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DA'WAH STRATEGY THROUGH GOOGLE SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

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Abstract

There is a lot of 'junk' on the internet today that spreads radicalism, terrorism, and pornography. Da'wah in this era of internet has a big challenge in society. Everyone can access the Internet quickly, and Google search engines play a significant role in providing information. Any information will appear in the search engine, whether it is positive or negative information, that's why the preachers need to use search engine optimization for da'wah purposes. Without the right strategies, da'wah through Google search engine optimization will not succeed. The objective of this study was to explain the da'wah strategy through Google search engine optimization. This research applied library research. The results showed that the da'wah strategy through Google search engine optimization are: focus on target audience, learn what audience needs, categorized keyword for SEO, SEO analysis on website, create mobile-friendly website, use targeted keywords in page titles, use infographics, use related keywords in content, link content to external sites with high domain authority, update old content periodically, increase site speed & improving user experience. The results of this study can be used as a guideline by the preachers, Islamic practitioners both individual and institutional, as well as the entire Muslim community who want to make da'wah through Google search engine optimization successfully.

Keywords: Da'wah Strategy, Google, Search Engine Optimization

Introduction

The strategy is an essential element in running a vision. Especially for communities or organizations that want to take a role to invite people to the path that blessed God. It has become common knowledge, that it is not easy to encourage people to do a good thing and follow the direction of their God (Allah SWT), let alone to invite them to do *amar ma'ruf nahi mungkar*. Without the right strategies, da'wah will not give a positive impression to the audience.²

Da'wah is a duty for every Muslim. Da'wah is not just to invite people to do a good thing, but da'wah is needed to change people to live with Islamic values.³ The command to do da'wah has been described in many of Allah's words.

Allah SWT said:

And who speaks better than he who calls to Allah while he himself does good, and says: I am surely of those who submit? (Surah Fussilat 41:33)

The current da'wah strategy has a big problem. It's

¹ Ali Mahfudz, *Hidayatu Al-Mustarsyidin Ila Al-Thuruq Al-Wa'dhli Wa Al-Khatabah*, *Dar Al-I'thisham* (Kairo: Dar al-I'thisham, 1979).

² Syaikh Mustafa Masyhur, *Fiqh Dakwah* (Jakarta: Al-I'tishom Cahaya Umat, 2000).

³ Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-'Alaf Al-Ghamidi, *Kiprah Dakwah Muslimah Melejitkan Semangat Muslimah Dalam Berdakwah (Kuni Da'iyatan, Nashaih, Taujihat, Tajarib, Iqtirahat Fi Ad-Da'wati Ilallah)*, ed. Amar Syarifuddin, Al-Marfu'i, and Dhiyaulhaq (Solo: Pustaka Arafah, 2008).

limited space and time.⁴ Something we do not find now in the presence of new media. Through the new media, space and time are no longer limited. Therefore, da'wah in the era of new media has a considerable challenge in modern society, because of new media has become the basic necessity of modern society.⁵

Da'wah is not only obliged to an Ustaz, hadith expert, tafsir expert, fuqaha', or another Islamic expert, but da'wah is required for all Muslims around the world⁶, Therefore in conveying the message of da'wah, da'i need to see uslub da'wah or manhaj da'wah or also known as da'wah method or da'wah strategy.⁷ Especially in this era of information technology where all of the peoples have depended on it. Google search engines play a significant role in providing information. Any information will appear in Google search engine, whether it is positive or negative information, that's why the preachers need to use Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for da'wah purposes to optimize the Islamic content in Google.⁸

That does not include a lot of junk information on the

⁴ Fuad Jaya Miharja, *Mengembalikan Kejayaan Media Islam Sebagai Upaya Mempertahankan Kualitas Kehidupan Islam Di Era Global* (Malang, 2016).

⁵ Rahmat Saputra, Azzyati Mohd Nazim, and Ummi Habibatul Islamiyah, "Dakwah Strategy 'Persaudaraan Professional Muslim (PPM) Aswaja' through the Internet," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 7, no. 6 (2017): 797–803, doi:10.6007/IJARBSS.

