SEO...
for creatives

By Jamie Body

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What is SEO?

No, it's not a B side to an ABBA song... It stands for **Search Engine Optimisation,** which means how well your online presence ranks.

For those of you with a tricky name like mine 'Jamie Body', it took a while for me to rank over search terms such as Jamie Dornan's 50 Shades of Grey 'Body', Jamie Lynn Spears post baby 'body' and so on.

If you have a website then you want it to have the best SEO possible.
Search Engine Optimisation is all about making your website more visible to people who are using search engines to look for your product, brand, or services.

The easier you are found online the more likely you are to get an enquiry about a job, a follow up email about an audition etc.

If you don't have a website, you still want to rank high on google and luckily social media accounts rank quite high, as platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have great SEO. With that being said you have to make sure your accounts are active and have fresh content.

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Why is it so important?

92% of clicks come from the first page of Google, so you want to make sure you appear on that first page and appear as high as you can. Every second that your website is not indexed on Google, you miss out on opportunities, in which someone might have accessed your website, viewed your content, and bought your product or services.
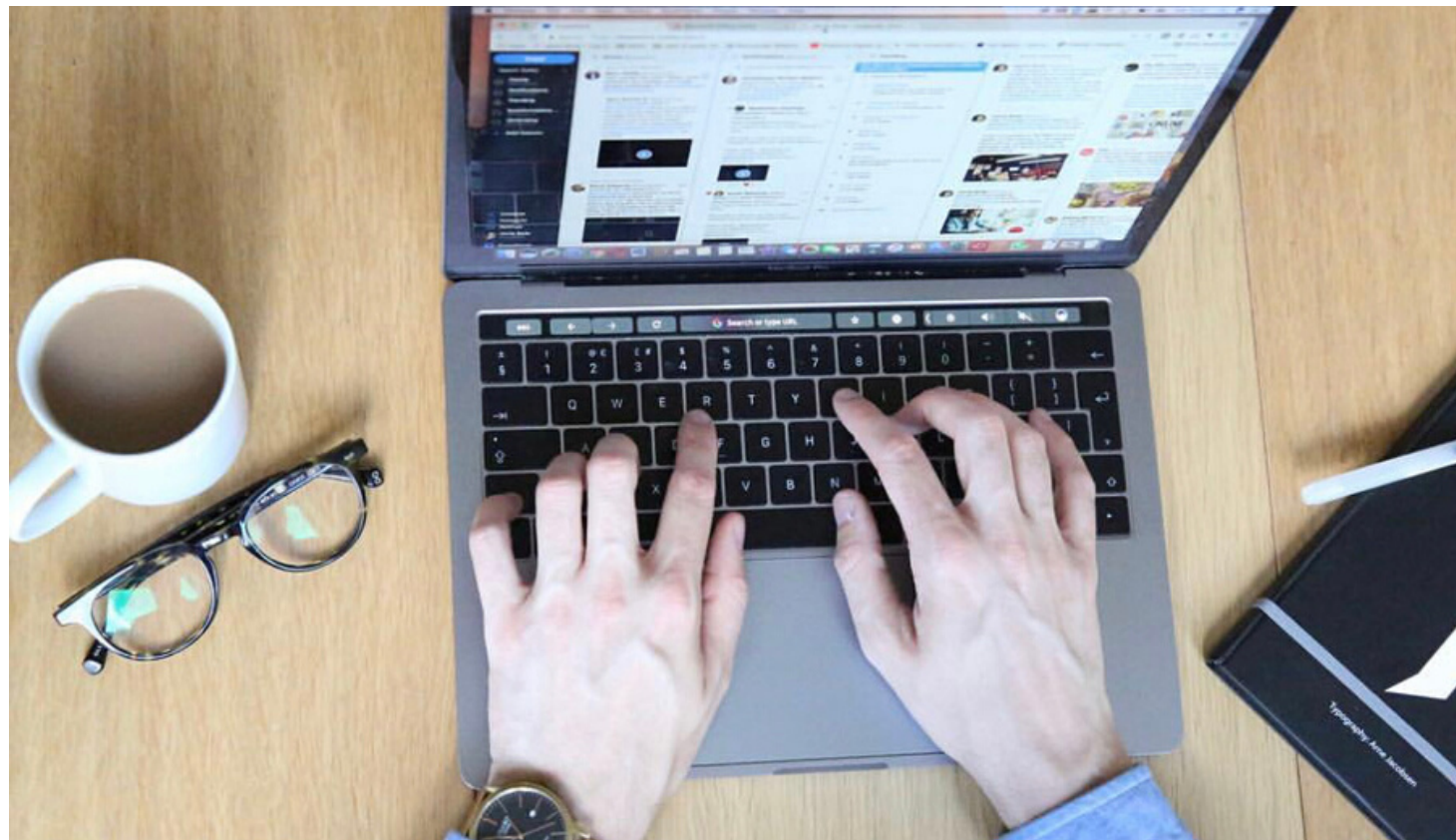
By optimising your website for search engines, not only can you improve its ranking (found easier by potential customers), but you can also create a better user experience. That is the key to SEO: you are optimising for your visitors, not just for search engines.

