

How To Get Found Online: SEO For Local Businesses



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01

Introduction

Why we're here today

About Shawn Livengood

- Digital marketing professional for 17+ years
- Subject matter expert in SEO, SEM, web analytics and user experience
- Based on the Oregon Coast
- Learn more at www.shawnlivengood.com



What Is SEO?

“SEO—short for search engine optimization—is about helping search engines understand your content, and helping users find your site and make a decision about whether they should visit your site through a search engine.”

- **Google SEO Starter Guide**

Why Does SEO Matter For Local Businesses?



76% of people who conduct a local search on their smartphone visit a business within 24 hours (source: Google)



28% of these searches result in a purchase (source: Google)



Greater visibility in search results = more customers = more \$\$\$

02

The Search Landscape

What is search?



Easy question, right?

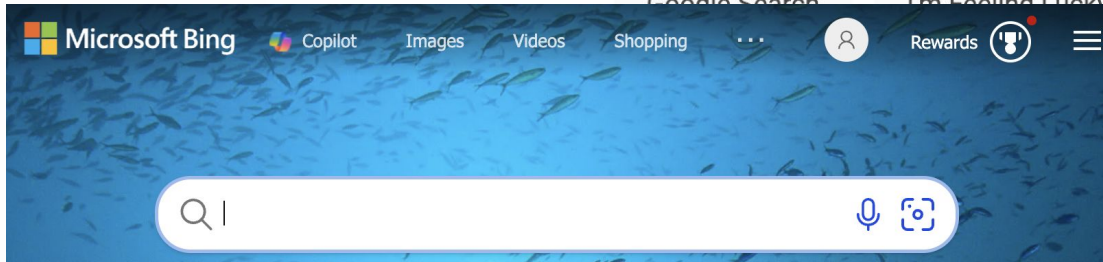
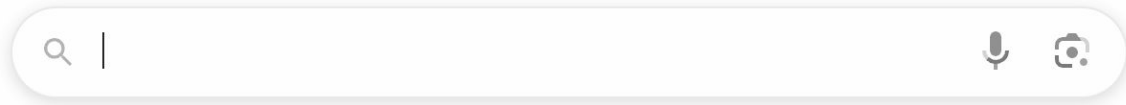
The Google logo is centered at the top of the page. It consists of the word "Google" in its signature multi-colored font: blue 'G', red 'o', yellow 'o', blue 'g', green 'l', and red 'e'.A white search bar with rounded ends is positioned below the logo. On the left side, there is a magnifying glass icon followed by a vertical line. On the right side, there are two icons: a microphone and a camera.

Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky

Easy question, right?

Google



Easy question, right?



Search



|



Microsoft Bing

Copilot

Images

Videos

Shopping



Rewards



Q |



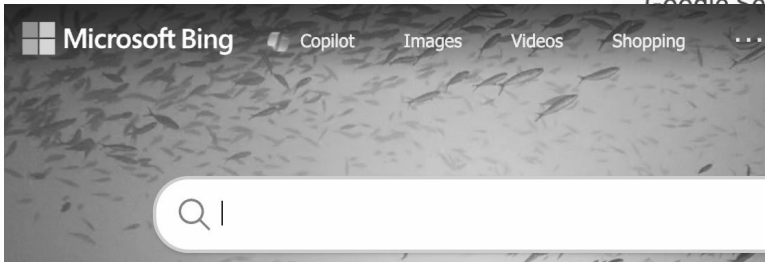
Easy question, right?



