

Ranked.

Issue 1 · October 2026

A RankMySEO magazine

ARIS SETIAWAN
on building RankMySEO

TOPICAL PAGES,
pillar pages and long-tail
keywords

THE SEO
toolkit that costs little and does
a lot

SEARCH IN 2027:
what the people who build it
say comes next

**FIND A GOOD
KEYWORD:**
a customer question you can
answer

**YOU BUILT THE
WEBSITE.**
Now who will visit it?

FOUR ROOMS
for one message: web, social
media, forums and offline

**How search works
now, and how people
find your business in it.**



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A letter from the editor

I am Aris Setiawan, the creator of RankMySEO. This magazine is new, and I am its editor-in-chief.

Issue 1 is a plain guide to SEO, marketing and the business of software. You need no special skills to read it.

The timeline covers events from January 2025 to 19 October 2026. Start there if you missed them.

Two sections look at RankMySEO and its plans. The interview has my own answers about how I build it.

Next come three practical articles. "SEO in 2026" explains what changed in Google Search. "GEO and AEO" covers AI assistants outside Google, and how to measure mentions, citations and visits.

After that, the marketing article gives you a worksheet for a small plan. The last article covers the business choices behind a software product from Indonesia.

This issue also has six sections:

- "The SEO toolkit that costs little and does a lot"
- "A good keyword is a customer question you can answer"
- "Build a topic, not a pile of posts"
- "2027: what the people who build search say comes next"
- "You built the website. Now who will visit it?"
- "Four rooms for one message: web, social media, forums and offline"

A team of AI assistants researched, wrote and edited this issue. The photos of me are my own. AI tools made the other photos. I answered the interview questions and made the decisions.

Aris Setiawan, editor-in-chief

Masthead

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The catch-up

The catch-up: search, AI and marketing, January 2025 to October 2026

These events changed search and marketing from January 2025 to 19 October 2026. Each 2025 and 2026 line gives the date, the event and one reason it matters to you. Two lines from 2024 give context.

One reason covers all rows of the update table. Its dates are in US Pacific time, as Google gives them.

Before 2025: the short context

- 5 August 2024: A US court found that Google broke antitrust law in search.
- 28 October 2024: Google AI Overviews, the AI summaries at the top of some results, reached more than 100 countries. The languages include Indonesian.

2025

5 February:

ChatGPT search opened to everyone in the regions where ChatGPT is available, with no sign-up. **Why it matters:** you can search with an AI assistant without an account.

5 March:

Google started AI Mode as a Search Labs test for some paid subscribers in the US. **Why it matters:** Google began to test a search mode where you ask in a conversation.

20 May:

AI Mode opened to everyone in the US. **Why it matters:** US users no longer needed a test sign-up for AI Mode.

12 June:

Google said that it would phase out seven rich result types. **Why it matters:** your pages may lose extra parts in results, but Google says that rankings do not change.

16 June:

AI Mode data started to count in the Search Console Performance report. **Why it matters:** your Search Console totals now include AI Mode.

2 September:

In US v. Google, the court decided the remedies. **Why it matters:** Google must share some search data with rival search services.

9 September:

AI Mode came to Indonesia, in Bahasa Indonesia. **Why it matters:** Indonesian users can search in a conversation in their own language.

Google core and spam updates, 2025 to 2026

Why they matter: a core update changes rankings for many sites at the same time. A spam update helps Google find pages that break its spam policies.

Update	Dates	2025				2026			
March 2025 core update	13 to 27 March 2025								
June 2025 core update	30 June to 17 July 2025								
August 2025 spam update	26 August to 22 September 2025								
December 2025 core update	11 to 29 December 2025								
March 2026 spam update	24 to 25 March 2026								
March 2026 core update	27 March to 8 April 2026								
May 2026 core update	21 May to 2 June 2026								
June 2026 spam update	24 to 26 June 2026								
August 2026 spam update	18 to 21 August 2026								
September 2026 spam update	24 September to 8 October 2026								

core spam

2026

10 February:

Bing Webmaster Tools added an AI Performance report, as a public preview. **Why it matters:** you can see how often Bing AI features cite your site.

7 May:

FAQ rich results ended. Google wrote: "This feature will no longer appear in Google Search starting May 7, 2026." **Why it matters:** FAQ markup no longer adds questions under your result.

19 May:

Google said that AI Mode "surpassed one billion monthly users". **Why it matters:** your customers may now meet your site inside AI Mode.

3 June:

Search Console added Generative AI performance reports. **Why it matters:** you can see the impressions that your pages get in AI features.

31 August:

All sites got the Search generative AI control in Search Console. **Why it matters:** you can now opt your site out of AI Overviews and AI Mode.

1 September:

The first entry in the RankMySEO public changelog appeared. RankMySEO and this magazine come from the same team. **Why it matters:** you can track Google rankings with an Indonesian tool that connects to AI assistants.

1 October:

A 0% QRIS merchant fee took effect for all merchants on payments up to Rp100,000. Bank Indonesia announced it on 17 August 2026. **Why it matters:** if you sell, small QRIS payments now cost you no fee.

13 October:

Gemini 4 Argon came to AI Mode for Google AI Pro and Ultra subscribers. **Why it matters:** AI Mode answers for your topics can change when Google changes the model.



Cursor on your team's real code

I am one of the first Cursor Ambassadors in Indonesia. My coaching uses your team's real code.

Tell me your team size, stack and what goes wrong in Cursor. I reply with how I would run the first sessions.

Get Cursor mentoring for your team.

madebyaris.com/services/vibe-code-friend

RankMySEO

RankMySEO: see where your site stands on Google, and ask an AI about it

A rank tracker records where your pages appear in Google for each keyword. It saves every check, so you can see the history over weeks and months. RankMySEO is a Google rank tracker of this kind.

first 20

Google organic results that the tool reads for each keyword

Weekly

rank refresh on every plan, according to the pricing page

8

social platforms where you can follow public accounts

The site footer says that it is part of madebyaris.com. RankMySEO and this magazine come from the same team.

What it measures

Each site in RankMySEO has a country and a language. New keywords copy them, so RankMySEO checks a .id site in Indonesia. The tool reads the first 20 Google organic results. If your page is not in them, the row reads 20+.

RankMySEO buys rank data from a data provider. It keeps the history on your account. The length of that history depends on the plan, as the table below shows.

How often it checks

Rank refresh is weekly on every plan, according to the pricing page. Growth and above also enter a limited daily queue. The FAQ says that this queue is shared, so a check can wait until there is room.

On any plan, you can press Check ranks for a look before the next automatic check. RankMySEO does not check hourly. Since 15 September 2026, the changelog also lists a Monday rank email.

What it does not track

The FAQ lists the limits. RankMySEO does not store Bing results, the map pack or a separate ranking for phones. It does not look past the first 20 results. Track AI, described below, checks ChatGPT and Gemini only, and not every AI assistant.

Tools around the rank data

From Starter, the tool adds research and fix tools to each site. The pricing page lists these:

- Auto-add: it reviews your site and proposes keywords and competitors. The tool tracks nothing until you approve the list.
- Competitor tools: competitor rank compare, keyword gap and competitor traffic comparison.
- Keyword planner and content ideas, which are article ideas for a keyword.
- On-page score with issue URL lists, and a structured data check by page URL.
- Backlink review and a disavow list that you can download for Google Search Console.
- Charts, tags, CSV export and a PDF report with no watermark.

RankMySEO can also connect Google Search Console. The tool then shows the clicks, impressions and queries from Search Console next to the stored positions. On

paid plans, the PDF report can carry your brand name, logo and colours.

Social accounts

The pricing page calls this part of RankMySEO socmed. With socmed, RankMySEO follows public social accounts and runs research on social platforms for you. Like the tools above, socmed is available from Starter.

You can follow public accounts on Instagram, TikTok, X, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Threads or Bluesky. RankMySEO reads their follower counts every week and shows the change over 90 days. On LinkedIn, the tool follows company pages only.

Research spends from two monthly allowances: everyday lookups and social credits. Everyday lookups cover post numbers, recent posts, comments and short videos on Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. They also cover TikTok creators and trends.

Every other research tool spends social credits. Examples are ads, transcripts, hashtags and mentions. Most tools cost 1 credit, and an engagement audit costs 5. Starter has 3 credits a month, so the API page says that the audit is available from Growth.

The API page says that a saved answer is free to open again until it ages out. Each tool has its own time, from 1 hour to 30 days.

A lookup that fails costs nothing. Both allowances reset on the 1st of each month, UTC. The server API offers the same research through its social endpoints.

Ask an AI about your ranks

Operator is the assistant inside the app. It reads the same stored checks that you see. From those checks, it can add a keyword, start Auto-add or queue a rank check. Starter includes 5 messages an hour, and Growth and above include 40.

Since 9 October 2026, Operator has its own chat page. It can write page reviews and content briefs, and it can draw charts from your numbers. On Growth and above, it also searches the web for link ideas.

An outside AI assistant can connect over MCP, the Model Context Protocol. The endpoint is `api.rankmyseo.com/mcp`. Its setup page names Cursor, Claude, ChatGPT, Grok, Gemini, Copilot, Windsurf and Zed. For ChatGPT and Grok, you add a remote MCP connector and paste that address.

An assistant can try the tool with no account. The walk-up limits are 1 site, 2 keywords and 48 hours. Keys from a signed-in account follow the plan of that account. The FAQ also says that there is a server API on every plan.

What customers say

The RankMySEO home page shows these five customer quotes.

“

We build websites, apps, and custom systems for businesses across Indonesia. Our own site and every client site sit on one account, so each Monday I know which keywords moved, which competitor pulled ahead, and what to tell the client before they ask.

Indra Gunanda, Founder, PT Cipta Dua Saudara

“

Javapixa does web, apps, design, and SEO for our clients. I track the studio site and our blog side by side, so I can see which articles start climbing and write the next one on a topic that already works.

Angga Adji Surya, CEO, Javapixa Creative Studio

“

Cuexon runs billing for billiard halls. The venue owners we want to reach search for kasir and billing software, so I track exactly those keywords, with the rivals they would compare us to saved right next to our site.

Ibrahim Muhammad, Cuexon

“

Sinergi Jaringan Telekomunikasi is a licensed ISP in Bandung. Companies come to us for dedicated internet and a link between offices. I watch the searches those buyers type, so the site is the one they find.

Tantowi Jauhary, Sinergi Jaringan Telekomunikasi

“

Bunnydog Studio animates for TV, commercials, and films. I look up the searches a producer types, so the studio site is what they find when they look for a team.

Ginanjari Novian, CTO, Bunnydog Studio

Kasir is the Indonesian word for cashier. ISP means internet service provider.

Source: rankmyseo.com home page, read on 19 October 2026.

Track AI

Track AI is on Agency and Scale only. You choose the prompts that a buyer would type. Each week, the tool records three things for each answer. These are whether it named your site, which rivals it named, and which of your pages it cited.

Agency includes 10 prompts a site, and Scale includes 25. The changelog lists Track AI on 17 September 2026.

Open source

The RankMySEO toolkit is open source under the Apache-2.0 licence. Its code is at

github.com/madebyaris/rankmyseo, and the npm package name is rankmyseo. You install it with "npm i rankmyseo", then "npx rankmyseo install". It uses your own database.

The public code went up on GitHub on 24 June 2026. Two days later, on 26 June 2026, the first npm packages followed.

Plans and prices

Prices are in rupiah, per month. RankMySEO bills paid plans monthly. In Indonesia, you pay with QRIS, a virtual account or an e-wallet. If you pay by card, the charge is in USD.

Plan	Starter	Growth	Agency	Scale
Price a month	Rp50,000	Rp199,000	Rp449,000	Rp799,000
Sites	2	5	10	15
Tracked keywords	10	40	80	120
History	3 months	1 year	2 years	Full history
Competitors per site	1	5	8	12
Seats	1	1	3	10
Social accounts / everyday lookups a month / credits a month	3 / 30 / 3	6 / 60 / 5	10 / 150 / 30	15 / 300 / 50

Growth, Agency and Scale add the limited daily queue. Agency and Scale add Track AI and content creation of about 800 words per article. The weekly limit is 4 articles on Agency and 10 on Scale.

RankMySEO also has a Free plan. See "Build in Indonesia, sell everywhere" for what the plan includes.

Which plan fits

The pricing page gives a short guide for paid plans:

One or two sites:

Starter.

A site that earns money:

Growth, with a year of history and the daily queue.