⁶ Muhamad Fariza Hanan, Hussain Kalthom, and Abdul Wahab Puziah, "Uslub Dakwah Menurut Perspektif Islam," in *Seminar Antarabangsa Akidah, Dakwah Dan Syariah 2016 (Irsyad 2016)*, 2016, 869–84.

⁷ Ibn Zaid, "Uslub,Manhaj Dan Wasilah Dakwah," *Blogspot.My*, 2017, http://ibnzahid.blogspot.my/2007/03/uslubmanhaj-dan-wasilah-dakwah.html. ⁸ Indra Cahya, "5 Alasan Dominasi Google Di Dunia Adalah Hal Yang Mengerikan!," *Merdeka.Com*, 2017.

Internet that disseminates radical information, terrorists, and pornography. When we see this phenomenon, it's not enough running da'wah as usual. We need new ways according to the times. So that, the benefits of da'wah can be felt more broadly. 10

The da'wah strategy referred here is a systematic design that has been approved in the form of activities or programs to invite people back to the path of Allah SWT. There is a collective meaning between strategy, method, manhaj, or uslub da'wah.¹¹ Allah SWT said:

Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way. (Surah al-Nahl 16:125)

The presence of new digital media has an essential function in the midst of a fast global rate. This is inseparable from the character of the media that is universal, not limited by time and places. The Vital function is what makes the media able to

⁹ Muhammad Taufiqqurrahman, "JK: Banyak Sampah Di Internet, Picu Radikalisme Dan Pornografi," *Detik.Com*, 2017, https://inet.detik.com/cyberlife/d-3547685/jk-banyak-sampah-di-internet-picu-radikalisme-dan-pornografi.

¹⁰ Saputra, Nazim, and Islamiyah, "Dakwah Strategy 'Persaudaraan Professional Muslim (PPM) Aswaja' through the Internet."

¹¹ Zaid, "Uslub, Manhaj Dan Wasilah Dakwah."

influence or lead people's mindset and have a share in determining the movement of civilization, either moving toward the right or vice versa. Information technology that we will make as da'wah media has a much more prominent position in maintaining the order of Muslims in mastering the global era.¹²

Therefore, conveying the truth of Islamic teachings to peoples through the Internet should be a priority for the preachers both individually and institutionally. Every Muslim must communicate the truth of Islam with the language of his people, and today the language is described as information technology, and now the information technology that we will discuss is about Search Engine Optimization through Google. Why Google? Google has become a worldwide favorite search engine that can index up to 40 billion data. And Android as one of Google products, controls 80% of global market share. There are 11 strategies needed to do da'wah through SEO.

11 Da'wah Strategy through Google SEO

I also need to explain that usually, SEO can be done if we have a website with our hosting (self-hosting). We may use an instant web or a blog, but often, the results will not be as optimal as using a self-hosting website. The most commonly used

¹² Miharja, Mengembalikan Kejayaan Media Islam Sebagai Upaya Mempertahankan Kualitas Kehidupan Islam Di Era Global.

¹³ Rina Nurjanah, "Menggoyang Dominasi Google," *Liputan6.Com*, 2015.

platform for creating websites is WordPress.¹⁴ Although some users also use Blogspot with a custom domain.

The strategy are: focus on target audience, learn what audience needs, categorized keyword for SEO, SEO analysis on website, create mobile-friendly website, use targeted keywords in page titles, use infographics, use related keywords in content, link content to external sites with high domain authority, update old content periodically, increase site speed & improving user experience.

1. Focus on Target Audience

Before we build a website as a medium of da'wah in cyberspace, we need to know the target audience. Who is the audience we want to be? This determination is critical to focus on the keywords we will optimize on Google. When we are talking about SEO, it will not be separated from the specific keyword.

