

## Golden Rule #6 of 20

# Build Your Site for Humans and Robots

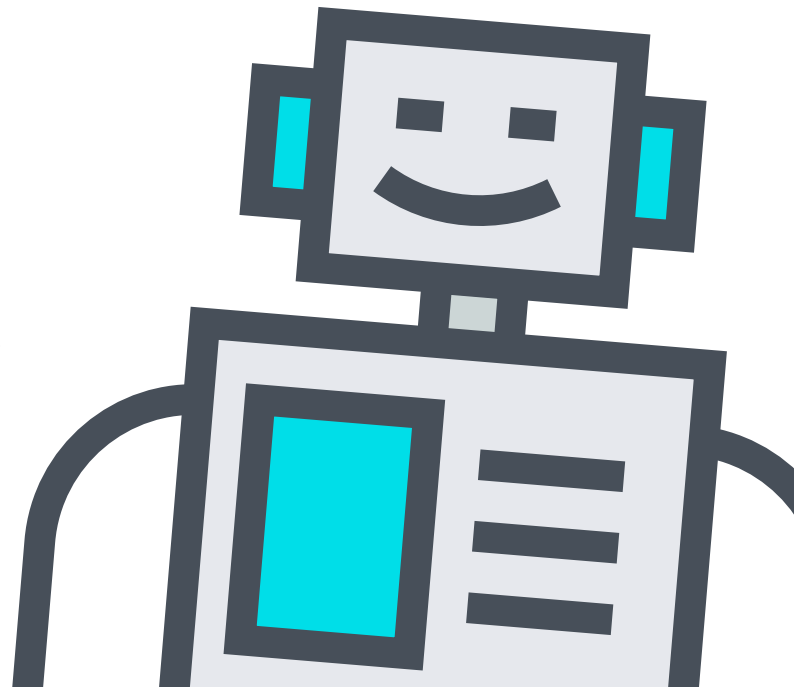


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Your website has two different kinds of visitors:  
**Humans, and Robots**

A flaw of many web designs is that it only focuses on the primary users (humans) and thinks about the secondary users (robots) as, “out of sight, out of mind” and it’s hard to see (even with analytics tools) all those robots.

Since building your site for humans is pretty obvious, this Golden Rule will focus on the not-so-obvious users, build your site for robots.



With no instructions, search engine robots (or, search engine spiders) start crawling every page it can sniff out from your domain. These spiders will most likely treat every page the same, often giving no preferential treatment to most important pages vs. least important pages. Unless, of course, you give these robots instructions.

## **Start with an XML Sitemap.**

A human sitemap helps visitors see all the pages of a website. An XML sitemap does the same thing for the robots. XML sitemaps are easy to create by using sitemap generators. A quick Google search can point you in the right direction.

## **Restrict robot access to certain pages to increase SEO results with a Robots.txt file.**

Think of robot as a new employee, if you think the new employee is going to find everything it needs without guidance to what is most important and what is least important, that employee is going to be very ineffective. Left to crawl on its own, the unguided robot will most likely focus as much on the troublesome areas of your website as it does the most important points. Restricting access to junk and hazards, while making quality choices easily accessible, is an important and often overlooked component of SEO. The robots exclusion protocol (REP), or robots.txt is a text file webmasters create to instruct robots, typically search engine robots, how to crawl and index pages on their website – and what NOT to crawl. Making this an easy but effective addition to any website.

## **Using a Canonical URL**

Yes, it's a bit of a strange word (Canonical, or as Google calls it, Canonicalization) but it's worth understanding and making sure your site is properly coded for these robots. Canonicalization is simply the process of picking the best URL when there are several to choose from, and usually refers to home pages. For example, most people would consider these the same URLs:

- [www.goldencomm.com](http://www.goldencomm.com)
- [goldencomm.com/](http://goldencomm.com/)
- [www.goldencomm.com/default.aspx](http://www.goldencomm.com/default.aspx)

