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Creating Web Meta Tags

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Web Meta Tags

The Internet is the most comprehensive source of information in human history. But like any library of knowledge, it must be catalogued to be used effectively. Thus, Search Engines were created.

Search Engines are used to filter out what customers are looking for. No other form of advertising is so focused where the customer is actually searching for your business.

According to the Georgia Institute of Technology, 88% of Internet users find new sites through search engine listings.

You need to get a listing near the top of your category to collect all the traffic a search engine can deliver. You can dramatically improve your positioning with a little bit of elbow grease. All it takes are some key modifications to your site and a little thought.

Search Engine Spiders

Some search engines like Yahoo!™ employ people to check each site registered with

them, but these are in the minority.

Most search engines use specialized software called "spiders" to do this. Spiders help search engines deliver accurate search results by determining how relevant a site is to the keywords a web surfer uses. Spiders "crawl" through millions of sites every month, analyzing text content and following hyperlinks. The information that is retrieved is used to determine how your site will be categorized and ranked.

Because the spider's functions are so critical, anything relating to the way they operate is a closely guarded secret. It is in your best interest to understand as much as you can about them, and to use that information to your advantage when creating your web text.

It is important to keep in mind how your site is seen from a spider's point of view. A spider can only analyze text and words that are in a structured format and it needs to know what it should look for. Meta Tags is the best method for doing that.

Meta Tags

It's important that you don't repeat your keywords too many times in any one section of your page.

For **Title, Description** and **Keyword Meta Tags**, do not repeat any keyword more than once. For **Body Text**, do not repeat any keyword more than 3 times.

Title Tag

The Title is in the header of every page and appears in the title bar of the browser. This is the first thing that a search engine robot finds in your page.

The Title is extremely important for ranking for several reasons

- ✓ Most search engines put a high value on words in the title when it comes to ranking
- ✓ Having keywords that are important in the title of your page will play a heavy role in boosting your rankings on many engines
- ✓ The closer your keyword is to the beginning of the title, and the percentage of the entire title occupied by the keyword may play a role in boosting your position
- ✓ Most search engines will use your title when listing your site. If you have a meaningful title for your page, when people see your listing on a search engine, they will be more likely to understand what your site is about
- ✓ Avoid using all uppercase words. It makes it difficult to read.
- ✓ Having non-descriptive title

such as "Acme Products Home Page" does not tell the search engine what your site is about and will not make people click on your link.

- ✓ Put as many of your keywords as possible in the title. "Acme Products - car waxes, polishes, wheel cleaners, & fine car care products" is a good example.
- ✓ Make sure you vary the keywords used in your site's Title. Don't just copy the same title on all pages. Let's say your company name is Acme Products and you specialize in chain saws, winches, and generators. On your home page, you might use something like "Acme Products - Chain Saws, Winches, and Generators are our business!" On another page, you might use "Acme Products - Over 20 models of Chain Saws to choose from."

Description Meta Tag

The Description is often used by search engines to describe your site in their listings. Usually, a search engine listing will have a Title and Description of the site listed. If there is no Description, some search engines will try to guess what your site is about by reading text on the page. This will often lead to garbage in the listing and can motivate web surfers to click through to a different site. Beware that repeating the same text can cause your site to be penalized.

Imagine you only have a short paragraph in which to convince people to visit your site. Write a

brief summary, explaining what they will find on your site and why they should visit it.

Keyword Meta Tag

A major step is choosing descriptive and focused keywords. The importance of keywords cannot be emphasized enough. Understand that "keyword" doesn't just mean single words such as "car", "computer", or "software". A few of your keywords might be single words, but most should be 2 to 3 word key phrases. The reason is most searches on the Internet are done using keyword phrases.

Phrase examples...

- ✓ "car wax"
- ✓ "Dallas Real Estate"
- ✓ "project management software"

Figure out all the possible key words that are related to your site. These keywords should be words and phrases that the average person would type into a search engine to find you. Look at it from the user's perspective. What search words or phrases make sense? When you're finished, you should have at least 50 keywords on your list.

Narrow the List

Pick 12 of the most relevant keywords from the list. You can track more than 12 but this is all that is required for most sites. The best way to tell if you've got 12 good keywords is to test them.