Client work:

Agency, with ten client sites, three seats and a PDF per client with no watermark.

You can move to a higher plan from the dashboard at any time. Your sites, keywords and history stay where they

are. The FAQ says that a person reads every support ticket.

Source: RankMySEO public pages, read on 19 October 2026.

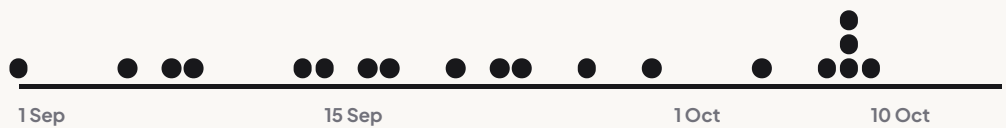
RankMySEO

RankMySEO: the road ahead

The RankMySEO public changelog lists what shipped, newest first. Its first entry is dated 1 September 2026. On 19 October 2026, the page had 19 dated entries, and the latest was 10 October 2026. RankMySEO and this magazine come from the same team.

19

dated entries in the changelog,
1 September to 10 October 2026



September 2026: the first month

The first entry, on 1 September 2026, lists the weekly rank tracker and a Free plan. It also lists MCP for Cursor and

Claude, with two days of MCP use with no account. Auto-add, the on-page audit, competitor tools, the keyword planner and backlink review are in the same entry. A PDF report, Indonesia checkout and support tickets complete it.

“

We want to make it a powerful app for marketing.

Aris Setiawan

Later entries in September add these items:

- 9 September: Google and GitHub sign-in, and USD checkout.
- 15 September: Operator on Starter, Search Console and a Monday rank email.
- 17 September: Track AI on Agency and Scale, Next actions, and Indonesian pages.
- 21 September: "B2B plan for platforms, live in Europe and Asia".
- 23 September: content creation on Agency and Scale, and content ideas.

- 24 September: team seats on Agency and Scale.
 - 30 September: branded PDF reports on paid plans.
- Other September entries are dated 6, 8, 14, 18 and 27 September. The 6 September entry, for example, adds a pricing compare table.

October 2026: Operator and the dashboard

On 5 October 2026, the dashboard got grouped menus and separate team and developer pages. Account owners can also review MCP requests from the last 30 days. On 8 October, "Refresh all" came to Agency and Scale.

The changelog has three entries on 9 October, and it calls one of them a "Big update". Operator became a full chat page that can write page reviews and briefs, draw charts and save actions. The same day added a guided setup for new sites and new on-page issue checks.

On 10 October, the content tools got a draft editor. A user can ask for up to 5 improvements on one draft, then keep or undo each change.

What the pricing page marks "coming soon"

The pricing page lists two Agency and Scale items as "coming soon". These are a priority crawl queue and priority support. The page gives no date for them. It also says that rows marked coming soon are not live, so do not buy a plan for those.

What Aris wants next

Aris Setiawan answered the questions for Ranked in writing on 19 October 2026. His answer about the next year is a set of goals.

In the future, I believe RankMySEO needs to be more than a rank tracker, AEO or GEO. We want to make it a powerful app for marketing.

Next, he named what that app should cover.

We want it to track the website and the social media, and to see other competitors. We want it to see what happens, and what the content builder should create.

He also made a prediction about AI marketing and how he expects it to work.

Also, in the near future, all indie developers or any SMB will have their own AI marketing. It will work in the "correct" way. It will not just wait mindlessly for your command.

SMB means small and medium-sized business. Each goal in his answer is a plan. RankMySEO gives no date for any of these goals.

Where the plans meet the product today

The pricing page already lists tools in some of the same areas. Of the live tools, socmed is the closest to his goal of tracking social media. From Starter, it follows public social accounts and reads their follower counts every week.

Competitor rank compare and keyword gap are on Starter and above. Content creation is on Agency and Scale.

For the next steps, Aris has given goals and no dates. The changelog at rankmyseo.com/changelog lists each release.

socmed

From Starter

Competitor rank
compare and keyword
gap

Starter and above

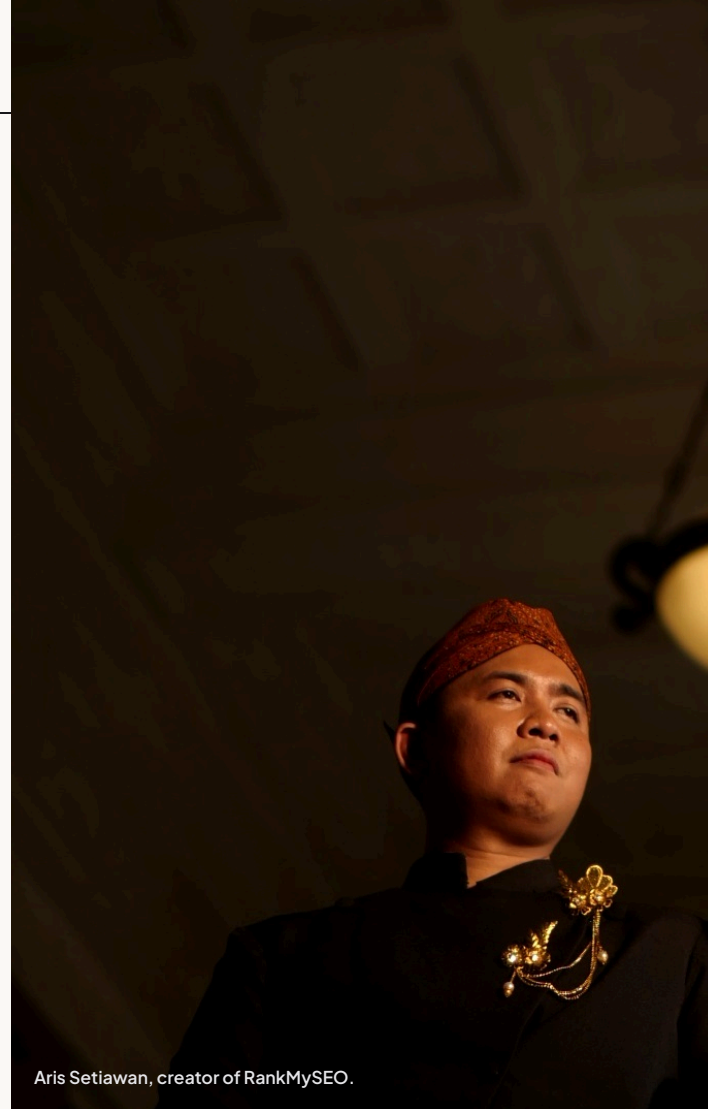
Content creation

Agency and Scale

The interview

The interview.

Aris Setiawan on building RankMySEO, search after AI, and working from Indonesia



Aris Setiawan, creator of RankMySEO.

Aris Setiawan is the creator of RankMySEO, a Google rank tracker that AI assistants can connect to. He runs MadeByAris, a web development practice in Sidoarjo, Indonesia. His clients work with him remotely.

He sent his answers to the magazine in writing on 19 October 2026. The magazine edited them for clarity and length.

“

One of my clients said to me that their sales had increased since we built the website.

Aris Setiawan

His story

How did you start to write code, and what made you

continue?

I have loved coding since the sixth grade. My first program was a "hello world" and a form in HTML. And then I started to project myself as a developer.

Somehow, it has been 13 years since I graduated from vocational high school and became a developer.

Aris links the name MadeByAris to work with an online magazine in Singapore and the UK.

When did you start MadeByAris, and what kind of work did you do for clients at the start?

“

It will not just wait mindlessly for your command.

Aris Setiawan

For my brand, I think it is from 2018. That was when I worked with an online magazine in Singapore and the UK. Since then, MadeByAris has been my brand.

My very first project was a website for a catering business in 2012, when I was still in high school.

Aris thinks that it was in 2016 when one comment from a client changed how he saw his work.

Which lesson from your client work changed how you build products today?

I think it was in 2016. One of my clients said to me that their sales had increased since we built the website. That is where I thought that I could make an impact by building an app or a website for others.

Why RankMySEO

Around March 2026, he thinks, RankMySEO began as an open-source JavaScript project. Its public code went up on GitHub on 24 June 2026. The first packages reached npm, a public registry of JavaScript code, on 26 June 2026.

When did you start RankMySEO, and what problem did you want to solve?

I started RankMySEO as an open-source JavaScript project. I think it was around March 2026. Then I published it.

Fast forward, I built the SaaS in August and September 2026. I thought that I would use it to apply for other jobs and impress people with my skills. It turned out that a lot of people liked it. I even got B2B brand deals with three companies, in Europe and other regions.

SaaS means software as a service, which is software that you use online. B2B means business to business, so

these deals were with companies. The first entry in the public changelog of the SaaS is dated 1 September 2026.

Who is RankMySEO for? Please describe the person you think about when you build it.

The first version was meant for SEO experts. In V2 and V3, I made it really simple to follow, and I connected it to AI agents. So now everyone can use it, even people who do not have any SEO skills.

We also have an operator AI. It can be your friend when you do research, and it can help you do things.

Operator is the name of that assistant inside the app. It reads the rank checks that RankMySEO stores, and it can add a keyword or queue a new rank check.

What does RankMySEO do differently from the SEO tools that people already use?

First, it is cheaper than other existing products. And we want to make it easy to use for everyone, yet an SEO veteran can still use it. We also expand beyond SEO, into GEO, AEO and social media marketing.

The price comparison is his own view. GEO and AEO are terms for work that helps AI answers use your site, and the glossary explains both.

How he works: AI agents and SEO

Do you use AI agents in your work? If you do, what tasks do you give them, and what tasks do you keep for yourself?

Yes, it is all AI. I use Cursor as my AI IDE. I mostly use Opus 5.5, Grok 4.7 and GPT-6 with Codex.

It is almost autonomous. There is still a human in the loop, so I can step in or add a new idea.

An IDE is a program for writing code. The models that he

names are Claude Opus 5.5 from Anthropic and Grok 4.7 from xAI. His GPT-6 choices are OpenAI's GPT-6.1 Sol and GPT-6 Luna models in Codex.

When you work with AI, how do you check that the result is correct?

I use Playwright, and I also test it myself. I also review the code to see if it is good or bloated.

Playwright is a tool that tests websites automatically.

The future of RankMySEO and SEO

Aris wants RankMySEO to grow past rank tracking. His answers describe goals, and they give no launch dates.

What do you want RankMySEO to do one year from now that it does not do today?

In the future, I believe RankMySEO needs to be more than a rank tracker, AEO or GEO. We want to make it a powerful app for marketing. We want it to track the website and the social media, and to see other competitors. We want it to see what happens, and what the content builder should create.

Also, in the near future, all indie developers or any SMB will have their own AI marketing. It will work in the "correct" way. It will not just wait mindlessly for your command.

SMB means small and medium-sized business.

His view of AI answers in search starts with what the user wants to do.

Do AI answers in search change SEO for a small business? If they do, how?

From my own research, and from asking some real users, it depends on the intent. If the user asks about something, surely it will affect how the user interacts.

But to find a product, with the intent to buy or compare, they are more likely to check the SERP. But I encourage this: if possible, we need to win in AI answers and the SERP. That is because it is still fundamental.

SERP is short for search engine results page. It is the list of results that a search engine shows.

For a first step, he starts with a website and one keyword.

What one step do you recommend to a small business owner who wants to start with SEO this month?

If you are sure that your business needs a website, help yourself and register at rankmyseo.com. Then find the best keyword for you, and ask the AI to create the website.

You can even ask the AI to connect to the RankMySEO MCP. Then it will help you research the keyword and implement it all for you. This is the kind of thing that RankMySEO will be capable of.

MCP is a standard way for an AI assistant to use an outside tool. The RankMySEO setup page names Cursor, Claude, ChatGPT, Grok and other assistants.

RankMySEO in brief

This box lists facts from the RankMySEO public pages, read on 19 October 2026.

- RankMySEO is a Google rank tracker. It records the position of your pages for each keyword over time.
- Operator is the AI assistant inside the RankMySEO app.
- An AI assistant can connect to RankMySEO over MCP.
- RankMySEO's open-source toolkit uses the Apache-2.0 licence.



What should Issue 2 answer?

Ranked comes out every quarter. Which search or marketing question is your business stuck on? Send it in for Issue 2.

