What is the best way for getting traffic to a newly build website? This seems to be one of the most common questions today. In fact, that is a great question and while there is no single answer, there are definitive steps that can increase the chances of that happening. Maybe you have wondered why your business doesn’t show up at the top of search results. All major search engines have primary search results where content like web pages, images, and videos are listed. These listings are free results and are ranked based upon what the search engine considers most relevant to users. Although there are no guarantees to have a number one spot through a search, by understanding and using **search engine optimization (SEO)**, it is possible to achieve a high ranking on search engine return pages (**SERPs**).

Traffic, otherwise known as organic traffic, is an important component to websites and all it requires is a little effort and some re-thinking. Google returns more than 240 Million search results in the US every day. SEO techniques help to structure content so that the content is easy to find when someone searches for what you have to offer. This means that an audience can easily find published information. SEO is the process of structuring content so your audience can easily find and use your published information. Being successful is more than just content, it means understanding how to structure information. In fact, both content and structure work together to produce a desired result.

This project explains the main objectives of search engine optimization and the method it uses to boost the frequency of a website results returned by a search engine in an effort to maximize user traffic to the site. It will also measure website's success using indicators and analytic tools and a detailed analysis of the techniques and contributing factors that influence them.

In order to optimize a website, it is important to understand the philosophical approach: white hat approaches. The white hat approach follows all search engine rules and policies and focuses on relevancy and organic ranking and utilizes the following strategies:

**Keywords**: Most people type just a few words into a search field but those words are fundamental to users finding content. Known as keywords, they are the way for website owners to connect with an audience. Search engines, such as Google, takes these words and returns thousands of search results. However, only 10 of these results appear on the first search engine return pages (**SERPs**). Selecting the right keywords is critical for connecting sites to users searching for content. If the right words are not contained in the website, it lowers the chance of the webpage seeing much traffic. By understanding this concept, I was able to see how important keywords are to a webpage. Researching and analyzing keywords help focus content and help define information presentation.

But how do you know which keywords to use? First of all keywords must be real meaning they should be actually in the webpage and not just put there for stuffing. For those who already have a webpage, they can actually rewrite the content to include keywords that their users actually use to search for information. Upon researching keywords, I found that Google has two good free tools for developing keywords. Google Adwords has an [external keyword tool](https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal) that is available to everyone.  This tools allows you to type in a keyword and immediately see related keywords and statistics indicating the volume of searches using the term and [Google Zeitgeist](http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist/) which examines search patterns, trends, and surprises and provides insight into global, regional, past and present search trends. Google Zeitgeist is actually home to several tools.

**Spiders/Crawlers**: Spiders or crawlers are programs run by a [search engine](http://www.motive.co.nz/glossary/search.php) to build a summary of a website’s content. They create text-based summaries of content and addresses ([URL](http://www.motive.co.nz/glossary/url.php)) for each webpage. When a person searches, the keyword(s) they enter are compared with the available website content indexes. Due to the large number of webpages indexed, direct text-only-matching is rare, rather search engines use sophisticated logics (algorithms) to rank potential matches. For example, the underlying information hierarchy of a webpage ([semantic markup](http://www.motive.co.nz/glossary/markup.php#semanticmarkup)) may be factored into the ranking a webpage is assigned. Spider/crawlers will only index the text-based content of your website. Images (such as photos or graphical-text), video and [Flash elements](http://www.motive.co.nz/glossary/flash.php) require supplementary [HTML-text](http://www.motive.co.nz/glossary/html-text.php) to be seen.

**Heading Tags**: Heading tags, as their name suggests, are used to differentiate the headings and subheadings of a page from the rest of the content. These tags are also known to webmasters as HTML header tags, head tags and SEO header tags. They are a very important aspect of any web design, whether the website is a blog, a portfolio, an informational site or even an online store. It is, along with the logo, one of the first things a new user will see when visiting your website. Heading tags can be likened to a personality and allows the user to quickly determine not only the quality of the site, but if the content is something they think they will enjoy.

Another very important aspect of SEO is use of the page title. The page title tells both the user and the search engine what the page is about. The page title appears in the search engine result and should correctly inform the reader about the content. Good SEO requires that every page have a unique page title that accurately labels the page content. The page’s title is the name by which the site will be bookmarked, the name that appears in the user’s browser’s menu bar, and most importantly, the name that will appear in SERP pages. The page title is contained in the web page <title> tag that is contained within the <head> tag. The page title is the page element that connects the search result to your site. By including clear information about the focus of the site, a user knows what to expect at the site. The matching search terms are in bold to further connect the search result to your content. This connection is complete when the user clicks the link and arrives at your site.

One of the most important things that can be done for a site is to build connections and links with the community. Whether it’s through Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, it is important to link as many external websites as possible.

Another aspect of my project comprises of comparisons of websites. Using the Side-by-Side SEO Comparison Tool by Internet Marketing Ninjas, I ran a check of websites links and images on each page. The tool compares two sites in a side-by-side report. At a glance, you can see how your page and a competitor’s page use keywords, how much text is on the page, and which keywords are used. This is invaluable competitive intelligence for SEOs.  Below is a breakdown of the components:

* On-page analysis: Shows the number of words used on the page, including linked and unlinked text, as well as the number of links and page size.
* Metadata tool: Displays text in the title tag, meta description and meta keywords tags
* Headings: Displays text used in <h1> and <h2> tags
* Keyword density tool: Reveals statistics for non-linked content
* Link structure tool: Displays the number and types of links used for internal, subdomain, and external links
* Page text tool: Shows both the total text and specific, non-linked text found on the pages
* Source code tool: Provides quick access to on-page HTML code

The first comparison I ran was an on-page analysis. By entering the two URLs, I saw that City Tech had 163 words on the page and BMCC had 607. My take on this is that the more words on a page, the more chance of that page being found. Therefore, the more content on a page, the better the ranking. The more links a web page has, the higher it will typically rank on search engines. City Tech has 63 link words compared to BMCC which has 401. The biggest difference I noticed was that City Tech’s page size is 16,205 and BMCC’s page size is 54,156. However, I am not sure if the page size really matters although BMCC uses more of their page and it looks better.

So then I compared the head tag elements. The head tag contains the title tag and it’s important to the spiders or web crawlers. These are programs run by search engines to build a summary of a website’s content. They take web page content and create key search words for online users to use. In comparison, they are pretty similar so not much to discuss there.

The most interesting comparisons I found were the difference in the amount to keywords used. I noticed that BMCC more than doubled the amount of keywords used than City Tech. It is good to use keywords but over stuffing too many keywords is not good either because it could send an alert which can negatively affect a ranking. I also noticed that City Tech has links to Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and also BMCC has links to all of them but also a blog page that is linked to their first page.