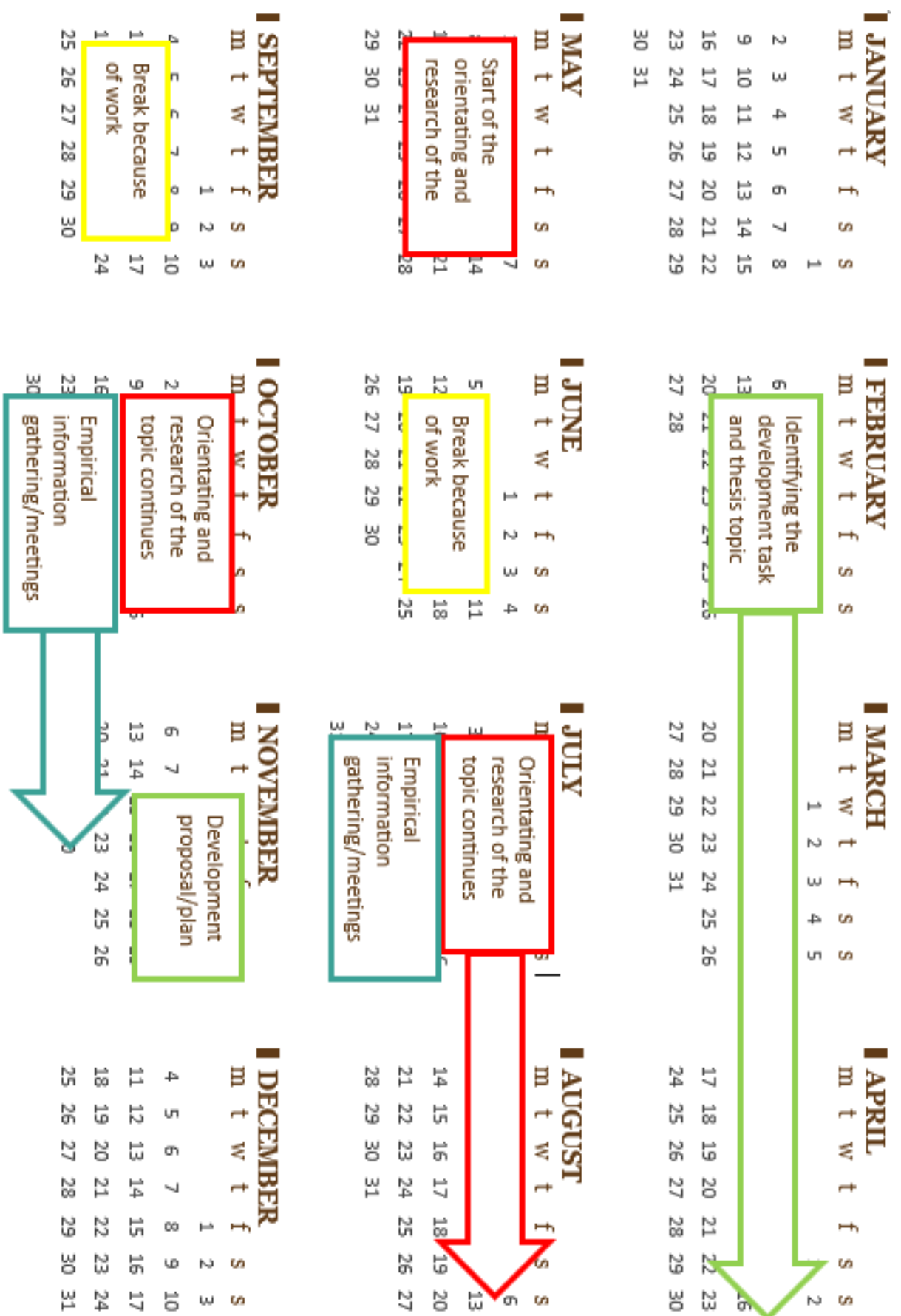


Figure 11. Development task schedule