## So how do you make sure that Google picks the URL?

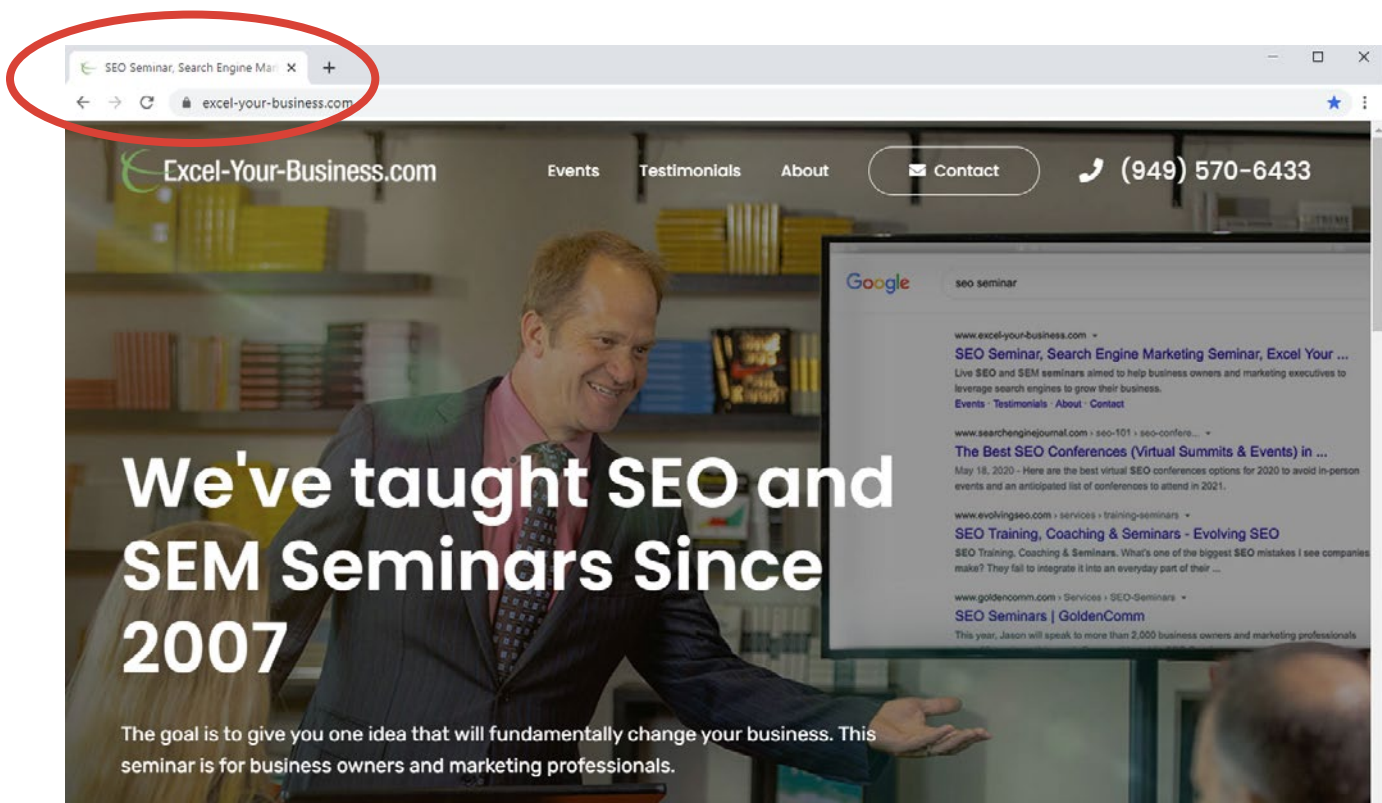
First, start by using that URL consistently across your entire site. For example, don't make half of your links go to <http://goldencomm.com/> and the other half go to <http://www.goldencomm.com>. Instead, pick the URL you prefer and always use that format for your internal links.

Next, configure your webserver so that if someone requests <http://goldencomm.com/>, it does a 301 (permanent) redirect to <http://www.goldencomm.com>. That helps robots know which URL you prefer to be canonical. Adding a 301 redirect can be an especially good idea if your site changes often (e.g. dynamic content, a blog, etc.).

