

MOBILE APP OPTIMIZATION

SEO BEST PRACTICES

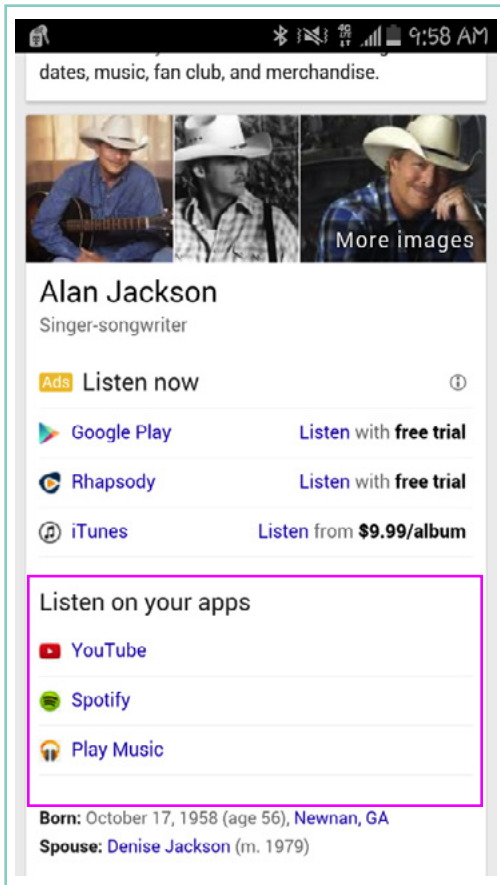




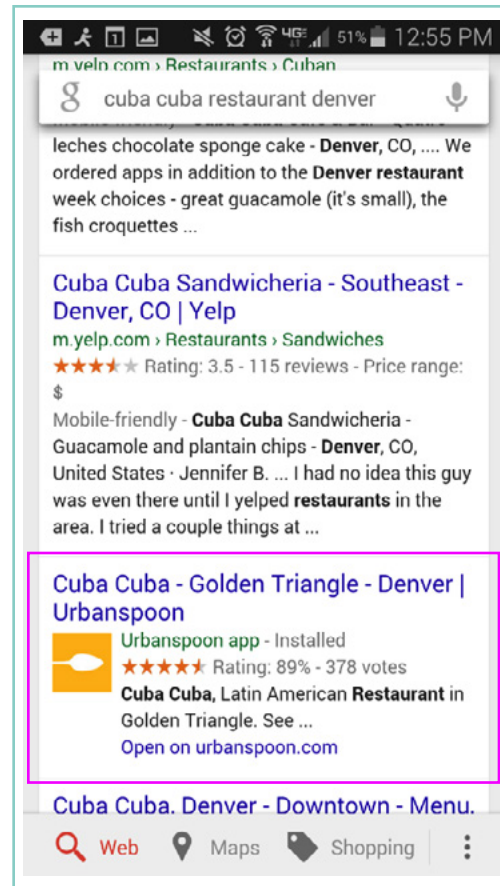
INTRODUCTION

In many cases mobile sites are not mapped correctly or are not optimized for mobile ranking; therefore mobile apps can sometimes offer better user experiences than a mobile site. When the content of the application is optimized, better rankings can be achieved in the app stores like Google Play and iTunes. Read on to learn the best practices for mobile app search optimization.

EXAMPLES OF APP INDEXING



When the indexing functionality has been implemented, your mobile phone will know which apps are installed and present those options in search results. As an example of app indexing, when I search for “Alan Jackson” on my Android mobile phone via Google Chrome, I’m presented with options to listen to this artist on YouTube, Spotify and Google Play because I have those apps installed. This feature is currently only available on Android devices and Google Play, but we anticipate this feature to also roll out across Apple devices soon.



Another example: when searching for restaurants, search can understand when I have related apps with restaurant reviews and ratings. Not only will it present that information in search results but it will also prompt me to launch the app providing access to information, reviews and menus for that specific restaurant.

According to Google, 15% of Google searches on Android now return links to apps through this App Indexing process (assuming the user is signed in). In the past quarter, the number of clicks on app deep links have jumped 10 times. Google's new mobile algorithm is already live for Android applications. With the proper indexing, those applications should rank within search results.



APP STORE OPTIMIZATION: NEW AND EXISTING CUSTOMERS

App Store Optimization is SEO for mobile applications.

Due to the growth in mobile search, mobile apps stand to see tremendous growth, especially from the mobile algorithm updates Google released April 21st. It's important to ensure your app is indexed and findable within the app stores.

Any application should have "on-metadata" and "off-metadata" optimizations for ranking within the app stores.

On-Metadate: Optimized application title, discription and keywords

- Identifying keywords for app optimization is not drastically different than conducting keyword research for any SEO effort. Use those keywords to create an optimized title for your app, making sure it's not overly stuffed and unnatural – the same as writing titles for your webpages.
- The description for your app is very similar to writing a description for your webpage. This is what entices users to learn more about your app and ultimately download. Use this as your sales pitch, making it succinct and include key features.
- Include images and video if available. Screenshots are some of the first things a user sees when browsing through apps. Use text in your screenshot, turning them into promotional graphics that explains exactly what a user is looking at.
- Make sure your icon is on brand point and memorable. The icon is what users will reference when scrolling through apps on their phone so you want it to stand out.
- All SEO best practices should be taken into account when determining optimization strategies, such as competitiveness of the targeted queries, competitive landscape of other applications, relevancy, long-tail opportunity, etc.