Setting a target audience does not mean focusing on a particular keyword only, but also on the meaning and motivation behind those words and phrases. What exactly are searched for when they use these keywords? Will it use keywords with short

¹⁴ Randy Littik, "Sekilas Tentang WordPress Dan Penggunaanya Sebagai CMS Yang Paling Banyak Digunakan.," *R4ndiel.Com*, 2017, http://r4ndiel.com/sekilas-tentang-wordpress-dan-penggunaanya-sebagai-

cms-yang-paling-banyak-digunakan/.

or long phrases? And what keywords should we use to attract visitors who are relevant to our website content?¹⁵

If our target audience is a young generation, we will use a different keyword and content than if we target mothers or adult audience. This is the importance of focusing on the target audience.

Allah SWT said:

And We did not send any messenger but with the language of his people, so that he might explain to them clearly; then Allah makes whom He pleases err and He guides whom He pleases, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. (Surah Ibrahim 14:4)

According to that verse, in the Tafsir of Ibnu Katsir explained that the purpose of using the language of the people that the Prophet approached was to make it easier for them to understand what the Prophets are saying. This verse provides a valuable lesson to us in created da'wah strategy through Google SEO that focuses on the target audience is an essential thing. Because of that, we can adjust the right contents of da'wah by the audience and relevant keywords to be easy to find on Google search.

¹⁵ John Rampton, "12 Most Effective SEO Strategies For 2017," *Forbes*, 2017, https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnrampton/2017/03/30/12-most-effective-seo-strategies-for-2017/5/#11bc30ec6b17.

2. Learn What Audience Needs

Google SEO is about how we can optimize relevant keywords on Google search engine. ¹⁶ Patel says "Google isn't an advertising company. They're a big data company. Every tool, platform, and a device that they design has one purpose: to get data from users and use it to build a stronger search engine". So, if we think like a data company, we need to focus on what our target audience needs. When we understand what they need and what they want, we can develop good content related to them.

The question is, how do we learn? And how do we get relevant data about our audience needs? There are three ways to find out. First: see the most popular pages in our web analytics platform such as Google Analytics, or if we want to use the simple way, go to Google trend website and type the keywords we want. Second: see what posts get the most shares on your social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Third: Listen to visitor comments on your website posts or your social media 17

And the next question, why do we need to learn? Allah SWT said:

Say: Are those who know and those who do not know alike? Only the men of understanding are mindful. (Surah Az-Zumar 39:9)

¹⁶ Patel (2017)

¹⁷ Ibid.

3. Categorized Keyword for SEO

The third point we need to do is categorize the keywords that we will optimize in Google. Which one will we prioritize and which are not. The easiest way to categorize keywords is to create a template. Templates can be tables or others. For example, if I build a da'wah website to young generations, the general keywords category I will use are about: love, motivation, education, relationship, consultation, etc. We can look for more specific keywords using the Google AdWords Keyword Tool. But, if we want to use the simple ways, we can use Google Instant's Autocomplete Suggestions (Google suggest). Google suggest will advise you several keywords related to the primary keyword you entered on Google.

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 $^{^{18}}$ Laura Lippay, "The 8-Step SEO Strategy , Step 1 : Define Your Target Audience and Their Needs," $Moz.Com, 2017, \mbox{https://moz.com/blog/the-8step-seo-strategy-step-1-define-your-target-audience-and-their-needs.}$



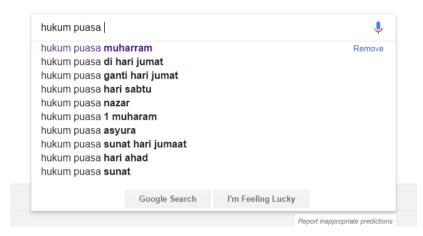


Figure 1. The view of Google suggest

The important thing is, make sure the keywords is not a keyword that includes false news, which is known as a hoax. Allah SWT said:

O you who believe! if an evil-doer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it, lest you harm a people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you have done. (Surah Al-Hujurat 49:6)