Write to

support@rankmyseo.com

SEO in 2026

SEO in 2026: what Google changed, and what stays the same

Between January 2025 and October 2026, Google added AI features to Search and removed some old search features. In this article, "AI features" means AI Overviews and AI Mode together. Google says that the basic work of SEO is still the same.

5

core updates that Google announced, March 2025 to May 2026

Google's advice is still "SEO"

Google has a page for site owners called "AI features and your website". It says that there are no extra requirements to appear in AI Overviews or AI Mode.

Google must index your page, and your page must be eligible to show a snippet. You do not need new machine-readable files, AI text files or special markup.

Google also has an AI optimization guide. The guide says that this work is "still SEO". It also tells you that you can ignore tactics like "chunking" your content into small parts.

Core updates: what to do after one

A core update is a large change to how Google ranks pages in general. Google announced five core updates in this period: March 2025, June 2025, December 2025, March 2026 and May 2026. It also makes smaller core updates that it does not announce.

Most sites need to do nothing after a core update. Wait at least a full week after the update is complete. Then compare your Search Console data from before and after the update. A small drop does not need a drastic change.

5

spam updates that Google ran between January 2025 and October 2026

What Google calls spam

Google ran five spam updates in this period. The last one, the September 2026 spam update, ended on 8 October 2026. Google's spam policies include these three.

- Scaled content abuse: many pages made mainly to manipulate rankings, not to help users. The method does not matter. Google lists generative AI tools as one example method.
- Expired domain abuse: a person buys an expired domain name and uses it again, mainly to manipulate rankings.
- Site reputation policy: a host site publishes third-party content mainly because of the host's existing ranking signals. Since 30 August 2026, manual actions under this policy work differently inside the European Economic Area.

Google added more spam rules in 2026. On 13 April 2026, it added a policy against "back button hijacking". From 14 April 2026, Google can use spam reports from users to take manual action. On 15 May 2026, Google said that its spam policies also apply to the AI features in Search.

One billion

AI Mode had more than one billion monthly users, Google said on 19 May 2026

AI Overviews and AI Mode in Indonesia

AI Overviews are Google summaries, made by AI, at the top of some search results. They have been available in Indonesian since 28 October 2024. Today, Google's Help page lists Indonesia as a country and Indonesian as a language. Google gives no separate launch date for Indonesia as a country.

AI Mode is a Google search mode where AI answers your question in a conversation. It came to Indonesia, in Bahasa Indonesia, on 9 September 2025. On 19 May 2026, Google said that AI Mode had more than one billion monthly users.

A new switch: the Search generative AI control

On 31 August 2026, Google gave every site a new control in Search Console. With this control, a site can opt out of AI Overviews and AI Mode. The control also covers the AI parts of Google Discover.

By default, the setting is "include". Google's AI guide now says that this control must include a site before the site can appear in AI features.

This control does not change AI training. A different control, the Google-Extended token in robots.txt, does that. This token controls the use of your content to train Gemini models. It does not change your place in Google Search.

Googlebot, Google-Agent and lms.txt

Googlebot reads pages for Google Search. Google also lists fetchers that act when a user asks, for example

Google-Agent. These user-triggered fetchers generally ignore robots.txt rules. Google's AI optimization guide says that Google Search ignores lms.txt files.

What Search Console shows about AI traffic

Search Console counts AI Overviews and AI Mode traffic in the "Web" search type of the Performance report. AI Mode data counts in the totals since 16 June 2025.

On 3 June 2026, Google added a Generative AI performance report. All sites got it on 31 August 2026. The report shows impressions, pages, countries, devices and dates. It does not show clicks.

Clicks: what Google says, and what one study found

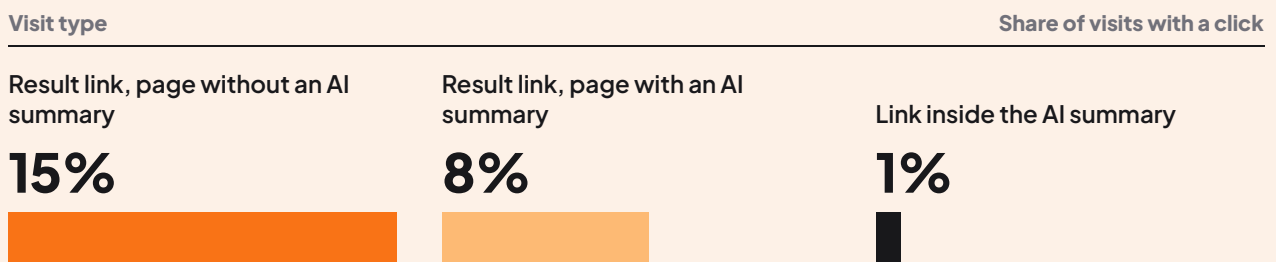
Google and outside researchers do not measure the same thing. Read each result together with its own method.

Google's view: Liz Reid of Google wrote a blog post on 6 August 2025. In it, she called total organic click volume "relatively stable" year over year. She also wrote that click quality had increased. Google did not publish numbers for these statements.

An outside study: Pew Research Center published a study on 22 July 2025. Pew uses the term "AI summary" for AI Overviews. It followed 900 US adults and 68,879 of their Google searches in March 2025. Of these searches, 12,593 showed an AI summary.

The chart shows how often users clicked a link in each case. In the same AI summaries, three sites gave 15% of all sources together: Wikipedia, YouTube and Reddit.

Chart: clicks with and without an AI summary (Pew Research Center, March 2025 searches, published 22 July 2025)



The study covers US adults only. It does not tell you what happens on your site.

Rich results after 7 May 2026

A rich result is a search result with extra parts, for example

stars or a list of questions. FAQ rich results stopped on 7 May 2026. Google wrote: "This feature will no longer appear in Google Search starting May 7, 2026."

On 15 June 2026, Google removed the FAQ documentation. How-to rich results stopped earlier, in September 2023.

Many types still give rich results. Google's search gallery lists them. Examples are Article, Breadcrumb, Event, Job posting, Local business, Product, Recipe and Video. If your pages use FAQ markup only to get extra space in results, that benefit is gone.

EXAMPLES FROM GOOGLE'S SEARCH GALLERY

Article**Breadcrumb****Event****Job posting****Local business****Product****Recipe****Video**

Page experience: Core Web Vitals

Core Web Vitals are three Google measurements of how fast a page loads and responds, and how stable it is. Each limit below is the "good" level. A page meets it when 75% of real visits are at that level or better.

Largest Contentful Paint (LCP):

2.5 seconds or less.

Interaction to Next Paint (INP):

200 milliseconds or less.

Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS):

0.1 or less.

Three checks to do this month

1.

Open Search Console and find the Search generative AI control. Make sure that the setting is the one you want.

2.

Go to the Generative AI performance report. Compare it with your normal Performance report for the same dates.

3.

Find the pages where you use FAQ markup. Do not expect FAQ rich results from that markup now. Check your other structured data against the types in Google's search gallery.



See where one site stands on Google

RankMySEO Free tracks 1 site and 3 keywords on Google. It keeps 14 days of history. You need no card to start.

Start for free: create an account, add a website and pick 3 keywords.

rankmyseo.com/free-rank-tracker

GEO and AEO: what is known about how AI assistants choose sources

When an AI assistant answers a question, the answer sometimes mentions or cites websites. In this article, a mention means that the answer names your site. When the answer links to your page as a source, that is a citation. Nobody outside the AI companies knows the full method that each assistant uses.

This article covers AI assistants outside Google. For Google Search and its AI features, read "SEO in 2026" in this issue.

Two new terms

GEO means generative engine optimization. It is work that helps an AI answer mention or cite your site. AEO means answer engine optimization. It is work that helps a system lift a direct answer from your page.

The term GEO comes from a research paper. Pranjal Aggarwal and other authors posted "GEO: Generative Engine Optimization" on 16 November 2023. They

posted it on arXiv, a public website for research papers. The KDD 2024 conference accepted the paper.

In the authors' own test set, GEO methods raised visibility in AI answers by up to 40%. Do not expect one action to make an AI assistant cite your site.

Who reads your pages

AI companies use programs called crawlers to read web pages. Each company gives its crawlers names. Your robots.txt file can allow or block most of these crawlers.

Some fetchers do not always follow robots.txt, as the notes under the table show. OpenAI and Anthropic use different crawlers for search and for training.

Company	Search crawler	Training crawler	Fetcher for user requests
OpenAI	OAI-SearchBot	GPTBot	ChatGPT-User
Anthropic	Claude-SearchBot	ClaudeBot	Claude-User
Perplexity	PerplexityBot	None named	Perplexity-User

Perplexity says that it does not use PerplexityBot to crawl content for AI foundation models. OpenAI says that robots.txt rules may not apply to ChatGPT-User. Perplexity-User generally ignores robots.txt rules, Perplexity says. A robots.txt change takes about 24 hours to work for OpenAI's crawlers.

Anthropic says that its bots respect "do not crawl" signals in robots.txt. OpenAI says that the setting for

each of its crawlers is independent. For example, you can allow OAI-SearchBot and block GPTBot.

Microsoft lists Bingbot and other Bing crawlers. Its page names no separate token for AI training.

What about llms.txt?

Jeremy Howard proposed llms.txt on 3 September 2024. It is a text file that gives AI tools a short guide to a website. AI companies publish llms.txt files for their own documentation.

No major AI company page that the magazine read says that it uses other sites' llms.txt files for answers. So do not expect results from this file yet.

How to measure mentions, citations and visits

- Bing Webmaster Tools: the AI Performance report shows how often Copilot and other Bing AI features cite your site. It started as a public preview on 10 February 2026.

- Google Analytics 4: look at your traffic sources for visits from AI assistants.
- RankMySEO Track AI: on the Agency and Scale plans, this feature checks ChatGPT and Gemini each week. It records mentions of your site, the rivals that each answer mentions, and the pages that each answer cites.

RankMySEO and this magazine come from the same team. The RankMySEO guide on AI visibility gives one rule: "One answer is a sample." Its method treats a mention, a citation, accuracy, a referral and a conversion as separate results.

An AI assistant can give a different answer each time. Look at many answers over many weeks before you decide anything.

THE RANKMYSEO GUIDE ON AI VISIBILITY TREATS THESE AS SEPARATE RESULTS

a mention**a citation****accuracy****a referral****a conversion**

Checklist: AI visibility for a small site

1. Read your robots.txt file. Make sure that it allows the search crawlers that you want.
2. Decide if you want to allow or block training crawlers. This choice is separate from search.
3. Put a short, direct answer near the top of each page that answers a question.
4. Check the Bing AI Performance report and your GA4 traffic sources once a month.
5. For Google, follow the three checks at the end of "SEO in 2026".



Start with an audit

I audit the site, research the keywords your buyers use, and fix the code. Send me your URL and what changed recently. I reply with what I would check first and a price for the job.

Send me your site for an SEO audit.

madebyaris.com/services/seo

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The SEO toolkit that costs little and does a lot

A small site does not need an expensive software suite to start with SEO. Google and Bing give site owners free tools. Some open standards fill most of the remaining gaps.

Each tool answers one kind of question. Search Console tells you what Google knows about your pages. PageSpeed Insights tells you how fast a page loads. When you know which tool answers which question, you stop guessing.

What a tool can and cannot do for SEO

A tool reports what it can measure. It can show that Google has not indexed a page, or that a

page loads slowly on a phone. No tool can write a useful page for you or make people link to you.

Most of the work stays with you. You decide what each page is for, who reads it and what it should answer. The tools below help you check that work and find problems early.

The five free tools to set up first

Start with these five. Each one is free, and each one answers a different question.

01 Does Google know about my page? Google Search Console	02 How does Bing see my site? Bing Webmaster Tools	03 How fast does my page load? PageSpeed Insights and Lighthouse	04 Can search engines read my structured data? The Rich Results Test and the Schema Markup Validator	05 What do visitors do on my site? Google Analytics 4
--	--	--	--	---

■ Google Search Console

Search Console is the free Google service that shows how your site appears in Google Search. Two parts of it matter most on day one.

The Page indexing report shows the indexing status of every URL that Google knows about on your site. Google describes it as a report on "all URLs that Google knows about in your property." If an important page is missing, this report usually tells you why.

URL Inspection checks one address at a time. It shows the indexed version of a page, and it can run a live test. Google warns that "the live test cannot predict whether or not the tested version will be considered canonical." A canonical URL is the address that Google treats as the main copy of a page.

