



# Google Algorithms, Readability & WordPress Yoast SEO

Digital Marketing  
IHU –Thessaloniki

# Readability: A linguistic factor of Content SEO

*The Panda Revolution-  
The Hummingbird Evolution*



# Google changing algorithms

- Each year, Google makes hundreds of changes to search.  
In 2018, they reported an incredible 3,234 updates — **an average of almost 9 per day**, and more than 8 times the number of updates in 2009.  
While most of these changes are minor, Google occasionally rolls out a major algorithmic update (such as **Panda** and **Penguin**) that affects search results in significant ways.
- *“For search marketers, knowing when major Google updates happened can help **explain changes in rankings and organic website traffic** and ultimately **improve search engine optimization**.”*

# Google Panda



## How does it work?

- Differs from previous ranking algos: it is site-based (not-page based).

What does this mean?

Google evaluates the percentage of the site that provide a high-quality experience (including content, navigation & usability).

- If a site receives a low Panda score, the rankings for the entire site might be lowered (despite a high ranked page).

*“Give visitors the info they’re looking for:  
Provide high-quality content on your pages, especially homepage.  
Just focus on the user and all else will follow.”*

Google engineers

# Google Panda



## Checklist:

- What is the primary question/task a visitor to this page has?
- Does this page answer that question/task better than any other page on the Web?
- Is the information trustworthy/authoritative?
- Is the content well-edited and researched?

## Google Guide for SEO best Practices (link):

<http://static.googleusercontent.com/media/www.google.com/en/us/webmasters/docs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf>

# Hummingbird - Readability



"human" search interactions

- The "**Hummingbird**" update (a search algorithm Google launched on 2013) places greater emphasis on **natural language queries**, considering **context and meaning** over individual keywords.
  - It looks deeper at content on individual pages of a website, leads users directly to the most appropriate page rather than just a homepage.

# Content - Readability



## Readability is

- “the ease of understanding or comprehension due to the style of Writing” (DuBay, 2007).
- «the ease of reading words and sentences” (DuBay, 2007).
- “the degree to which a given class of people find certain reading matter compelling and comprehensible.” (Harry McLaughlin, 1969)

Readability features include several linguistic levels of text like:

**level of vocabulary, word length, word ambiguity, figurative language, sentence length, syntactic complexity, cohesion, and number of paragraphs**

# Readability

## Why Readability is an important SEO factor?

- By writing in an easy-to-read way, your target audience is sure to spend more time on your website.
- They are also less likely to click on one of the other search results instead. That's a signal to Google that you're providing valuable content
- Research show it correlated with user engagement

# Readability

LESS IS MORE

- Text needs to be easy to read, especially for mobile readers.
- Longer sentences should be combined with short ones.
- Repetition of words should be avoided.
- Complex points need to be made simple.
- Text needs to have a structure and a logical sequence that flows naturally for the reader.
- Keyword stuffing is not acceptable.

**Content should be written specifically and clearly for the target audience.**

# Readability

## Web Readability 8 Guidelines

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S.No	Guidelines
01	Choose Fonts Wisely
02	Font size and Line Spacing are important.
03	Use of High Contrasts.
04	Keep the lines short.
05	Keep paragraphs also short.
06	Get straight to the point.
07	Don't use Jargon.
08	Use lists, images and highlights.

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(Idler, 2012)

# Common Readability Scores

- Flesch-Kincaid  
$$0.39 \left( \frac{\text{total words}}{\text{total sentences}} \right) + 11.8 \left( \frac{\text{total syllables}}{\text{total words}} \right) - 15.59$$
- Gunning Fog  
$$0.4 [(\text{word sT}s \text{ entences}) + 100(\text{complex word sTw ords})]$$
- Coleman Liau Index
- Automated Readability Index (ARI)
- SMOG Index

**Online Testing Tool: WebFX:** <https://www.webfx.com/tools/read-able/>

The readability test tool uses the Flesch Kincaid reading ease test, the Flesch Kincaid grade level test, the Gunning Fog score, the Coleman Liau index, the Automated Readability Index (ARI), and the SMOG index to help you better understand how easy your content is to understand.

# Common Readability Scores

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Score	School level(US)	Ease of understanding	Notes
100.00–90.00	5th grade	1-Very Easy	Very easy to read. Easily understood by an average 11-year-old student.
90.0–80.0	6th grade	2-Easy	Easy to read. Conversational English for consumers.
80.0–70.0	7th grade	3-Fairly Easy	Fairly easy to read.
70.0–60.0	8th & 9th grade	4-Standard	Plain English. Easily understood by 13- to 15-year-old students.
60.0–50.0	10th to 12th grade	5-Fairly Difficult	Fairly difficult to read.
50.0–30.0	College	6-Difficult	Difficult to read.
30.0–10.0	College graduate	7-Very Confusing	Very difficult to read. Best understood by university graduates.
10.0–0.0	Professional	8-Very Confusing	Extremely difficult to read. Best understood by university graduates.