Search



Search Facebook



Search

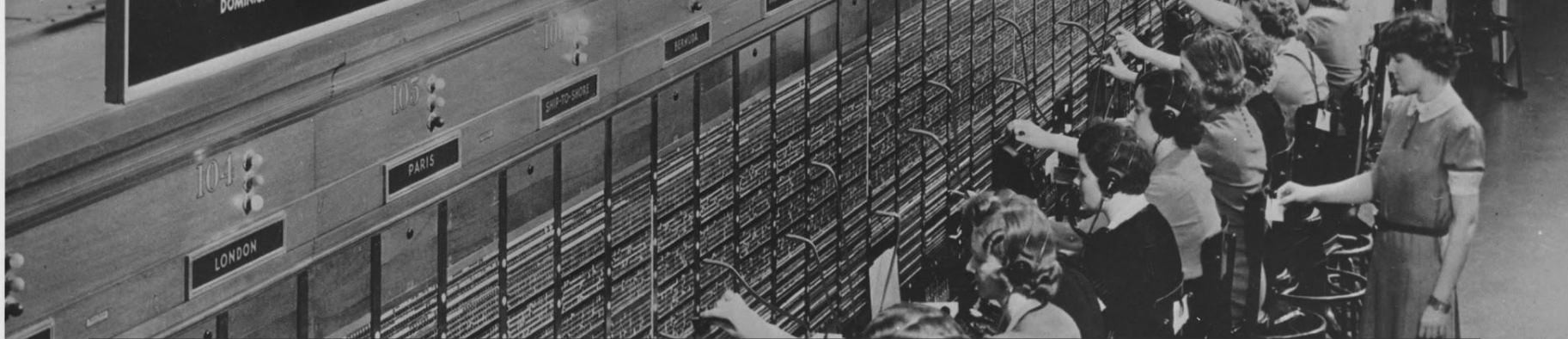
Search





Search Is EVERYWHERE

You never know where your customers will find you, so be prepared to meet them where they're at.



Search is about connecting people to the information and services they need, *at the precise moment they need them.*



03

How To Do SEO

A three-phase approach

The Three-Phase Approach To SEO



Tech

Technical SEO

Does your site work? Can users and crawlers read it?



Text

SEO Content

Does your site have good content? Is the content relevant?



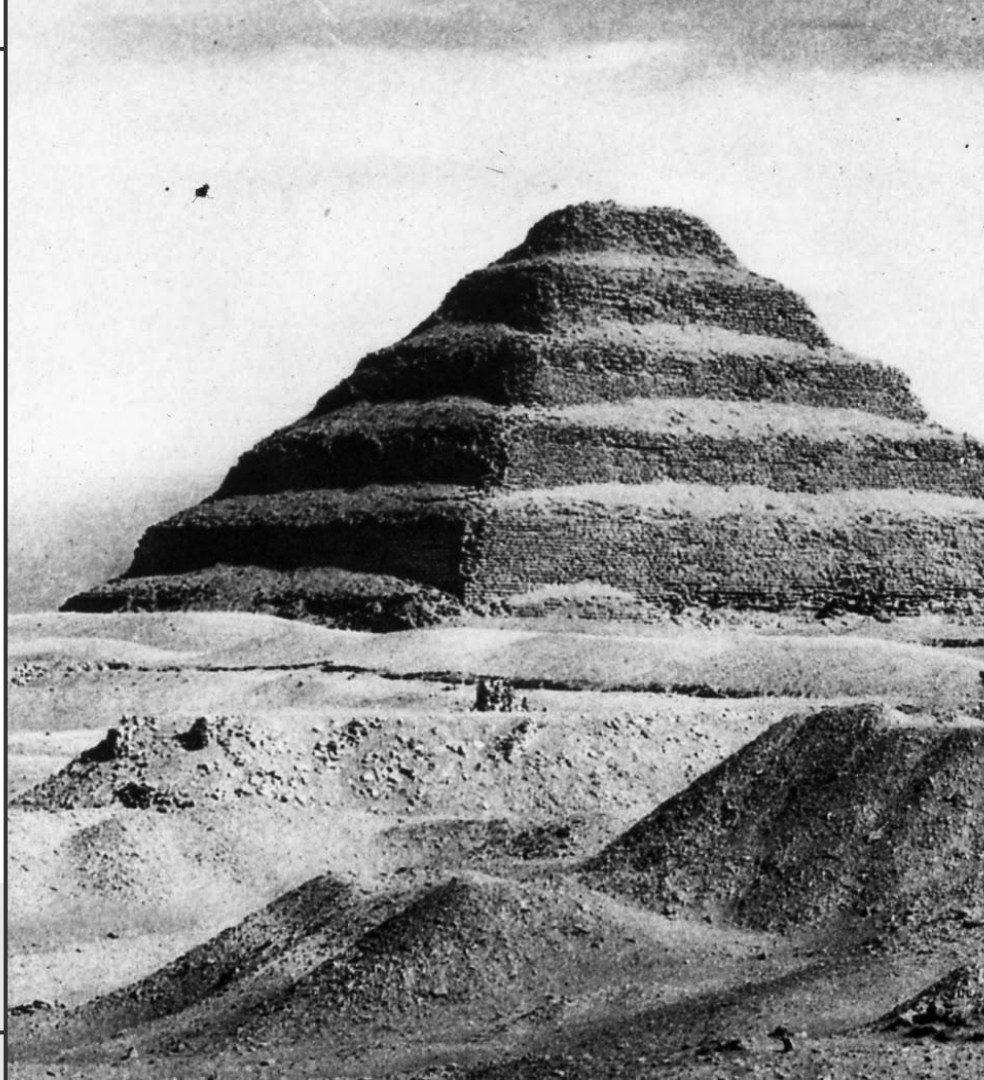
Tell

Website Promotion

Does your site have links to it? Do people know about your site?

