

CMDR Journal of Social Research

(A Biannual Journal of Centre for Multi-disciplinary Development Research, Dharwad)

ISSN: 3049-1797 (Print) (Vol.3, No.1, Jan-Jun 2026, pp.39-52)

Mapping the Digital Terrain in Marketing Context: Focus on Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Vaishali R. Bendre* and Kirankumar R. Bannigol**

ABSTRACT

Digital Marketing has brought a paradigm shift in the way organizations communicate about their products to their target customers. Organizations spend crores together to integrate objectives of marketing and sales maximization along with customer satisfaction, brand building, brand loyalty, customer relationship management, etc. Survival in today's digitally driven world is quite a task. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is one of the boon to solve this issue which costs no money but the technical skills to organically drive the marketing campaign. The present page serves as a starter to the readers who want to acknowledge about SEO and allied things. A simple attempt has been made to introduce SEO to the young minds and learn about its benefits, advantages, limitations, types etc. An exploratory descriptive research methodology is adopted and secondary data sources have been reviewed to integrate all the aspects of SEO.

Keywords: Digital Marketing; Search Engine Optimization tools; client; media

* Research Scholar, Karnatak University, Dharwad, Karnataka state- India,
Email:vaishalibendrepd@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009-0000-3937-2520

** Assistant Professor, Department of Studies in Commerce, Karnatak University, Dharwad, Karnataka State- India, Email: rbkiran@kud.ac.in, ORCID: 0000-0001-7745-8771