## Of course, make sure you're using the proper meta-tags throughout the site.

For the purpose of this Golden Rule, we'll focus on the three meta tags that are most commonly asked about.

**Title Tags** – the mother of all meta tags and the easiest and most important single SEO tweak you can make. Title Tags have a real impact on search rankings and, perhaps just as importantly, are the only one of the tags we'll discuss here that are visible to the average user. You'll find them at the top of your browser (for organic search pages or for PPC landing pages):



The image shows a browser window with the address bar containing "excel-your-business.com" and a search result for "seo seminar". The search result snippet is circled in red and includes the following text:

www.excel-your-business.com -  
**SEO Seminar, Search Engine Marketing Seminar, Excel Your ...**  
Live SEO and SEM seminars aimed to help business owners and marketing executives to leverage search engines to grow their business.  
Events - Testimonials - About - Contact

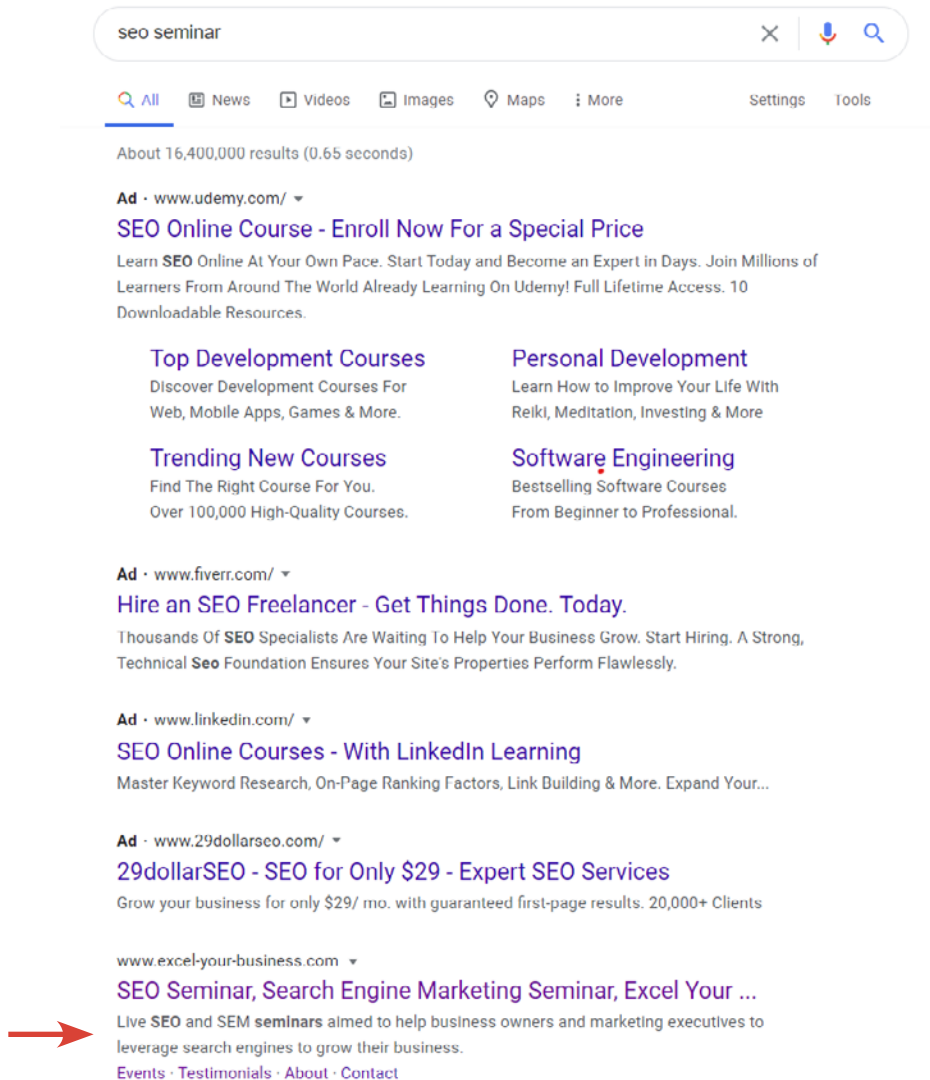
www.searchenginejournal.com - seo-101 - seo-conferenc... -  
**The Best SEO Conferences (Virtual Summits & Events) in ...**  
May 18, 2020 - Here are the best virtual SEO conferences options for 2020 to avoid in-person events and an anticipated list of conferences to attend in 2021.

