

Beginner's guide for getting high search engine ranking

By Susan Miller

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Improving rankings in search engines requires considerable understanding of how search engines work, and how you can use this information to optimize your website to improve your ranking. What follows is a preliminary guideline to get you started.

Understanding Search Engines

A search engine builds its database either by getting list submissions from webmasters or by using software robots. In the case of former, the database is often built manually. On the other hand, "Robot" or "Spiders" are programs that browse through the web and store links and information about the pages that they visit.

The way a spider indexes and ranks a website is very much dependent on what information it receives from your website and how you have designed the site. Therefore it is essential to develop your website keeping in mind the search engine placements.

Keywords

Your website is indexed by search engines on the basis of your key words. When a search engine sends a spider to your web site, it determines that pages' keywords by counting the words on the web page it is visiting. The words that appear most frequently or considered most significant (Words that are mentioned towards the top of a document and words that are repeated several times throughout the document) become your keywords. When a user searches for a particular term, the ranking of your site in the results would depend on the weight of that search term on your site.

Therefore it is very important to judge the keywords on your site by understanding what phrases or words users would most use to perform the search. To help you get this information, there are keyword research tools available on the web which enable you to find out how often any phrase is searched for on a search engine.

Creating copy for the website

Once you have listed the keywords you would use, you need to create the copy for your website. As much as it is important to use your keyword as many times as possible on a page, you should also pay attention to how the text sounds when read by user. Overstuffing the text with keywords will not only confuse or put-off a visitor but you might also get identified as a "spammer" by search

engines and your website removed from the database.

You can have more than one keyword for a page but that also reduces the individual importance of each keyword. It is advisable to use your keyword as the first word on your page.

Many search engines index websites by the meta tags in the documents' HTML. The "title" and the "description" meta tags are often used by search engines in indexing. It is essential to use your keyword in the title tag. Use relevant words in keyword meta tags such as synonyms of your keyword, or words directly relevant to your page.

Optimizing Page Content

Tables: Spiders do not have a problem reading the content of tables, however if you use nested tables, it makes it difficult for spiders to navigate through your website.

Frames: Frames always pose difficulty for spiders. Some spiders are absolutely unable to read frames pages, while others see only the master page and therefore will not be able to read complete webpage because of which your website will not be indexed properly.

Graphics: Do not clutter your webpage with graphics. Not only these are not read by spiders and reduce space for text but also affect the speed of loading of the page which often turns off the visitors.

Flash: Most spiders are unable to index Flash content or follow their navigation links. Flash should be an optional link with a duplicate spider-friendly HTML page.

Password-protected page: Spiders cannot enter password-protected pages.

JavaScript: Search engines are unable to read java script and JavaScript should be placed as an option for visitors, similar to use of Flash.

Site Submission

You can go for either free or paid submissions. Obviously, a paid submission will get your site indexed faster than the free submission which might take anywhere upto 4 months. In case of paid submissions, you have to pay for each page that you wish to get listed.

Outside Links

Number and relevancy of outside links significantly affects the ranking of your website by search engines, and even helps you get your website indexed faster. You can build links to your website in several ways such as Link exchange or reciprocal linking, requesting addition of your url to informational sites or directories, and Affiliate programs.

About the Author

Susan Miller is a Marketing Manager at 550 Access (<http://www.550Access.com>), a nationwide Internet Service Provider that is leading the market in the "budget ISP" category.

Susan is actively involved in defining and executing online marketing programs for 550 Access and can be contacted at <mailto:susan@550Access.com>.

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