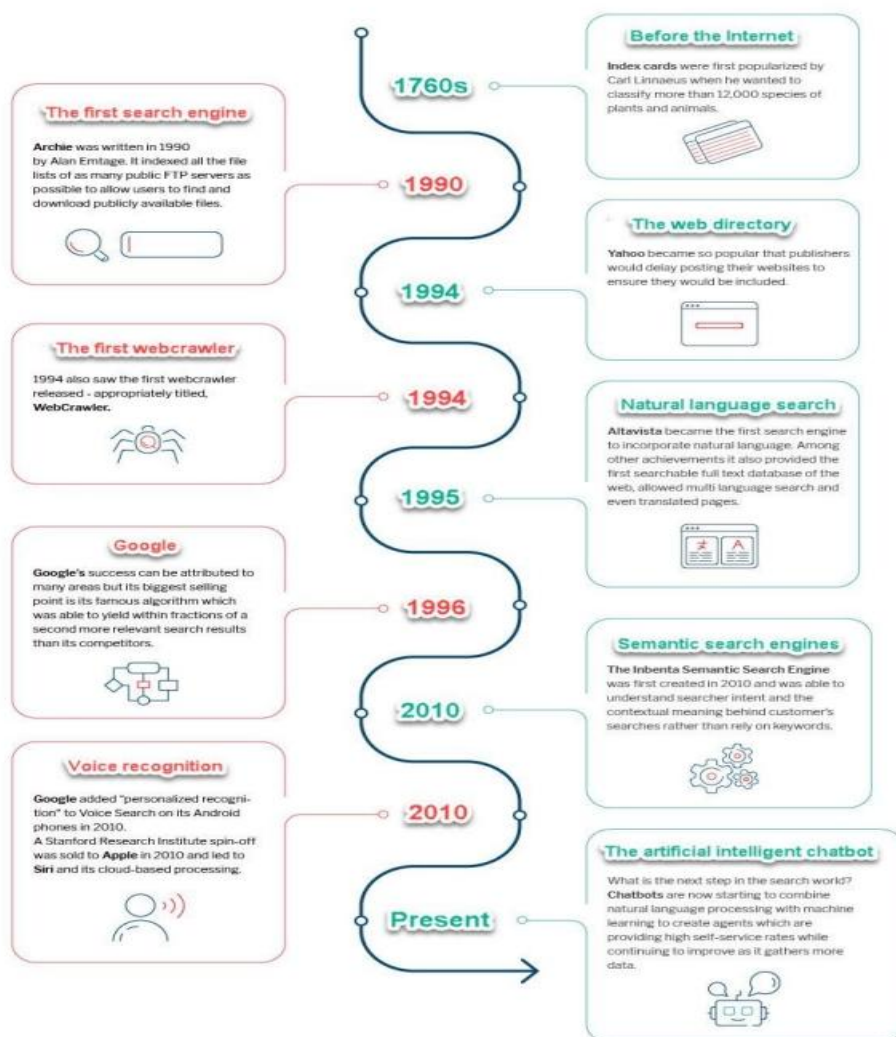
INTRODUCTION

In this digital era, people are terminating from traditional buying practices to modern ones. Online purchase is one such practice. Online business means anything which is bought and sold over the virtual market (i.e. using internet over computer, laptop, tablets, android mobile phones etc.). In online marketing, the products are not sold in various platforms like websites, social media applications like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat and the like. The scope of online business is deeper and wider than what we know. It includes a wide variety of aspects which have influence and are influenced by it. Online business is not as easy as offline. It takes a lot of homework to get hitched. Online marketers have to take care about optimizing their online presence including online advertising (both organic as well as PPC), user friendly websites, good quality content which is efficient and effective, easy return policies, easy to purchase, using safe and secure payment method, selling good quality products and so on (Baye et al., 2013). Utilizing these strategies help online businesses gain brand awareness.

The enormous amount of information is available on the internet which makes it difficult to find the right information (Swati P et al., 2013). Search engines are the software's which will help people to find information about anything that they are searching for. Search engines will help the users to collect and organise all the data that is available on the internet. The brief history of search engines is shown in Figure 1 (Shahzad et al., 2020). Whenever people want to search about anything, they will type certain keywords in the search box, the search engines will crawl over the internet and find out those keywords in the various available websites and then will organize them and show them in the Search Engine Result Pages(SERP). Due to its accuracy in showing the search results, Google is the most widely used search engine throughout the world. There are search engines other than Google such as Baidu, Bing, Yahoo, Ask, Dogpile, DuckDuckGo (Shahzad et al., 2020). Google has 88.6% market share compared to other search engines (Osan, 2023). According to Osan, SEO is nothing but improving a website's status in terms of their performance. It helps in enhancing the rank of the website in Search Engine Result Pages. Regular content creation, blogging, publishing articles on websites will have perks on SEO. Clients procure brand mindfulness via internet sources like Google, Amazon, Flipkart etc. Search engines manage 93% of internet traffic (Egri & Bayrak, 2014). Google updates its search results regularly based on past clicks that the website gets where a search is done (Baye et al., 2013). The websites which appear on the first position in the search engine result page gets clicked comparatively than others. It's a game of race. This can be achieved by two

ways. The first one is by optimizing the search engines popularly called as Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) which can be done by Improvising the content of the website which matches the keywords used by the users of the internet. This can be called generating the website traffic by organic search. The other one is through paid search. Popularly known as pay per click, the website can be made visible by bidding to appear on the top most position in search engine result pages. The marketer has to pay only when their website gets clicked by the users.

Figure 1: History of Search Engines



Here, improvising the content means product details, product description, information, graphics, social media posts, blogs, vlogs and the like. This will enable the users to locate their website on the top position in the Search Engine Result Pages. Around 92% of traffic will be received by the websites which are located on the first page of SERPs (Giomelakis & Veglis, 2015). Furthermore, SEO is not a one shot job, instead it should be managed continuously on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis which will help in improving website traffic and in turn increase sales.

Some of the well-known and crucial tasks in SEO are crawling, measuring importance of keywords, indexing, sorting etc. (Almukhtar et al., 2021). The basic working structure of Search Engine can be seen into four steps/components. Whenever a user searches for any query, the search engine crawls over the internet to search for the text including the specific keyword the user is searching for. Then, it collects and forms an index of all those websites which has that keyword. Third step is to calculate the relevancy of the content of the website and the user's search query. Last step is to retrieve only those websites which have higher relevance to the search query.

