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Ultimate digital marketing glossary (216 terms defined)

Digital marketing can be a confusing subject, filled with jargon, abbreviations and initialisms.

So we've put together this ultimate glossary of digital marketing terms to help you figure out what the hell people are talking about.

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#

404

404 is an error code which is used when you try to load a page on a website which doesn't exist. When a 404 error is encountered, the user is usually shown a 404 page.

Good 404 pages describe what's gone wrong and help the user find what they're looking for.

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301 redirect

A 301 redirect is what you use when you want to permanently redirect one page on your website to another page, either elsewhere on your website or elsewhere on the [internet](#). When a user tries to view the redirected page, they're instantly redirected to the new one.

301 redirects tell search engines that a page has permanently moved and won't be coming back. 301 redirects are usually [cached](#) (or remembered) by the [browser](#).

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302 redirect

A 302 redirect works in the same way as a [301 redirect](#). However, instead of being permanent, it's only temporary. 302 redirects are not usually [cached](#) (or remembered) by the [browser](#).

When a search engine encounters a 302 redirect, it will keep the original page in its index instead of eventually replacing it (which is what happens when you use a 301 redirect).

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A

A/B testing

A/B testing is a methodology which involves testing one variation of a piece of marketing against another to see which one is more effective. For example, you could test a [PPC](#) advert which uses a certain word against another PPC advert which uses a different word. A/B testing usually involves one variation which is tested against a control (an unaltered version).

[Neil Patel's](#) published a beginners' guide to A/B testing.

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Abandonment rate

Abandonment rate can be either:

1. The percentage of people who leave your website without interacting or viewing another page (also called [bounce rate](#))
2. Or the percentage of people who add items to their shopping basket on an [e-commerce](#) without buying them.

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Above the fold

Above the fold refers to the portion of a web page or email which is visible without needing to scroll further down the screen. It's best practice to include key marketing messages and [calls-to-action](#) above the fold so fewer people miss them.

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Ad group

An ad group is a way of grouping similar paid ([PPC](#)) adverts together, for example in [Google Ads](#) or [Facebook](#). PPC ads are usually arranged in the following hierarchy:

Campaigns > Ad groups > Ads

An ad group can contain multiple ads, and a campaign can contain multiple ad groups. Certain settings can then be applied to that ad group, which are inherited by ads contained within it.

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Affiliate

An affiliate is someone who earns commission by referring leads to a website or company. Affiliates are usually given a unique [URL](#) or coupon code which the people they refer can use. This helps ensure that the sales are correctly attributed to them so they get the commission they're owed.

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Algorithm

An algorithm is a set of rules which are used by a computer to process and sort data. In [SEO](#), it's used to refer to the algorithms search engines use to determine the rankings of different websites.

It can also apply to [social media](#), where algorithms determine which posts are shown in a user's news feed.

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Alt text

Short for alternative text. Alt text is an attribute which can be added to an image on a web page. It's used to describe what the image depicts so people who use text-based [browsers](#) (for example, people with sight problems) and search engines can understand what the image is.

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Anchor text

Anchor text is the text that makes up the part of the link which users click or tap (for example, "click here"). Anchor text usually appears in a different style to the text surrounding it so users know it can be interacted with. By default, the anchor text in a link appears underlined in blue, but it's normally styled to fit the design of the website.

The anchor text (along with the text surrounding the link) is used by search engines to work out the intention of the link (as links are used as a [ranking signal](#) in [SEO](#)).

Have a look at this guide from [Ahrefs](#) if you want to learn more about anchor text when it comes to SEO.

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Animated GIF

See [GIF](#).

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AOV

Average order value. The AOV is a measure of the average amount spent by your customers for each individual order or sale. For example, if you make four sales in one day of £15, £30, £45 and £15, your average order value would be £26.25 ($\text{£15} + \text{£30} + \text{£45} + \text{£15} \div 4$).

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API

Application programming interface. An API allows different software platforms to interact with each other, passing data back and forth and triggering actions.

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Attribution model

An attribution model is a rule or set of rules for how [conversions](#) are attributed to a particular marketing activity. Attribution models are necessary as there are often multiple touchpoints a user interacts with before they convert (buy a product or service).

The main models are first click (where the very first interaction with an advert or other touchpoint is credited with the conversion) and last click (where the conversion is credited to the last advert or other touchpoint the customer interacted with).

This beginners' guide to attribution models from [the Drum](#) should be helpful.

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Auction

The auction refers to the way [PPC](#) platforms decide what order to show ads in each time a search is carried out. The order is dictated by a number of different factors, including [CPC](#) and [quality score](#). At its simplest level, it's designed to show the ads in descending order of CPC (like a bid at an auction where the winning bid is the highest). However, this order is also balanced by how relevant the ad is to the [keyword](#) and also by how the ad has performed in the past (based on [CTR](#), for example).

For more information about how PPC auctions work, have a look at this infographic from the [AdHawk blog](#).

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B

B2B

Business-to-business. B2B is a marketing philosophy that applies to products or services which are marketed towards businesses rather than consumers.

B2C

Business-to-customer. B2C is a marketing philosophy that applies to products or services which are marketed towards consumers rather than businesses.

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Backlink

A backlink is a link leading to your website which appears on another website. In the context of [SEO](#), backlinks are used by search engines as a way of determining the quality or value of a website. This is because backlinks are considered as a [ranking signal](#). In this sense, you can think of them as being like votes - someone else thinks your website is worth linking to. See [nofollowed link](#).

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Banner advert

A banner advert is a static image or moving video advert which appears on a website. Banner adverts are used in [display advertising](#).

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Big data

Big data is a buzzword which refers to the collection or analysis of data covering a wide range of different sources.

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Bing

[Bing](#) is a search engine owned by Microsoft. It's the second most popular search engine in the UK, with roughly 4.7% of total UK searches.

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Black hat SEO

This is the name given to [SEO](#) techniques which break search engines' webmaster guidelines (for example, paying for a [link](#) in order to manipulate a website's rankings). They're strongly discouraged by search engines, and websites who employ them can be [penalised](#).

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Blog

Short for weblog. A blog is a collection of posts, usually arranged in a reverse chronological order. Posts can be multimedia, featuring a mixture of text, images, videos and more. Blogs can be very useful as part of a company's [content](#) strategy.

