

How to Submit Your Products To Froogle

By Mervyn Jose

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Mervyn Jose
mervynj@siteall.com

SiteAll.com <http://www.siteall.com>

Introduction to Froogle

Froogle is a new service from Google that makes it easy to find information about products for sale online. By focusing entirely on product search, Froogle applies the power of Google's search technology to a very specific task: locating stores that sell the item you want to find and pointing you directly to the place where you can make a purchase.

It is located at <http://www.froogle.com> and <http://froogle.google.com> .

The Froogle Engine itself is organized into Categories. There are 14 categories. Shoppers can either drill-down on any of them or search directly by keyword. Shoppers can also limit your search to a specific category.

Search results are limited to one product per store. Each result displays a thumbnail image of the product to the left, with the product's name, price and description listed to the right of the thumbnail. The store where the product is available is also listed, along with a link to see all results related to your keyword that are available at that particular merchant.

Froogle's emphasis is on helping users find products, rather than providing product information, reviews, and other associated information found on other shopping search services.

What does it mean to you?

As an extension of the Google search engine that millions of people around the globe use daily to research products before they purchase, listing your product in Froogle is a free way to extend the reach of your marketing efforts to millions of customers.

There are two ways you can get included in Froogle:

The first, though not the most effective is to let Google or Froogle crawl your site and pick up the information for itself. This is likely to result in inaccuracies in your product listing.

The second, and more effective way is to submit a data feed directly to Froogle.

Create An Account With Froogle

To get an account you will need to send Froogle the following details about your company and you:

1. Your contact information
2. Store Information
 - a. Name
 - b. URL

3. Product information
 - a. Numbers of products
 - b. Product Categories
4. Affiliate Information

You can either use this form http://services.google.com/froogle/merchant_email

Or send them an email at feeds-support@google.com

To be eligible to submit a feed, you must sell products via your website and ship them to the buyer. If you sell services or custom products that do not have fixed prices, use your website only to promote an offline business, or are an affiliate marketing site, your site content may be crawled by and included in Google's web search, but it will not be included in Froogle. Nor will Froogle accept a data feed under these conditions.

Google say it takes anywhere between 5 to 10 business days to respond. My experience and from what I've heard from other merchants is that it takes about a week. You will receive an email with your account information: login ID and password. This last email will also contain FTP instructions.

The Data Feed Format

The data feed file format is:

A tab-delimited text file

The first line of the file is the header - must contain field names, all lower-case

Use the field names from the table below, and in the same column order

One line per item (use a new-line or carriage return to terminate the line)

The following field elements are forbidden as part of the basic format. If you want to include them as part of the basic format, products that contain errors will be dropped from the feed.

Tabs, Carriage Returns, or new-line characters may not be included in any fields, including the description

Exactly one tab must separate each field, If there are extra tabs inserted between fields in a line, or at the end of a line, that product will be dropped.

HTML Tags, comments and escape sequences may not be included- description must be plain text.

Basic Fields

The basic data feed format consists of your product information in the following order:

Field Name Description

product_url This is the URL of your product page - where you display the product for sale.

description Full descriptive text about the product from your web site, up to 5KB.

price The current selling price of the product

image_url URL of the image, for eg. <http://www.mysite.com/images/golfball.gif>

category Category to which the product belongs

offer_id Unique identifier - try not to use your internal product ID, as the offer_id can be used to offer the same product with add-ons for a different price.

There are more fields called Extended fields that you can use to further specify your product information, such as color, size, shipping cost and more.

Optional extended headers may be used to flag special features of your file. You must use these header parameters if you use HTML escape characters, or include book, music or video products or use quotes in your product descriptions or names.

If you have many items in your feed, only some of which change daily, you can provide updates-only files as a more efficient way for you to delete, add, or change offers for items. You can upload a full file later if a large percentage of your inventory changes.

To download Froogle's official data feed format in PDF format, visit:

<http://www.siteall.com/froogle/datafeed.asp>

Rules To Follow When Creating The Feed File

Quotes, Tabs & Newlines

When quotes, tabs or newlines are present in your name, description or other fields, you must wrap the entire field (that contains the quotes or tabs) in quotes. You must also set the quoted extended format header value to "YES".

Submission Frequency

Data feeds for your online store must be submitted at least once a month. You can however submit your data feed file once a day. Currently the FTP server does not accept more frequent updates and returns an error.

Currency & Availability

Right now, Froogle accepts only prices in US dollars. All your products must be currently available for sale.

Removing Products

To remove certain products from the data feed you could either

Set the expiry date of the offer to some predefined date or

Create and send an update file with the products marked for delete.

Or when you send in the next feed remove those products completely.

Upload Your Data Feed

You can upload new feeds daily, weekly, or monthly. You must upload a new feed at least once a month, because Froogle will automatically expire your old data after a month. The content in your feed must be the same as the content visible to users on your web site. The description and price you provide in the feed must be the ones on your product URL page. The image URL should be that of the actual product image on the product page.

After you upload your feed for the first time, notify via email at feeds-support@google.com so that Froogle can confirm receipt and verify the accuracy of the format. Be sure to include your name, title, phone number and username in the email.

Is it Worth It?

If you spend just a little time surfing around Froogle, you'll see very quickly that some products have clear and enticing descriptions, while others seem to be random snippets from the product page. It's not enough to show up in the search, if the searcher doesn't click through to your site. Those with clear descriptions are from the sites that have taken the time to give Froogle their data feed. And those are the merchants who are winning on Froogle.

So, don't wait; submit your product data feed today!

Try FroogleFeeder to create, verify and submit your Froogle data feed files easily & efficiently.

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