■ Bing Webmaster Tools

Bing has its own free console for site owners. On 10 February 2026, Bing announced AI Performance in Bing Webmaster Tools as a

public preview. Bing added Topics Portfolio, in beta, inside AI Performance on 13 October

2026.

BING WEBMASTER TOOLS, AS DATED IN THIS SECTION

10 February 2026

AI Performance, public preview

The article "GEO and AEO" in this issue explains the AI Performance report. For setup, add and verify your site the same way you do in Search Console.

■ PageSpeed Insights and Lighthouse

PageSpeed Insights, or PSI, measures how fast a page loads. Google says that "PSI provides both lab and field data about a page." Lab data comes from a test run. Field data comes from real visits.

Each kind has its own use. Google writes that "Lab data is useful for debugging." Field data is useful for capturing the real experience of users. A new site often has no field data yet, so the lab result is what you can see first.

Lighthouse is an open-source test tool from the GoogleChrome project on GitHub. Its latest release on GitHub is v13.5.0, published on 18 September 2026. Google's speed limits are in "Page experience: Core Web Vitals", a section of "SEO in 2026".

■ The Rich Results Test and the Schema Markup Validator

Structured data is code that describes a page to search engines in a fixed format. Two free tools check it. Google's Rich Results Test "supports structured data in JSON-LD, RDFa, and Microdata".

13 October 2026

Topics Portfolio, in beta, inside AI Performance

Google says the test is for "validating your structured data". In some cases, it also previews a feature in Google Search. Use it when you want to know if Google can read your markup. The second tool is the Schema Markup Validator at validator.schema.org.

■ Google Analytics 4

Google Analytics 4, or GA4, records what visitors do on your site. Its enhanced measurement option needs no extra work, and Google states that "No code changes are required."

Some events start without any setup. For page views, Google writes: "This event is collected automatically. You cannot turn off collection."

Site owners can turn off other options, such as scrolls and outbound clicks. By default, Google enables all event types for automatic event detection by the Google tag.

To see which campaign brought a visitor, add UTM tags to your links. Step 5 of "A small marketing plan" shows how.

“

**No tool can write a useful page for you
or make people link to you.**



Technology inside your own site

■ Structured data with schema.org

Structured data can make a page eligible for rich results, such as review stars or product details. It does not open a special door to AI answers. Google's AI features page says: "There are no additional requirements to appear in AI Overviews or AI Mode".

The AI optimization guide from Google, updated on 10 July 2026, agrees. It states that "there's no special schema.org markup you need to add." The guide adds that markup "helps with being eligible for rich results". Add structured data where it describes the page truthfully, and test it before you publish.

■ JavaScript sites and rendering

Many modern sites build their pages with JavaScript in the browser. Google explains that it "processes JavaScript web apps in three main phases". These phases are crawling, rendering and indexing. Rendering means that Google runs the code to see the final page.

Some sites once sent search engines a different, pre-built version of each page. Google calls this method dynamic rendering. Its current documentation says: "Dynamic rendering was a workaround and not a long-term solution". If your site still uses it, read that page in full before you plan a change.

■ Images: formats and lazy loading

Google Images supports a fixed set of file formats. The list is "BMP, GIF, JPEG, PNG, WebP, SVG, and AVIF." Use one of these for every image that you want people to find in search.

Lazy loading means that a page loads an image only when the visitor scrolls near it. Google has a separate guide called "Fix lazy-loaded content", and you should follow that guide when you add lazy loading.

■ Pages in two languages: hreflang

Your site may have pages in Bahasa Indonesia and in English. Hreflang is a way to tell Google which language version of a page fits which reader. Google writes: "There are three ways to indicate multiple language/locale versions of a page to Google".

The three ways are HTML tags, HTTP headers and the sitemap. Google states that "The three methods are equivalent from Google's perspective". Choose the one that fits how you build the site. Add an x-default value for the page that readers see when no language matches.

Telling search engines about new pages: sitemaps and IndexNow

A sitemap is a file that lists the pages on your site. Google's guide "How Search works" names URL discovery as the first step, and it points site owners to sitemaps. You can submit your sitemap in Search Console and in Bing Webmaster Tools.

IndexNow is an open protocol that tells some search engines about new or changed pages. The IndexNow FAQ says that "Submitting a URL through IndexNow alerts all participating search engines". It lists Amazon, Bing, Naver, Seznam.cz, Yandex and Yep.

INDEXNOW PARTICIPANTS LISTED ON INDEXNOW.ORG

Amazon

Bing

Naver

Seznam.cz

Yandex

Yep

On 19 May 2025, Bing's Webmaster blog named Shopify and Milestone Inc. as "now supporting IndexNow". The participant list on

indexnow.org does not include Google. So, for Google, keep your sitemap current and use URL Inspection for single pages.



Server logs: see which crawlers visit

Your server keeps a log of every request it receives. The log shows which crawlers visit, which pages they ask for and when. A crawler is a program that reads web pages for a search engine or an AI company.

Any request can carry the name Googlebot and still come from somewhere else. Google gives a method to check this. Its guide says: "Run a reverse DNS lookup on the accessing IP address from your logs". You can also compare the IP address with the IP ranges that Google publishes.

AI crawler controls at your host or CDN

A CDN, or content delivery network, serves your site from servers near each visitor. Cloudflare lets you block AI crawlers with one setting. On 1 July 2025, Cloudflare said that it "is changing the default to block AI crawlers".

The same Cloudflare post launched "Pay Per Crawl". Cloudflare's documentation also has a "Block AI Bots" setting and a robots.txt setting. Check the dashboard of your own host or CDN for similar controls.

A robots.txt file tells crawlers which pages to skip, but it does not hide a page. Google's guide says: "To keep a web page out of Google, block indexing with noindex".

Before you block anything, decide which AI assistants you want to read your pages. The crawler table in "GEO and AEO" names the main AI crawlers.

AI assistants as SEO helpers, and what to check

An AI assistant can help you read reports, draft a page outline or check a list of URLs. Google does not ban AI help. Its Search Central blog said in February 2023: "Appropriate use of AI or automation is not against our guidelines."

Google's current page on generative AI content asks writers to "focus on accuracy, quality, and relevance". It also links to the scaled content abuse policy. That policy covers unoriginal content made in large amounts to rank, "no matter how it's created". Check every fact that an assistant gives you before you publish.

Assistants can also connect to outside data. The Model Context Protocol, or MCP, is "an open-source standard for connecting AI applications to external systems". Claude's Help Center says that custom connectors using remote MCP are available on Claude, Cowork and Claude Desktop.

RankMySEO and this magazine come from the same team. An AI assistant can connect to RankMySEO over MCP and ask where your site ranks. RankMySEO's MCP setup page gives steps for Cursor, Claude Code, Claude, ChatGPT and Grok.

For ChatGPT, the setup page says to add a remote MCP connector and paste the address. A walk-up trial needs no account. It covers 1 website, 2 keywords and 48 hours.

Checklist: your afternoon setup

- Search Console: add and verify your site, submit your sitemap and open the Page indexing report.
- Bing Webmaster Tools: add and verify your site, and submit the same sitemap.
- PageSpeed Insights: test your home page and one product or service page.
- Rich Results Test: test one page that has structured data.
- GA4: install the Google tag and leave enhanced measurement on.
- Server logs: find out where your host keeps them, and check one Googlebot visit.
- Host or CDN: check its AI crawler setting, and make a deliberate choice.

“

A tool reports what it can measure.



SPONSOR



Kirim pesan whatsapp secara otomatis

Send notifications, bot replies, reminders and OTP messages on WhatsApp automatically.

Fonnte is an unofficial WhatsApp API gateway for Indonesia. Its tagline means "send WhatsApp messages automatically".

Use it to send notifications, bot replies, scheduled messages and reminders. The site lists these uses: Notifikasi, Chatbot, Reminder, Tagihan, Informasi and OTP.

Read about sending WhatsApp messages automatically at

fonnte.com





Ask your AI assistant where you rank

MCP, the Model Context Protocol, lets an AI assistant connect to a tool. Connect Claude, Cursor, ChatGPT or Grok to RankMySEO. Then ask that assistant where your site ranks. An assistant can try it with no account.

Connect your assistant to the RankMySEO MCP server: add the server and ask one question.

rankmyseo.com/mcp/setup

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A good keyword is a customer question you can answer

A keyword is a word or phrase that a person types into a search engine. For a small business, a good keyword matches three things at once. It fits what you sell, it fits what the customer wants, and one page on your site can answer it.

A GOOD KEYWORD MATCHES THREE THINGS AT ONCE

1

It fits what you sell

2

it fits what the customer wants

3

one page on your site can answer it

Search volume is one signal among several. A term that many people search for is of little use when its searchers want something else.

What makes a keyword "good"

■ Search intent

Search intent is what a person wants to get or do when they search. Google's Search Quality

Rater Guidelines discuss it in section 12.7, "Understanding User Intent". Its current version carries the date 11 September 2025.

The guidelines say: "It can be helpful to think of queries as having one or more of the following intents." Two of the subsections are "Know and Know Simple Queries" and "Visit-in-Person Queries". A person who types "how to store coffee beans" wants to know something. Someone who types "bakery near me" may want to visit.

TWO INTENTS FROM THE GUIDELINES, WITH THE EXAMPLES IN THIS SECTION

Know

"how to store coffee beans"

Visit

"bakery near me"

Section 12.7.5 covers "Queries with Multiple User Intents", because one query can have more than one intent.

■ Business value

A keyword has business value when the person behind it could become your customer. Ask what job the customer wants done. Step 2 of "A small marketing plan" explains how to choose one customer first.

A question keyword can still be useful even if it does not lead to a sale today. It brings the right

reader to your site, and that reader may come back later.

■ Difficulty and your site's age

Keyword difficulty is a tool's estimate of how hard it is to rank for a keyword. A new site with few pages and few links usually starts with narrower terms. Broad terms can come later, when the site has more pages on the topic.



Places to find keywords

■ Your own Search Console data

PLACES TO FIND KEYWORDS

1

Your own Search
Console data

2

Google
Autocomplete

3

Google Trends

4

Google Keyword
Planner

5

Your customers'
own words

If your site already gets some visits, start here. Search Console shows the queries that brought your site into Google results. In Google's Search Console Help, an impression means that a user has seen a link to your site. A link that the user has "potentially seen" in Search, Discover or News also counts.

Look for queries with impressions and few clicks. They show topics where your site already appears in Google results. A better page on that topic may earn more clicks.

RankMySEO and this magazine come from the same team. The tool connects to Search Console and reads your queries. Its Auto-add feature proposes keywords that it found evidence for, and it tracks nothing until you approve the list.

■ Google Autocomplete

Autocomplete shows suggestions while you type in the Google search box. Google explains: "Our automated systems generate predictions". When those systems miss a problem, "our enforcement teams remove those that violate our policies".

Type the start of a customer question and read the suggestions. They show how other people phrase similar searches. Google's Danny Sullivan explained the system in a blog post on

20 April 2018. One section of that post has the heading "Predictions, not suggestions".

■ Google Trends

Google Trends shows how interest in a term changes over time. Its numbers are not search counts. Google says that Trends uses "a largely unfiltered sample of actual search requests made to Google."

The data is "scaled on a range of 0 to 100". This scale is "based on a topic's proportion to all searches on all topics." Google also normalizes the data "to the time and location of a query".

Use Trends to compare two phrases, or to see a season, such as a rise before a holiday.

■ Google Keyword Planner

Keyword Planner is a tool inside Google Ads. It shows "Average monthly searches". Google defines this as "The average number of times people have searched for a keyword and its close variants". The same page states: "Your search volume statistics are rounded".

Treat the volume as a rough guide. It helps you compare terms, but it is not an exact count.

■ Your customers' own words

The best source is often free and close. Read the messages that customers send, and listen

to the questions they ask on the phone or in the shop. Write down their exact words.

Customers often use other words than the business does. A shop may say "artisan bread". Its customers may search for "roti tawar tanpa pengawet", which means white bread without preservatives.

Real searches can be this exact. Two of the padel searches that trended in Indonesia in Google's Year in Search 2025 show this. "Sewa Lapangan Padel" means renting a padel court. "Perbedaan Padel dan Tennis" means the difference between padel and tennis.

“

A term that many people search for is of little use when its searchers want something else.

Read the results page before you choose

Search your candidate keyword in Google, and read the first page of results. The results show what Google thinks the searcher wants. If the first page shows shops, the intent is probably to buy. A first page of guides suggests that the intent is to learn.