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Bounce rate

The bounce rate is the percentage of people who visited your website and left without interacting or visiting another page on your site. For example, if 100 people land on your website and 50 of those leave without visiting any other pages, your bounce rate will be 50%. The lower your bounce rate, the better. According to [the Rocket Blog](#), an average bounce rate is between 41 to 55%. But this will vary from industry to industry.

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Breadcrumb navigation

Breadcrumb navigation is used on some websites to make it easier for visitors to navigate through a website's hierarchy. From right to left, they show the page the user's currently on, followed by links to pages which are higher up in the hierarchy. For example, the breadcrumb navigation for a blog post might look like:

Home > Blog > Tips > How to clean a shower curtain

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Broad match

Broad match is a [keyword](#) matching option used for [PPC](#) advertising. When you use broad match, your advert will appear when people search for the keyword you've entered and similar phrases, as well as singular and plural variations. For example, for the keyword "flowers", your ad will show when people search "flowers", "flower" and "how to buy flowers".

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Browser

A browser is a piece of software which enables users to view and interact with web pages over the [internet](#). There are many different types, but the most popular is Google Chrome. Other browsers include Firefox, Edge, Internet Explorer and Safari.

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C

CAC

Customer acquisition cost. The CAC is the advertising cost you spend to acquire a new customer. It's different from [CPA](#) (cost per acquisition) because CPA is a measure of how much it costs to acquire a new sale, not necessarily a new customer.

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Cache

Caches are used to speed up the loading of data or web pages on the [internet](#). A cache is a temporary store which is quicker to load from than the original source. However, the data or web page loaded from the cache might not be the most up-to-date version.

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Canonical tag

A canonical tag is a piece of code which can be added to a web page. The canonical tag tells search engines which version of a piece of content is the canonical one. It's mainly used to prevent [duplicate content](#) issues, particularly when the same piece of content exists at multiple [URLs](#).

Canonical tags take the format:

```
<link rel="canonical" href="https://www.example.com">
```

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Captcha

A captcha enables webmasters to prevent spammers or automated bots from submitting information on a website or app (for example, filling in a contact form). The captcha forces users to visually identify either text, numbers or images before they can submit their information. Captchas are designed to be impossible (or at least very hard) for computers to circumvent them.

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CDN

Content delivery network. A CDN can speed up web page loading times by serving resources (like images and script files) to users much faster. It does this by using multiple servers

across the world which are synced with each other. The CDN then serves resources from the server which is physically nearest to the user, or which has the best bandwidth at that particular moment.

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Clickbait

Clickbait is a term used to describe a piece of [content](#) which has been created or optimised specifically to get people to engage with it. Clickbait is generally seen as a pejorative term, usually meaning the content looks appealing at first but is actually low quality. Clickbait is usually made to sound more exciting or more shocking than it really is.

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CLV

Customer lifetime value. CLV is a way of gauging the long-term value of a customer to your business. For example, you might make a loss acquiring a customer with their first purchase, but if they remain a loyal customer because of that first purchase, you might profit from them in the longer-term as they keep coming back to you.

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CMS

Content management system. A content management system is a software platform which enables webmasters to create and edit pages on their website without needing to know how to write [HTML](#), [CSS](#) or [JavaScript](#) code. Pages and blog posts can usually be edited like word processing documents, making it easier for people who don't have the technical skills to build and update web pages from scratch. See [WYSIWYG](#).

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Consent

Consent is a term used for complying with data protection legislation, particularly when it comes to [GDPR](#). You have consent when a customer gives you permission to contact them for marketing purposes. Without consent, you may only contact a customer specifically about the product or service they've bought, or if they've asked you to contact them.

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Content

Content can refer to any media which is intended to be consumed by an audience, either for educational, informational or entertainment purposes. For example, content can include blog posts, images, videos or audio files. See [content marketing](#).

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Content marketing

Content marketing is a type of marketing which involves the user of [content](#) to increase brand awareness and gain sales. Content marketing includes a range of different strategies which make use of content. For example, a content marketing strategy could include publishing in-depth guides and articles which are useful to a company's intended audience. By interacting with the content, the users are made aware of the brand and may subsequently choose to [convert](#).

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Conversion

Conversion is the term used when a customer completes a particular goal, usually when they buy a product or sign-up to a mailing list. What's defined as a conversion depends on your business goals. It's called a conversion because you've converted a visitor into a customer.

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Conversion rate

The conversion rate is a percentage showing what proportion of your website visits resulted in a [conversion](#). For example, if 100 people visit your website and 50 buy a product, your conversion rate is 50%. The higher your conversion rate, the better. According to [WordStream](#), the average conversion rate across industries is 2.35%. But this will vary depending on a number of different variables.

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Cookie

A cookie is a small text file which is placed on a website visitor's computer. Cookies are used to store temporary information between [browser](#) sessions. They can be used to track users' browsing behaviour (for example, for advertising or website analytics) or to make it possible for user's to stay logged in to a site the next time they return.

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CPA

Cost per acquisition. The CPA is the cost you pay to acquire a sale or a [conversion](#). For example, if you spend £1,000 on an advertising campaign and get five conversions from it, your CPA is £200. Also see [CAC](#).

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CPC

Cost per click. CPC is a term which is used in paid advertising, like [PPC](#). It represents the cost you pay every time someone clicks or interacts with your advert.

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CPL

Cost per lead. The CPL is the cost you pay to acquire a [lead](#), which you can then work to [convert](#) into a customer.

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CPM

Cost per mille (mille is Latin for thousand). CPM is a term which is used in paid advertising. It refers to the cost you pay for your advert to be viewed a thousand times. For example, if your advert got 2,000 [impressions](#) for a total cost of £2.50, your CPM is £1.25.

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CPT

Cost per thousand. See [CPM](#).

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Crawl

In order for search engines to work, they need to periodically “crawl” websites to learn their structure. They do this using bots (sometimes called [spiders](#)) which are automated computer programmes that simulate the action of a user clicking around a website and visiting all its pages. Once a website's been crawled, it can then be [indexed](#).

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CRM

Customer relationship manager or management. CRM can refer either to an approach for managing a company's interactions with its customers, or it can refer to the system which

makes this possible. A CRM system is basically a database of a company's existing and potential customers, including their data and information about their interactions with the company (for example, which products or services they've bought).

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CRO

Conversion rate optimisation. Conversion rate optimisation is the act of working to improve an advert, website or email so that more of the people who see it or interact with it are likely to [convert](#). See [conversion rate](#).