Benefits of SEO:

It will help the firms to achieve the desirable outcomes like high profits, effective management of costs, global exposure of their products, wide geographic coverage through advertisements, sales maximization and so forth (Al-Mukhtar et al., 2021). Other benefits are (Berryhill, 2025):

- It helps in advertising the business 24*7.
- It helps customers visit the website organically.
- SEO can be done within any given budget.
- SEO can alone benefit many other marketing initiatives.
- Helps in building the competitive advantage.
- Decreases cost per acquisition.
- Results are always quantifiable and can be easily tracked.
- Helps in reaching new markets easily.
- It helps in long term marketing.
- Conversion rate can be increased.

- SEO helps in building brand trust, brand equity, engagement and customer relationship management.
- Increases user experience and helps in providing distinctive experience to the users using innovative technology like AI, Virtual reality and augmented reality.
- Enhances credibility.
- Enhances reach in local markets.
- Maximises PPC (Pay Per Click) campaigns.

Tools to measure the price volatility of the paid search market are Keyword Price Index (KPI) which will help in comparing the cost effectiveness as well as help to trace the change in CPC (Cost Per Click) (Panchal, 2025).

Tools used to identify the exact keyword to be focused on to achieve maximum number of viewers are SEMrush, SmallSEOTools.com, Ubersuggest, Google Analytics, Keyword Everywhere, Keyword Shitter etc. (Panchal et al., 2021 & Ramya et al., 2018)

Limitations of SEO

As observed by (Almukhtar et al., 2021), the following are the limitations of SEO. Whereas, he has further noted PPC is the solution to these limitations where firms can overcome the limitations of SEO.

- Idioms and key restrictions
- Competitive limitations
- Limitations of subpages
- Language barrier
- Restricted crawling ability of the search engines
- Error of duplication of webpages

SEO techniques:

1. ON Page SEO techniques
2. OFF Page SEO techniques

Figure 2: SEO Techniques



Source: (Which Is More Essential: - On Page SEO or Off Page SEO, n.d.)

On-Page SEO techniques: On-page SEO includes optimizing the content of one's own web page so that the search engines can easily crawl to the website and rank it on top position in the Search Engine Result Page (SERP). The practices in on page SEO includes content optimization, title tags, internal links, URLs and other ranking factors. It all can be properly placed by using the relevant and right keyword in the building of the content of the website (Fig.2).

1. **SILOS:** Siloing is the process of structuring the content of the website around a specific keyword theme and also grouping the similar or related topics in a separate section called "SILO". Furthermore, these different sections are inter connected using internal links which sends signals to the search engines on how the content must be understood. In other words, Siloing is the method of organizing the most relevant content page at a specific section which can be easily traceable.
2. **Site performance:** Site performance includes all the attributes related to the working of the website. If the website opening speed is too slow, then the bounce rate will be too high. User does not have patience to wait for the page to be loaded. Hence, the conversion rate decreases and the visibility as well. The website which uses very low opening time are favorable to provide

the best experience to their viewers and hence attract them. The images used in the web pages must be very clear and optimized in terms of their size and formats.

