A top-down view of a person's hands interacting with a silver laptop. The left hand is pointing at the screen, which displays a website layout with various colored blocks. The right hand is positioned near the keyboard, with the index finger pointing at the trackpad. The person is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and a black watch on their left wrist. The background shows a patterned rug and a dark surface.

**How can my  
website reach  
more future Iowa  
State students?**

**20-MINUTE WEBINAR**

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

# Web Style and Story Guide

[Download Style Guide >](#)





# Audience

## Audience 1: Prospective Students (Undergraduate)

- **Need to feel what it's like to attend Iowa State**
- Respond well to Iowa State's humanistic approach to science, arts, and technology education, as well as **learning communities** and **faculty/peer support**
- Should feel **included** and **welcomed** by the user experience of exploring the Iowa State website in a manner similar to their inclusion in the University itself



## Overall Site Purpose

Our content should [purpose] and help audiences feel [adjective, adjective] so they can [visitor goal].

**Purpose:** Show future students what it's like to attend Iowa State

**How should the user feel:** Included, Welcome, Supported

**Visitor goal:** Determine if ISU is the right fit



# Additional Audiences

## **Families of Prospective Students (Undergraduate)**

- Need to find relevant information as easily as possible
- Respond well to plain language, clear instruction, and scannable layouts
- Should feel immediately confident in their ability to navigate the website successfully

## **Prospective Graduate and Professional Students, Current Students, Faculty, Staff, Employee Recruiting, Alumni, Media, Vendors**

- Need a clear path to the specific information they seek
- Respond well to a sense of community and involvement
- Should feel urged to participate in the Iowa State community



# Audience

While the Iowa State websites ([iastate.edu](https://iastate.edu)) serve an entire universe of information to a wide array of audiences, its primary (nearly singular) purpose is as a tool for student recruitment. **Even content that's clearly intended for other audiences, such as media requests or faculty position listings, should be viewed through the lens of student recruitment.** Doing so will help maintain a consistent tone and sense of purpose across all web properties.

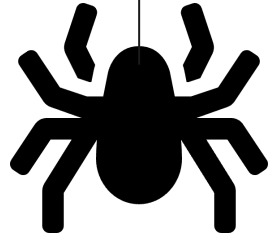


**SEO is about being found... In this.**





# Search Engine Optimization (SEO)



How Search Works:

There are billions of sites on the internet.

Each time a user triggers a search, the search engine (Google) crawls the billions of webpages and creates a ranking to return the best results for the searcher.

The ranking is determined through an ever-changing algorithm.

- Accessibility | Content Quality | User Experience



PAID

ORGANIC

The image shows a Google search results page for the query "college majors". The search bar at the top contains the text "college majors". Below the search bar, there are tabs for "All", "Images", "Books", "News", "Videos", and "More". A row of topic filters includes "Science", "technology", "Business", "Engineering", "Language", "Education", "medicine", "Architecture", and "Design".

The first result is a paid advertisement. It features a blue header "Find The Right Major For You - Take Our College Match Quiz". The text below the header reads: "Compare the best colleges for the majors you're considering. Chances to get in, college fit score, Scholarships, reviews and more! Career and Major Quiz. Every Scholarship. Find Your Perfect College. Events and Webinars. Every College. Apply for Scholarships." Below this, there are two sub-sections: "What Major Should You Do" with the text "Take our quiz + we'll point you in the right direction for your major", and "College Match Quiz" with the text "See your college fit score and find your perfect college match!".

The second result is an organic search result. The URL is "https://www.collegemajors101.com". The title is "College Majors 101 - Discover College Majors, Jobs and ...". The text below the title reads: "Explore the major sections below to learn about each major in REAL depth! · Education · Emergency Management · English & Writing · Environmental Science · Global ...". Below this, there is a line of text: "Toggle navigation · Get Recruited · Pricing · Contact Us".

The third result is another organic search result. The URL is "https://central.edu/academics/majors". The title is "Majors | Academics - Central College". The text below the title reads: "Majors · Allied Health · American Studies · Arts Management · Data Science (minor) · Food Systems · Gender Studies · Geography · Visual Communication".

The fourth result is another organic search result. The URL is "https://www.mymajors.com/college-majors".



# Future Iowa State Students

- Have known they want to go to Iowa State University since the day they were born (Type A)
- Not sure what their next step is or where they fit best (Type B)

**Is your website content  
optimized for search?**

**SEO: Getting the right people to  
your website at the right time.**

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# Improving Organic Placement

Improve **ACCESSIBILITY** so that potential customers can find you.

Website accessibility is the practice of ensuring there are no barriers preventing users from accessing or interacting with your site.

- *How?* Focus on helping search engines crawl your site

Quick Fix:

- SiteImprove report, page speed, accurate and appealing headers, useful copy





# Improving Organic Placement

Improve **CONTENT** to qualify in Google's algorithm: relevancy, quality, and authority.

- Relevancy: the content on your site is relevant to the searcher's query
- Quality: your content has useful answers for searchers with no typos, broken links, or misinformation
- Authority: Other sites find your information useful enough to share and link to your content

Quick Fix:

- Keyword Research



# Improving Organic Placement

Improve **USER EXPERIENCE** so that potential customers trust and value your site.

- Curating a website that is useful and easy to navigate for your audience. Give them the best experience while interacting with your brand so they understand the value you provide.
- *How?* Audience research, competitive analysis, live testing from analytic-based strategy,

Quick Fix:

- Short and digestible copy, relevant videos and images, call-to-action, proof of value, and additional call-to-action.

**Improve accessibility**

**Improve content quality**

**Improve user experience**

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# Pages vs. PDFs + Open Office Hours

## 20-MINUTE WEBINAR

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY





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## What are Open Office Hours?

Hannah and Ann are available to answer your website questions! This can be anything from how to resize an image to an idea for a new website feature!

# The CALS/LAS Team



John VanDyk

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Strategic Lead



Ann Staniger

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Project Manager



Hannah Schultes

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Content Strategist

**Contact us at [websupport@iastate.edu](mailto:websupport@iastate.edu)**