Off-Metadate: Ratings, reviews, Google+, social signals, links

- Ratings are having more of an influence on ranking, especially in the Apple app store. Build a great product and offer in-app rating options for users to ensure you are getting those good ratings!
- Reviews help users determine if the app you've built is worth the download but can also impact your rankings within app stores. Read your reviews for feedback on ways to improve the usability and service your app is providing.
- Links have a direct impact on your ranking: "Getting people to write about your app improves your search ranking in the Play store." - Google I/O, June 2012. Conducting successful outreach campaigns and developing relationships with key influencers will lead to more people talking about and linking to your app. Offer free access, beta review or some other promotion as PR efforts to kick start this process. Make sure you have linked to your app from the desktop and mobile sites, providing users direct access to download. Consider building a page dedicated to your app that highlights the features and usability consumers should expect once they download. Use this as an opportunity to include more detail that may not "fit" into the app store.
- Social signals and +1 (in the Google Play stores) can have an impact on driving users to download your app. Use in-app features to help users promote the apps they are using through tweets, shares on Facebook or +1 in the app store.

Each app store will have different ranking criteria so applying best practices across all stores may provide the best return. Key differences in tactics for each major app store are listed here

iOS vs Google Play

Tactical Differences

iOS

Title
Keyword Field
No links
No social

Google Play

Title
Description
Links count
+1s





APP INDEXING: EXISTING CUSTOMERS

App Indexing lets Google index apps just like websites. Deep links to your Android app appear in Google Search results, letting users get to your native mobile experience quickly, landing exactly on the right content within your app.

This is done by creating relationships between the content on your web pages and deep links to content within your application. The first step in this process is to map the content of your web pages to content or functionality that exists within your app. Once mapping is completed, several steps follow to properly implement the deep links and connect your app.

First:

You must specify intent filters in your app that will define how to reach the content within your app. This enables you to add deep linking to your app.

Second:

You must connect your app to your website through the Google Play Console and Webmaster Tools.

Third:

You must provide the deep links. After your app and website are connected, if your app is using an HTTP scheme for handling deep links, Google will automatically start indexing the content of your app using URLs that Google has discovered through web indexing and that map the intent filters established in the first step. If your app is using a custom URI scheme, you will need to specify corresponding deep links to webpages using sitemaps, <link> element in the <head> or the ViewAction schema markup. If your app is automatically indexed, it is still recommended to use one of these three methods to ensure everything is mapped and indexed correctly.

To ensure all code has been implemented properly, complete this launch checklist. Testing your deep links can be done by entering a deep link URL in this testing tool. Additional technical information and training is available from Google Developers.



APP AND USER OPTIMIZATION

Consider using a CRM solution like [Apptentive](#) that provides access to better application management.

A system should provide solutions for in-app surveys, ratings, in-app feedback, download insights, application management, and CRM integration.

Monitoring App Indexing Performance:

1: Give your developers access via Webmaster Tools so they can display errors in indexed pages within apps, show weekly clicks and impressions from app deep link via Google search and stats on your sitemap and much more to come.

2: You can see engagement with your app such as weekly clicks and impressions update to the Message center in your Webmaster Tools account. Track how much traffic app deep links drive to your app using referrer information - specifically, the referrer extra in the ACTION_VIEW intent. And coming soon, integration with Google Analytics.

3: Do not block resources, this may prevent deep and app linking from working properly.

4: New Android App errors now show content mismatch, Intent URI not supported, APK not found, No first-click free and back button violation errors.

As mobile use continues to explode the opportunities for app developers are endless. However, without a knowledge of these basic SEO practices developers risk creating a wonderful app that no one can find. Follow these tips to ensure optimal ranking for your next product.

RESOURCES:

1. <https://developers.google.com/app-indexing/webmasters/>
2. <https://developers.google.com/app-indexing/webmasters/details>
3. <https://developers.google.com/app-indexing/faq>
4. <http://moz.com/blog/app-store-seo-the-inbound-marketers-guide-to-mobile>
5. <http://www.slideshare.net/SearchMarketingExpo/the-why-the-what-and-the-how-of-app-store-optimization>

THOUGHT LEADERS:

Alex Porter, President

As President of Location3 Media Alex Porter forges seamless relationships with prospective clients and oversees the day-to-day operations of the entire company. He is a founding board member of the [Interactive Marketing Association of Colorado \(IMACO\)](#). He frequently presents at national marketing conferences including IFA, DMA, PhocusWright and PubCon and is often published in industry journals. Prior to joining Location3 in 2003, he was an Associate at Cooks Associate, a boutique executive recruiting firm in Boulder, CO.

Crystal Ware, Head of SEO

As Head of SEO, Crystal oversees the SEO department, helping enterprise and multi-unit brands increase their online visibility and performance by optimizing and building authority for their websites and creating content that performs. Crystal ensures best practices are being followed, the business is shifting with the industry, and SEO is fully integrated into client's full marketing strategy.



ABOUT LOCATION3 MEDIA

Creative Thinkers,
Data Geeks &
Digital Enthusiasts –
Location3 is a digital marketing
agency that delivers
enterprise-level strategy
with local market activation.

Founded in 1999 and located in the heart of Denver, [Location3](#) has a staff of 70 full-time employees who service global, national and local brands. More than half of Location3's client base has worked with the agency for at least three years, as Location3 improves the findability and performance of every client they partner with.

MOBILE APP OPTIMIZATION SEO BEST PRACTICES

Copyright © 2015 Location3 Media, Inc.

1515 Arapahoe St.
Tower 2 - Suite 400
Denver, CO 80202

Office: 720-881-8510

info@location3.com

www.location3.com