3. **Title tag for links:** The title of the page should be very precise and catchphrase must be used so that the search engine could easily identify what the website content is all about. Each page must have a unique title tag for easy identification of the website content. The title must be brief, compelling and enough to get ranked on SERP.
4. **Canonical URLs:** canonical URLs are the original or primary web pages which are distinctive from their duplicate versions. Search engines can identify them easily over the other duplicates. The duplicate web pages may harm the website traffic significantly.
5. **Internal link anchor text:** it is a clickable text in the hyperlink that is used within the same domain to indicate the content of the interlinked pages. They are like signposts which tell the search engines what it will find on which page of the website. In other words, they are like navigators to the search engines.
6. **Site map:** Site maps are like the blueprints of the website. They help search engines crawl for the relevant webpage when a search is done. They also suggest to search engines which page is most important and which image, video tells what.
7. **301/404 errors:** 404 error is commonly seen by many internet users which means the page they are looking for does not exist. There may be two reasons for this error to happen. One is that the spelling typed in the URL might be wrong or the other one is the change in permalink (Permalink is the link which comes after “ / ”). This pays a negative impact on seo performance. 301 error means the website has been transferred over to a new domain. Simply, it means the website is moved permanently and a redirect should be built up to bridge a gap between old domain and the new domain. Seo experts need to fix these errors to improve the site performance.
8. **Robots.txt:** This technique tells the search engine crawlers as to which web pages should be indexed and which need to be skipped using Robots.txt file. It helps the googlebot to crawl over the valuable parts of the web pages and skip the unnecessary ones.

9. **Keyword density:** it is a percentage of the number of times the particular keyword appears in the content of the webpage. It is calculated as the number of times a particular keyword used in a page divided by the number of words in that page multiplied by 100. Although this metric is no longer helpful in ranking the webpage in the top position, it should be used wisely while writing the content of the website.
10. **Meta-tags:** These are the snippets which tell the search engines as to which information is important about the webpage such as how it should be displayed on the result page and how it should be displayed to the visitors.

Off Page SEO techniques: It is a technique to increase the website traffic by not making any changes in the content of the website. It is the method of increasing organic searches by providing more backlinks in somebody else's websites or posts or blocks etc. (Waykar, 2025). The techniques mentioned below are referred from an article written by (Gupta et al., 2016).

1. **RSS Feeds:** RSS stands for Rich Site Summary. It is a method of sharing one's content in the website to another on request. It is just like getting a notification upon adding any new content to the website that you are interested in. (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2009)
2. **Directory submission:** The website's URL is submitted to the online directory where the title, description and other details of the website are saved in a particular category. Some of the directories are free whereas some are paid. This technique helps the crawlers to crawl for the relevant website based on the keyword search query.
3. **Social Bookmarking:** it is also a link building technique where the marketers can save any website which he feels is interesting or if he wants to revisit the webpage then he can save it for later. This will help him to make that website available anywhere from any computer at any time. This is a social element from which anybody can access anybody else's bookmarks.
4. **Article Marketing:** It is one of the oldest techniques used by web developers where they prepare an article relating to a company's products or service and publish them in one of the reputed article submission directories. This is beneficial for both the parties because the directories

get to publish free articles and the web developers can successfully create a backlink to their website so that they can increase the traffic.

5. **Social media:** A robust content and Social media presence will enable the company to increase the website traffic exponentially. Not only this but it also helps in developing the brand awareness as well as stimulating a healthy relationship with the viewers. Influencers may foster in harnessing your online presence in an even better way than you alone can do. (West-Brown, 2023)
6. **Press releases:** Any event big or small happening in your corporation must be known to the internet users. For this purpose you can submit your news to news websites and provide the backlink for your website. The news with the good content written in an effective manner gets the attention of news readers and can help them generate new visitors to companies' websites.
7. **Forum or blog commenting:** It is one of the useful techniques where the SEO specialist provides backlinks for their website by commenting on any blogs or any posts. Usually there is a space below every post /blog where people can comment. One has to specify their name, e-mail id and website (if any). It is very helpful to comment on those blogs which are relevant to our website's content. The backlinks will redirect the readers to our website.
8. **Forum Posting:** Forum means communicating and discussing a problem. Web forums are one of the locations where SEO specialists can post their views about a particular topic under discussion in discussion sites. As a signature they provide a backlink of their websites.

Tools for SEO

Tools are the media which aid the digital marketing experts to analyze and formulate the appropriate and effective optimization of their websites. There are tools available to carryout SEO process. Some are paid, some are free and the others have limited free access tools. An attempt has been made to list these tools based on their nature of performance.