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CSS

Cascading stylesheets. CSS is a programming language which is used to tell [browsers](#) how to style web pages. CSS files are loaded alongside web pages and contain instructions for how each element on the page should be styled (for example, colour, font, padding, margin etc.).

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CTA

Call-to-action. A call-to-action is usually a button or link on an advert, web page or email which prompts an immediate action. For example, a call-to-action in an email could be a 'Buy now' button which links to a web page or a 'Call us' link on an advert which dials a number.

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CTR

Click-through rate. The CTR shows the percentage of times someone clicked or interacted with your ad after seeing it. For example, if 100 people saw your ad and 50 clicked on it, your CTR would be 50%. The higher the CTR, the better.

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Customer journey

Customer journey is a term used in customer experience methodology to represent the stages a customer goes through when they interact with a brand, from the beginning of the process to the end. The stages in a customer journey could include seeing an outdoor advert from a company, receiving an email from that same company a few days later, clicking a link in the email, visiting their website, and then [converting](#) on the website. A customer journey can be visualised as a [funnel](#).

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D

DA

Domain authority. [Domain](#) authority is a score between 1 and 100 which is assigned to websites by the marketing analytics company Moz. Websites (specifically website domains) with a higher domain authority are likely to rank higher up for relevant [terms](#) in search engines. They can also be more valuable to get [links](#) from. This is because links are considered as a [ranking signal](#) when it comes to [SEO](#).

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Dashboard

A dashboard is a user interface component which aggregates data or actions from multiple sources. The dashboard is designed to make it easier to see a top-line summary of information or to quickly perform common tasks. For example, [Google Analytics'](#) dashboard gives you a summary of [visits](#) to your website over the last seven days.

Here's an example of an analytics dashboard:



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Deep link

A deep link is a link on a web page which does not lead to a website's [homepage](#) - it leads to a page which is deeper in that website's hierarchy. Deep linking is a tactic used in [SEO](#), as [links](#) are considered to be a [ranking signal](#).

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Demographics

Demographics are basically a way to break the population or a specific audience down into groups based on things like age, gender, income, location or job. Demographics can be used in identifying and [targeting](#) advertising campaigns to make sure they reach people who are more likely to [convert](#).

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Direct

Direct is a default channel grouping in [Google Analytics](#). It refers to [traffic](#) which comes directly to your website (for example, when someone clicks on a bookmark link in their [browser](#) or types your [website address](#)). It can also refer to [leads](#) or customers which come directly to your company rather than through an intermediary.

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Display advertising

Display advertising involves serving display adverts to users on the [internet](#) (display adverts are basically [banner adverts](#)). Display ads appear on other websites, usually in between or around the main website [content](#).

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DKIM

DomainKeys Identified Mail. DKIM is a method of authenticating emails which is designed to help mail clients and users identify spoofed emails. Email spoofing occurs when someone fakes the sender of an email to make the recipient think it was sent by someone they trust.

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DM

DM can mean direct mail or direct message:

1. Direct mail is a marketing activity which involves sending printed adverts or promotional materials to potential customers by post.
2. A direct message is a private message which is sent directly to a user or a collection of users on [social media](#) (especially on [Twitter](#)).

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DMARC

Domain-based message authentication. DMARC is another method of authenticating emails to make it possible for users to identify spoofed emails, where the sender has been faked to appear as if it's someone the recipient trusts.

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DNS

Domain name system. The DNS is like a phone book for the [internet](#) - it connects the human-readable [website addresses](#) (for example, www.example.com) which we use with the [IP addresses](#) which are used on the back-end. DNS records are updated when you move your website to another server. Updates to a website's DNS records generally take between 24 and 48 hours to be updated across the internet (as they're [cached](#)).

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Dofollow link

A dofollow link is link on a web page which has not had the rel="nofollow" attribute added to the HTML code for it (see [nofollowed link](#)). Dofollow links are generally seen as an advantage in [SEO](#) as [links](#) are considered as a [ranking signal](#).

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Domain name

A domain name (sometimes just called a domain) is part of a website address, specifically the part that comes in the middle of the [URL](#) - for example, in https://www.example.com/some-page/, example.com is the domain name.

Together with the pages and files that are stored on it, each domain represents a separate website. For example, example.com and anotherexample.com are two different domains, and therefore, two different websites.

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DR

Direct response. DR involves marketing to potential customers with the aim of getting them to [convert](#) on the spot. Direct response marketing is usually [targeted](#) towards a particular audience. It's an alternative to branding or mass marketing, where the goal is to increase awareness of the brand or product among a wide audience.

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DuckDuckGo

[DuckDuckGo](#) is a relatively new search engine which emphasises data privacy (by not taking a user's previous search or browsing history to customise results). It's only used for roughly 0.5% of total UK searches.

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Duplicate content

Duplicate content is the term used to refer to [content](#) which is either very similar or identical to another piece of content available on [the world wide web](#). It's a major consideration when it comes to [SEO](#), as duplicate content can result in a drop in search rankings or, if it's particularly prevalent, a [penalty](#). To avoid this, you should make sure you only produce content which is unique. See [canonical tag](#) for more information.

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E

E-commerce

E-commerce (sometimes spelt ecommerce) is short for electronic commerce. It refers to websites or apps which allow you to buy products or services online (for example, online stores).

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Engagement

An engagement can include any interaction a user has with your advert or piece of [content](#). It can include [impressions](#), clicks, likes, [retweets](#), shares, comments or views.

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Evergreen content

Evergreen content is [content](#) which is designed to be timeless and always relevant. Evergreen content tends to focus on topics which are not topical and which are likely to always be popular with users. Evergreen content is an important part of [content marketing](#) and can be beneficial for [SEO](#).

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Exact match

Exact match is a [keyword](#) matching option used for [PPC](#) advertising. When you use exact match, your advert will only show when people search for the keyword you've entered and

its close variants. Close variants include misspellings, singular or plural forms, reordered words and more.

For example, for the keyword "red flowers", your ad will show when people search "red flowers", "red flower" but not when you search "photos of red flowers". Exact match keywords should be contained within square braces, like [red flowers].

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F

Facebook

[Facebook](#) is a [social networking](#) platform which allows people to connect with their friends and family, and share [content](#) with them. Users can also follow companies and brands, and take part in groups.

