

# A Guide to Search Engine Optimisation

## Search Engine Optimisation Tips

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1. An introduction to Search Engine Optimisation

Unfortunately simply submitting your web site to search engines will not drive traffic to your site. Although submission is an integral part of any effective search engine optimising strategy, you must achieve good search positions for anyone to find your listing. Hopefully our useful hints and tips will help you optimise your site and achieve that top ten position.

As any search engine optimisation company will tell you, getting you site listed in the first ten results for a specific keyword is as much art as a science. Anyone can get to number 1 on a unique word or trade name, but on a generic key phrase, it's much more tricky. Search engine optimising can be difficult and confusing, but once you are aware of the key optimisation techniques, time and persistence can yield a hugely gratifying reward if you get it right.

As Search Engine Optimiser's (SEO's), we ensure that the relevant words and phrases appear in the best positions on the pages. There are many other considerations, complicated by the engines modifying their preferences on a monthly basis. We pay for access to a the Wordtracker

keyword database, which holds 301 million entries over the last 60 days. Using this information, we make sure that we are optimising the page in such a way that people will find it.

## 2. Site design considerations

### 2.1 Do not use frames

One of the biggest potential pitfalls for Webmasters is search engines that do not index the text within frames. A frame is an HTML page that "frames" other HTML pages. If your site uses frames your homepage is actually a frameset with no real content. Several major engines (including Excite, WebCrawler and HotBot) do not support frames, others do not index framed sites very well. If your site uses frames we recommend redesigning your site without them if you want to get good listings in the search engines.

If you must use frames, include text in the <NOFRAMES> tag. Another solution is to create pages (without frames) to act as doorways or alternate entrances to your site for the purpose of giving these engines something they can see and index.

### 2.2 Do not use dynamic URL's

Most search engines cannot list dynamic URL's which are commonly listed on database driven sites using scripting languages such as VBScript within Active Server Pages (ASP). An example of a dynamic URL is shown below.  
<http://www.searchengineoptimising.com/products.asp?ID=dynamic+example>

### 2.3 Do not have an entirely FLASH homepage

Search engines cannot index pages made entirely with FLASH. When you submit a page to a search engine a spider will follow the links on the page and listing the rest of the site. The best way to remedy this is to create a site map that uses normal html links to every page on your site. Also add a standard HTML link on each page of your site that links to the site map.

### 2.4 Do not use image maps as the only method of navigation

Search engines cannot index the code that makes up image maps. You can use image maps in your site but you should also include standard html links. As with a Flash site, create a site map that uses normal html links to every page on your site. Also add a standard HTML link on each page of your site that links to the site map.

### 2.5 Do not use javascript as the only method of navigation

Search engines can't follow links that are within Javascript, so your site will not get spidered unless you also have some form standard HTML hyperlinks that they can follow. You should add some form standard HTML hyperlinks to all of your pages on each of your pages so that your site will be spidered properly. An easy way to do this is to create a site map page uses standard HTML links to link to every page on your site.

Then add a standard HTML link on each page of your site that links to the site map.

### 3. Carefully choose your keywords

Target the wrong keywords and all your efforts will be in vain. Choose the right keywords and you'll see your traffic dramatically increase. Therefore, think long and hard about what keywords people are most likely to use when search for your site. Make lists of single keywords and then combine them into phrases.

For more information on choosing and the optimisation keywords for particular search engines have a look at our keywords section.

### 4 . Optimisation of your Title Tag

The title tag of your page is an extremely important factor to consider during the optimisation of a web page for search engines. This is because many engines and directories place a high level of importance on keywords that are found in your title tag. The title tag is also what the search engines usually use for the title of your listing in the search results.

What it looks like:

Here's the title tag of this page:

```
<TITLE>Hints and Tips - optimisation of your title tag for search engines</TITLE>
```

Where it belongs:

The correct placement for the title tag is between the <HEAD> and </HEAD> tags within the HTML the makes up your page.

Tag limits:

Generally, we recommend that your title tag, including spaces, be between 50-80 characters long. The optimum level differs from search engine to search engine, therefore we recommend using a tool such as Web CEO tool to analyse your page.

Tips for optimising your Meta Tags:

- We recommend including 1-2 of your most important keyword phrases in the title tag, be careful not to just list keywords. If you just list keywords you risk being viewed as a spamming the engines which can ultimately lead to you being blacklisted by the search engines. Your title tag should include your keyword phrases while remaining as close to a readable sentence as possible to avoid any problems.
- Make your title enticing! Don't forget that even if you get that #1 listing in the search engines your listing still needs to say something

that makes the surfer want to clickthrough and visit your site.

- Since the length of your title tag could be a little long for some engines we suggest placing the keywords at the beginning of the tag when possible so that you do not risk having them cut off.
- Each page of your site should have a unique title tag with it's own keywords that related to the page that it appears on.

## 5. Optimisation of your page content

Your page content is another very important factor in achieving better search engine listings. Your page content is the information that a visitor would read from the page. Search engines look through Did you know that just like a visitor to your site would read the copy on your page to figure out what you have to offer, the search engines do too? And what do you think the search engines are looking for when they 'read' your page copy? Keyword phrases, of course!