4. SEO Analysis on Website

Analyzing your web helps you discover why you're not getting enough search traffic from Google. In the SEO world, analyzing is a growth hacking technique that will help you attract more audience. It means you're closely examining your overall website performance, setting new goals based on what you find, and implementing tactics to reach those goals.¹⁹

Here's what you need to do for analyzing your website:

1. Is your web has been registered in the Google search engine?

2. Do all the titles and descriptions of your web page have SEO friendly? 3. Is your URL permalink optimized for Google and SEO friendly? 4. Have you optimized image on your web with the titles and descriptions by your target keywords? 5. Have you provided a hyperlink to the content of your web? 6. Are you using backlink services to optimize your post? 7. The last but not least, are the 11 strategies we are discussing here already implemented on your da'wah website?²⁰

5. Create a Mobile Friendly Website

The mobile-friendly website is a must. However, in October 2016, mobile overtook desktop with mobile and tablet accounting for 51.3 percent of all web browsing.²¹ Optimizing da'wah website using mobile optimization has been important for years.²² Rampton says, "around this same time (November 2016); Google launched its mobile-first index. Previously, Google crawled the desktop version of a site, using that as their primary search engine index. However, with this update, Google

¹⁹ Patel, "19 Advanced SEO Techniques That'll Double Your Search Traffic."

²⁰ Rahmat Saputra, *Revolusi Bisnis Internet: 3 Langkah & 7 Strategi Sukses Dari Internet* (Situbondo: Cyber Media Publishing, 2014).

²¹ Rampton, "12 Most Effective SEO Strategies For 2017."

²² Rampton, (n.d.)

has now started to use the mobile version of a site as its primary index. This means prioritizing your mobile site and mobile content is a must".

It's essential to create a website. But more important to make sure your website mobile friendly and performs well on mobile devices. Over 60% of daily searches are now completed on a mobile device.²³ Today, we need to use Google Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) too for the maximum result on search engine results page (SERP).



Figure 2. Example of mobile view nu.or.id

6. Use Targeted Keywords in Page Titles

Why is this important? Because of Google firstly will index the titles, then the descriptions and contents of your page.

²³ Ibid.

Ensuring that there is a title in the keywords we are targeting is a must. If you want, you also can target multiple keywords in a title with a few tricks. But make sure the title you created does not use excessive or spammy keywords, so google doesn't detect your title as spam. Spammy it's mean just cramming keywords in there for the sake of it, even if they sound a little off. Or, by using spam trigger words that instantly make Google think your content is less than legit.²⁴

For example, we want to target this keyword: Hukum Puasa Muharram. To be a perfect title, we add a few words into Hukum Puasa 11 Muharram dalam Syariat Islam.

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 $^{^{24}}$ Lippay, "The 8-Step SEO Strategy , Step 1 : Define Your Target Audience and Their Needs."



Figure 3. Targeted keywords about hukum puasa 11 Muharram dalam Syariat Islam

7. Use Infographics

Some people have said graphics represent 1000 words. ²⁵ Rouse said, "An infographic (information graphic) is a representation of information in a graphic format designed to make the data easily understandable at a glance. People use infographics to communicate a message quickly, to simplify the presentation of large amounts of data, to see data patterns and relationships, and to monitor changes in variables over time". 65% of people are visual learners; that's why a graphic goes a lot

²⁵ Rouse, (n.d.)

further than just text content. Quality infographics can increase your website traffic by 193%.²⁶

"On average, websites who publish infographics grow traffic 12% faster than those who don't. Why do search users prefer infographics? It's because the human brain processes visual data 60,000 times faster than plain text. Also, 65% of users are visual learners. Also, 90% of information transmitted to the human brain is visual".