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Favicon

A favicon is a small icon which is shown when a website is bookmarked. It's sometimes also shown next to the [address](#) when a web page is loaded in a [browser](#). By default, web pages don't have favicons but you can specify one using the following [HTML](#):

```
<link rel="shortcut icon" href="https://www.example.com/favicon.ico">
```

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Featured snippet

A featured snippet is a piece of [content](#) which is highlighted and displayed prominently at the top of a search engine results page. Featured snippets pick the content from a web page which is most relevant to the query that was searched for. They show most often for [long-tail keywords](#) and [queries](#) which are phrased in the form of a question.

Here's an example of a featured snippet for a Google search of "what is a featured snippet":

The screenshot shows a Google search for "How to search a car". The top navigation bar includes links for All, Images, Maps, Books, Shopping, News, Settings, and Tools. The search results are filtered by "Web" and show 123,000 results. The first result is from "Carfax" with the title "Get Instant Car History Reports (No Fees) - Carfax". The snippet states: "Get Instant Car History Reports (No Fees) - Carfax. Get instant car history reports on over 1 billion vehicles in just 10 minutes. No fees. No hassle. No waiting. Get your report now." The second result is from "Carfax" with the title "Get and Don't of Buying Your Car (or Van) - Carfax". The snippet states: "Get and Don't of Buying Your Car (or Van) - Carfax. Get instant car history reports on over 1 billion vehicles in just 10 minutes. No fees. No hassle. No waiting. Get your report now." The third result is from "Carfax" with the title "People also ask". The snippet states: "People also ask. How do you check price of car? How do you properly search a car? What is included in a car detail? Can you use alternatives to search your car?"

searchengineland.com

[? About this result](#) [! Feedback](#)

A funnel is a way of thinking about a [customer journey](#) which has multiple steps leading towards a [conversion](#). The goal for marketers is to make sure customers move all the way down the funnel without dropping out and exiting the funnel before they've converted.



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G

GCLID

Google click identifier. GCLIDs are unique tracking parameters which are used by Google to track clicks on paid ([PPC](#)) adverts. They help to ensure that the data in [Google Ads](#) (used to create the adverts themselves) matches with [Google Analytics](#) (which is used to track visitors to a website which come from multiple sources). With auto-tagging enabled in Google Ads, GCLIDs are automatically appended to the destination [URLs](#).

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GDPR

The General Data Protection Regulation. The GDPR is an EU directive which restricts how businesses who are based in or who have customers in the EU can collect, store and use the personal data of their customers and clients. An important feature of GDPR is [consent](#), which must be obtained by businesses before they can market to individuals.

The [Information Commissioner's Office](#) has published a guide to the GDPR for organisations.

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GIF

Graphics Interchange Format. GIFs are a type of compressed image which can be used in web pages, emails and documents. GIFs can also be animated in a similar way to a flip book (with multiple frames which can be shown in sequence to give the appearance of motion).

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Google

[Google](#) is an [internet](#) company which provides a number of different products and services, the main one being a search engine. Google is the most-used search engine in the UK, with roughly 92% of total UK searches. Google is owned by Alphabet Inc.

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Google Ads

[Google Ads](#) (formerly Google AdWords) is Google's platform for creating and managing [PPC](#) ads on their platform. With it, you can run ads on Google Search as well as the Google Display network ([banner adverts](#) which publishers can host on their websites).

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Google AdSense

[Google AdSense](#) is a platform which lets website owners add [display advertising](#) to their websites so they can earn money. The money website owners can earn is a percentage of the spend invested by the advertisers who serve their ads on Google display network.

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Google AdWords

See [Google Ads](#).

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Google Analytics

[Google Analytics](#) is a platform which lets you track and monitor [visits](#) to your websites, as well as the actions users perform while they're on the site. Google Analytics runs as a piece of [code](#) on your website which records certain actions visitors to your site take. These actions can then be analysed in detailed reports which can be filtered and segmented based on different criteria. For example, you can see how long visitors spend on your website on average.

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Google My Business

[Google My Business](#) is a [dashboard](#) which lets you create and manage your business's [local listing](#) on Google.

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Google Search Console

[Google Search Console](#) (formerly called Google Webmaster Tools) is a [dashboard](#) for webmasters which lets you manage your site's appearance in Google's [index](#) and [results pages](#). You can use Google Search Console to submit [XML sitemaps](#), view [crawling](#) or indexing errors and more.

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Google Tag Manager

[Google Tag Manager](#) is a platform which lets marketers add [tracking tags and code](#) to websites without needing to ask their web designer or IT developers to do it for them. Google Tag Manager runs as a piece of code on your website, which in turn loads the other tags you've created in its [dashboard](#). It lets you easily turn tags on and off without needing to make complicated changes to your website's [source code](#).

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Google Trends

[Google Trends](#) is a tool which enables you to compare search [keywords](#) against each other to see their relative popularity. It also lets you see how popular a search keyword or combination of keywords has been over a period of time. The data provided by Google Trends is normalised, which means you can't use it to gauge the actual volume of searches.

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Google Webmaster Tools

See [Google Search Console](#).

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Google+

Google+ is a defunct [social media](#) platform which was owned by Google. It was launched in 2011 but shut-down in April 2019 due to a lack of popularity.

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H

H1

An H1 is an [HTML](#) tag which is used to markup the main heading on a web page. Not only do H1s tend to be the most prominent heading on a page from a user's perspective, they're also important in telling search engines what a page is about. As such, they're important [ranking signals](#).

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Hashtag

A hashtag is a keyword or phrase which can be used to categorise [social media](#) posts. They take the format of a single word or series of words, with no spaces, preceded by a hash (#) symbol. By using a hashtag, you can group different posts about a similar subject together. They can also be used to add further context to a post.

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Header

The header is the name given to the top-most part of a webpage, which usually includes the website logo, strapline and navigation menu.

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Heatmap

A heatmap is a visual representation of the most popular parts of a web page. They can be drawn from a range of different interactions, but are mostly based on clicks. The heatmap appears as a screenshot of the web page, with coloured portions over certain areas to show

which parts have been interacted with the most. The colours usually go from red to blue, with red showing which elements have been interacted with the most and blue showing which elements have been interacted with the least.

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Hero image

A hero image is the name given to a large banner image which might be used at the top of a web page or email. Hero images are designed to be visually appealing and are usually shown [above the fold](#).

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Hit

A hit is another word for a [visit](#) to a website.

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Homepage

A website's homepage is the page which comes highest in its hierarchy. Homepages are usually designed to be a starting point for visitors to a website, with navigation links leading to other pages on the site.