Test each keyword in a major search engine. Type in your keywords and see if sites that

sell similar products are returned to. If you see your competition show up in the results, then you are on the right track.

Avoid Common Words

It is unrealistic to think that a site could rank number one using common words like "Software", "Books", or "Fish". Most people do not query search engines on single words such as "Books", or "Fish". Users are more likely to search for something more specific like "Cook Books", or "Monk Fish".

Geographic Location

If possible, use a geographic location. If you're a dentist in Houston, you would be interested in attracting site visitors from the Houston area. Houston traffic would also be more likely to visit you, rather than a dentist in another state.

Use Keywords like . . .

- ✓ Dentists TX
- ✓ Dentist in Houston
- ✓ TX Dentists

Relate to Main Subject

Keywords should be closely related to the main subject of your site. If your site subject is gourmet foods and culinary arts, you might try related keywords such as "Vietnamese cinnamon" or "Cajun spices". People looking for these items are probably interested in cooking as well. Competition for these keywords is much less intense than for "food", or "Cooking".

Misspelled Words

If you are sure of common

misspellings, be sure to include them. Getting a number-one listing on a misspelled word can be very easy and rewarding in terms of traffic.

Frequency

Keywords aren't the only thing search engine spiders look for. A spider tries to find out how relevant those keywords are for your site. If your site is about recreational fishing, and you use the words fly-fishing, angling, and deep-sea fishing multiple times in your site, the spider will see your site being more relevant to those particular words than words which only appear once.

Positioning

If a keyword is in the Title, or in the first six lines of the page body, some search engine spiders consider that to be very significant.

Weight

The "weight" of a keyword is a big factor. If a keyword appears 3 times in a page with one thousand words, that keyword has a lower weight than if it was on a page with 30 words. Pages with heavily weighted keywords are considered more relevant to that keyword, and usually rank higher.

Don't Try to Fool

Overdoing it can cause the spider to think that you are trying to fool it. A common way of doing this is by using too many keywords. In an effort to rank a site higher, some sites will include a keyword section two or

three times in their page. This is not effective.

Don't repeat keywords over and over again on the home page text, then try to hide it by making it the same color as the page background. There was a time when this was a commonly used tactic. Search engines have caught on and now know how to detect this obvious deception. This could get you penalized or banned. Many search engines share common indices of listings. If you get your site banned on one of these engines, chances are that you will be banned on several engines at once.

Avoid Non-Relevance

Some webmasters have resorted to using keywords that have no relevance to the actual content. This has potentially drastic consequences for the engines that are trying to return relevant results on a query. Tactics like this might work for a short time but the search engines will catch on and you will be penalized. Your goal should be the accurate indexing of your site by the search engine robots.

Page Heading

The Page Heading is text on a page included in a Heading Tag. Some search engines consider text found between these tags to be relevant in rating your page. Keep it short and simple, but make sure it conveys your point.

Graphics

All graphics are ignored by the search engines. A site with nothing but graphics will never get good rankings on the search engines. Your home page should have at least a few well-written paragraphs that tell the world what you do or what you offer. These paragraphs should include as many of your 12 top keywords as possible.

Submission

Once you have decided on meta tag values and your pages have been updated, the next step is to submit your updated pages to the many search engines. We have purchased the AddWeb Professional software to assist in what can be a tedious task.

Remain patient as you wait for all of the indices to pick up your listing. This can take anywhere from several seconds to months.

You will need to check your ranking regularly to determine if you are listed and where you are positioned.

If you have chosen good keywords, you should have a good position near the top. Just because you appear at the top of the search results doesn't mean that you are guaranteed to remain there. New sites appear by the second and search engines regularly change the methods they use to index them.

To maintain your position, you must resubmit your site around once a month and check your ranking on each major search engine, preferably once a week. By checking your ranking you can determine what your position is and whether it is

trending upward or downward. If your rank is spiraling downwards, or you can't seem to push ahead of competitors, its time for some more work.

Take a look at the sites that have higher listings than you and review their meta tags.

Don't let your competitors get a leg up on you by ignoring your ranking trends. Maintain your position and you will get a steady reward in the form of new visitors and increased traffic to your site.

By comparing your site to the top three sites on an engine, you can learn what other sites do that give them a high position, and then you can incorporate those features into your site.