Your page should match the kind of page that already appears.

See "Clicks: what Google says, and what one study found" in "SEO in 2026" on AI features and clicks. Keep that in mind when you choose question keywords.

Keywords for a local business

A local business needs keywords with a place in them, or keywords that people search near the shop. Google says: "Local results are mainly based on relevance, distance, and popularity." The page still uses the older word "Prominence" in a subheading.

You cannot change the distance to a searcher. Keep your Business Profile complete and correct, so that it matches what people search for.

Keywords in Indonesian and English

Check which language your customers use when they search, and whether they mix two languages in one query. Collect both forms from your customers' own words.

Choose one language for each page. If you need both, make two pages and connect them with hreflang. "Technology that really helps SEO" in this issue explains hreflang.

Numbers from keyword tools: what they mean and do not mean

A keyword tool shows estimates. The volume is usually a rounded or modelled figure. Difficulty is a score that each tool calculates in its own way.

The RankMySEO glossary defines keyword difficulty as "A tool's estimate of competition for organic rankings." Its keyword guide adds: "Different tools calculate it differently." So compare difficulty scores only inside one tool.

RankMySEO says in its FAQ that it buys rank data from a data provider. Its keyword planner and keyword gap are available from Starter. Keyword gap compares your keywords with those of a rival site.

RankMySEO also has a guide, "How to choose keywords for your site", updated on 4 October 2026. It has five working sections and a closing next action, with a bike shop as its example.



Worked example: from 30 ideas to 5 keywords

This is an imagined example, with no real data. A small bakery in Sidoarjo sells bread and cakes. It wants more orders for birthday cakes.

The owner collects 30 ideas in one week. They come from customer messages, from Autocomplete and from the queries in Search Console. Then the owner asks four questions about each idea.

- Intent: does the searcher want to buy, to learn or to visit?
- Business value: does the bakery sell this?
- Page: which page on the site can answer it?

- Answer: can the bakery answer it better than the current results?

The owner removes the ideas that fail the business value question. Two ideas that need the same page become one. After this, the owner keeps five keywords, each with its own page.

The five keywords are these:

- Order: a birthday cake order term with "Sidoarjo".
- Diet: a term for cakes without eggs.
- Delivery: a term for same-day cake delivery.
- Care: a question about how long a cake keeps.
- Children: a term for character cakes.

The owner writes or improves one page for each, starting with the one that sells most.

30
ideas in one week

5
keywords, each with its own page

Worksheet: my keyword shortlist

Copy this table, and fill in ten rows.

Keyword	Intent	Page on my site	Can I answer it well?



Search volume is one signal among several.



SPONSOR



EKSTENSI

.ID

TEMAN WORDPRESS & VPS

Teman Setia WordPress & Server VPS-mu

Domain registration from Ekstensi ID, which also offers WordPress services and VPS servers.

Ekstensi ID registers domain names. On its domain page, you can search for a name and register it.

The page lists these extensions: .COM, .ID, .CO.ID, .MY.ID, .WEB.ID, .BIZ.ID and .XYZ. Ekstensi ID also offers WordPress services and VPS servers.

Search for your domain at



dash.ekstensi.id



Keyword tools for two sites

Starter costs Rp50,000 a month for 2 sites and 10 tracked keywords. It includes the keyword planner and keyword gap. In Indonesia, you can pay with QRIS, a virtual account or an e-wallet.

See the plans.

rankmyseo.com/pricing

SECTION

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Build a topic, not a pile of posts

A small site cannot cover everything. It can cover one subject well, with pages that answer real questions and link to each other. That structure helps readers move around. Google's guidance on links and structure, quoted below, fits it.

Three terms come up in this work. They are long-tail keyword, pillar page and topic cluster. Google does not use two of them, pillar page and topic cluster. Each term gets a plain definition first.

Three terms in plain words

■ Long-tail keyword

A long-tail keyword is a longer, more exact search term that fewer people type. "Coffee" is a short term. A long-tail term is something like "coffee beans for an office of ten people".

Each long-tail term has few searches on its own. Together, such terms show the exact

questions that customers ask.

■ Pillar page

A pillar page is a main page that covers a whole topic. It gives the overview, and it links to the pages with the details.

■ Topic cluster

A topic cluster is a pillar page together with its detailed pages. Each detailed page covers one question. The pages link to each other, so a reader can go from the overview to the detail and back.

A 2004 article, and what Google says

15%

"15% of searches we see every day are new." Google, "How Search works"

Chris Anderson wrote an article about the long tail for WIRED on 1 October 2004. Its title is "The Long Tail".

Google's "How Search works" page says: "15% of searches we see every day are new." The page has no date, so treat the figure as Google's current description. Google does not link this figure to long-tail keywords. The figure does show that new searches appear every day.

Questions are also getting longer. Elizabeth Reid of Google wrote about this on 20 May 2025. "People are coming to Google to ask more of their questions, including more complex, longer and multimodal questions." She gave no figure for query length.

Google does not use the terms "pillar page" or "topic cluster". A main page that links to related pages applies Google's guidance on links and structure. Three parts of that guidance fit together.

First, internal links. Google writes: "Every page you care about should have a link from at least one other page on your site." It also asks you to "link to those pages in context."

Second, grouping by topic. Google's SEO Starter Guide has the heading "Group topically similar pages in directories". It says that directories "can help Google learn how often the URLs in individual directories change." Google ties this advice to sites with "more than a few thousand URLs".

Third, hierarchy. Google's breadcrumb documentation says: "A breadcrumb trail on a page indicates the page's position in the site

hierarchy". A breadcrumb is a short path of links near the top of a page. An example is Home, then Coffee, then Office coffee.

A BREADCRUMB TRAIL, THE EXAMPLE IN THIS SECTION



■ A note on "topical authority"

The phrase "topical authority" appears often in SEO advice. Google has used a similar term, but in a narrow area. On 23 May 2023, its Search Central blog published "Understanding news topic authority".

That post says: "The topic authority system looks at a variety of signals". Its examples are news searches, such as Top Stories and local

news. The post is about news only. Do not read it as a rule for every kind of site.

The guidance that applies to all sites is Google's page on helpful, people-first content. Its last update was on 5 October 2026. The page tells writers to "Ask "Who, How, and Why" about your content". Write each page for a reader with a real question, and the structure in this article supports that page.

“

Every page you care about should have a link from at least one other page on your site.

Google

PLAN ONE TOPIC CLUSTER: THE FOUR STEPS IN THIS SECTION

1

Find the questions

2

Choose the pillar page

3

Choose the cluster pages

4

Link the pages

Plan one topic cluster

■ Find the questions

Start with the questions that customers already ask you. Collect them from messages,



calls and sales visits. Add the queries that Search Console shows for your site. "How to find a good keyword for your website" in this issue covers more sources.

■ Choose the pillar page

The pillar page answers the broad question. It should make sense to a reader who knows nothing about the topic yet. Keep it focused on one topic, and link out to the details.

■ Choose the cluster pages

Each cluster page answers one narrow question in full. If two questions need the same answer, put them on one page.

■ Link the pages

Link from the pillar page to every cluster page, and from each cluster page back to the pillar. Between cluster pages, add a link where a reader needs the next step. Google says that "Good anchor text is descriptive, reasonably concise, and relevant to the page that it's on".

Anchor text is the visible, clickable text of a link. "Office coffee subscriptions" tells the reader and Google what is on the next page. "Click here" tells them nothing.

Use clear addresses too. Google advises: "use readable words rather than long ID numbers in your URLs." An address such as /office-coffee/subscription says what the page is about.

Two pages, one keyword: keyword cannibalization

Keyword cannibalization means that two pages on one site compete for the same

keyword. Many site owners worry about it. Google's John Mueller has given a calmer view.

John Mueller is a Search Advocate at Google. Search Engine Journal reported his words on 22 September 2025. He said: "If you have 3 different pages appearing in the same search result, that doesn't seem problematic". Mueller gave it as his own view, and said that more than one page alone is not the problem.

Real duplicates are a different case. Bing's Webmaster blog wrote on 19 December 2025 that duplicates leave you "competing against your own content". For "duplicate or very similar pages", Google says that "you can indicate your preference using a" canonical method. A canonical URL is the address that you tell Google is the main copy of a page.

So check before you merge or delete. Two pages with the same answer to the same question need one main page, with the other pointing to it. Pages that answer different questions need titles and text that make the difference clear.

RankMySEO and this magazine come from the same team. As a Google rank tracker, RankMySEO stores the position and the URL for each tracked keyword over time. It reads the first 20 Google organic results, so a page below that shows as 20+.

Many pages from one template: when it helps and when it is spam

Programmatic SEO means many pages made from one template and a database. It can help readers, or it can break Google's rules. The difference is whether each page gives something useful of its own.

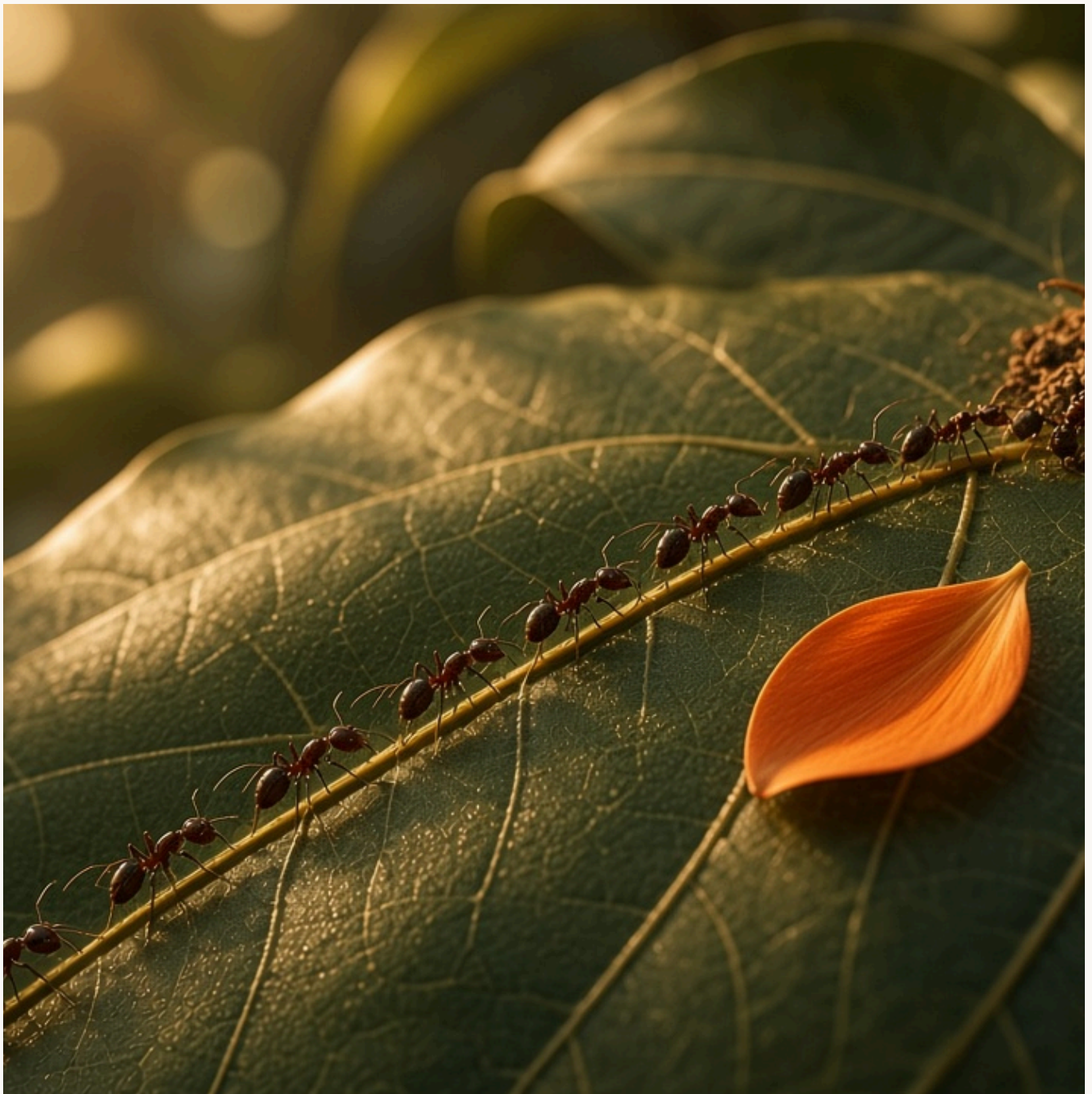


Zapier presents its own pages as an example of the helpful side. On 19 February 2025, its blog explained that it can "roll out individual pages for every single app they support". The post states: "This is what programmatic SEO is about: solving users' needs at scale."

