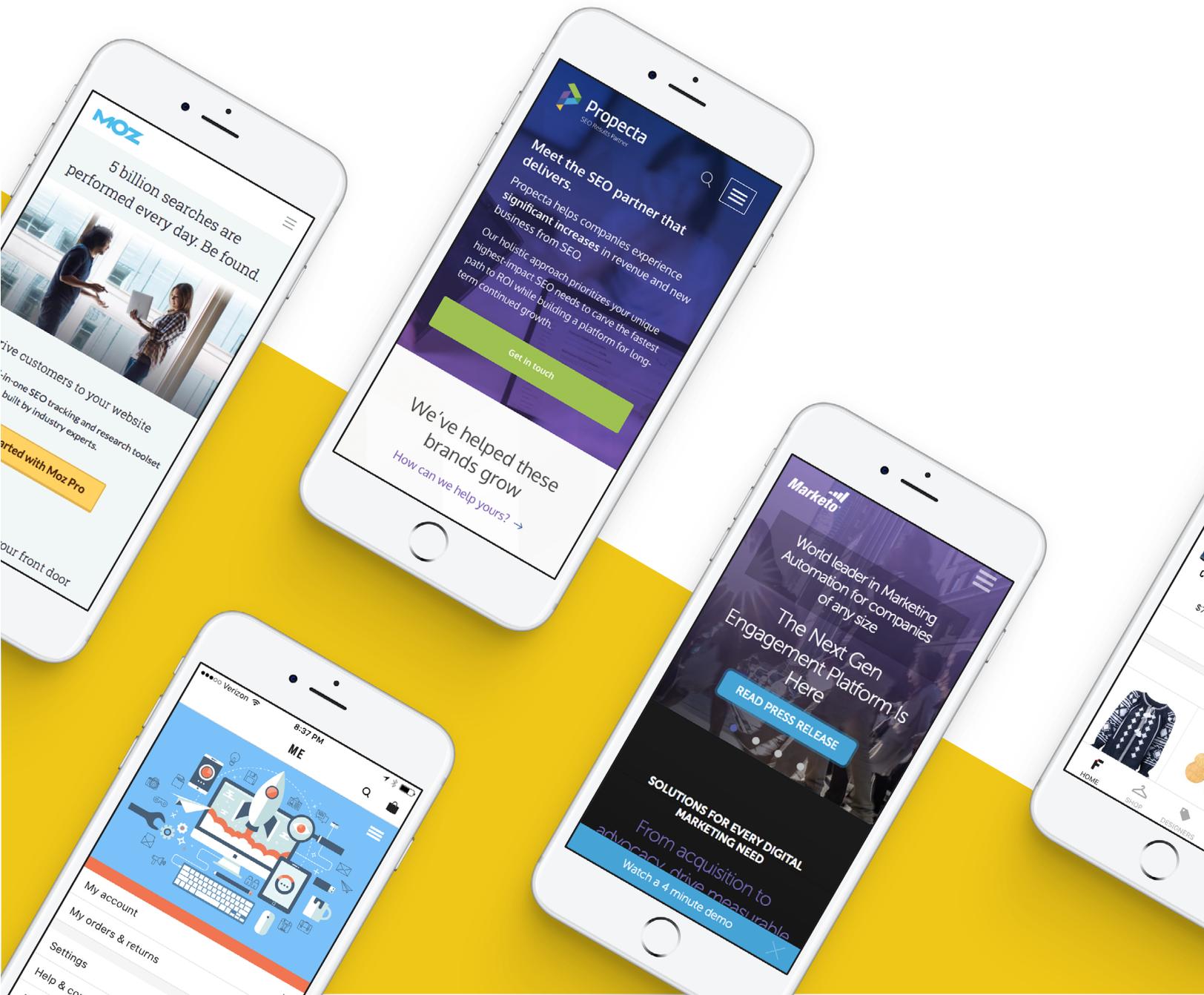
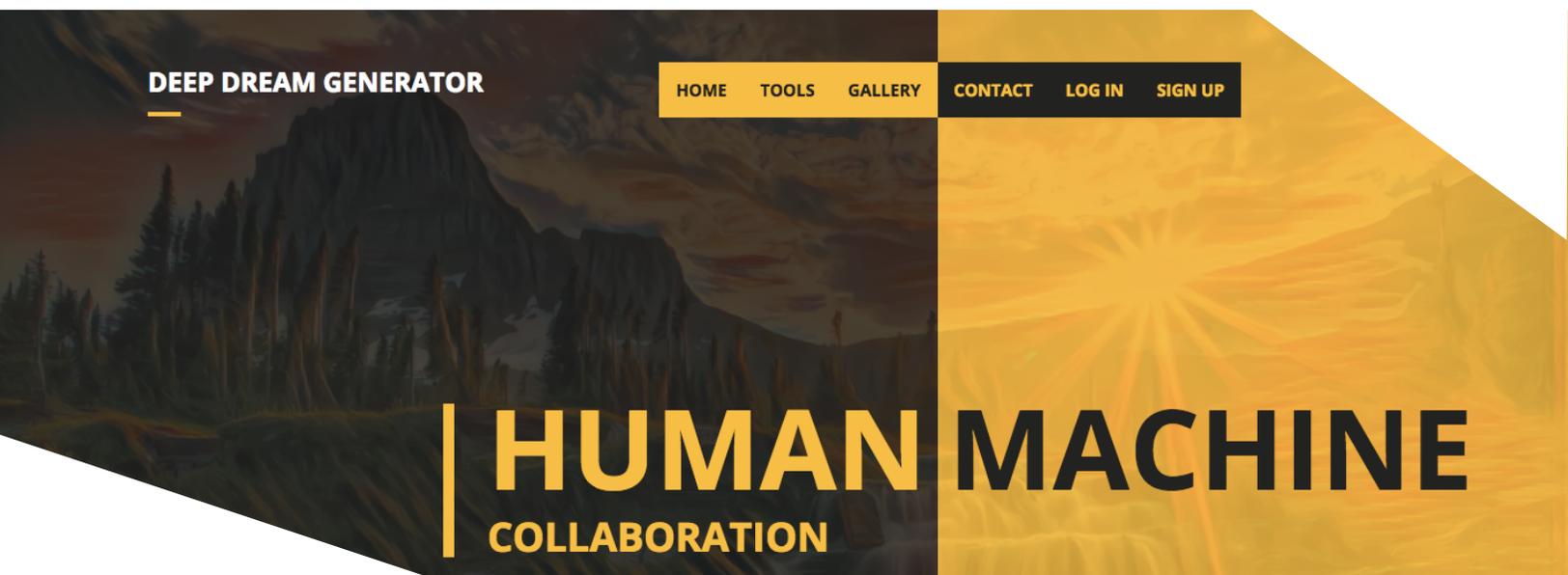