A. Tools of SEO (for Organic Search)

Table 1: Tools of SEO for Organic Search

SEO Tools	Price	Best for	Features
WebFX SEO Checker	Free	Overall SEO Research	- Analytics for sit speed, content optimization, links and more - SEO auditing capabilities
FAQ Fox	Free	Content research and competitor analysis	- Crawling capabilities for research - Topic idea generation
Google Search Console	Free	SEO analytics for existing sites	- Access to ranking and performance for specific keywords - Optional notification for site issues.
Screaming Frog	Free	Crawling and evaluating websites	- Free auditing for the site (or for competitor's site) - Ranking factor detection and analytics
WOO Rank	Free	SEO grading and research	- Ranking system for websites to measure SEO - Feedback on extra areas like mobile optimization and usability

Source: Author's Compilation

B. Keyword research tools

Keyword research is one of the crucial steps in SEO Strategy. It helps to find, analyze, and choose search terms we want to optimize the site for.

Table 2: Keyword Research Tools

Keyword research tool	Price	Best for	Features
Keywords FX	Free	Keyword research	- Free, unlimited keyword suggestions - Exporting options
Keyword everywhere (Free Version)	Free	Keyword research in browser	- Chrome extension that offers easy access - Social site integration and analytics

Mongools KW Finder	Starting at \$19.90 per month (free version available)	Identifying a keyword's difficulty score and ranking pages	• Providing seed keyword insights like keyword difficulty and search volume. • Gathering related keywords based on location and language.
--------------------	--	--	--

Source: Author's Compilation

C. Best Performance tools

Table 3: Best Performance Tools

Best performance tools	Price	Best for	Features
Page Speed Insights	Free	Page speed analysis	• Reporting website and page speed for free • Diagnostics for how to improve the speeds
Lighthouse	Free	Auditing a page's performance and accessibility	• Downloadable report on a page's SEO Status and accessibility • List of recommended actions to improve a page.
Google Analytics 4	Free	Data tracking and analytics for SEO Campaigns	• Free reporting and SEO Campaign • Access to data like user behavior, traffic, conversions, and more.

Source: Author's Compilation

D. Top back linking tools

Link building is a strategy that aims to earn links from reputable websites leading to one's own site. Because manually searching for potential sites takes time, one can invest in link building tools instead.

Table 4: Top Back Linking Tools

Tools	Price	Best for	Features
Ahrefs	Starting @ \$108 per month	Overall SEO Research including linking and keyword research	• Collection of tools for everything from keyword research to link analysis • Backlinks information on all inbound links to a page.

Buzz Sumo	Starting @ \$159 per month	Backlink research	• Information on influencers in a range of topics and industries. • Contact points for popular websites and backlinks opportunities.
Majestic	Starting @ \$49.99 per month	Link building and visualization	• Complete list of link specific tools. • Link mapping that shows where the website fits in the internet.
Moz Link Explorer	Starting @ \$79 p.m	Link building	• Link tracking features for incoming and outgoing links.

Source: Author's Compilation

E. All-in-one tools

The robust paid tools that can help with various tasks are,

Table 5: All-in-one Tools

Tools	Price	Best for	Features
SEO.com app	Starting @ \$19 pm (10 days free trial available)	Tracking the site's SEO performance and also competitor's	• Automated reports • Checking keywords you rank for and website's ranking
Moz Pro	Starting @ \$79 p.m	Large Scale SEO Work	• All-in-one suits for SEO tools • Breakdown of the different stages of SEO within the interface.
SEMRush	Starting @ \$108 p.m (free limited plan available)	Technical SEO and Analytics	• Technical analytics to help SEO approach. • Over 50 tools for all aspects of SEO.
Raven tools	Starting @ \$33 p.m	Site auditing	• Paid site audits for website or competitor's sites. • Access to 17 different metrics for rating website.
Marketing Cloud FX	View pricing	All-in-one SEO work	• Multiple tools that range from keyword tracking to lead nurturing.