Take It Step By Step

- Each phase builds off of the previous one.
- You'll get better results if you complete the work of the previous phase before you move on to the next one.
- **Don't worry about being perfect if it delays you from being good.**



Phase 1: Tech

Phase 1 is all about making sure that your site works correctly so that people can use it and search engine bots can crawl it.

Phase 1 Elements:

Robots.txt - tells search engine crawlers which pages to crawl.

Sitemap file - XML file that is a list of all the pages on your site. Search engines use this as an inventory.

Fix site errors - fix broken links by setting up 301 redirects.

Improve site load speed - faster loading times = more engaged users.

Internal linking - internal links on your site improve indexing and shows search engines which pages are most important on your site.

Phase 1 Checklist:

- Robots.txt file
- Complete sitemap
- Correct any 404 errors with 301 redirects
- Improve site load speed
- Have a logical internal linking structure and navigation hierarchy

Phase 1: Tech

Robots.txt Example: Target.com

Links to sitemap(s)

Disallowed folders to block web crawlers

```
Sitemap: https://www.target.com/sitemap_keywords-index.xml.gz
Sitemap: https://www.target.com/sitemap_stores-index.xml.gz
Sitemap: https://www.target.com/sitemap_taxonomy-categories-index.xml.gz
Sitemap: https://www.target.com/sitemap_pdp-index.xml.gz
Sitemap: https://www.target.com/sitemap_taxonomy-brand-index.xml.gz
Sitemap: https://www.target.com/sitemap_facet-categories-index.xml.gz
```

```
User-agent: *
Disallow: /*/Ntk
Disallow: /*/Ntt
Disallow: /*/Ntx
Disallow: /*%7Cd_
Disallow: /*/schoollist/
Disallow: /*BTWN
Disallow: /[path]/
Disallow: /7078046/
Disallow: /7079046/
Disallow: /AddToList
Disallow: /AddToRegistry
Disallow: /admin
Disallow: /advancedGiftRegistrySearchView
Disallow: /AjaxSearchNavigationView
Disallow: /Allons_voter
Disallow: /bp/c/
Disallow: /bp/guest_mfg_brand
Disallow: /bp/p/
Disallow: /CallToActionModalView
Disallow: /cgi-bin
Disallow: /cgi-local
Disallow: /Checkout
Disallow: /CheckoutEditItemsDisplayView
Disallow: /CheckoutOrderBillingView
Disallow: /CheckoutOrderShippingView
Disallow: /CheckoutSignInView
```

Phase 1: Tech

Sitemap Example - shawnlivengood.com

```
<!-- Generated by Screaming Frog SEO Spider 20.3 -->
▼<urlset xmlns="http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9">
  ▼<url>
    <loc>https://www.shawnlivengood.com/</loc>
    <lastmod>2024-10-11</lastmod>
    <changefreq>daily</changefreq>
    <priority>1.0</priority>
  </url>
  ▼<url>
    <loc>https://www.shawnlivengood.com/services/wordpress-development/</loc>
    <lastmod>2024-10-11</lastmod>
    <changefreq>daily</changefreq>
    <priority>0.9</priority>
  </url>
  ▼<url>
    <loc>https://www.shawnlivengood.com/services/google-analytics/</loc>
    <lastmod>2024-10-11</lastmod>
    <changefreq>daily</changefreq>
    <priority>0.9</priority>
  </url>
```

Phase 1: Tech

Exercise - Google PageSpeed Insights Live Demo

 Mobile  Desktop



Performance



Accessibility



Best Practices



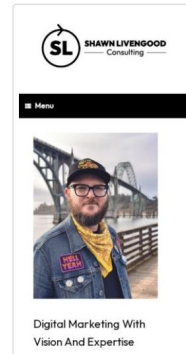
SEO



Performance

Values are estimated and may vary. The [performance score is calculated](#) directly from these metrics. [See calculator.](#)

 0-49  50-89  90-100



Phase 1: Tech

Phase 1 Resources:

How To Make A Robots.txt File:

<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/robots/create-robots-txt>

How To Make A Sitemap:

<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/sitemaps/build-sitemap>

301 Redirect Guide:

<https://www.semrush.com/blog/301-redirects/>

Identify Issues That Are Slowing Your Site Load Times:

<https://pagespeed.web.dev/>

Phase 2: Text

Phase 2 is all about optimizing site content to show relevance signals to users and search engine bots.

