

Improving Web Presence

A basic guide for candidates

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Introduction

This guide intends to cover off four suggested must do's for candidates to improve their online presence.

1. Facebook
2. Search Engine Optimisation
3. Pay Per Click Advertising

Note: This guide is only a basic guide to get you going, and is aim primarily aimed at candidates/Constituencies that already have their own website, be it candidate specific, a constituency website or a blog.

If your constituency does not already have a website, CCHQ will be able to set a branded one up for a small fee and we highly recommend using this as sites setup and maintained locally are often reliant on one individual.

We hope to produce some future Guides covering:

- Email –Managing Lists and Email distribution
- Beyond Facebook, other social media

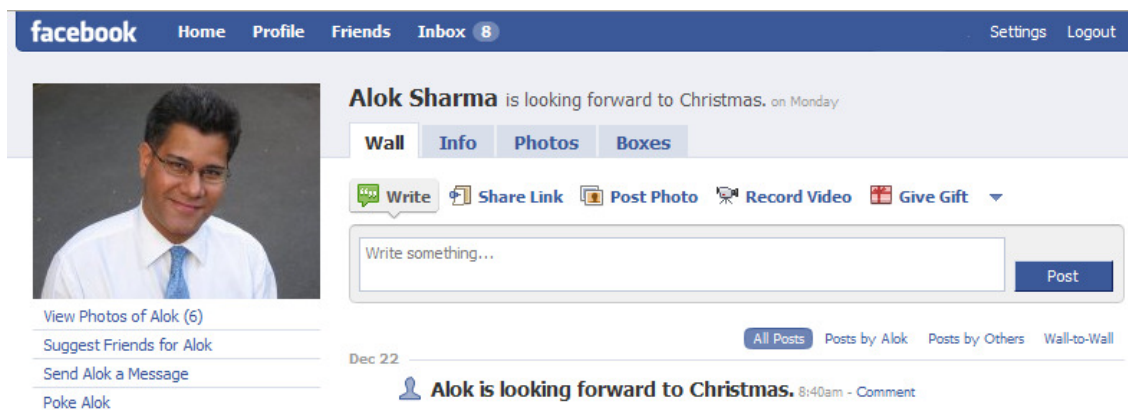
Facebook

What is Facebook?

Facebook is a popular, free-access social networking website that is popular amongst younger voters in the UK.

During the last US Elections it was used to great effect by Barack Obama, and also in the UK by Boris Johnson during the London mayoral elections.

If used correctly, Facebook can be used to encourage activists, attract new younger members.



Facebook Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- Set a profile for yourself at www.facebook.com
- Join/create local groups & campaigns (e.g. Save Caversham Post Office)
- Get some friends and accept all friend requests, or you will look rather lonely.
- Update status regularly – Tell people what you are doing/where you are
- Post photos of you out and about, build albums around specific campaigns.
- Promote your profile via emails and your website
- Keep it clean – we have already had problems with candidates posting inappropriate content, the press and opposition will be watching.
- Assume everything is in the public domain
- Check it regularly

- Get friends/helpers to set up and manage your profile, use others' knowledge
- Add Conservatives.tv and Conservative News Facebook applications
- Create Events and invite friends (for canvassing, fundraising etc.)

Don't:

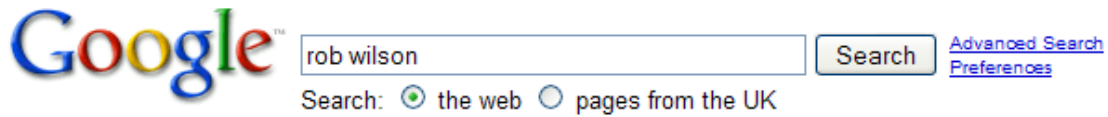
- Don't accept all requests to add applications. (Don't become a vampire!)
- Don't create profiles for your constituency (but do create Groups/Pages) as Facebook only allows individuals to have profiles.
- Don't add anything that you wouldn't send to the press.