How to Optimize Images for SEO



Search engines could always read and “understand” text, but images posed a unique problem. Humans can decipher the contents of an image, but that is a very difficult task for computers. So search engines have relied on textual cues around images to better understand them—hence the importance of image alt tags in SEO.

Google has a lot of very advanced algorithms that are getting better and better at understanding images and even “seeing” what is in them. (Enter [Deep Dream](#).) For now, however, content creators still maximize the images on their pages by strategically using each of the text options available for an image.



Alt Tags (aka Alt Image Attributes)

The original purpose of the alt attribute was usability. People who choose not to show images, and screen readers for blind users, can read alt text in place of images.

They also have SEO implications, because of search engines' difficulty understanding images. Search engines rely on alt text to describe what is happening in an image, and that provides some SEO value if done properly:

- **Don't stuff keywords.**
- **Use keywords and synonyms naturally.**
- **Briefly describe the content of the images.**

You can include a value proposition or benefit statement if you're describing a product image.

Describe it in a positive way, but describe it—don't sell it. Don't be too overt or aggressive.



For example, if your content keyword is, "safety advice for hikers," you want to be descriptive of what the hikers are doing in each photo, and then figure out how to incorporate keywords. Usually, the top/featured image is a title image and the alt attribute is the keyword or something very close to it.