Title Tags - Include 1-2 target keywords that are relevant to the page and your business. Keep it under 60 characters for maximum visibility in search results

Meta Descriptions - Doesn't affect ranking, but can affect click-through rate. Appears below link in search results. Signal to users that they will find what they are looking for. 160 character limit.

Page Content - Should be relevant, useful, and engaging. Look at top results and think about what you can do better.

This phase matters for your social media as well! Don't forget to use keywords in your posts, bios, and captions.

Phase 2 Checklist:

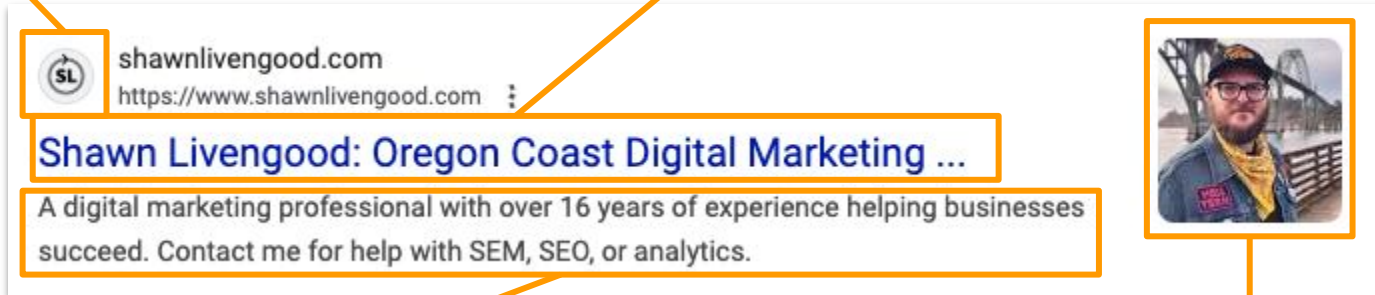
- Title tags contain target keywords
- Meta descriptions contain keywords and call to action
- Page content is relevant, useful, and engaging
- Page content uses a variety of text, image, and video elements
- Content is 10x better than competitors

Phase 2: Text

Anatomy Of A Search Result

Favicon

Title Tag



The image shows a search result for Shawn Livengood. It includes a favicon (SL), the domain shawnlivengood.com, the URL https://www.shawnlivengood.com, a title tag "Shawn Livengood: Oregon Coast Digital Marketing ...", and a meta description "A digital marketing professional with over 16 years of experience helping businesses succeed. Contact me for help with SEM, SEO, or analytics." A featured image of Shawn Livengood is also present.

shawnlivengood.com
https://www.shawnlivengood.com

Shawn Livengood: Oregon Coast Digital Marketing ...

A digital marketing professional with over 16 years of experience helping businesses succeed. Contact me for help with SEM, SEO, or analytics.

Meta Description

Featured Image

Phase 2: Text

Exercise: Write a title tag and meta description for a local pizzeria called Pablo's Pizza Place.

Remember:

- Keep your title tag under 60 characters
- Keep your meta description under 160 characters
- Use 1-2 keywords relevant to the business
- Include a strong call-to-action (i.e. “buy now” or “learn more”)

Phase 3: Tell

Phase 3 is all about getting visibility for your website and your business by spreading the word.

External links to your site (also known as **backlinks**) are a powerful ranking signal that helps your website move up in search results. A few things to know:

- Quality is better than quantity in the world of links.
- It's better to get a small amount of links from reputable, high-quality websites than a lot of links from low-quality websites.
- Links from sites that are relevant to your business are best. For example, a local realtor will benefit more from a link from a mortgage broker than from a coffee shop.
- Links from other local businesses provide location signals, improving your results in local searches for that area.

Phase 3 Checklist:

- ❑ Link to your site from any other sites and social media profiles you own
- ❑ Get links from partnerships, memberships, and clients
- ❑ Do something notable and get links from news sites
- ❑ Sponsor events and groups to get links

Phase 3: Tell

Quality Backlink Examples



**SHAWN
LIVENGOOD**
Consulting



Marketing, Sales, Advertising, Business Consultant, Business Services

 389 S. Drift Creek Rd., Lincoln City, OR 97367

 (214) 460-3328

 [Visit Website](#)



Chamber Directory Listing

"Working with Shawn Livengood was a highlight for the West Seattle Chamber. His SEO knowledge and guidance through the Report Card process have made a huge impact on how we serve our members in the digital space."