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hreflang tags

hreflang tags are link tags which can be added to the [HTML](#) of a web page. They help search engines understand which language a web page is written in, and are useful for websites which cater for multiple languages. An example of an hreflang tag on an English (UK) web page is `<link rel="alternate" href="https://www.example.com" hreflang="en-GB">`.

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HTML

Hypertext markup language. HTML is the programming language which is used to build web pages. All web pages are made from HTML, which uses different tags to represent different web page elements. In web design, it's best practice to keep HTML separate from [CSS](#) (which is what's used to style the web page elements).

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HTTP

Hypertext transfer protocol. HTTP is what's used to transmit information across the [internet](#), specifically when it comes to requesting and loading web pages. It's most often seen at the beginning of [URLs](#) which are not encrypted (i.e. which do not have an [SSL certificate](#)).

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HTTPS

Hypertext transfer protocol secure. HTTPS is almost identical to [HTTP](#) except traffic which is transmitted using it is encrypted with an [SSL certificate](#). Whether or not a site uses HTTPS is one of Google's 200 [ranking signals](#) (websites which are secured may rank better than websites which aren't).

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I

Iframe

An iframe enables you to embed a web page inside another web page.

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Impression

An impression is a count of each time your ad is displayed to a user. You can usually break it down into unique impressions, which excludes repeat impressions (for example, if the same person sees your ad four times, the unique impression will only be one).

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Impression share

Impression share is a measure of the likelihood that your [PPC](#) ad will be shown to users. For example, if your ad has an [impression](#) share of 50%, it means that there's a one in two chance a user will see it when they search the relevant [keyword](#).

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Index

In order for search engines to find results as quickly as possible, they build up an index of the [world wide web](#) (similar to the index at the end of a book). The index represents all the pages they've [crawled](#) which can be searched and shown in their [results listings](#). Indexing occurs after crawling.

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Influencer

An influencer is an individual - traditionally on [social media](#) - who has a large online following and who can be useful in helping brands or companies get exposure. Brands usually work with influencers to help them market their products and services. In return, the influencer is usually compensated either financially or with discounts or freebies.

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Instagram

[Instagram](#) is a [social networking](#) platform where users can share photos, videos and [Instagram stories](#).

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Instagram story

An [Instagram](#) story is a full-screen photo, video or text message. Once posted, a story is visible to a user's followers for up to 24 hours. After that, it disappears. Users can add as many screens to their story, and their followers can flick through them like slides.

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Internet

The internet is a global network of computers and servers over which people can access the [world wide web](#), and also send and receive emails and other forms of electronic communication.

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IP address

Internet protocol address. Every website and computer connected to the [internet](#) is assigned a unique IP address. IP addresses are translated into human-readable [web addresses](#) by the [DNS](#). IP addresses usually take one of the following formats: 172.16.254.1 (IPv4) or 2001:db8:0:1234:0:567:8:1 (IPv6).

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J

JavaScript

JavaScript is a programming language which is primarily used to make web pages more interactive. It helps websites write modules which can be triggered by users to carry out a variety of different actions. For example, JavaScript can be used to automatically validate a form before it's submitted by highlighting field that haven't been filled in yet.

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JPEG or JPG

Joint Photographic Experts Group. A JPEG is a compressed image which can be used in web pages, emails and documents.

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K

Keyword

A keyword is basically a word or phrase which someone can search for using a search engine. When it comes to [SEO](#), keywords are considered a [ranking signal](#). Keywords can also be called keyphrases or search terms.

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Keyword density

Keyword density is a measure of how many times a particular [keyword](#) is used in the content on a web page. Keyword density (i.e. how many times a certain word appears on a page) used to be used as a [ranking signal](#) by search engines. However, thanks to [keyword stuffing](#), it became too easy to abuse in order to manipulate a web page's rankings.

Keyword stuffing

Keyword stuffing is a [black hat SEO](#) technique where webmasters overuse the [keywords](#) they want a web page to rank for in their content. Keyword stuffing used to be an effective strategy but it's now seen by search engines as being [spammy](#) and unhelpful to users. As such, webmasters who overuse keywords in an attempt to manipulate the rankings of their web pages can be [penalised](#).

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Knowledge Graph

Knowledge Graph is a knowledge base developed by Google which gathers together information about topics from a variety of different sources. This information can then be presented to users in [search results pages](#). It usually appears in an infobox to the right of the rest of the search results.

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KPI

Key performance indicator. A KPI is a pre-defined value which can be used to measure the success or failure of a marketing campaign. For example, a KPI could be to gain a [CPA](#) of £20 or lower.

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L

Landing page

A landing page is a web page you direct your potential customers to so they can [convert](#). A landing page can be any page on your website, but it usually refers to pages that are specifically designed to convert visitors into customers (i.e. with a prominent [call-to-action](#)). Some landing pages can also exist outside of your website but are designed to appear as if they're part of your site.

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Lead

A lead is effectively a potential customer for whom you already have some details. For example, a lead could be a visitors who's entered their details on your website but hasn't [converted](#) yet. You can then use a combination of different marketing channels to try to turn that lead into a customer (provided you have marketing [consent](#) to contact them).

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Link building

Link building is the process of encouraging other websites to [link](#) to your website. The intention of link building is to gain extra [traffic](#) and also for [SEO](#), as links are considered a [ranking signal](#). Link building can be a form of either [black hat](#) or [white hat SEO](#), depending on how it's done.

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LinkedIn

[LinkedIn](#) is a [social network](#) owned by Microsoft which is aimed specifically for business networking.

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Local listing

Local listings are search results which are based on location. They're designed to show searchers local businesses which are nearby either their current location or the location they've specifically searched. Local [SEO](#) is the process of optimising your local listings or website to appear higher up the list for relevant searches (for example, "florists in Chelmsford").

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Long-tail keyword

A long-tail [keyword](#) is a search term that, on its own, doesn't get searched that often. However, when counted together, long-tail keywords represent the majority of overall searches. Long-tail keywords tend to be highly specific. For example, "how do I look after my cactus" is an example of a long-tail keyword. "Long-tail" refers to the way the keywords would look on a distribution graph (the long-tail keywords would look like a tail stretching off to the right along the X-axis).

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Lookalike audience

Lookalike audiences are built by a computer [algorithm](#) which takes an existing collection of individuals and expands it to include individuals who "look like" (or are similar to) the existing collection. That audience can then be used for ad [targeting](#).