The question is, how to create infographics? It's easy. Even if you don't have any ability to use image processing software such as Photoshop, CorelDraw, etc. You need to open canva.com on your favorite browser. Canva is a free graphic-design tool website, founded in 2012. It has an easy to use dragand-drop interface and provides access to over a million photographs, graphics, and fonts. It is used by non-designers as well as professionals.²⁷

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Patel, "19 Advanced SEO Techniques That'll Double Your Search Traffic."
 Sarah Perez, "Backed By \$3 Million In Funding, Canva Launches A Graphic Design Platform Anyone Can Use," *TechCrunch*, 2013, https://techcrunch.com/2013/08/26/backed-by-3-million-in-funding-canvalaunches-a-graphic-design-platform-anyone-can-use/.



Figure 4. Infographic about Islamic Sharia law

8. Use Related Keywords in Content

This is the part of internal SEO or also termed as an onsite SEO. On-site SEO is a critically important aspect of Google SEO.²⁸ Rampton said, "However, it shouldn't just be about finding one or two words or phrases to use in our content. Ideally, look for phrases that are semantically-connected to your main topic". Especially for Indonesian and Malaysian peoples who have much of synonyms, many equations, and related terms.

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²⁸ Rampton, (n.d.)

For instance, if we are writing an article about *hukum* puasa 11 Muharram, we need to use related keywords about "hukum puasa hari asyura", "puasa senin kamis", "puasa syawal", and etc. Using these words will prove to Google search enggine that we are comprehensively covering topic about puasa. And of course, it's great for user experience too.²⁹

9. Link Content to External Sites with High Domain Authority

It's mean we need to use the hyperlink in our content. This is the part of internal SEO too.³⁰ Rampton said: "Google has confirmed they're one of the top three ranking factors, and multiple ranking factor studies have confirmed this". And how about domain authority? Domain authority is a search engine ranking score developed by Moz that predicts how well a website will rank on search engine result pages.³¹

10. Update Old Content Periodically

This strategy will help us improve those posts and leverage their authority for higher search rankings in Google SERP.³² However, if our da'wah site already has hundreds of contents, we can analyze our website using Google Analytics or directly from our site dashboard. We need to know which posts are fewer readers and which posts are the most read by the

³⁰ Rampton, (n.d.)

²⁹ Ibid.

³¹ Administrator, "What Is Domain Authority? - Learn SEO," *Moz*, 2017, https://moz.com/learn/seo/domain-authority.

³² Patel, "19 Advanced SEO Techniques That'll Double Your Search Traffic."

audience. We can edit & update our old post with the latest information. Usually, this can be done for contents in the form of free articles (not news), statistical data, infographic, etc.

11. Increase Site Speed & Improving User Experience

Today, site speed is very important, especially for the mobile site. That's because mobile users have dominated Google search engine. This forces Google to prioritize mobile users.³³ Rampton said "Slow loading sites frustrate users and negatively impact publishers. In our new study, "The Need for Mobile Speed," we found that 53 percent of mobile site visits are abandoned if pages take longer than 3 seconds to load". We can analyze our mobile site speed by using Google's Page Speed Insights.³⁴ And of course, we can use Gtmetrix.com to analyze our site speed. GTmetrix is a free tool that analyzes our page's speed performance.

And how about user experience? SEO experts often say that providing a good user experience is key to rankings. There are many factors that affect user experience. Some of the strategies we discuss here also directly impact user experience.³⁵

³³ Rampton, (n.d.)

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid.



Figure 5. Gtmetrix website

Conclusion

Da'wah is obliged for all Muslims around the world, moreover in this globalization era. Every Muslims have to do da'wah. Today, we live on "junk" information. Anyone can spread unuseful, false, and hoax information. If more Moslems know how to do da'wah through Google search engine optimization, I believe we can produce and double the positive impact of Islamic contents on the cyberspace. But, without the right strategies da'wah through Google search engine optimization will not succeed. That's why I combine the business SEO strategy into SEO into da'wah. By implementing this strategy, we will increase the number of da'wah audience on our website. I hope this paper can be an inspiration for the da'wah practitioners to learn SEO.

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