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How does it work?

Every search engine has a program known as a "bot", "crawler" or "spider". When you type in your key words or phrase on google these spiders follow links and visit websites containing them.

As they do so, they index website content and follow the links on the website to other sites. If your website has not yet been indexed, it will not appear in search results.
Major search engines like Google and Yahoo are continually indexing websites.

The bots scan every site's URLs and look for the key words/phrase you mentioned. They also browse the HTML code for metadata such as particular tags or markups, so that they can determine the relevance of individual pages to particular subjects.

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Google uses over 900 different factors to determine the relevance of a website to a search query. Don't worry, I'm not going to list all of them but here are some important factors that the search engine algorithm takes into account when ranking a website:

· The website's content
· The website's structure and internal links
· The searcher's geographical location
· If it is mobile optimised
· Loading times
· Links from social networks

Your rank is an indicator of how relevant your website is for a search term from the search engine's perspective, and what authority that your website has.

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Do you pass the test?
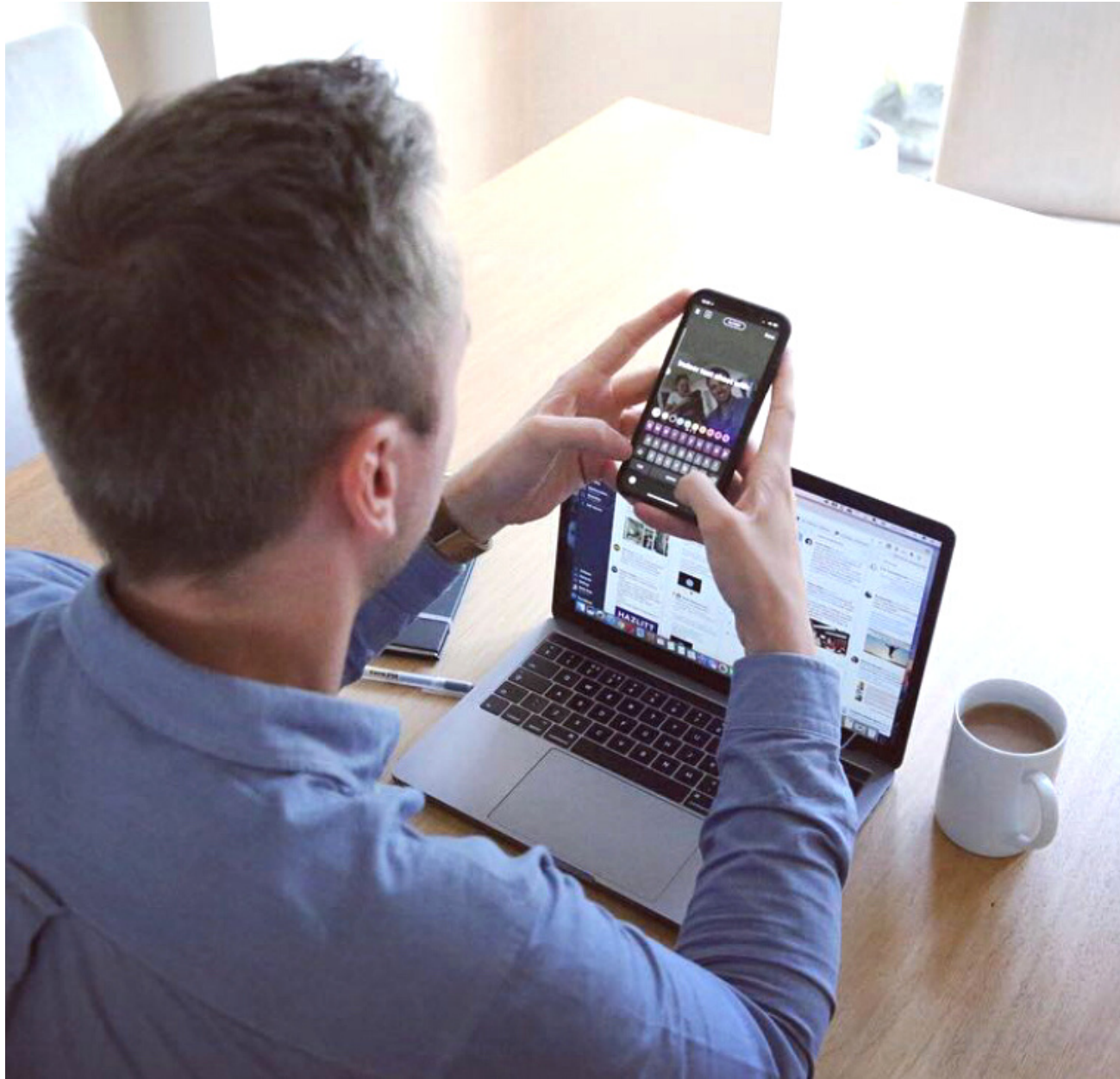
Now the boring stuff is out of the way, I am sure you want to learn how to improve your SEO, right? Well let's do an online test first to see how well your personal brand ranks at the moment?

Open an incognito window on your website browser and type in your name and see what comes up.

- Are you on the first page of Google?
- Do you like what you see?

Don't know how to open an incognito window?
To open an incognito window, start Chrome and click the three-dotted icon in the top right corner of the screen. Step 2: Click New Incognito Window and start browsing.

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How to improve your SEO?

■ **Updated your website regularly**