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M

Mailto link

A mailto link is a link on a web page which opens a new email message to a predefined email address. The [HTML](#) code for a mailto link is `Email us`, with "Email us" appearing as the [anchor text](#).

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Media queries

Media queries are [CSS](#) rules which allow web designers to create styles which are conditional based on certain parameters (for example, screen size or browser). Media queries are most commonly used in [responsive web design](#).

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Meta description tag

A meta description tag is a [meta tag](#) which is used by search engines and some other tools to display a short description of what a web page is about. Meta descriptions are mainly used for the snippets of text which appear on a web page's search engine listing. They can also appear under links that are shared on [social media](#) websites like [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) (see [Open Graph tag](#)).

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Meta keywords tag

A meta keywords tag is a [meta tag](#) which can be added to the [HTML](#) of a web page. It used to be used by search engines as a summary of what topics a web page covered. This information was then used to decide what [keywords](#) the web page should rank for. However, it's now ignored by most search engines as it was too easy to abuse.

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Meta refresh redirect

A meta refresh redirect is a kind of redirect which automatically takes a user from one web page to another after the page has loaded, usually after a short delay. They shouldn't be used as a replacement for [301](#) or [302 redirects](#), which occur at the server level and are better for [SEO](#).

A typical meta refresh redirect is formatted `<meta http-equiv="refresh" content="5; url=https://www.example.com/">` - this would redirect the user to <https://www.example.com> after a 5-second delay.

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Meta tags

Meta tags are pieces of [HTML](#) code which can help add descriptive information to a web page. Meta tags don't appear on the web page itself - instead, they're used to convey information to search engine crawlers or other tools.

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Mobile-first

Mobile-first is a design philosophy where a website is designed to look good and work on mobile devices before desktops and tablets. The design is then usually expanded to adapt to larger screens.

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Mobile-first index

The mobile-first index refers to the fact that Google now [crawls](#) and [indexes](#) web pages as if they were being visited on a mobile device only. The goal of this is to ensure that webmasters are catering for people who browse using a mobile devices, which traditionally have smaller screens and slower [internet](#) connections.

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MoM

Month-on-month. MoM refers to reports which compare marketing performance in one month compared to the previous month.

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MTD

Month-to-date. MTD refers to reports which demonstrate marketing performance for the current month so far.

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Multivariate testing

Multivariate testing is a testing methodology where multiple variations of a web page, emails or advert are tested in combination to see which combination is the most effective.

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N

NAP

Name, address and phone number. NAP is a principle which is used in local [SEO](#) to increase the chances your [local listing](#) will show up in users' searches. It means you should make sure that your company name, address and phone number are consistent on your local listing and your website.

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Nofollowed link

A nofollowed link is link on a web page which has had the rel="nofollow" attribute added to the [HTML](#) code for it. The nofollow attribute tells search engines that the page the link shouldn't be considered when it comes to determining the search engine rankings for the page it leads to. It was introduced to allow webmasters to indicate which links had either

been paid for (which is considered a [black hat SEO technique](#)) or that lead to a website they don't approve of.

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Noindex robots tag

A noindex robots tag is a [meta tag](#) which is added to the [source code](#) of a web page which tells a search engine not to add that page to its [index](#).

It usually takes the format of <meta name="robots" content="noindex, nofollow"> or <meta name="robots" content="noindex, follow"> (depending on if you want links on the page to be followed by search engine crawlers).

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O

Open Graph tag

Open Graph tags are pieces of [HTML](#) code which can be added to web pages to help customise how the web page looks when it's shared on certain [social media](#) websites. For example, a webmaster can use Open Graph tags to dictate what image appears alongside their link when it's shared on [Facebook](#).

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Open rate

The open rate is the percentage of people who actually opened an email versus the amount of people who received it. For example, if you send an email to 100 people and 50 people open the email, your open rate will be 50%.

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Organic search

Organic search is the term used to refer to non-paid-for search engine results. It's the opposite of [PPC](#). Organic search rankings can be influenced by [SEO](#).

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P

PA

Page authority. PA is similar to [DA](#) (domain authority) but instead of applying to website [domains](#), it applies to specific pages.

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Page speed

Page speed is the length of time it takes for a web page to load on a user's device. There are different ways of measuring page speed, but it's most commonly measured as the time it takes for the web page to fully load. Page speed is considered to be a [ranking signal](#) in [SEO](#). Since Google launched its [mobile-first index](#), a web page's page speed is measured as how long it takes to load on a mobile rather than on a desktop.

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Page title

The page title is what appears at the top of the browser when you view a web page. It's also used as the link for organic search listings, usually with the [meta description](#) appearing underneath. The page title is set using the <title> tag in the [HTML](#) code for a web page. Page titles are considered as a [ranking signal](#) for [SEO](#).

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PageRank

PageRank (PR) was the [algorithm](#) used by Google to decide which order to rank pages in its organic search listings. PageRank has since been largely replaced by 200 different [ranking signals](#). It was named after one of Google's founders, Larry Page.

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PDF

Portable document format. A PDF file is a document which is supposed to be readable no matter what hardware or software you're using. PDF files can generally be opened using [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).

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Penalty

In the context of [SEO](#), a penalty is when action is taken by Google or another search engine to punish a website for breaking its guidelines (for example, if they've used [black hat SEO](#) techniques). The penalty might result in a website's rankings dropping or in it disappearing from the search results entirely.

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Permalink

A permalink is basically a [URL](#) for a web page. Permalinks are intended to be permanent and not change.

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Phrase match

Phrase match is a [keyword](#) matching option used for [PPC](#) advertising. When you use phrase match, your advert will only show when people search exactly the phrase you've entered in the order you've entered it. For example, for the keyword "where can I buy red flowers", your ad will only show when people search "where can I buy red flowers". Phrase match keywords should be contained within double-quotes, like "where can I buy red flowers".

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Pinterest

[Pinterest](#) is a [social networking](#) site where users can create boards and "pin" images from around the [internet](#) to them.

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Pixel

Pixel is a term which is sometimes used to refer to a piece of [tracking code](#).

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PPC

Pay-per-click. PPC is an advertising model where you pay each time someone clicks or interacts with your ad. PPC can apply to many different types of digital marketing, but it tends to mainly refer to paid search advertising.

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Programmatic advertising

Programmatic advertising is a model where bids for advertising positions (usually based on [CPC](#)) are automated based on historical performance data.