Most importantly:

- Remember to check profile regularly for inappropriate content, including other campaign team members.
- **Keep it clean!**

Basic Search Engine Optimisation

Google yourself and your opponents! Is your website appearing in the first few results, or even on the first page? What else is out there with your name on?



Web

[Rob Wilson / MP for Reading East](#)

Rob Wilson MP. Member of Parliament for Reading East. [home](#) · [about Rob](#) · [about Reading East](#) · [Rob's priorities](#) · [local news](#) · [upcoming events](#) · [parliament ...](#)
www.robwilsonmp.com/ - 11k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

Google and other search engines (Live.com, Yahoo! etc) rank pages in order of importance. One of the best ways to improve your importance is to get other sites to link to you.

Link Building

Provide your link to:

- CCHQ
- ConservativeHome.com, iaindale.blogspot.com, www.totalpolitics.com and other popular blogs/websites
- Newspaper/TV/Radio when doing press releases
- Local community sites, actively seek them out and promote your campaigns to them
- And post the link on Facebook!

Crawler Food

The process of finding and looking at the content in your site is called Crawling, and you need to feed the crawlers. Ensure that you copy on your website is unique, not just a cut and paste from a template as Search Engines rate unique content very highly. Remember to include place names, individuals that others might search on. Build this up over time, adding it a few months before the election won't work.

For more advanced users:

- Google Analytics – Provides details on how people found your website, how they explored it, what stories they read. CCHQ website allows you to just add your analytics code in the Content Management system. This is a free service.

For more information see: <http://www.google.com/analytics>

- Google Alerts allows you to set up a permanent search looking for new content about you or your opposition.

<http://www.google.com/alerts>

- Google Sitemaps and Webmaster Tools – Enables you to improve your website and Google ranking and submit information to Google about where your pages are.

For more information see:

<http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/>

<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=40318>

Pay Per Click Advertising

What is Pay Per Click?

Adverts are created with associated keywords, when people search on these keywords on search engines such as Google, Microsoft Search (msn.com, live.com), Yahoo! the adverts appear. If people click on them they are taken to an appropriate website (candidate, association, blog etc) and the advertiser is charged a small fee.

Candidates can use this to increase their profile, even if the advert is not clicked it doesn't mean it wasn't noticed.

Keywords

Choosing correct keywords is essential for people seeing the advert.

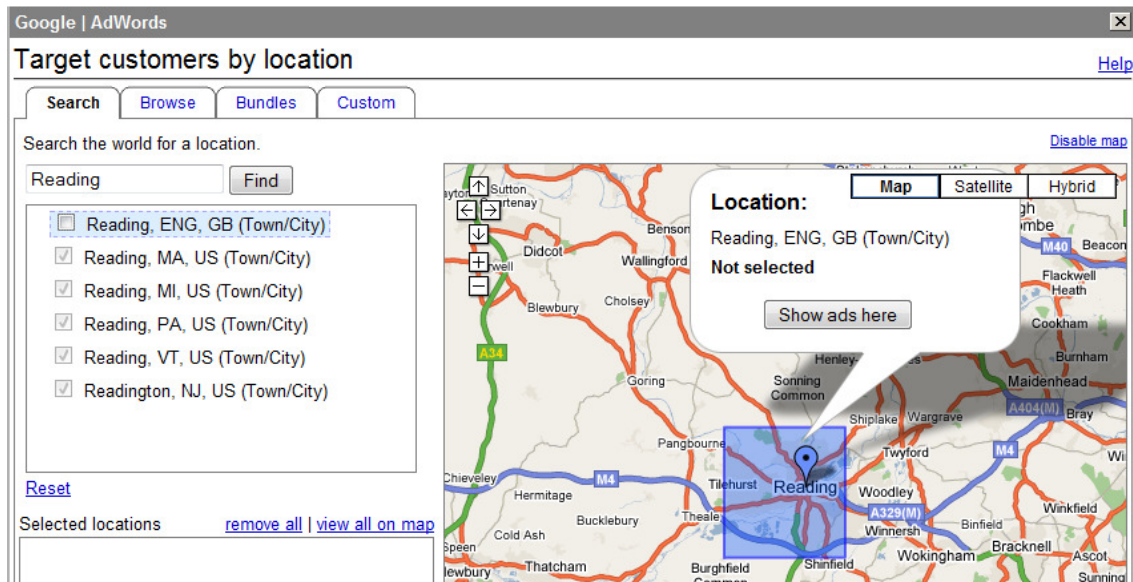
Good examples would be:

- Candidates name
- Opposition candidate
- Council
- Locality
- Key campaigns

Depending on the keywords used, negative keywords might also be appropriate. For example if someone searches on Brunel trains, they are unlikely to be looking for Marc Brunel-Walker, so a negative keywords such as train, bridge and station would be appropriate.

Geographic Targeting

Google and Microsoft allow you to target adverts by geographical areas, make use of this to ensure your adverts are displayed to the correct target audience. Where appropriate also use locations in keywords.



Facebook Adverts

Facebook allows advertisements to be more precisely targeted to different age ranges, genders, locations and even work places.

3. Reach the exact audience you want [Help: Targeting an Ad](#)

Location:
 Everywhere By City

Cities:

Sex: Male Female

Age: -

Keywords:
(interests, favorite music, movies, job titles, etc.)

Education: All College Grad In College In High School

Workplaces:

Relationship: Single In a Relationship Engaged Married

Interested In: Men Women

I want to reach people between 18 and 22 years old in Reading. ➔ **≈ 72,000 people**

Useful links

Google AdWords and Microsoft AdCenter provide easy to use websites to start an advertising campaign.

Click on one of the links to find out more:

Facebook Advertising: <http://www.facebook.com/advertising/>

Google Adwords: <http://adwords.google.com>

Google Adwords overview and help:

<https://adwords.google.com/support/bin/topic.py?topic=70>

Microsoft AdCenter: <http://adcenter.microsoft.com>

Reading West Example

[Alok Sharma](#)
Conservative Candidate for Reading
West - Find out more here
www.ReadingWestConservatives.com

Reading West have served over 1,000,000 targeted adverts on Google for candidate Alok Sharma, costing only £100.

Keywords used have been:

- alok sharma
- conservative reading
- martin salter
- reading labour party
- reading west
- reading west station
- contact mp
- reading west train station
- reading mp
- west street reading
- mp for reading

Glossary of SEO Terms

- **Algorithms.** A search algorithm is, in short, the incredibly complex mathematical formula that a search engine uses to "rank" web sites for keywords. Based on a huge number of variables and calculations, algorithms are among the most closely-guarded secrets on the internet. Why? Imagine if they were leaked - suddenly the less-than-honest would have a very specific guideline to follow in climbing to the top of search results in a less-than-organic way, ruining the quality of Google's search results and their entire competitive advantage with it.

- **Bot or Bots.** See also "crawlers"

- **Crawlers.** Googlebot, for example, is a search engine crawler. Googlebot periodically traverses the web in record time, indexing content, links - everything contained in page source code - and storing it in Google's search index. Then, when a user visits Google and enters a search phrase, the index, filtered by the algorithm, is what the user gets. Please note: there is some delay in this process since the results you're getting are from the index and not the live web.

- **Directories.** When webmasters realized just how much power inbound links have in determining search rankings they quickly set out to do two things: 1) get inbound links and 2) set up web sites where other webmasters could achieve inbound links (meaning big traffic revenues for the site). Hence the directory farms you'll find today. Link building has been a priority on the list of any SEO-savvy webmaster for years, and as a result "quick fix" directories that allow streamlined listing submissions get a ton of traffic. However, Google and the other major search engines are on to this tactic, and the word among SEO "experts" is that the benefits of listing your site at directories are diminished if not gone.