			Integrating opportunities with other marketing softwares.
SpyFu	Starting @ \$39 p.m	Competitor's analysis	- In-depth SERP analysis. - Competitor and Keyword analysis.

Source: Author's Compilation

CONCLUSION

SEO is helpful in generating leads to the website and helps to increase conversion rate. This will in turn be helpful in consumer reachability. It further enhances the customer base by increasing brand credibility, brand awareness, brand equity and brand loyalty. Search Engine Optimization can be done by having technical expertise in web page development and web designing. Organizations can outsource or can have in-house digital marketing expert to carry out this task. It is an organic method to generate leads to website and in turn increase visibility of products as induce sales for the organizations. SEO is the most popular and most widely used digital marketing channel in the current era. The present study helps the young digital marketers to understand SEO and tools available for doing it.

REFERENCES

- Al-Mukhtar, F. H., Hamad, N., & Kareem, S. (2021, March 23). *Search engine optimization: a review*. Walter de Gruyter.
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350529991_SEARCH_ENGINE_OPTIMIZATION_A_REVIEW
- Baye, M. R., De los Santos, B., & Wildenbeest, M. R. (2013). Search engine optimization: What drives organic traffic to retail sites? *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2277077>
- Berryhill, H. (2025, February 26). Why generative engine optimization (GEO) is the next big thing. *Chatter Marketing, Inc.* <https://www.chattertulsa.com/the-future-of-seo/>
- Egri, G., & Bayrak, C. (2014). The role of search engine optimization on keeping the user on the site. *Procedia Computer Science*, 36, 335–342.
- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2014.09.102>

- Giromelakis, D., & Veglis, A. (2015). Employing search engine optimization techniques in online news articles. *Studies in Media and Communication*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v3i1.683>
- Osan, A. (2023, April 5). *Search engine optimization (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM)*. Unknown. <https://tinyurl.com/2yzhav8p>
- Panchal, A., Shah, A., & Kansara, K. (2021). Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM). *International Research Journal of Innovations in Engineering and Technology (IRJIET)*, 5(12), 17–21.
- Panchal, J. (2025, October 9). *Future of SEO: How AI and voice search are changing optimization*. Medium.
https://medium.com/@Jaimini_Panchal/future-of-seo-how-ai-and-voice-search-are-changing-optimization-f31b720a2936
- Ramya, A., Shrivastava, S., & Mishra, A. (2018, January 29). *Importance of search engine marketing in the digital world*. Unknown.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322780257_Importance_of_Search_Engine_Marketing_in_the_Digital_World
- Shahzad, A., Jacob, D. W., Nawi, N. M., Mahdin, H., & Saputri, M. E. (2020). The new trend for search engine optimization, tools and techniques. *Indonesian Journal of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science*, 18(3), 1568.
<https://doi.org/10.11591/ijeecs.v18.i3.pp1568-1583>
- Swati P, P., B. V, P., & Ajay S., P. (2013). Search Engine Optimization: A Study. *Research Journal of Computer and Information Technology Sciences*, 1(1), 10–13.
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2009, February 19). RSS. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/technology/RSS>
- Waykar, S. (2025, January 15). What is Off-Page SEO? Meaning, Types, Techniques, & Checklist. *Infidigit*. <https://www.infidigit.com/blog/off-page-seo/>
- West-Brown, C. (2023, March 23). Utilizing social media as off-page SEO: A comprehensive guide. *LinkedIn*. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/utilizing-social-media-off-page-seo-comprehensive-guide-courtney-west>
- Which is more Essential: - On Page SEO or Off Page SEO*. (n.d.). Zebra Techies Solution. Retrieved November 6, 2025, from
<https://zebratechiessolution.com/which-is-more-essential-on-page-seo-or-off-page-seo>