Google's spam policies describe the other side. Scaled content abuse covers unoriginal content made in large amounts to rank, "no matter how it's created". The policies also say:

"Doorway abuse is when sites or pages are created to rank for specific, similar search queries."

A test helps here. Remove the city name or the product name from a page, and ask what useful content remains. When nothing remains, read the doorway rule again. "SEO in 2026", in the section "What Google calls spam", gives more detail.



Measure the cluster in Search Console

The Performance report in Search Console shows clicks and impressions from Google Search. Google explains that "the "queries" dimension groups your data by the search query users typed". A "Pages" tab groups the same data by page.

Filter by one cluster page, then open the Queries tab. You see the long-tail questions

that bring people to that page. Filter by one query instead, then open the Pages tab, to see which of your pages appear for it.

Read the latest days with care. Google notes that "the newest data can be preliminary". Compare full weeks, and wait a few days before you judge a change.

RankMySEO can also connect to Search Console. It then shows Search Console clicks, impressions and queries next to its stored positions.



Worked example: a cluster for a small business

This is an imagined example, with no real data. A small coffee roaster in Bandung sells beans to homes. It wants to sell to offices too.

The topic is "office coffee". First, the roaster lists the questions that office managers ask in messages and calls. Then it plans one pillar page and a set of cluster pages.

The pillar page is "Office coffee: a guide for small offices". It explains the choices and links to each cluster page. The cluster pages answer one question each:

- How much coffee does an office use in a month?
- Which brewing equipment suits a small office?
- How does an office coffee subscription work?
- Whole beans or ground coffee for the office?
- How should an office store coffee beans?

Each cluster page links back to the pillar page. The page on equipment links to the page on whole beans and ground coffee, because readers often need both answers. All pages sit under the address /office-coffee/, with breadcrumbs that show the path.

After a month, the roaster opens the Performance report and filters by each page. It notes which questions bring visits, and which pages show no impressions yet. Then it improves one page at a time.



A small site cannot cover everything.





Who is ahead of you?

Operator is the chat that answers questions about your site. Ask where you rank for a keyword, and which competitor sits above you. Free includes 3 messages in total.

Start for free with no card: create an account, add a website and pick 3 keywords.

rankmyseo.com/free-rank-tracker

SECTION

4 of 6

2027: what the people who build search say comes next

Predictions about search are easy to find and hard to check. The useful ones carry a name, a role and a date. With those three facts, you can judge how much weight a forecast deserves.

The title uses two newer terms, GEO and AEO. "GEO and AEO", in the section "Two new terms", explains what they mean.

Every prediction below has that attribution and a source type. Old predictions sit next to what happened, so you can see how a forecast held up.

How to read a prediction

Three questions help with any forecast. Who said it, and what is their job? When did they say it? What do they sell?

A platform such as Google, OpenAI or Microsoft speaks about its own product. It has data that nobody else has, and it also has a reason to sound confident. An analyst firm sells reports to companies. A practitioner sells services or tools, and a good one says so.

Trend lines differ from predictions. Each one reports something that has already happened, with a date. A prediction says what someone

expects. Keep the two apart when you read the news.

The scorecard: a prediction for 2026, and what happened

On 19 February 2024, Gartner published a press release with a forecast for 2026. It quotes Alan Antin, Vice President Analyst at Gartner. The release says: "By 2026, traditional search engine volume will drop 25%".

That was a prediction by an analyst firm, and it was never a measured fact. In its I/O 2026 post on 19 May 2026, Google wrote: "last quarter, we saw queries reach an all-time high". That is a company statement about its own product. It is not an independent measurement.

A search on 19 October 2026 found no independent figure for total search volume in 2026. So the scorecard can only show the two claims side by side. The analyst firm expected a drop, and the platform reports growth.

TWO CLAIMS, SIDE BY SIDE

19 FEBRUARY 2024 · GARTNER

"By 2026, traditional search engine volume will drop 25%"

A prediction by an analyst firm

19 MAY 2026 · GOOGLE

"last quarter, we saw queries reach an all-time high"

A company statement about its own product

Other data from the same period points in more than one direction. On 22 July 2025, Pew Research Center published a study of clicks on Google pages with AI summaries. Elizabeth Reid, VP, Search at Google, on 6 August 2025, called total organic click volume "relatively

stable" year over year. On the same day, she wrote that people click on sites "where they can hear authentic voices and first-hand perspectives."

These two sources measure different things. See "Clicks: what Google says, and what one

study found" in "SEO in 2026" for the difference.



What the platforms say

■ Google

Elizabeth Reid wrote the I/O 2026 post on 19 May 2026. In it, she said that Google is "entering the era of Search agents". An agent is AI software that does a task for the user.

The same post describes the first step. "We're starting with information agents," Google wrote, and these agents run "in the background, 24/7". The post also calls the new search box the "biggest upgrade to our Search box in over 25 years".

Google's crawler documentation already lists a fetcher called Google-Agent. The page says that it "is used by agents hosted on Google infrastructure". Its last update was on 19 August 2026.

Trend line, not a prediction: in the same post, Google said that "AI Mode has surpassed one billion monthly users". It added that queries in AI Mode were "more than doubling every quarter". Both figures are Google's own.

At I/O 2025, on 20 May 2025, Google gave a figure for the types of queries that show AI Overviews. For those queries, AI Overviews drive "over 10% increase in usage of Google", Google said. The figure covers Google's biggest markets, such as the U.S. and India.

■ OpenAI

Varun Shetty, VP, Media Partnerships at OpenAI, spoke at a webinar on 15 January 2026. WAN-IFRA, a news publishers' association, reported his words on 20 January 2026. He said that "a very big opportunity for ChatGPT is to increase personalisation".

According to the same report, he also said that search should become "more customised, personalised, more visual". This source is a press report of a webinar, not an OpenAI page. Treat it as weaker than a statement on the company's own site.

OpenAI's own post "Introducing ChatGPT search", dated 31 October 2024, is one such statement. It said that OpenAI planned "to keep improving search, particularly in areas like shopping and travel".

■ Microsoft and Bing

Microsoft Bing launched Copilot Search on 4 April 2025. The launch post names no author. It says: "Copilot Search seamlessly blends the best of traditional and generative search together".

The post also says that "Copilot Search cites its sources prominently". These lines describe a launch. They are not a forecast for 2027. A search on 19 October 2026 found no dated Microsoft forecast with a named speaker.

“

The analyst firm expected a drop, and the platform reports growth.

What the analysts say

On 15 January 2025, Gartner published a press release about 2027. It quotes Emily Weiss,

Senior Principal for the Gartner Marketing Practice. The release says: "By 2027 mobile app usage will decrease by 25% due to AI assistants".

25%

"By 2027 mobile app usage will decrease by 25% due to AI assistants". Gartner press release, 15 January 2025. A forecast, not a fact.

That is the opening line of the release. A heading in the same release gives a second forecast for 2027. It says that 85% of customer data will come from automated interactions or those led by AI agents. The release names the report "Predicts 2025: Marketers Must Prepare to Serve Human and Machine Customers".

On 25 June 2025, another Gartner release quoted Anushree Verma, Senior Director Analyst. It says: "Over 40% of agentic AI projects will be canceled by the end of 2027". Agentic AI means AI agents like the ones in the Google section.

These are predictions by an analyst firm. Read them next to the scorecard above. The same firm's 2024 forecast for search volume met a platform statement that points the other way.

What the practitioners say

Duane Forrester, Founder and CEO at UnboundAnswers.com, published three predictions for 2027. Search Engine Journal ran the article on 17 September 2026. An earlier version is on his own Substack, dated 13 September 2026.

He wrote: "By 2027 I expect the ranked results page to persist largely as a legacy interface". In the same article, he wrote: "Search advertising revenue keeps growing in absolute terms".

The article discloses that he builds measurement tooling, called CitationIQ. That does not make his view wrong. It is the kind of fact that the third question in "How to read a prediction" asks about.

Dates that are already fixed for 2027

Laws and official plans already set some dates. These are facts, not forecasts, but they can still change, as the first item shows.

The European Union changed the dates of its AI Act this year. According to the European Commission, the AI Omnibus "entered into force on 27 July 2026". EUR-Lex, the official site for EU law, publishes it as EU Regulation 2026/1744 of 8 July 2026. Under it, the rules for high-risk AI systems in Annex III apply from 2 December 2027.

Rules for Annex I products apply from 2 August 2028.



EU AI ACT DATES, AS GIVEN IN THIS SECTION

27 July 2026

The AI Omnibus entered into force

In the United States, the case *US v. Google* on search continues. The Department of Justice case page lists filings up to 13 October 2026. For the earlier steps, see "The catch-up" timeline in this issue.

Standards work is also moving. The Internet Engineering Task Force, or IETF, writes open standards for the internet. Its aipref working group, short for AI preferences, writes a vocabulary for "AI Usage Preferences". Two

2 December 2027

Rules for high-risk AI systems in Annex III apply

2 August 2028

Rules for Annex I products apply

drafts, draft-ietf-aipref-vocab-08, dated 13 September 2026, and draft-ietf-aipref-attach-05, dated 18 August 2026, aim for Proposed Standard.

The group planned to send both drafts to the Internet Engineering Steering Group, or IESG, in August 2026. Within the IETF, the IESG approves drafts for publication. On 19 October 2026, both were still drafts. The final text can still change.



What to do in any case

None of the forecasts above changes the basic advice from Google. Its AI optimization guide, updated on 10 July 2026, says that "you can ignore tactics like "chunking"". The same guide calls the work for AI search "still SEO".

Google's AI features page also says that AI Overviews and AI Mode need no special

optimizations. So the steps in "SEO in 2026" still apply.

You can also watch what AI assistants say about your business while these changes happen. RankMySEO and this magazine come from the same team. The Track AI feature in RankMySEO checks ChatGPT and Gemini each week. It records whether each answer named your site, which rivals it named and which of your pages it cited.

“

The useful ones carry a name, a role and a date.





An AI feature in the product you already run

I add an agent, a chatbot or an LLM feature to your existing app. An LLM is a large language model, an AI model that reads and writes text. Each feature ships with spend caps and testing before launch.

Send me what your AI feature should do and where your data lives, for a first scope.

madebyaris.com/services/ai-development

Marketing

A small marketing plan: one customer, one message, one channel

A small business has little time and a small budget. So its plan should be small too. You choose one customer, write one message for that customer, and use one channel to reach them.

Then you measure the result and change one thing at a time. SEO fits into this plan as one of the channels.



Change the customer, the message or the channel, but only one of them.

Step 1: know the market you sell in

Indonesia is a large online market. DataReportal's Digital 2026 report counts 230 million internet users in Indonesia, or 80.5% of the population. It counts 180 million social media user identities in October 2025.

Indonesia also has many small businesses, but the counts are different. The Ministry of UMKM counted 30,209,069 micro, small and medium businesses at 31 December 2025. That count does not include agriculture.

On 15 July 2025, the news agency ANTARA reported 65.5 million, from BPS data. That figure includes agriculture. So check which count a source uses before you compare numbers.

Step 2: choose one customer

Write down the one type of customer that you want most. A useful question comes from the "Jobs to Be Done" idea. Clayton Christensen and three co-authors

wrote about it in Harvard Business Review in September 2016.

The article asks why customers make the choices that they make. Its answer is that each customer has a job to get done. Ask what job your customer wants to get done. Then describe your product in terms of that job.

Step 3: write one positioning sentence

Positioning tells the customer what your product is and who it is for. It also tells them why it is a better choice for them. April Dunford's book "Obviously Awesome" is a guide to this work.

Your first goal is one clear sentence. Use the worksheet at the end of this article.

Here is an imagined example. A small coffee roaster in Bandung sells beans online. Its one customer is an office manager who buys coffee for a team. That manager's job is to keep the team supplied with no extra work.

Here is the sentence in the worksheet template:

"For office managers who buy team coffee, my product is the coffee subscription that arrives on a fixed day monthly."

Step 4: choose one channel

A channel is the place where your customer meets your message. Examples are search, social media, email and marketplaces. Choose one channel and use it for 3 months. Each channel has its own rules.