Rachel Porter - West Seattle Chamber of Commerce

Client Testimonial

Phase 3: Tell

Exercise: SEMRush Backlink Gap Analysis Live Demo

Backlink Gap

Find prospects for domain or URL

You shawnlivengood.com	×	Root Domain ▾
● oregoncoast.edu	×	Root Domain ▾
● https://www.newportchamber.org/	×	Root Domain ▾
● https://www.lcchamber.com/	×	Root Domain ▾
Add domain		Root Domain ▾

[Find prospects](#)

The Three-Phase SEO Approach: Wrap Up

Phase 1: Tech

Fix technical and structural issues on your site.

Phase 2: Text

Optimize your content for relevance and quality.

Phase 3: Tell

Spread the word about your site.

04

Local Listing Optimization

Optimizing your business listings

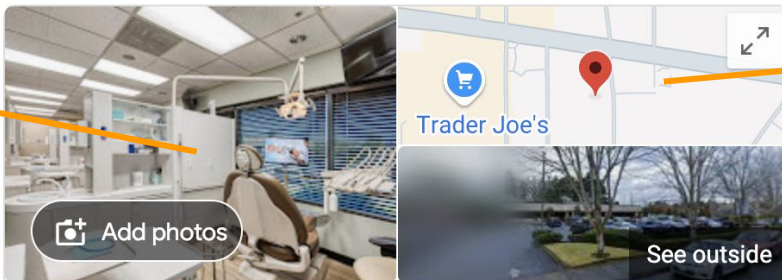
Local Listings Matter

- Local business listings feature prominently in local search results.
- They are the fastest way for customers to find out critical business information like contact info and opening hours.
- Reviews on listings make a huge difference for converting a searcher into a customer.



Anatomy Of A Local Listing

Photos



Location

Business Name

Dr. Jared Bowyer DDS

Reviews

4.9 ★★★★★ 351 Google reviews

Dental implants provider in Vancouver, Washington

Business Category

 You manage this Business Profile 

Business Information

Address: 300 SE 120th Ave #700, Vancouver, WA 98683

Hours: Closed · Opens 7:30 AM Mon ▾

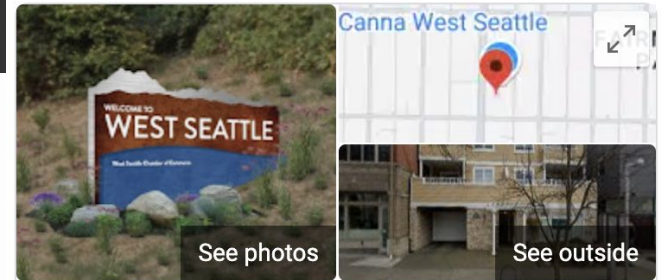
Phone: (360) 253-2640

Products and Services: drbowyer.com

Links

Verifying Your Listing

- Before you can optimize your listing, you need to claim it.
- Go to <http://business.google.com/add> or Google your business and click the “Own this business?” link in the listing.
- You’ll need to verify that you own the business by doing a video recording, phone call, or email.
- Once your business ownership is verified, you can make edits to the profile.