Image 1: A guy on a hill

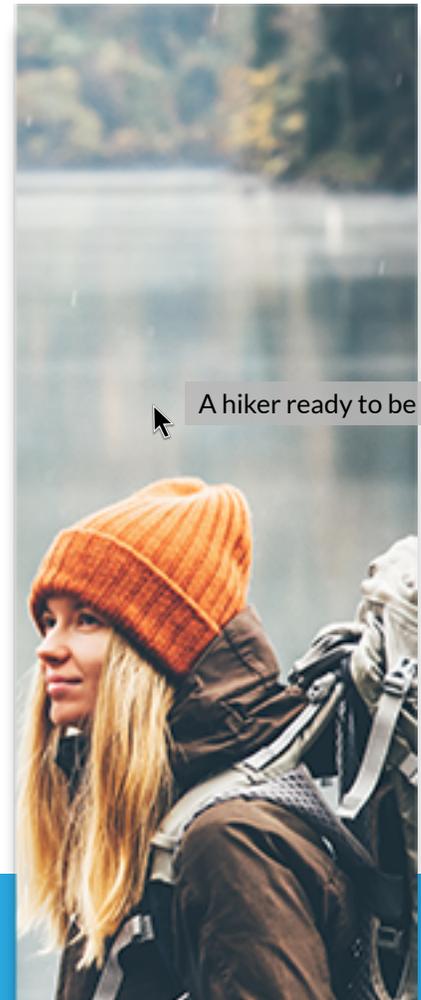
Alt text: safety advice for hikers

Image 2: A woman in hiking gear looking confident

Alt text: hiker ready to be safe

Image 3: A bear eating a hiker

Alt text: hiker being eaten by bear - unsafe!



A hiker ready to be safe

Image Title Text

Title text is the text that appears when the user rolls/hovers over an image. It's not related, or beneficial, to SEO, but it can be a good place to include a next step or a CTA.

Whether it's juggling multiple websites, confronting a lack of resources, poor scaling, or attempting to align the ambitions of marketers with the abilities of its content teams, it can be easy for big companies to lose sight of why they are working to improve SEO in the first place. (Reminder: Nearly 90% of consumers begin the buying process with a search engine. That's a pretty good reason.)



A photo of your software on a laptop might include the title text, "Click for a free demo," or, "Download a free trial today!"

Image File Names

Make sure to give photos (and any file you upload to the internet) descriptive names. Search engines assume that the name is descriptive of the content, so it becomes a minor SEO factor. Similar rules apply to naming files:

- **Use keywords naturally, and close to the front. (Don't stuff keywords!)**
- **Describe the image.**
- **Keep it short (five words, max).**
- **Connect the words with dashes, not with spaces or underscores.**
- **Don't use special characters.**

Image Captions

The last option for maximizing the SEO value of an image is to add a caption. This can either be in a dedicated caption field, or just immediately below the image on the page. Google assumes that text very near an image relates to that image. Same rules here: use keywords naturally and be concise: "Joe was not familiar with basic safety advice for hikers."

Bonus: Image File Size

Good UX is good SEO, and image sizes are crucial to a page's load time.

Determine what size image you need, and scale your image appropriately before uploading. Yes, you can dictate the size that the image displays once it's uploaded, but [Google doesn't recommend it](#):

The overhead of shipping unnecessary pixels, only to have the browser rescale the image on our behalf, is a big missed opportunity to reduce and optimize the total number of bytes required to render the page.

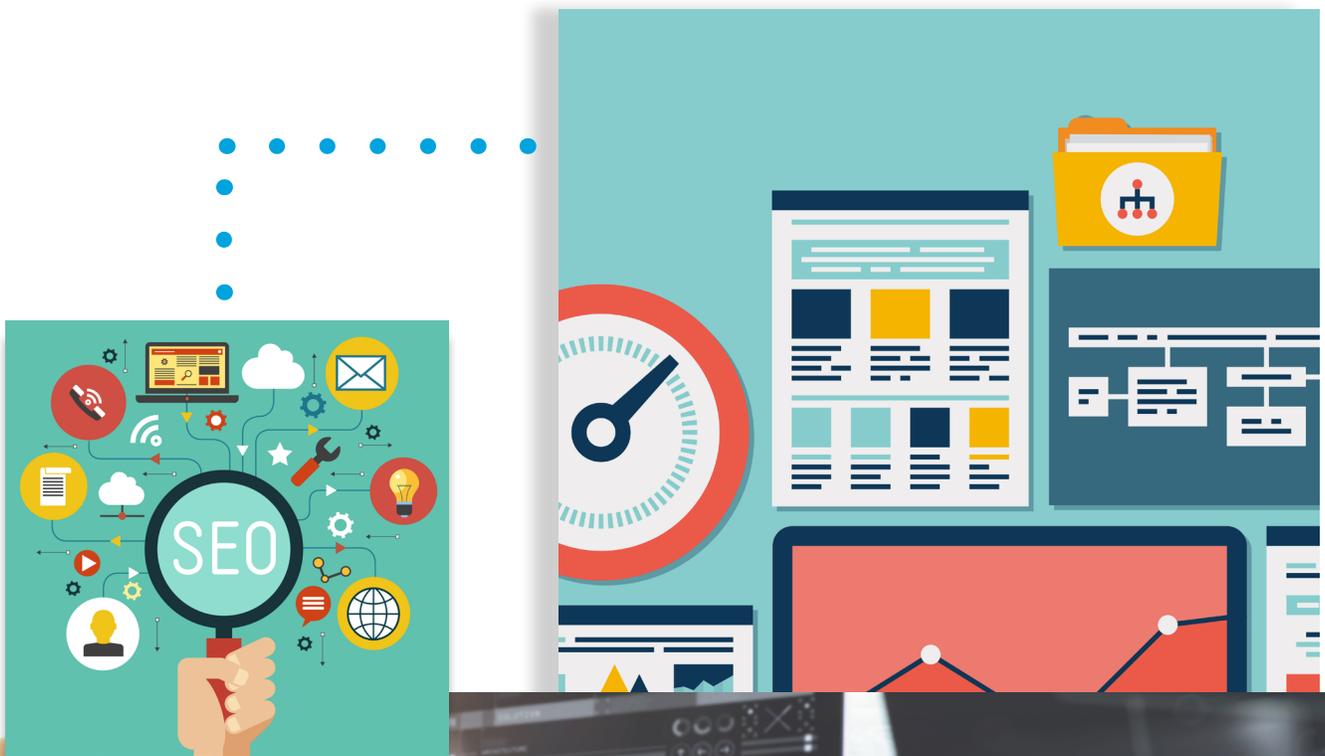
Forcing the browser to re-scale images uses extra CPU resources, better spent on delivering your content before the user backs out.



