

Is Search Engine Submission Necessary?

By Partha Bhattacharya

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Recently, a customer of ours was insistent on announcing his new website to big search engines. Otherwise, he argued, *...how would the world know that I exist...*. Indeed, the belief that one *must* submit his/her website to search engines has spawned growth of umpteen agencies (some with questionable intentions) that promise *guaranteed inclusion in search engines* for hefty fees. There are others who promise *guaranteed top placement* in search engines. But that's a different story.

So then, what takes..! Let's first separate grains from the chaff. It's worth looking at a few apparently contradicting, yet important aspects.

BGoogle is the king/B

Recent reports suggest Google presently is the most popular search engine in the US. A May, 2003 research finds Google's share of *search-pie* an overwhelming 76% among US web surfers compared to MSN's only 15% (reference: article by Danny Sullivan on Aug 1, 2003 at Search Engine Watch, <http://searchenginewatch.com/reports/article.php/2156431>).

In continental Europe (France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and UK), in June, 2003 the average viewership of Google (about 29.06%) was very close to (in fact a little less than) MSN's nearly 29.43% (reference: article by Danny Sullivan on July 31, 2003 at Search Engine Watch, <http://searchenginewatch.com/reports/article.php/2156441>).

With rapid-fire developments like Yahoo's acquiring Inktomi and Overture and MSN's plan to float its own crawler, none is sure what would happen one year hence. There are even talks of 3rd generation search engines taking over soon. At the time of writing this article though, Google remains firmly atop the surfers' list of most preferred search engines.

BDo not submit to Google/B

Yeah, you need not submit to Google. Google will find you. It has been Google's long-time practice to extensively crawl the Web so as to build its own comprehensive database of webpages, no matter whether you submit or not. In the process it has *outsmarted* others in producing the most relevant search results. Surfers love Google. Since Yahoo presents Google's search results and the fact that Looksmart has changed its listing procedure, it is obvious that their paid-listing programs are just not working.

Google's famed robot, *Googlebot*, crawls millions of webpages everyday and it's quite probable a new website will be automatically crawled sooner than one may imagine, whether *submitted* or not. One may also expect periodic visits by AltaVista's *Scooter*, Inktomi's *Slurp* and numerous other crawlers after you're *known* to Google.

BGoogle's luppishness//B

Google doesn't like *orphan* sites. To quote Google's own words (at <http://www.google.com/webmasters/1.html>), *The best way to ensure Google finds your site is for your page to be linked from lots of pages on other sites. Google's robots jump from page to page on the Web via hyperlinks, so the more sites that link to you, the more likely it is that we'll find you quickly*.

Dilemma indeed. Getting in Google is a MUST, yet if you want your website to be liked by Google, it'd need *fingers* (meaning links) pointing at it.

BThe way out/B

ODP (Open Directory Project <http://www.dmoz.org/>) is the first choice. But there it takes a long time, being human-controlled initiative (consider consulting Seotie <http://www.seotie.com/> to monitor your website's inclusion in DMOZ directory, in case you've submitted to ODP).

Another factor to think over is once listed in ODP, it is very difficult to alter your listing. Even a small change of a webpage url may render your ODP listing unworthy.

It comes therefore the necessity of submitting to other search engines, the relatively smaller ones, yet important ones at that. There are in fact quite a few of them with decent traffic flow. An advantage here is most search engines list websites in relevant categories and therefore once listed, links from them are what I call *highly-targeted-link-sources*.

BWhere to find them/B

A handy list of nearly 50 search engines and directories according to their Alexa Traffic Rank is maintained by FreeWebSubmission <http://www.freewebsubmission.com/> , refreshed on the first of every month. For example, Google's Alexa rank is 5.

Other important ones in this list are AltaVista <http://addurl.altavista.com/addurl/new> (Alexa Rank 58), AllTheWeb http://www.alltheweb.com/add_url.php (Alexa Rank 199), What U Seek <http://www.whatuseek.com/addurl-secondary.shtml> (Alexa Rank 2523), ScrubTheWeb <http://www.scrubtheweb.com/addurl.html> (Alexa Rank 2555), ExactSeek <http://www.exactseek.com/add.html> (Alexa Rank 2471), SearchHippo <http://www.searchhippo.com/addlink.php> (Alexa Rank 3041), EntireWeb <http://www.entireweb.com/eng/basic/> (Alexa Rank 3667), GigaBlast <http://www.gigablast.com/addurl> (Alexa Rank 6860) and Gimpsy <http://www.gimpsy.com/> (Alexa Rank 7222).

FreeWebSubmission <http://www.freewebsubmission.com/> also offers free submission to 20 search engines at one go. [Note the Alexa rankings given here are for August, 2003]. To know how Alexa ranks webpages, go here <http://pages.alexa.com/exec/faqsidos/help/index.html?index=1> .

Here is an interesting article by Barry Lloyd http://www.searchengineblog.com/columns/optimising_for_inktomi.htm . He proffers that optimizing for Inktomi can later translate into Google success. Don't forget to look at it http://www.searchengineblog.com/columns/optimising_for_inktomi.htm .

BThe bottom line/B

Search engine submission is but one small part of web success. If you stay put on the Web taking good care of your core business, chance is you'll be *discovered* sooner than later. Pause awhile now and then and renew your *friendship* with smaller search engines. The surfing traffic may seldom find you there, but Google surely will. And that's important.

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