# Common Readability Scores

- Gunning Fog Index   $0.4 \times (\text{words per sentence}) + 100 \times (\text{complex words per 100 words})$

Fog Index	Reading level by grade
17	College graduate
16	College senior
15	College junior
14	College sophomore
13	College freshman
12	High school senior
11	High school junior
10	High school sophomore
9	High school freshman
8	Eighth grade
7	Seventh grade
6	Sixth grade

# Common Readability Scores

FKRE: Summary of Understanding status of text.

Readability Score	Understanding Status
90-100	Very Easy
80-89	Easy
70-79	Fairly Easy
60-69	Standard
50-59	Fairly Difficult
30-49	Difficult
0-29	Very Confusing

Summary of Fog Index Reading level score (GF Score) by grade.

GF Score	Grade	GF Score	Grade
6	Sixth grade	12	High school senior
7	Seventh grade	13	College freshman
8	Eighth grade	14	College sophomore
9	High school freshman	15	College junior
10	High school sophomore	16	College senior
11	High school junior	17	College graduate

# URL READABILITY

Cannot resist.  
Seems good.

[https://www.aoneseoservice.com/  
basic-seo-fixes-to-boost-google-rankings.html](https://www.aoneseoservice.com/basic-seo-fixes-to-boost-google-rankings.html)

I can guess  
what the content  
is about.

[https://www.aoneseoservice.com/  
blog/post?id=4&KW=boost+ranking](https://www.aoneseoservice.com/blog/post?id=4&KW=boost+ranking)

It looks risky

[https://www.aoneseoservice.com/2grf42e/  
i?HEXID=Abd6598hkt81peld&qry=b#ranking](https://www.aoneseoservice.com/2grf42e/i?HEXID=Abd6598hkt81peld&qry=b#ranking)

# Yoast SEO (WordPress Plugin)

- **How it works?**

You fill out your focus keyphrase in the Yoast SEO plugin,

then it evaluates your page's content and provides feedback on how to improve the text for that focus keyphrase.

Yoast SEO Premium → checks for synonyms, related keyphrases, and different word forms.



[https://yoast.com/wordpress/plugins/seo/?gclid=CjwKCAiAz4b\\_BRBbEiwA5XIVVkvqyEhuKXm4HDIWSQ3IReUc70dSwB08Fk2gZ-S9aYPXlsC9U\\_BRehoCNr4QAvD\\_BwE](https://yoast.com/wordpress/plugins/seo/?gclid=CjwKCAiAz4b_BRBbEiwA5XIVVkvqyEhuKXm4HDIWSQ3IReUc70dSwB08Fk2gZ-S9aYPXlsC9U_BRehoCNr4QAvD_BwE)

# Common Readability Checks (by Yoast)

1. **Transition words.** Do you use transition words like 'most importantly', 'because', 'therefore', or 'besides that' to tie your text together?
2. **Sentence beginnings.** Do any of your consecutive sentences start with the same word? This might feel repetitive to your reader, and annoying.
3. **Reading ease:** Is your text easy to read? (short sentences and simple words -2 syllables).
4. **Paragraph length.**
5. **Sentence length.** (e.g. no more than 20 words)
6. **Subheading distribution.**
7. **Passive voice:** Using a lot of passive voice makes the text distant, and the message will be less clear.

# Yoast SEO (WordPress Plugin)

Yoast SEO Premium

Need help? 

 Snippet Preview

Avoid using a focus keyphrase more than once • Yoast  
<https://yoast.com/avoid-using-a-focus-keyphrase-more-than-once>

You shouldn't use a focus keyphrase more than once. Why? Find out why the Yoast SEO plugin checks for it and how to avoid this!

   Edit snippet

 Readability analysis

 Focus keyphrase  
avoid using focus keyphrase more than once

**Focus keyphrase** 

avoid using focus keyphrase more than once

 Synonyms 

previous use of focus keyphrase

 Analysis results

Problems (1)

Keyphrase density: 0.3%. This is too low; the keyphrase was found 2 times. [Focus on your keyphrase!](#) 

Improvements (4)

Outbound links: No outbound links appear in this page. [Add some!](#)  
Image alt attributes: Images on this page do not have alt attributes with words from your keyphrase. [Fix that!](#)  
Keyphrase in title: Does not contain the exact match. [Try to write the exact match of your keyphrase in the SEO title.](#)  
Slug stopwords: The slug for this page contains stop words. [Remove them!](#) 

Good results (11)

Internal links: You have enough internal links. Good job!  
Keyphrase in introduction: Well done!  
Keyphrase distribution: Good job!  
Keyphrase length: Good job.  
Keyphrase in meta description: Keyphrase or synonym appear in the meta description. Well done!  
Meta description length: Well done!  
Previously used keyphrase: You've not used this keyphrase before, very good.  
Keyphrase in subheading: 2 (out of 5) subheadings reflect the topic of your copy. Good job!  
Text length: The text contains 758 words. Good job!  
SEO title width: Good job!  
Keyphrase in slug: More than half of your keyphrase appears in the slug. That's great! 

 Add related keyphrase

**Keyphrase** 

Dr Ioannis Magnialis | Digital Marketing, IHU