

Key Facts you should know about Web Site design and Search

Engine Optimization

By Rajitha Dahanayake

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1. Web site File Structure / File Naming

- Most search engines do not recognize beyond two directory levels.
- Make sure to name your files and directories with keywords.
- Don't separate keywords using the underscore instead use hyphens.
- File names should be not too long.

2. Load Time

- If a page doesn't load in 8 seconds, Web site will lose 1/3 of the visitors.
- Images and Graphics - Image optimization will help to improve the load time. Images can be optimized using the "GIFBOT" image optimization tool (<http://www.netmechanic.com/accelerate.htm>)

3. Browser Compatibility / Screen Resolutions

- Make sure the all the web pages are compatible with the latest versions of Internet explore and Netscape. (Eg: IE 4.0 and above, Netscape 4.7 and above)
- Screen resolution is very important. Compatibility in 800 and 1024 resolution is a must.

4. Site Map

- A very important page on a web site.
- Search Engine spider's prefers Site maps.
- Name the Site Map page-using hyphen (site-map.html).
- Make sure the site map has links to every page of the web site.
- Use key words on the anchor.
- Try to describe the links with two or three lines.
- Give a link o the site map from all the pages of the site.
- Keep the site map simple with no or few images.

5.HTML Validation

- Make sure the coding is done according to the W3C standards. (<http://validator.w3.org>)
- Search engines are constantly rewarding web sites that utilize clean and validated HTML.
- Validate the HTML coding using the "CSE HTML Validator" before the site goes live. (<http://www.htmlvalidator.com/>)

6.Custom 404 Error Page

- Through the custom 404 error page, make it easy for the users to find where they want to go.
- Use HTML links and include a search box.
- For information on how to create custom 404 pages for every type of server, visit the 404 Research Lab (<http://www.plinko.net/404/>). The site also features many examples of custom 404 pages.

7.Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

- Cascading Style allows Webmasters to control Web page design parameters, such as margins, font/typeface appearance, link appearance, colors, and placement.
- CSS decreases download time. Style sheets alone don't matter to the search engines.

8.Using JavaScript / Frames / Flash

- JavaScript - JavaScript is not search engine friendly and not important to the engines, so move it to a separate .js file.
- Frames – Try to avoid using frames. In a situation of using frame make sure to use the NOFRAMES Tag.
Frames must be navigational within the frames. Include an option to use the site with or without frames. And, use JavaScript to keep frames intact.
- Flash – Search Engine spiders cant read the flash (Except Fast.com). Anyway Flash can be used for demos and presentations.
- Layers – It is recommended not use layers.

9.Font Styles and Colors

- Font Styles – It is important to use the font styles compatible with the browsers.
- Colors – Web Safe Colors A few years ago, when most computers supported only 256 different colors, a list of 216 Web Safe Colors was suggested as a Web standard. The reason for this was that Microsoft and Mac operating system used 40 different "reserved" fixed system colors (about 20 each).

For more information Please visit

http://www.w3schools.com/html/html_colors.asp

http://www.webdevelopersjournal.com/articles/websafe1/websafe_colors.html

10.Title / Meta Key Words / ALT tags

- Title / Meta Key Words – Title and Meta key words play an important role search engine

optimization.

·ALT Tags – It is important to have an Alt tag to each and every image

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