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Q

QA

Quality assurance. QA is a process which is followed before a platform, system or product goes live to ensure it doesn't have any faults and works as expected. Usually, IT developers will follow a QA process before putting a new website or system live.

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QR code

A QR (or quick response) code is a two-dimension barcode which can be used to store data, most frequently [website addresses](#). Someone can scan the QR code and then visit the web address stored in it.

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Quality score

Quality score is a measure of the quality of a [PPC](#) ad in [Google Ads](#). The quality score is influenced by how relevant the ad is to the [keywords](#) it's targeting. Ads with a high quality score will generally have a lower [CPC](#) and may also get more [impressions](#).

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R

Ranking signal

Ranking signals are used by search engines to determine where a web page should appear in their results pages. They can include things from the [keywords](#) which appear on the page to how long it takes for the page to load in a [browser](#). It's said that Google takes 200 different ranking signals into account when deciding how a web page should rank.

[Backlinko](#) has compiled a list of what those 200 signals might be.

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Reach

Reach is a term used in digital marketing to refer to how many people an advert or [social media](#) post has reached. The higher the reach, the greater the exposure. Reach can be multiplied on social media by reposts, shares and [retweets](#). Reach is usually made up of unique [impressions](#) rather than repeat views.

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Reciprocal link

A reciprocal link occurs when two webmasters decide to link to each other's websites. Reciprocal links can be created for a number of reasons, but are most common for [SEO](#). This is because [links](#) are considered a [ranking signal](#).

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Reddit

[Reddit](#) is a [social network](#) which lets users share links to web pages as well as text posts or images. Other users can then vote submissions either up or down, and take part in discussions about them.

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Referral

Referral is a default channel grouping in [Google Analytics](#). It refers to [traffic](#) which has come to your website after following a link on another website. In Google Analytics, you can dig down to find out exactly what site the visit was referred from, as well as which page the link was on.

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Remarketing

Remarketing (also called retargeting) is a strategy where you [target](#) people who have already interacted with your brand in some way. For example, a typical remarketing strategy would be to show [display adverts](#) to people who have visited your website in the last month. The goal of remarketing is to get people to return and [convert](#) (or return and buy an additional product or service).

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Responsive web design

Responsive design is a technique where a website is made to adapt to whatever screen size it's viewed on (for example, a desktop, tablet or mobile phone). It replaces a previous technique where separate websites were made for each device (for example, one version for desktops and one version for mobile phones). Responsive web design usually uses [media queries](#).

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Return visitor

A return visitor is a person who's visited your website more than once within a certain window of time. Return visitors are usually identified by a [cookie](#).

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Retweet

A retweet is when someone reposts someone else's tweet on [Twitter](#) so their followers can see it too.

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ROAS

Return on ad spend. ROAS is a measure of how much revenue a marketing activity is earning versus how much it costs. It's very similar to [ROI](#).

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Robots file

A robots file (robots.txt) is a text file which sits in the root of a website and tells search engine [crawlers](#) which pages it can and cannot crawl. It's helpful if you want to exclude entire sections of your website from being crawled by search engines. However, it shouldn't be used to prevent pages from being [indexed](#) - for that, you should use a meta noindex tag. See [SEO](#).

Here's a guide from [Neil Patel](#) on how to create the perfect robots.txt file for SEO.

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ROI

Return on investment. ROI is a measure of how much revenue a marketing activity is earning versus how much it costs. ROI can either be positive (if you're making more than you're spending), neutral (if you're making the same as your ad spend) or negative (if you're making less than you're spending). ROI is very similar to [ROAS](#).

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ROPO

Research online, purchase offline. ROPO refers to the tendency of some customers to research a product online and then buy it offline (for example, by calling up and buying over

the phone). ROPO represents a challenge for marketing attribution as it can be tricky to match up the online [customer journey](#) to the offline [conversion](#).

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S

Schema

Schema is code that can be added to the [HTML](#) of web page which helps search engines to understand more about the web page or the elements on it.

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Search engine

A search engine is a website which lets you search for things

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SEM

Search engine marketing. SEM can refer to any marketing activity which involves a search engine. Although it's most often used to refer specifically to [PPC](#) (pay-per-click) search advertising.

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SEO

Search engine optimisation. SEO is the process of optimising your website so it ranks higher up in search engines for the things your customers look for.

We've written [a guide](#) on SEO for small businesses, and how you can make sure your website is as visible on search engines as possible.

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SERP

Search engine results page. The SERPs are the pages which show after you search for a [keyword](#) on a search engine.

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Session

A session is a collection of interactions a visitor to your website makes within a certain time frame, and it's used as a metric in [Google Analytics](#). A session usually begins when someone lands on your website and ends either after 30 minutes of inactivity or at midnight. After this, if the user comes back to your site or continues interacting, a new session will begin. Sessions have replaced [visits](#) as a metric in Google Analytics.

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Sitelink

A sitelink is an extension of a paid ([PPC](#)) or organic search listing which appears below the main advert and links to an alternative page. Sitelinks increase the visibility of your advert and can increase the likelihood someone will click on your ad. Sitelinks generally only appear on organic listings for brand terms.

Here's an example of some sitelinks for an organic search listing on Google (in the red box):

[Amazon.co.uk: Low Prices in Electronics, Books, Sports Equipment ...](#)

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/> ▼

Sign up to **Amazon Prime** for unlimited One-Day Delivery. Low prices at **Amazon** on digital cameras, MP3, sports, books, music, DVDs, video games, home ...

Books

Welcome to the Amazon.co.uk Book Store featuring critically ...

Shop by Department

... Your Services on Amazon · Associates Programme ...

Home & Garden Store

Online shopping for Home & Garden from a great selection ...

[More results from amazon.co.uk »](#)

Amazon Prime

Super-fast delivery, millions of items, and flexible delivery ...

Kindle Books

Kindle books allow you to do just that, offering top quality reads at ...

Amazon Smile

AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products ...

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Sitemap

See [XML sitemap](#).

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SMM

Social media marketing. SMM refers to any marketing activities which are carried out on [social media](#).

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Snapchat

[Snapchat](#) is a [social media](#) platform for mobile devices which allows users to send photos and videos to each other. The photos and videos are designed to disappear after they've been viewed, and can be timed (for example, to only show on the recipient's screen for five seconds).

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Social media

Social media refers to any form of online platform which allows people to communicate with each other in virtual communities or networks. Examples of social media are [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Snapchat](#).