Page content tips:

- We recommend that each page you submit has at contains least 200 words.
- This text should include your most important keyword phrases, but should remain logical & readable.
- Include the phrases that you have used in your other tags (i.e. metas, alt, headings, title, etc.) during the optimisation process.
- Add additional content rich pages to your site. For example, how-to articles, hint and tips, or tutorials. These types of content pages not only help you in the search engines, but many other sites will link to them too.

## 6. Optimisation of your META tags

The head element contains general information (meta-information) about a document. HTML also includes a meta element that goes inside the head element. The purpose of the meta element is to provide meta-information about the document.

Most often the meta element is used to provide information that is relevant to browsers or search engines like describing the content of your document. Some search engines will use the name and content attributes of the meta tag to index your pages.

This meta element defines a description of your page:

```
<meta name="description" content="Free Web tutorials  
on HTML, CSS, XML, and XHTML">
```

This meta element defines keywords for your page:

```
<meta name="keywords" content="HTML, DHTML, CSS, XML,  
XHTML, JavaScript, VBScript">
```

The intention of the name and content attributes is to describe the content of a page. However, since too many webmasters have used meta tags for spamming, like repeating keywords to give pages a higher ranking, many major search engines have stopped using them entirely. Where they belong: The correct placement for both meta tags is between the <HEAD> and </HEAD> tags within the HTML the makes up your page. Their order does not really matter, but most people usually place the description first then the keywords meta. Tag limits:

- We recommend that your Keywords Meta not exceed 1024 characters including spaces.
- We recommend that your Description Meta tag not exceed 250 characters including spaces.

Meta description tips:

- Make sure you accurately describe the content of your page while trying to entice visitors to click on your listing.
- Include 3-4 of your most important keyword phrases. Especially those used in your title tag and page copy.
- Try to have your most important keywords appear at the beginning of your description. This often brings better results, and will help avoid having any search engine cut off your keywords if they limit the length of your description.

Meta keywords tips:

- Aside from what we mention in the other tips below you should only use those keyword phrases that you also used in the copy of your page, title tag, meta description, and other tags. Any keywords phrases that you use that do not appear in your other tags or page copy are likely to not have enough prominence to help your listings for that phrase.
- Don't forget plurals.
- Don't forget common misspelling of a popular keyword that could be used to find your site.
- Watch out for repeats! You want to include your most important phrases, but when doing so it can be difficult not to repeat one word many times. There is no limit, but we recommend that no one word be repeated in the keyword meta more than 5 times.
- If your site has content of interest to a specific geographic location be sure to include the actual location in your keyword meta.

## 7. Optimisation of your images using "alt"

The alt attribute is used to define an "alternate text" for an image. The value of the alt attribute is an author-defined text:

```

```

The "alt" attribute tells the reader what he or she is missing on a page if the browser can't load images. The browser will then display the alternate text instead of the image. It is a good practice to include the "alt" attribute for each image on a page, to improve the display and usefulness of your document for people who have text-only browsers.

Although not all search engines use the Alt tab it can help your listings on some of them. We recommend on using 2-3 words for each image and using it where ever possible.

## 8. Optimisation of Text Hyperlinks

A text based hyperlink is a standard HTML example optimising search (this is an example link that does not go anywhere).

Search engines use complex algorithms to see if what you are linking to is something closely related to the content of your page. Some of the engines look for keywords in hyperlinks and in the surrounding text of the hyperlinks. We recommend including your most important keyword phrases in the link itself and possibly the surrounding text.

## 9. Optimisation of Heading Tags

Headings are defined with the <h1> to <h6> tags. <h1> defines the largest heading. <h6> defines the smallest heading.

```
<h1>This is a heading</h1>
```

```
<h2>This is a heading</h2>
```

```
<h3>This is a heading</h3>
```

```
<h4>This is a heading</h4>
```

```
<h5>This is a heading</h5>
```

```
<h6>This is a heading</h6>
```

HTML automatically adds an extra blank line before and after a heading.

Although they are used less frequently due to new technologies, HTML heading tags can help improve your listings in the search engines also. You should include you most important keyword phrases in the heading tags on your page. Some search engines use them in the analysis of your page content.

10. How long should I wait before re-submitting to a particular search engine?

MSN  
30 days

Google  
4-6 weeks

AltaVista  
15-30 days

Fast  
15-30 days

Excite  
4-6 weeks

Northern Light  
30 days

AOL  
30 days

HotBot  
30 days

iWon  
30 days

#### 11. Things to Avoid attempting Optimisation techniques for Search Engines

You should not try to trick a search engine in any way because you risk being blacklisted by them.

- Excluding the meta keyword tag, do not list you keyword one after another anywhere on the page
- An old trick is to try and keyword stuff the page by using the same colour text as the page's background. Search engines can detect this and view it as spam.
- Do not submit the same page to any search engine more than once in any twenty-four hours.
- Do not submit identical pages. You should instead give them different filename and change the title and, if possible, the keywords for the page.
- Do not use any keywords in your keywords meta tag that do not directly relate to the content of your page.
- Don't use any keywords in your keywords meta tag that do not directly relate to the content of your page.

Good Luck with your Optimisation!

[SearchEngineOptimising.com](http://SearchEngineOptimising.com)

The Search Engine Optimising (SEO) Team