West Seattle Chamber of Commerce

Website

Directions

Save

Call

5.0 ★★★★★ 8 Google reviews

Chamber of commerce in Seattle, Washington

Address: 5450 California Ave SW STE 101, Seattle, WA 98136

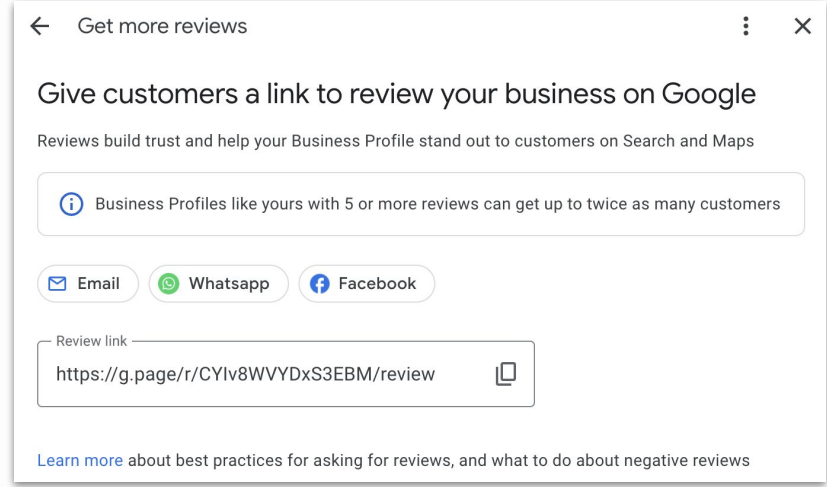
Hours: Closed · Opens 9 AM Mon ▾

Phone: (206) 932-5685

Suggest an edit · [Own this business?](#)

Optimizing Your Profile

- Make sure all of the essential data (address, phone number, hours, and website) are complete and correct.
- Choose a primary business category that is the best fit for your business. Choose secondary categories that are also relevant.
- Add keywords about your products and services in your description and services sections.
- Fill out all the fields that are applicable to your business.
- **GET REVIEWS!!!**




Pro Tip: Add a Google Review link to your follow-up communication to customers, and ask for a review.

Other Business Listings

- **Apple Maps** - <https://businessconnect.apple.com/>
- **Bing Places** - <https://www.bingplaces.com/>
- **Yelp** - <https://biz.yelp.com/claim>
- **Chamber of Commerce member listings**
- **Industry-specific directories (i.e. Healthgrades, Google Partners)** - varies by industry

Pro Tip: Claim your free listing on Yelp, but don't pay for their advertising. They inflate their traffic numbers in reporting and will withhold positive reviews that you earned unless you pay them.



All images

West Seattle Chamber of Commerce

Chambers of commerce in Seattle, WA

[Directions](#) [Nearby](#)

5450 California Ave SW Ste 101, Seattle, WA 98136

(206) 932-5685

wschamber.com

Closes in 2 mins

[Suggest an edit](#) · [Manage this business](#)

05

SEO Tools

Free tools for SEO analysis

Recommended Tools

- **Google Search Console** shows how Google reads your site and provides performance reports. 100% free.
- **Screaming Frog** is a crawl tool that scrapes all of your site data for easy analysis. Free for up to 500 URLs.
- **SEMRush** is a powerful SEO tracking tool with a free tier that's good enough for most small businesses.
- **Ahrefs** is another great SEO tool with a site audit feature in the free version.



Google Search Console Demo

Total clicks

15



Total impressions

3.74K



Average CTR

0.4%



Average position

54



<https://search.google.com/search-console/about>

Screaming Frog

The screenshot shows the Screaming Frog SEO Spider interface. The browser address bar displays <https://www.shawnlivengood.com/>. The interface includes a navigation menu with tabs for Internal, External, Security, Response Codes, URL, Page Titles, Meta Descri, Overview, Issues, Site Structure, Segments, Response Times, API, and Spelli. The Overview tab is active, showing a summary table of page types. The table has columns for URLs and % of Total. The 'HTML' row is highlighted in green, indicating it is the selected filter. Below the table, a status bar shows 'Selected Cells: 0 Filter Total: 18'. On the left, a list of 10 URLs is visible, with the first one being <https://www.shawnlivengood.com/>.

	URLs	% of Total
All	57	100%
HTML	18	31.58%
JavaScript	16	28.07%
CSS	17	29.82%
Images	0	0%
Media	0	0%
Fonts	0	0%
XML	0	0%
PDF	6	10.53%
Plugins	0	0%
Other	0	0%

<https://www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider/>

06

Conclusion

Wrapping it up

Wrapping It Up

- Good SEO can directly lead to more customers for your local business.
- Search is everywhere - meet your customers where they are at.
- **Tech** - Make sure your website works.
- **Text** - Optimize your website content.
- **Tell** - Get the word out!
- Local business listings are a huge part of local search visibility - claim and optimize them!
- Positive reviews are perhaps the best way to get better visibility in local search results.

Find Me On The Internet

Website: www.shawnlivengood.com

Email: shawn@shawnlivengood.com

LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/slivengood/>

Download a copy of this presentation:

<https://www.shawnlivengood.com/presentations/>



Ready for more? Book a no-cost digital marketing advising session with me! Ask your SBDC advisor for details.

07

Q&A

Question and answer time

Thanks!

Do you have any questions?

shawn@shawnlivengood.com

+1 214 460 3328

shawnlivengood.com

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