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Source code

The source code is the programming language which lies behind web pages, script files and computer programmes. Source code can be written in a variety of different languages, including [HTML](#) (for web pages), [JavaScript](#) (for script files) or more.

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SOV

Share of voice. SOV is an indication of how visible your marketing activities are compared to your competitors. For example, SOV can be used to demonstrate how visible your [PPC](#) ads are compared to those of your competitors.

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Spam

Spam is any email or other type of electronic communication which is unsolicited or unwanted, usually designed to either market a product or service, or to trick someone into performing an action (like downloading a virus or piece of malware).

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SPF

Sender Policy Framework. SPF is a form of email authentication which helps users and email clients verify that an email has come from the sender. This helps to identify email spoofing, which is when someone forges an email to make it look like it comes from someone else.

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Spider

A spider is a a bot (or automated computer programme) which "[crawls](#)" web pages to help search engines build their [index](#) of the [world wide web](#).

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Split testing

See [A/B testing](#).

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SSL certificate

An SSL certificate is a digitally signed certificate which is used to encrypt emails and website traffic. Encrypted emails and website traffic can't be intercepted.

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Stickiness

Stickiness is a measure of how appealing a website or piece of marketing it is. The "stickier" something is, the more time people spend engaging with it. For example, if your website is considered sticky, it means people spend a greater amount of time browsing it and reading your [content](#).

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T

Targeting

Targeting is the name given to the rules used to making sure the right audience sees your advertising. For example, you might target people in a certain [demographic](#) (men aged between 18 and 30, or women who live in Northern Ireland).

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Tel link

A tel link is a link on a web page which initiates a phone call. When tapped on a smartphone, tel links start dialling the number using the device's phone feature. On other devices like desktops which don't have phone features, it can launch software which is capable of making [internet](#) calls (for example, Skype).

The [HTML](#) code to create a tel link is `Call me`, with "Call me" appearing as the [anchor text](#).

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Tracking code

A tracking code is a script which can be added to the [HTML](#) of a web page to enable [visits](#) or interactions which occur on that page to be tracked and analysed. For example, [Google Analytics](#) can only work once its tracking code has been added to the pages on your website. The tracking code will contain a unique reference which is specific to your website or account. and it's important to make sure this is correct when you install it.

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Traffic

Traffic basically refers to the [visits](#) a website gets. The more traffic your website has, the more people are visiting your site.

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Trending

Trending is a term which refers to a topic or event which is particularly popular at the moment. For example, [Twitter](#) shows trending topics to its users, so you can easily see what most people using Twitter are talking about.

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Twitter

[Twitter](#) is a [social network](#) where people and brands can post short messages called "tweets". Twitter originally had a character limit of 140 per tweet but this was recently raised to 280.

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U

UI

User interface. A user interface is a broad term for the parts of a website or application which a user interacts with.

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Unique visitor

A unique visitor is a visitor who hasn't been to your site before. Unique visitors can usually be identified because they do not have a [cookie](#) set on their computer from your website.

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URL

Uniform resource locator. URL is just a technical term for a web page address. For example, www.example.com/some-page/ is a URL.

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USP

Unique selling point. A USP is something which makes your product, service or company stand out from your competitors. A USP is something which is unique to you and can be used as a key differentiator.

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UTM parameter

UTM parameters can be added to the ends of [URLs](#) so visits to those URLs can be correctly tracked in [Google Analytics](#). They make it possible to individually track the performance of different mediums, campaigns, sources and even different ad creatives.

The possible fields are `utm_medium` ("social"), `utm_source` ("facebook"), `utm_campaign` ("black-friday-2019") and `utm_content` ("banner-advert-1").

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V

Viral

When something "goes viral" online, it means it has become overwhelming popular. The name refers to the way it's shared around and passed from person to person similar to a virus.

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Visit

A visit is the term used to refer to each individual visit a user makes to your website. It used to be used as a metric in [Google Analytics](#), but visits have been replaced by [sessions](#).

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VOD

Video-on-demand. VOD basically refers to online streaming services like Netflix, [YouTube](#) or BBC iPlayer, where users can choose what they watch and when they want to watch it. VOD is relevant to marketing when it comes to VOD advertising, where brands can pay to display ads to users of VOD services (for example, during advert breaks etc.).

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W

Web 2.0

Web 2.0 is a general term that refers to web pages which are dynamic rather than static.

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White hat SEO

White hat SEO is the opposite of [black hat SEO](#) – it's the name given to techniques which do not break Google's or other search engines' webmaster guidelines.

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Wiki

A wiki is a type of website which can be collaboratively edited by multiple users. Wikis tend to be educational websites like encyclopedias. The most popular wiki is [Wikipedia](#), which is an encyclopedia which anyone is free to edit. Wiki comes from the Hawaiian word for "quick".

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WordPress

[WordPress](#) is an open source [content](#) management system which lets webmasters easily create and edit web pages without needing any technical skills and without needing to touch [HTML](#). WordPress's functionality can be customised with free and paid-for plugins which can be downloaded and installed.

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WWW

World wide web. The world wide Web is the full name given to the collection of websites and documents that can be accessed over the [internet](#). Strictly speaking, the internet is just the network over which the web can be accessed, and not the web itself.

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WYSIWYG

What you see is what you get (sometimes pronounced wizzy-wig). A WYSIWYG interface lets you edit a web page, email or document visually, so you can see what the end product will look like. This is especially helpful for web pages and emails which are made up of [HTML source code](#) which would require technical skills to edit directly.

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X

XML

Extensible markup language. XML is a way of presenting hierarchical information in a machine and human-readable format.

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XML sitemap

An XML sitemap is a file (formatted in [XML](#)) which lists all of the crawlable [URLs](#) on a website. They're used by search engines to learn the structure of your website and discover URLs so they can [crawl](#) them.

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Y

Yahoo!

[Yahoo!](#) is an internet company and search engine. It's the UK's third most popular search engine, being used for roughly 1.8% of total UK searches. Yahoo! uses the same index as [Bing](#) for it's organic search listings.

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YouTube

[YouTube](#) is a video sharing website which is owned by Google. Users can create channels and upload their own videos, or simply watch and comment on other people's videos.

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YoY

Year-on-year. YoY refers to reports which compare marketing performance in one 12-month period compared to the previous 12-month period. YoY comparisons are useful because they take into account seasonal trends, where sales or leads might fluctuate throughout the year.

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YTD

Year-to-date. YTD refers to reports which demonstrate marketing performance for the current year so far.

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