But remember quality over quantity - it's better to produce more relevant content than updating everyday with bad updates.

■ **Use key words on your webpages.**

Make sure you use words on your site that you want to be found for. So first off, your name. You will be surprised how many websites for creatives I see that hardly mention their name. Use key words like 'Actor', 'Dancer', 'London', 'Freelance', 'Currently appearing in...'

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URL Structure

The structure of your URLs can also help search engines to better understand your website content. So instead of Jamiebody.com/page5678 it should be jamiebody.com/services.

Internal Links

Make sure you use hyperlinks on your website to send visitors to other pages. You want to keep vistors on your user journey for as long as possible. I.e hyperlink the word 'actor' on your homepage to take to the your 'C.V' page.

Images

Images are a great way to break up chunks of text, and also to communicate with search engines. Every image you upload to your site will have a file name. If you insert the image into your website, your image's file name will appear in your site's source text. You should use file names that describe the content of the image. I.e , "Jamie Body Social Media. jpg" is more useful than "pic12345.jpg".

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Keep it relevant

There is no point having a website and only updating it once a year. I'm not saying you have to update it daily but add new pictures or update your C.V page once a month at least. Show that it is fresh and keep it at the top of rankings for your name/search terms. Updating your C.V page or blog are great ways to add fresh content to your website.

Use social media and emails to distribute content

Now that you have your website you want people to see it, right? Share content across your social media channels or on your monthly mail out. Tweet a link to your 'news' page or add your new 'portfolio' page in your email signature. Send people to your website to get traffic and engagement, therefore improving your SEO.

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