- **Frames.** Frames are a way of laying out a website with multiple documents in one browser window. Essentially, there is one main document which contains the frameset tag - this document specifies the dimensions/placement of the frames and also the documents that will "populate" those frames. From an SEO standpoint the use of frames for your layout is not recommended. Since frames do not use links in the same way, and since links may point to one frame from another, they may cause serious problems for crawlers. Additionally, there are almost no uses for frames that can't either be 1) duplicated with other methods or 2) thrown away without much fuss. If your site was built with frames and you're thinking you don't want to rebuild - it might be tough luck if you're interested in optimizing for search. Consider it a learning experience - build yourself a CSS-based layout.

- **Gateway Pages.** Also "doorway pages." Although there isn't a real consensus about what these pages are, their function is always cited as their definition. In other words, these pages are created to "rank well in search engines" by playing to the algorithms. Often viewed as "spammy," "gray hat" or even "black hat." However, any page written with search in mind, and geared towards search, can be construed to be a "gateway page." The difference between a page well-optimized for search and

a "gateway page?" No clear lines there, but quality of content is probably the determining factor.

- **HTML.** Okay, most of you probably know this one, but there are probably some of you who don't. HTML stands for Hyper-Text Mark-up Language, and it is the core building block that has made the web the greatest modern tool for business, social, informational, political and any other causes. Search engines look exclusively at a web page's HTML code to determine its relevance. Therefore, it's a good idea to pay attention to HTML and familiarize yourself with proper tagging techniques if you're hoping to get a good handle on SEO.
- **Link Popularity.** Inbound links are probably the most important optimization point for web pages. Number, quality, trust - these are all factors that affect the value of an inbound link. Going back to the HTML root of search, link popularity (in terms of quantity) measures how many pages point to your site using anchor text.
- **Link Building.** In short, the process of gaining links at other web sites pointing in to pages on your own.
- **Link Baiting.** The process of generating high-quality content on your pages that users will appreciate and link to voluntarily.
- **Meta Tags.** Meta tags are found at the top of a page's source code. They are used to specify certain things that might not be found in the page content. They also allow webmasters to put up certain "flags" that search engine crawlers can react to. There are many Meta tags available for use, and many of them can help with SEO to a great extent and for a variety of purposes. However, Meta tags are no longer used in the way they originally were - as a place to stuff keywords to drive your site up in rankings. Some webmasters out there are still doing this, but they are decidedly behind the times and unaware of the impending, or already cast-down, penalties.
- **Robots.** See also "crawlers."
- **Search Engines.** If you don't know what a search engine is congratulations on finally making it out from under that rock. Search engines are essentially programs that scan an existing index of the web based on a query of search terms, or keywords, that a user enters. However, the word more commonly refers to companies as a whole - Google, for example, controls a search engine, while Googlebot is the crawler that gathers content for its index, but most users and webmasters think of a search engine as the whole package.
- **Search Engine Marketing.** Most often this refers to Pay-Per-Click marketing in which an advertiser bids on chosen keywords and writes several ads to be displayed should their bid achieve placement. These ads are displayed in the "sponsored" section of search engine result pages (SERPS). However, in some circles this term is used to refer to any action taken to gain rankings both paid and organic.
- **SEO / Search Engine Optimization.** This one is open to interpretation. It is quite often used to encapsulate a huge amount of different tactics. On-site optimization, off-site optimization (link building, etc) and many other techniques all feasibly fall under the SEO blanket. However, there is an

obvious difference between optimizing a page's code to be clean and search friendly and writing link bait that will be popular and get linked to.

- Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs). The pages resulting from a search engine query run by a user. Webmasters review these pages to determine where their pages are ranking for certain search terms.
- Sp@mming. Basically, any unnatural effort to bring a page higher in search results. What constitutes sp@m is open to some interpretation, but the only interpretation you need to worry about is that of the major search engines. If Google, for example, considers a technique "spammy" you'd be wise to cease at once.
- Spiders. See also "crawlers."
- Submission. For SEO this has traditionally meant submitting a web site to search engines so they'll know about and crawl it. SEO firms offered submission services as a big selling point to bring in clients. However, for a long time now submitting your site to search engines hasn't done anything. They're all much smarter now - just focus on gaining quality inbound links and your site will be indexed in no time.