- Search: the SEO and GEO articles in this issue explain this channel.
- Email rules: Gmail and Yahoo set rules for bulk senders in February 2024. If you send more than 5,000 messages a day to Gmail, you need SPF, DKIM and DMARC. You also need a one-click unsubscribe link, and your spam rate must stay below 0.3%. Yahoo asks senders to honour an unsubscribe within 2 days.
- Email settings: SPF lists the mail servers that may send email for your domain. DKIM adds a digital signature that links each message to your domain. DMARC tells receivers what to do when a message fails these checks, and sends you reports.
- Paid ads: Google Ads now has AI Max for Search campaigns. This feature uses AI to match your ads to more search terms and to adapt your ad text.
- Launch sites: a launch on Product Hunt is free. Launches start at 12:01 am Pacific Time.

Step 5: measure with UTM tags

A UTM tag is a short text that you add to the end of a link. It tells Google Analytics 4 (GA4) where a visit came from. The main tags are `utm_source`, `utm_medium` and `utm_campaign`. For example, `utm_source` can be "newsletter", and `utm_medium` can be "email".

In GA4, you can also count events, for example a form submit or a click on a button. GA4 has four types of events: automatically collected, enhanced measurement, recommended and custom. A custom event is an event that you define.

Use one simple model to read your numbers. Dave McClure's "Startup Metrics for Pirates" talk gives five steps: Acquisition, Activation, Retention, Referral and Revenue. The first letters of the steps spell AARRR. For a small business, start with two steps: how many people arrive, and how many take the first action.

Step 6: change one thing at a time

Check your one number each week. After 3 months, judge the result:

- If the number went up, keep the plan.
- Otherwise, change one part of the plan.

Change the customer, the message or the channel, but only one of them. Then you know which change made the difference.

Worksheet: my one-page marketing plan

1. My one customer is: _____
2. The job that my customer wants to get done is: _____
3. My positioning sentence: "For _____, my product is the _____ that _____."
4. For the next 3 months, my one channel is: _____
5. UTM tags for that channel: `utm_source` = _____, `utm_medium` = _____, `utm_campaign` = _____
6. The one number that I check each week: _____

SECTION

5 of 6

You built the website. Now who will visit it?

A new website is like a shop on a quiet street. The shelves are full and the door is open, but nobody walks past yet. A website is a base, and it does not bring a crowd by itself.

Around the website, a small business has four jobs. People must find it, trust it, act easily and

come back. Each job has a first step that costs little.

PEOPLE MUST FIND IT, TRUST IT, ACT EASILY AND COME BACK

1**find it****2****trust it****3****act easily****4****come back**

The empty shop on a quiet street

A launch day feels like the end of a project. For the business, it is the start. Search engines do

not know the site yet, customers have no reason to trust it, and nobody has bookmarked it.

235.2 million

internet users in Indonesia

Indonesia has a large online audience. Detik reported on 22 May 2026, citing APJII, 235.2 million internet users in Indonesia and a penetration of 81.72%. "A small marketing

81.72%

penetration. Detik reported on 22 May 2026, citing APJII

plan", in Step 1, gives figures from a different source. Even so, that audience cannot visit a site that it cannot find.

“

A website is a base, and it does not bring a crowd by itself.

Job 1: be found

■ **Search engines and Google**

Business Profile

Search Central describes the process in plain terms. "Google Search works in three stages, and not all pages make it through each stage".



The first step is URL discovery, when Google learns that a page exists. A sitemap helps Google discover your pages, and Google's guide links to its sitemap documentation.

Expect to wait. Google says: "Crawling can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks." You can ask Google to crawl single pages with URL Inspection in Search Console.

Google notes that there is "a quota for submitting individual URLs". It adds: "Requesting a crawl does not guarantee that inclusion in search results will happen instantly".

A local business also needs a Google Business Profile. This free listing appears in Google

Maps and Search. Google says: "When you verify your business on Google, you gain ownership of your Business Profile".

There are several ways to verify. Google writes: "If your business is eligible for video verification, we recommend that you use this option." Email is another method. Live video "may not be available for all businesses".

■ Mentions on other sites

Links and mentions from other sites help people find you. Get them in honest ways, such as a listing in a local business directory or an article about your work.

Do not buy links or swap them in bulk. Google's spam policies define link spam as creating links

"primarily for the purpose of manipulating search rankings".

Job 2: be trusted

■ Who you are, how to contact you

A visitor wants to know who runs the site before they pay. Google's raters look for the same thing. The Search Quality Rater Guidelines carry the date 11 September 2025. They say: "Every page belongs to a website, and it should be clear:" who is responsible for it.

Section 2.5.3 of the guidelines has the title "Finding About Us, Contact Information, and Customer Service Information". Put these on your site. An About page can give the real names behind the business. A contact page can give an address or a phone number, next to clear service terms.

■ Reviews and real proof

Reviews help a new business, but only honest reviews. Google's policy bans "Reviews or ratings that have been paid for, directly or in kind." Businesses must not "Offer incentives" for reviews, such as payment, discounts, free goods or services.

A review should "reflect an actual experience", in Google's words. Ask all your customers for a review, not only the happy ones. Make it easy with a direct link. Reply to every review, including the bad ones.

Job 3: make it easy to act

■ Speed on a phone

Test the speed of your pages on a phone, not only on a laptop. Google's speed limits for a

good experience are in "Page experience: Core Web Vitals", a section of "SEO in 2026".

One company case study shows what speed can mean. Vodafone reported that "a 31% improvement in LCP led to 8% more sales". web.dev published the case on 17 March 2021.

LCP measures how fast the main content of a page appears. The result is one company's experience, and your result can differ.

■ WhatsApp, forms and payment

Some customers want to ask a question before they buy. A WhatsApp button lets them do that in one tap. Meta says: "The WhatsApp Business app is built with the small business owner in mind".

The app offers a business profile and a product showcase. It can also send replies "even when you're away". Link to it from every product page, and keep a short form for people who prefer email.

Payment is the last step. QRIS lets customers pay from many banking and e-wallet apps with one code. "Build in Indonesia, sell everywhere" in this issue covers QRIS and its fees.

Job 4: bring people back

■ Email list and social accounts

Keep in touch with customers who bought once. Ask for an email address at checkout, with a clear reason to give it. Send useful news, and keep the list clean.

Large senders must follow Gmail's rules for bulk email. "A small marketing plan", in Step 4, explains these rules. Follow them from your first message.



Social accounts keep the business in view between purchases. Choose the one or two platforms where your customers already spend time. "Marketing 101" in this issue compares social media with the other channels.

RankMySEO and this magazine come from the same team. Its socmed feature follows public social accounts and runs social research, from Starter. You can then watch your accounts in the same place as your site's rankings.

“

Crawling can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks.

Google

A 30-day plan after launch

This plan uses an imagined business, with no real data. A small bakery in Sidoarjo opens its first website. Here is its first month.

Week 1 sets up the basics:

- Monday: verify the site in Search Console and submit the sitemap.
- Tuesday: start the Business Profile verification.
- Wednesday: check the About and contact pages.
- Thursday: add the WhatsApp button to every product page.
- Friday: test the home page in PageSpeed Insights on a phone.

- Saturday: set up QRIS at checkout.
- Sunday: ask all your customers for an honest review, not only the happy ones.

Week 2 is about being found. The owner lists the bakery in two local directories and asks a local food blog for a visit. Then URL Inspection gets a check for the main product pages.

Week 3 is about trust. The owner replies to every new review and adds photos of the kitchen and the team. An email sign-up box goes in at checkout.

Week 4 is about coming back. The owner sends the first short email to the new list. Later that day, the same news goes on the main social account. At the end of the month, the owner checks the Page indexing report and the Business Profile.



Each job has a first step that costs little.



SPONSOR

Search Engine **Journal**[®]

The AI Search & SEO News That Matters



A news site with articles about AI search, SEO, GEO and AEO.

Search Engine Journal is a news site about AI search and SEO. It publishes news and articles about AI search, SEO, GEO and AEO.

Read it to follow news about search. Then compare that news with the articles in this issue.

Read the news at

searchenginejournal.com





What should you fix first?

Ask Operator what to fix on your site. It reads the stored checks that you see in the app. Starter includes 5 Operator messages an hour, and Growth and above include 40 an hour.

Choose a paid plan and enter your email. After payment, RankMySEO sends a link to open your account.

rankmyseo.com/pricing

SECTION

6 of 6

Four rooms for one message: web, social media, forums and offline

A small business can tell people about itself in many places. Each place has its own owner and its own rules. So each one suits a different job.

One simple model helps. Your website is owned space, and social media is rented space. Forums and communities are borrowed

space. Offline marketing happens in the street, at events and on paper.

Owned space

Your website

Rented space

social media

Borrowed space

Forums and communities

Offline

in the street, at events and on paper

Owned, rented and borrowed space

Owned space is under your control. You decide what it shows, and nobody can switch it off except your host. Rented space belongs to

a platform, which sets the rules and can change them. Borrowed space belongs to a community, and you are a guest there.

Each kind of space does a different job. A small business can pick one main channel and one support channel. To choose the first channel, see Step 4 of "A small marketing plan".



The website: owned space

The website is the one place where you set every rule. Your pages can rank in search, carry your full price list and take payment. "Why a website is not enough" in this issue covers the jobs around it.

A website also connects to Google Business Profile. The profile shows performance data. Google defines "Calls" as "The number of times a customer clicked on the call button on your Business Profile." It defines "Directions" as

"How many people asked for directions to your business."

Social media: rented space

Indonesia has very large audiences on the main platforms. DataReportal's Digital 2026 Indonesia report gives ad audience figures for late 2025. It lists an ad audience of 151 million for YouTube, 121 million for Facebook and 108 million for Instagram.

For TikTok, the report gives an ad audience of 180 million aged 18 and above. DataReportal

warns that ad reach differs from the number of people, and that Meta revised its figures. Treat

these numbers as ad audience sizes that the platforms report.

AD AUDIENCE, INDONESIA, LATE 2025

TikTok (aged 18 and above)		180 million
YouTube		151 million
Facebook		121 million
Instagram		108 million

DataReportal, Digital 2026 Indonesia. Ad reach differs from the number of people.

The Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2025 looks at news use in Indonesia. It names WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, and says that "57% of Indonesians report getting their news from these platforms".

Reuters notes that its sample is "more urban". TikTok as a news source rose 5 percentage points to 34%.

■ How feeds choose what people see

57%

"57% of Indonesians report getting their news from these platforms": WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram

A feed shows each user a different mix of posts. TikTok explained its system on 18 June 2020 in "How TikTok recommends videos #ForYou". It named three groups of factors: "User interactions", "Video information" and

34%

TikTok as a news source, up 5 percentage points. Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2025

"Device and account settings". TikTok wrote that more followers can bring more views, but follower count is not a direct factor in its recommendations.

TIKTOK, 18 JUNE 2020: THREE GROUPS OF FACTORS

1

User interactions

2

Video information

3

Device and account settings

Instagram explained its feed on 31 May 2023, in Adam Mosseri's post "Instagram Ranking Explained". He wrote: "Instagram doesn't have a singular algorithm". The post adds: "We use a variety of algorithms, classifiers, and processes, each with its own purpose."

That TikTok post is from 2020, and the system may have changed since. The basic point still helps. Your post reaches the people that the platform chooses.

■ Selling inside social apps and marketplaces in Indonesia

Permendag 19/2026 sets the rules for trade through electronic systems in Indonesia. The Minister of Trade set it on 4 June 2026. It was promulgated on 8 June 2026, and Pasal 76 says that it applies from that date.

Pasal 75 revokes Permendag 31/2023 and declares it no longer valid. So 19/2026 is the regulation to read now.

Pasal 1 angka 18 defines social commerce. It is a social media operator with features, menus or facilities for sellers to post offers. Pasal 2 ayat 2 states that domestic sellers include sellers who trade through social commerce.

The key limit is in Pasal 25 ayat 3. A social commerce platform "dilarang memfasilitasi transaksi pembayaran pada Sistem Elektroniknya". In plain words, the app can show your offer, but it must not process the payment in its own system.

Pasal 25 ayat 2 adds that marketplaces and social commerce platforms must not act as producers. Under Pasal 23, cross-border platforms must apply a minimum price to finished goods of foreign origin. This covers goods that sellers sell directly into Indonesia. The regulation states the amount as FOB USD

100 per unit, and the Minister sets any exceptions.

