

Moving Up the Search Engine Ranks

By MaryJo Scamurra

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Preparing for search engine submission is greatly important to the success of your website. Make sure you are ready for it! By taking the following steps, your website has a much better chance of getting a higher listing on the major search engines.

How important is a high ranking?

When was the last time you visited a search engine, entered your desired search text, and then clicked on the 937th item listed? Now ask yourself how many times you clicked on one of the top 20 sites listed. I rest my case.

What can you do to improve your ranking?

1. GET YOUR OWN DOMAIN!

Using a free hosting site not only appears unprofessional to your visitors, it also makes it more difficult to receive a high rank on a search engine. This is due in part to the engines placing more emphasis on home pages, in this instance the home page would belong to the free host. There are many sites where you can purchase domains for less than \$15/year (<http://www.000domains.com> - for example). If you are serious about being in business on the web, that is a small price to pay.

2. CREATE META TAGS

Meta Tags are HTML that is not seen by the eye when a page is displayed. They provide information on what the page is about and which keywords represent the content.

Title Tag - this is used to display the name of your web page. Pick a title that is relevant to the information on that page.

Description Tag - this should describe your page in a brief summary. Be sure to include your most important keywords in this tag, in the form of a sentence. Often times this is the description shown to search engine users.

Keyword Tag - this needs to include words and short phrases about the content of your page. Do not overuse any one keyword by repeating it more than three times. To find out which keywords are typed most frequently into search engines, visit <http://www.searchterms.com>

Be sure your title, description and keyword tag words can all be found within your web page text. Once you have an idea of what keywords should be used to describe your web page, visit <http://www.supersoft-solutions.com/metacreate.html> and use the free meta tag generator form. Simply cut and paste the results into your HTML document.

3. USE THE ALT TAG

The ALT (alternative text) tag should be used to label each graphic file on your web page. Be descriptive, using keywords in the form of a short sentence.

4. CONTACT INFORMATION

Since many of the search engines are now charging for express submissions, they are more likely to be reviewed by a human and not a spider. A lot of engines, the Yahoo! directory in particular, prefer that websites list contact information on the submitted site. This would include an email address, street address, and telephone number.

5. LINK POPULARITY

Be sure to get your site linked by as many other domains as possible. Search engines, like Google, use your popularity on other websites when ranking search results. For a detailed look at link popularity, read an article on the subject at <http://www.mjswebularworld.com/linkpopularity.htm>

6. AVOID SLOW LOADING PAGES

Several of the major engines admit that webpages that load slowly may be excluded from being listed. Find out how to optimize your HTML for quicker load time at <http://www.netmechanic.com>

7. CONTENT IS KING

Submissions may be overlooked if interesting, useful and quality content is not there. A page full of nothing more than links to other domains will have a hard time getting indexed. Also, do not bother to submit your site if it is "under construction".

8. DON'T SPAM!

Forms of spamming include using invisible text, false use or repetition of keywords, over submitting, and submitting to inappropriate categories. Spamming is a sure fire way to get your site banned from being listed.

Submit!

After optimizing your site to please the search engines, it is time to submit!

AllTheWeb - http://www.ussc.alltheweb.com/add_url.php3

Alta Vista - <http://www.altavista.com/>

Direct Hit - <http://www.directhit.com/util/addurl.html>

Excite - http://www.excite.com/info/add_url_form

Google - <http://www.google.com/addurl.html>

Hotbot - <http://hotbot.lycos.com/addurl.asp>

Lycos - <http://www.lycos.com/addasite.html>

Northern Light - <http://www.northernlight.com/>

Yahoo! - <http://www.yahoo.com>

There are more engines out there, including the Pay-Per-Click directories, but that's an article for another day.

Keep in mind it may take anywhere from a week to three months to be indexed. Most search engines now offer express services, for a fee, although that won't guarantee a listing.

The time it takes to prepare for the search engines will be well worth it once the traffic starts rolling in.

Visit MaryJo Scamurra's Webular World website and download her ebook, "The Free Guide to Start and Manage a Successful Online Business" ... and don't forget to subscribe to the Webular World Digest! <http://www.mjswebularworld.com>

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