

Search Engine Marketing 101: What Search Engines See When They

Visit Your Site

By Robin Nobles

Search Engine Marketing 101: What Search Engines See When They Visit Your Site

Robin Nobles
RobinN@acws.com

Academy of Web Specialists <http://www.academywebspecialists.com>

Search Engine Marketing 101:
What Search Engines See When
They Visit Your Web Site

by Robin Nobles

If you have a Web site, have you ever wondered what a search engine sees when it visits your site to add the site to its index? Do you know that it doesn't see the beautiful graphics or the fancy Web design? Do you know that it only sees the source code, or the "skeleton" of your Web site?

Do you realize that knowing this little tidbit of information and doing something about it can make a huge difference in your search engine rankings and, ultimately, the success of your online business?

One very important thing that you need to remember is: the search engines like simplicity. The simpler your Web site is, the easier it is for the engine to determine what your Web site is about. And, if the search engine can determine exactly what your Web site is about, you have a better chance at top rankings under the keyword phrases that are important for your online business.

Let's look at this concept in action with a page I recently created for one of my online businesses: Search Engine Workshops.

<http://www.searchengineworkshops.com/articles/search-engine-seminars.html>

As you can see, it's a very plain, simple page that was not

created to be the "main" or "home" page of a Web site. Rather, it was created to pull in traffic through the keyword phrase, "search engine seminars."

What I really want you to see is the source code of the page. So, when viewing the page, click on View on the top menu bar, then Source or Source Code.

The most important part of a Web page is what appears at the very top of the page. Why? Because a search engine starts at the top of the page and begins moving down as it indexes.

So, what appears in the head section of your Web page is very important, because the head section is at the top of the page.

Let's look at the head section of the source code:

HEAD

```
TITLESearch Engine Seminars--your path to success on the Web!/TITLE
```

```
META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="search engine seminars, conferences, workshops, CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, Conferences, Workshops"
```

```
META NAME="description" CONTENT="Have you considered attending a search engine seminar to learn how to take a struggling Web site and bring it to the top of the rankings?"
```

```
/HEAD
```

There are only three tags in the head section of this Web page: the title tag, the keyword META tag, and the description META tag. Because the title tag is in the head section, and because of the importance that most engines place on the tag, it is considered one of the most important tags on your page, so it should always be the first tag in the head section.

Notice that in the title and keyword META tag, the important keyword phrase (search engine seminars) appears as the first words in the tag. In the description META tag, the keyword phrase is still toward the beginning of the tag, as opposed to the end.

In other words, where you place your keyword phrase in the tags and content of your page is important. If you place your keyword phrase toward the beginning of all of your important tags and toward the beginning of the contents, you're "proving" to the engines that the page is really about that particular topic.

I've mentioned one reason why the title tag is important, but there's another reason too. The title tag is important because it almost always appears as the title of the site in the search engine results. Your description META tag may appear in the search engine results as well and is considered important by the some of the engines. So, when you create your title and description tags, remember two things: put your keyword phrase

toward the beginning of the tags, and make the tags captivating and designed to pull in traffic.

Think of it this way. If your site is #10 in the search engine rankings, but if the sites above yours haven't gone to the trouble to create appealing titles and descriptions, a search engine user may skip over those sites to visit yours.

Now, let's go back to the source code. Look for this tag, which isn't far from the body tag:

```
IMG SRC="images/banner3.jpg" ALT="search engine seminars, search engine conferences, search engine workshops" WIDTH="220" HEIGHT="100"
```

This is the image, or graphics, tag for the Search Engine Workshops banner that appears at the very top of the page. Notice that the engine doesn't "see" the graphic itself. It sees the name of the graphic (banner3.jpg), and it sees the ALT text that describes the image. It sees the width and height of the graphic. But, it doesn't see the graphic itself. So, the engine doesn't know that the graphic says, "Search Engine Workshops."

Next, look for this tag, which directly follows the image tag:

```
H1 ALIGN="center"FONT FACE="Arial"Search Engine Seminars/FONT/H1
```

An H1 tag is a heading tag, and heading tags are very important to a Web page. Try to put a heading tag at the very top of your page, if at all possible, and use your important keyword phrase in that heading tag. When you look back at my actual Web page, do you see the words "Search Engine Seminars" right under the graphic? That's the heading tag.

Now, look for this tag in the source code:

```
PFONT FACE="Arial"Is your Web site achieving the success that . . .
```

This is where the contents of the Web page begin. Look on the actual Web page and find the text: "Is your Web site achieving the success that . . ." Notice that the keyword phrase (search engine seminars) appears in the first paragraph.

In other words, with all of these tags and the placement of our keyword phrase in the page's contents, we're proving to the engines that the page is really about "search engine seminars."

So, let's visit your site on the Web. View the source code. What's in the head section? Are your title and description tags using the keyword phrase that's important for that particular page? Are your title and description tags captivating and

designed to pull in traffic? Each page of your site should have different title and description tags, and those tags should be based on the focus of that page - what that page is really about: in other words, its keyword phrase.

How many graphics do you have before the actual contents of your site? If you have a lot of graphics, navigation bars, or buttons before the contents of your page, the engine has to sort through all of that source code before it gets to the actual keyword-containing content.

Does your page contain lengthy JavaScript or other code that pushes the important contents toward the bottom of the page? If so, it could be hindering your chances at top rankings.

Are you using a heading tag that contains your important keyword phrase toward the very top of your page? Is your keyword phrase used in the first paragraph of the page? Is it used in several places throughout the page?

Look back at my page. Notice that the keyword phrase, search engine seminars, is used as link text to describe several links. Are you using your keyword phrase to describe links that are leaving the page? If not, try to do so.

Study your own site carefully, and apply these guidelines to your pages.

Doing whatever you can to push your important keyword phrase toward the top of the page and toward the beginning of your tags is the first step toward having a successful Web site that's ranked in the top of the search engine rankings.

If you would like to learn more about how to achieve top search engine rankings, visit:

<http://www.searchengineworkshops.com/articles.html>

Or, sign up for online training at:

<http://www.onlinewebtraining.com/courses.html> or 3-day search engine marketing workshops at:

<http://www.searchengineworkshops.com> .

Robin Nobles, Director of Training, Academy of Web Specialists, has trained several thousand people in her online search engine marketing (<http://www.academywebspecialists.com>) training programs. Visit the Academy's training site to learn more (<http://www.onlinewebtraining.com>). She also teaches 3-day hands-on search engine marketing workshops in locations across the globe with Search Engine Workshops (<http://www.searchengineworkshops.com>).

Copyright 2002 Robin Nobles. All rights reserved.

Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)