Sellers also need a licence. Under Pasal 4, a platform must refuse a domestic seller that has no business licence. The minimum is a Nomor Induk Berusaha in the trade sector, plus proof that the goods meet the required standards.

Platforms must help sellers reach OSS, the Online Single Submission system for business licences. Under Pasal 74, sellers active on a platform before the regulation get at most 18 months for their business licence. Pasal 73 keeps existing licences valid if they have not expired or been revoked. They must also be registered in the OSS system.

Pasal 7 requires each platform to hold a business licence for electronic trade. A domestic seller that runs its own online shop system counts as a platform under Pasal 7 ayat 3. Pasal 19 says that the licence is free of charge.

For sellers, Pasal 14 adds protection on six kinds of platform, including marketplaces and social commerce. These platforms must state every fee that they charge sellers in a transparent way. They must answer a seller's written objection within 14 working days.

Tax is a separate rule. The tax office, DJP, announced that marketplaces started to collect PPh Pasal 22 on 1 October 2026, under PMK 37/2025. PPh Pasal 22 is income tax under Article 22 of the income tax law. The marketplaces collect 0.5 percent of gross turnover.

Sellers with a turnover of up to Rp500,000,000 in one tax year are not subject to the collection. DJP had appointed

four marketplaces on 24 September 2026. These are Shopee, Global Digital Niaga, Tokopedia and Ecart Webportal Indonesia.

“

Your post reaches the people that the platform chooses.



Forums and communities: borrowed space

A forum or a group chat belongs to its members and its moderators. You join as a guest. If you only post offers, the members notice, and the moderators may remove you.

■ Rules about promotion

Indonesian communities on SEO and marketing state their rules clearly. On 19 October 2026, an Indonesian SEO group on Telegram had about 5,600 members. Its rule 4 reads: "Tidak jual beli/promosi/spam", which means no buying, selling, promotion or spam.

The group DIGITAL MARKETING had about 730 members on the same day. Its rules say: "SPAM, JUALAN APAPUN DELETE and

BANNED". SEO Indonesia had about 540 members.

So answer questions, share what you learned and let your profile do the selling. Read the rules of each group before your first post.

■ Forums in search results and in AI answers

Google shows forum posts in Search. On 10 May 2023, Google published a post headed "Find helpful information from people on forums and social media sites". The post said that helpful information can be "a comment in a forum thread".

Google also has a structured data type for discussion forums. If you run your own forum, this markup describes it to Google. AI answers also cite community sites. See "Clicks: what Google says, and what one study found" in "SEO in 2026" for the Pew figure.

Offline marketing

■ Events, bazaars and print

Offline contact often leads to word of mouth. Nielsen published a survey about trust in 2021. It found that "88% of global respondents trust recommendations from people they know more than any other channel."

The government runs events for some businesses. Its SMEsta site of the Ministry of SMEs lists "SIAL Food and Drinks Indonesia 2026" at JIEXPO Kemayoran. That event is for medium-sized, export-ready businesses, and registration and curation are free.

A search on 19 October 2026 found no national bazaar program for micro or small shops on a government page.

■ From offline to online: QR codes and UTM tags

A printed flyer or a counter card can send people to your website. Put a QR code on it that opens a page address with UTM tags. A UTM tag is a short label at the end of a link. It tells Google Analytics where a visitor came from.

Google Analytics Help lists the UTM parameters, such as `utm_medium` and `utm_source_platform`. The page has no rule for QR codes, so treat this as an application of UTM tags. Use a different tag for each flyer or event, and you can see which one brought visits.

The comparison table

Channel	Who owns it	Main rules	Best job
Website	You	Your own, plus Google's spam policies for search	A permanent home for your offer and payment
Social media	The platform	The platform's terms, and Permendag 19/2026 for selling	Reach new people through the feed
Forums and communities	Members and moderators	Each group's own rules, often no promotion	Answer questions and earn trust
Offline	You and the event host	The event's rules	Meet people in person and send them online

Worked example: one launch across four channels

This is an imagined example, with no real data.

A small bakery in Sidoarjo launches a new cake. It plans one week across the four channels.

On the website, the bakery adds a page for the cake, with photos, the price and a WhatsApp button. Next, a short video on its main social account links to the page. Payment goes through the website.

In a local community group, the owner answers a question about cake storage. The bakery appears only in the owner's profile. At the shop counter, a card with a QR code opens the cake page with UTM tags.

Seven days later, the owner checks Google Analytics. The UTM tags show how many visits came from the counter card and how many came from the social post. Calls and direction requests appear in the Business Profile.

“

Each kind of space does a different job.



EVENT

7
NOVEMBER
2026

JATIM DEVELOPER DAY 2026: INCLUSIVE TECH, REAL IMPACT

A community tech event in Pasuruan, East Java, on Saturday, 7 November 2026.

Jatim Developer Day 2026 is a community tech event in East Java. The organisers say that more than 35 IT communities in East Java support the event.

Date: Saturday, 7 November 2026, 08.00 to 15.20 WIB.

Venue: ITB Yadika Pasuruan, Jl. Salem No.3, Kersikan, Kec. Bangil, Pasuruan, Jawa Timur 67153.

City: Pasuruan, East Java.

Register at

avora.id/jatimdeveloperday/jatim-developer-day-2026



The business side

Build in Indonesia, sell everywhere: pricing, payment and open source

You can build a software product in Indonesia and sell it to the world. Before you sell, you must make a few business choices. These choices are about currency, payment, tax, a free plan and open source.

The market at home

Indonesia has a large digital economy. Google, Temasek and Bain publish the e-Conomy SEA report.

The 2025 edition puts Indonesia's digital economy near US\$100 billion in gross merchandise value. That is 14% more than the year before. E-commerce is US\$71 billion of that total.

Choice 1: one currency or two

You can show your prices in rupiah, in US dollars, or in both. Two price lists mean two sets of numbers to keep up to date.

The example in this article is RankMySEO. RankMySEO and this magazine come from the same team.

In Indonesia, RankMySEO shows prices in rupiah and takes QRIS, virtual account or e-wallet payments. Outside Indonesia, buyers pay by card in USD, says the RankMySEO pricing page (accessed 19 Oct 2026). These are the monthly prices:

Free:	Starter:	Growth:	Agency:	Scale:
no cost.	Rp50,000.	Rp199,000.	Rp449,000.	Rp799,000.

Choice 2: how people pay

Local buyers want local payment methods. QRIS is the national QR code standard for payments in Indonesia.

Bank Indonesia reports 65.77 million QRIS users and 44.86 million QRIS merchants as of June 2026. Of those merchants, 96.68% are micro, small and medium

businesses. In the first half of 2026, QRIS handled 12.55 billion transactions worth Rp1.12 quadrillion. That value is 93.92% more than a year earlier.

The fee for sellers changed on 1 October 2026. This fee is the merchant discount rate (MDR), which a seller pays on each QRIS payment. From that date, the MDR is 0% for all merchants on payments up to Rp100,000.

65.77 million

QRIS users, June 2026

44.86 million

QRIS merchants, June 2026

0%

MDR for all merchants on payments up to Rp100,000, from 1 October 2026

Before that date, small, medium and large merchants paid 0.7% on these payments. Micro merchants stay at 0% for payments up to Rp500,000. Bank Indonesia's QRIS page still shows the old table. The new rule is in

Bank Indonesia press release No. 28/159/DKom, dated 17 August 2026.

Choice 3: tax on digital services

Indonesia collects VAT on digital services from foreign sellers. This tax is called PPN PMSE. It started on 1 July 2020. The rate is 12% of a tax base of 11/12 of the price, so the real rate is 11%.

A foreign seller must collect it above a sales threshold and/or a visitor threshold. The sales threshold is more than Rp600 million a year or Rp50 million a month. For visitors, the threshold is more than 12,000 a year or 1,000 a month.

This rule matters to you as a buyer too: foreign software that you buy online can include this VAT. If you sell software, ask a tax adviser about your own case.

Choice 4: a free plan

A free plan lets people use the product before they pay. Wes Bush of ProductLed calls this approach product-led growth. In his words, it uses "your product as the main vehicle to acquire, activate, and retain customers".

RankMySEO has a Free plan. It costs nothing and needs no card. Its limits are 1 site, 3 tracked keywords and 14 days of history.

The plan also includes 1 saved competitor, on-page issue counts and a PDF report with a watermark. Operator, the AI assistant inside the app, gives 3 messages in total.

Choice 5: open source

Some software companies publish their code in public repositories. A licence sets what other people may do with that code, so choose it before you publish the code. Supabase uses the Apache-2.0 licence for its repository, which dates from October 2019. Plausible uses the AGPL-3.0 licence for its repository, which dates from December 2018.

RankMySEO also has an open-source toolkit, under the Apache-2.0 licence. Its public code went up on GitHub on 24 June 2026. Aris Setiawan, the creator of RankMySEO, says that the open-source version is for him and his clients. He says that the current focus is the SaaS, which means software as a service.

Table: five choices before you sell software from Indonesia			
Choice	Your options	Fact to know	RankMySEO example
Currency	Rupiah, US dollars, or both	Two price lists mean two sets of numbers to keep up to date	In Indonesia: rupiah, for example Starter at Rp50,000 a month, paid by QRIS, virtual account or e-wallet. Outside Indonesia: card in USD.
Payment	Card, QRIS, virtual account, e-wallet	QRIS MDR is 0% up to Rp100,000 from 1 October 2026	QRIS, virtual account or e-wallet in rupiah, and cards in USD
Tax	Local rules, PPN PMSE for foreign sellers	PPN PMSE has a real rate of 11%	Not applicable
Free plan	Free plan, trial, or none	Product-led growth uses the product to win customers	Free plan, no card
Open source	Open code, closed code, or a mix	Licences differ, for example Apache-2.0 and AGPL-3.0	Apache-2.0 toolkit, for Aris and his clients

Glossary.

AEO (answer engine optimization): work that helps a system lift a direct answer from your page.

AI Mode: a Google search mode where AI answers a question in a conversation.

AI Overviews: Google summaries, made by AI, at the top of some search results.

Canonical URL: the address that you tell Google is the main copy of a page. Google decides which address it treats as the main copy.

Core update: a large change to how Google ranks pages in general.

Crawler: a program that reads web pages for a search engine or an AI company.

Field data and lab data: speed data about a page. The first comes from real visits, and the second comes from a test run.

GEO (generative engine optimization): work that helps an AI answer mention or cite your site.

Google Business Profile: a free Google listing for a business, shown in Google Maps and Search.

IndexNow: an open protocol that tells some search engines about new or changed pages.

Internal link: a link from one page of your site to another page of your site.

Keyword cannibalization: two pages on one site compete for the same keyword.

Keyword difficulty: a tool's estimate of how hard it is to rank for a keyword. Each tool calculates it in its own way.

llms.txt: a proposed text file that gives AI tools a short guide to a website.

Long-tail keyword: a longer, more exact search term that fewer people type.

Owned, rented and borrowed space: your website, your social media accounts, and forums or communities.

Pillar page: a main page that covers a whole topic and links to the pages with the details.

Programmatic SEO: many pages made from one template and a database.

QRIS: the national QR code standard for payments in Indonesia.

robots.txt: a text file on your site that tells crawlers which pages they may read.

Rich result: a search result with extra parts, for example stars or a question list.

Search Console: a free Google tool that shows how your site performs in Google Search.

Search intent: what a person wants to get or do when they search.

Search volume: an estimate of how often people search for a term. Google Keyword Planner shows a rounded monthly average.

Spam update: a change that helps Google find pages that break its spam policies.

Structured data: code that describes a page to search engines in a fixed format.

Topic cluster: a pillar page together with its detailed pages, linked to each other.

Topical authority: a phrase that appears often in SEO advice. Google has used a similar term, topic authority, in a 2023 post about news only.

UTM tag: a short text at the end of a link that tells analytics where a visit came from.

The full RankMySEO glossary is at rankmyseo.com/learn/glossary.

Back page

Try RankMySEO for free

RankMySEO has a Free plan. See "Build in Indonesia, sell everywhere" for what the plan includes.

Go to rankmyseo.com/free-rank-tracker and start your Free plan. Then add your site and your first keywords.

Ranked.

Colophon

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A team of AI assistants researched, wrote and edited this issue. Aris Setiawan reviewed and approved it.

Send letters and corrections to support@rankmyseo.com.

RankMySEO and this magazine come from the same team.