Images and SEO: A Checklist

Before you hit “Publish” on your content, check each of your images for the following, and make sure keywords are used strategically but naturally:

- Alt tags**—Describe the image in a few words.
- Title text**—No SEO value, so give the user a next step or insert a CTA.
- File name**—Describe the image in very few words
- Captions**—Use a few more words here, and be helpful to the reader.
- Image size**—Once you’ve figured out how big images have to be, stick with a standard.



Additional Resources:

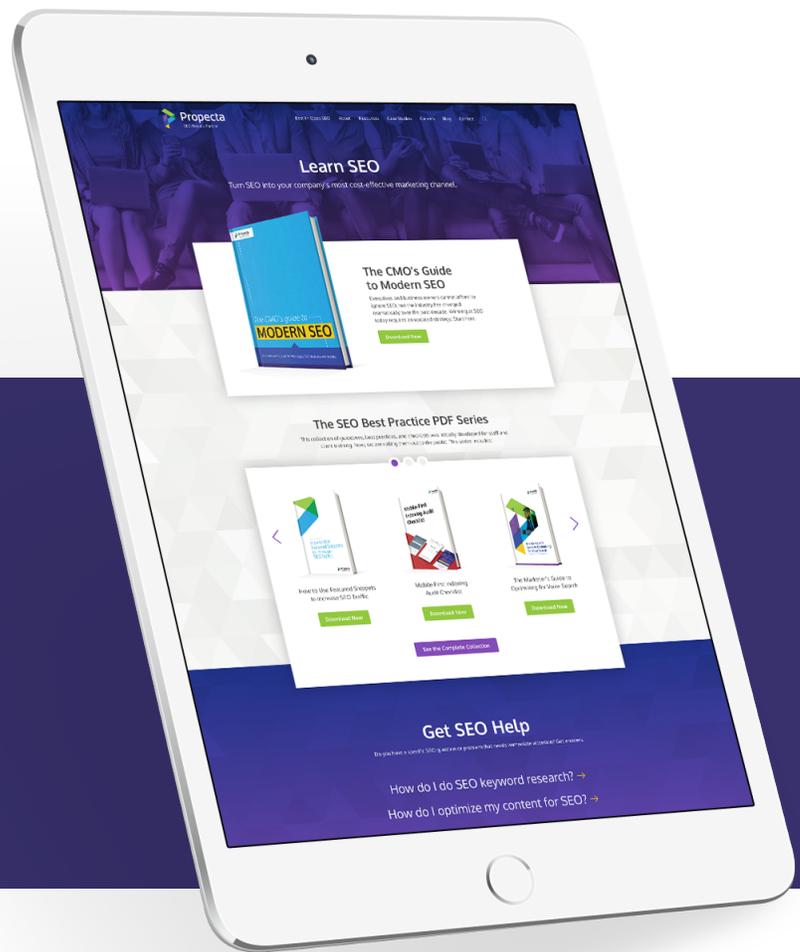
[Image Publishing Guidelines - Google](#)

[Image SEO: alt tag and title tag optimization - Yoast](#)

[On-Page Factors - Moz](#)

[5 Ways B2B Websites Get it Wrong](#)

[Image Optimization - Google Developers](#)



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