

How to Make Your Website Search Engine Friendly

Website owners, managers and marketers understand how important it is to get a good website ranking in the most widely used search engines.

But how do you make your website search engine friendly so the audience you are seeking can find you easily? The following tips will point you in the right direction.

1. Know what search engines are available and how they work

There are numerous search engines available to register your site with. Some use people to create their listings and other use 'crawlers', a piece of software that crawls through the World Wide Web reading websites and indexing them. Some allow you to register your site for free whilst others will charge you a registration fee.

It is worthwhile to familiarise yourself with the different search engines available, how they work and how popular they are with users so you register your website with those search engines that are most likely to display your website in their search results.

The most popular search engines (or directories) on the Web include:

Google	www.google.com	Yahoo	www.yahoo.com
AltaVista	www.altavista.com	MSN	www.msn.com
Ask Jeeves	www.askjeeves.com	All the Web	www.alltheweb.com
Hot Bot	www.hotbot.com	LookSmart	www.looksmart.com
AOL	http://aolsearch.aol.com		

2. Create a search engine friendly website

An effective home page

Web crawlers will analyse your home page first. If it contains a clear and concise statement about your organisation, then this statement will appear in search engine results. It is wise to avoid splash pages that contain little or no text as search engines will skim over this page.

Understand what metadata is and how it works

Metadata is the information about your website written in HTML code. Metadata is not seen by the users of your site, only by search engines that use crawlers to index websites. Metadata is usually inserted into the HTML of your home page by the web developer when your site is first developed.

Anyone can see the metadata of any website simply by accessing the site then, if using Internet Explorer, click on VIEW in the top menu bar and then Source.

There are a number of internationally recognised categories of metadata, called meta-tags.

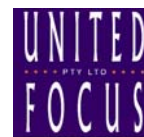
Let us evaluate your website using our WebCollie test –
the expert, independent round up of your website

Visit our website for more about WebCollie and the website advice, workshops and assistance we provide.

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web tips and tricks #3



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The most common ones that your site should contain are:

- Title tag: where you provide a short title for your website
- Description tag: a sentence describing the contents of your site
- Keyword tag: a list of the keywords that are representative of your site's contents and are words you anticipate users may enter into search engines.

Think about what words your target audience would enter into a search engine when looking for the very thing your site offers. If these keywords are not already in your metadata, then ask your web developer to add them for you.

It is also useful to inspect the metadata your competitors are using and the sites that are listed above yours in search engine results. Have a look at the keywords they are using and learn from them.

3. Prepare your keywords

Prepare a summary of your entire website using keywords that your audience may use when searching for you. You need to have prepared this summary before you start the process of registering your site. Some search engines will request a 25 word summary whilst others will ask for ten keywords. It is best to think about both - what are the best terms that summarise your site and what keywords may your audience use when searching for you on the Web.

4. How to register your site

Once you have decided which sites you want to register with, and what keywords you are going to use, you are ready to register your site!

Registering your site with most search engines is relatively easy. Simply visit their website, ie www.google.com and look for the link which enables you to 'suggest a site'.

For Google you will see the 'About Google' link on the bottom of the home, click on the 'For site owner's' section and follow the instructions. You need to enter the full URL of your website and some keywords that describe the content of your website.

5. Review your ranking in search engine results

Once you have registered your site, try entering some of the keywords you used to register your site to check where your site appears in the results page. Remember if you haven't paid for a listing it may take two to three weeks before your site appears.

6. Maintain your search engine registrations

If you are submitting your site to search engines for free, then you may like to re-submit it every four to six months. This increases the chance of your website appearing in the results.

If you have taken out a subscription to a search engine, then you will most likely receive a renewal notice towards the expiry of your subscription.

For more information about the search engines visit Search Engine Watch www.searchenginewatch.com

Search Engine Watch provides tips and information about searching the Web, analysis of the search engine industry and help to site owners trying to improve their ability to be found in search engines.

Let us evaluate your website using our WebCollie test –
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