www.evolvegseo.com - services - training-seminars -  
**SEO Training, Coaching & Seminars - Evolving SEO**  
SEO Training, Coaching & Seminars. What's one of the biggest SEO mistakes I see companies make? They fail to integrate it into an everyday part of their ...

www.goldencomm.com - Services - SEO-Seminars -  
**SEO Seminars | GoldenComm**  
This year, Jason will speak to more than 2,000 business owners and marketing professionals

The main content of the page features a man in a suit pointing at a screen displaying the search results. The text on the screen reads: "We've taught SEO and SEM Seminars Since 2007". Below this, it says: "The goal is to give you one idea that will fundamentally change your business. This seminar is for business owners and marketing professionals."

**Meta Description Attribute** – can be a useful meta tag as it very simply explains to searchers what your page is about. Let’s say you were googling the phrase “SEO seminar” for example. You might encounter the following results:



seo seminar

All News Videos Images Maps More Settings Tools

About 16,400,000 results (0.65 seconds)

**Ad** · www.udemy.com/ ▾  
**SEO Online Course - Enroll Now For a Special Price**  
 Learn **SEO** Online At Your Own Pace. Start Today and Become an Expert in Days. Join Millions of Learners From Around The World Already Learning On Udemy! Full Lifetime Access. 10 Downloadable Resources.

**Top Development Courses**  
 Discover Development Courses For Web, Mobile Apps, Games & More.

**Personal Development**  
 Learn How to Improve Your Life With Reiki, Meditation, Investing & More

**Trending New Courses**  
 Find The Right Course For You. Over 100,000 High-Quality Courses.

**Software Engineering**  
 Bestselling Software Courses From Beginner to Professional.

**Ad** · www.fiverr.com/ ▾  
**Hire an SEO Freelancer - Get Things Done. Today.**  
 Thousands Of **SEO** Specialists Are Waiting To Help Your Business Grow. Start Hiring. A Strong, Technical **Seo** Foundation Ensures Your Site's Properties Perform Flawlessly.

**Ad** · www.linkedin.com/ ▾  
**SEO Online Courses - With LinkedIn Learning**  
 Master Keyword Research, On-Page Ranking Factors, Link Building & More. Expand Your...

**Ad** · www.29dollarseo.com/ ▾  
**29dollarSEO - SEO for Only \$29 - Expert SEO Services**  
 Grow your business for only \$29/ mo. with guaranteed first-page results. 20,000+ Clients

www.excel-your-business.com ▾  
**SEO Seminar, Search Engine Marketing Seminar, Excel Your ...**  
 Live **SEO** and **SEM seminars** aimed to help business owners and marketing executives to leverage search engines to grow their business.  
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The meta description tag is a snippet used to summarize a web page’s content – while it does NOT help in SEO results, it helps a ton for click-through rates as it lets the visitors know what a page is about before they click on it.

**Alt Tags** - (or Alt Attributes) are “alternative text” for an image. Alt tags are rarely seen by people (only SEO-type nerds like us) reading your website, but the robots sure like them, and one way to “search” on Google is via images. So properly naming those images can be VERY important.

## Conclusion

As more websites come online every day, and the world gets nosier and nosier, the robots need you to articulate clearly who you and your company are, and what you do. By providing structure to the chaos of the web, metadata helps robots (and people) find what they want -- and gives your content the edge in the world of search.

All of our **Golden Rules of Harder Working Websites** are only a sampling of what's possible.

The case studies are real, but your results will vary, depending on your business and how well you execute.

However, whether your company is in B-2-B or B-2-C our experience consistently shows properly designing your website for humans and robots will increase your web traffic and conversation rates.

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Be sure to let us know if you have any questions, or if you try this Golden Rule, let us know how it worked!

**WE'D LOVE TO  
HEAR FROM YOU**

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