

Building and Placing Keywords

Keywords both in the page and in Meta Tags are among the most important elements of a page's searchability.

Choosing Keywords To Target:

- **Use Overture's and WordTracker's Search Suggestion tools to see what people search for.**

<http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/>

and

<http://www.wordtracker.com>

Start at a base level, and see what relevant terms are returned. For example: Your client owns a tattoo parlor. A search for tattoo parlor in Overture returns 2,585 searches, but a search for Tattoo (the base level term in tattoo parlor), shows that Tattoo Design is a much more desirable term with 59,389 searches.

- **Choose your most important Keyword Phrase for each page.** It's okay to have more than one keyword phrase, but you should shoot to be ranked really high for only one. The phrase should be at least two words long unless your industry is incredibly under web-developed.
- **Double check your keyword phrases by searching for "relevant" searches in search engines.** When you search in AltaVista, the engine shows you what "Others searched for" these are the top five searched-for terms that pertain to your topic. You may get new suggestions, or find that "Tattoo Designs" is searched for more than "Tattoo Design" (Some Engines are case sensitive).
AltaVista, Direct Hit, and HotBot are the best engines for double-checking your keywords.
- **Capitalization doesn't matter**
- **Choose Keywords that will bring customers, not just clicks.** "San Francisco Bus Tours" is better than "Bus Tours" if your business is local.
- **Plan to optimize every page for a different specific Keyword Phrase.**

When Building The Keyword Meta Tag

- **500-1000 characters**
- **Place your most important terms first.** Don't even bother coming up with more than the first couple of keyword terms. Later, after you've written your page text, you can use the Jim Tools Analyze Keywords tool to pull natural keywords out of your page. Add the most prominent to your Meta tags. <http://jimworld.nu/keywords.html>
- **Don't bother with commas in your Meta Tags.** Research shows that they don't matter.
- **Don't repeat terms too often.** Combine terms in your Meta tags if you can. Example:
`<meta name="keywords" content="buying plants online, online plant store">`
becomes
`<meta name="keywords" content="buying plants online plant store">`
- **Your keywords should also appear in the description tag.** Studies have shown that people are much more likely to click if they see their searched-for term in the description. Keep the description under 150 characters, including spaces.

Writing Keywords Into your Site

- **Place the most important keyword phrases first in your title.** Order counts in the title, too. Put the important keywords first. There is evidence that repeating your most important keyword phrase in the title is beneficial (see www.awdsf.com). Keep your title under 15 words.
- **The higher your keywords are in the HTML, the better.** Make sure that you have your keyword phrases prominently placed in the first paragraph. Move any JavaScript in the head to the bottom of your HTML page, directly above the `</html>` tag. Also make sure that all JavaScript is surrounded by `<!--comment tags -->`.
- **The end of the page is also considered important.** To be effective at the beginning of the page, a keyword phrase should also appear at the end.
- **Keywords in the beginning or the end of a paragraph get more weight.**
- **Use your keywords every chance you get.** Cram those keywords in there every time it makes sense to do so. You should usually go for anywhere from 2-6% keyword density for body text that's roughly 250 words long. Shorter text will have a higher percentage. Use www.keywordDensity.com to analyze your keyword percentage. Don't go nuts, though. If

your page is still humanly readable you'll usually avoid the appearance of spamming. Some engines don't even use Meta tags, and only pay attention to the text.

- **Bold text and header text is ranked higher by some engines.**
- **Keyword phrases found in links are weighted very high.** Some search specialists reserve half of their keyword allotment for links!
- **Use <noframes> for frames pages and Flash.** Search engines do not usually list frames and Flash pages well because they lack an appropriate page body. This can be fixed by adding a <noframes> and</noframes> tag. You can add keyword rich text between the tags.

Building Sites that Spider Well

The following tips can help more of your pages be spidered and ranked highly by search engines.

- **Build a comprehensive site map.** A site map is simply a page with links to *all* of your other pages. A site map allows a spider to easily crawl your site. The homepage should have a link to the sitemap.
- **Keep your site structure shallow.** Pages that are closer to the root often rank higher on search engines. Instead of building neat organized folders that go many levels deep, consider keeping important pages at or close to root level.
- **Create HTML links.** Many search engines don't follow image maps or JavaScript links. That means that you'll need html links somewhere on the page for the spider to follow. Make sure you don't try to hide the links or they may not be followed.
- **Create Static pages for Dynamic sites.** Some sites, like Amazon.com, automatically create pages as you look at them. Automatic (dynamic) page creation is advantageous in a very large site because it cuts down on storage and allows for customization of individual pages based on user data. The problem with dynamic pages is that search engines never see them! So, if your site is going to use dynamically created pages, you should also create some static pages that search engines (and search engine users) can find.

Link Popularity

Every major crawler uses link popularity and link analysis to help determine rank. Link popularity is defined as the number of links pointing to a site. Link analysis determines how much weight is placed on each link. Therefore, while it is quite important to have as many links pointing to your site as possible, it is more important to have "Quality Links".

- **Links from sites that are related to you are best.**
- **Links from more important sites are better.** Sites with high link popularity that link to your site give you a bigger boost than links from lower ranked sites. Links from reviewed sites like Yahoo, About.com, and some award sites are given very high weight. You can determine a site's importance by downloading the Google Toolbar from Google's homepage.
- **Link Wording** is important. If you can, you should try to make sure that you inbound links say something like [A Great Place For Web Design Classes](#) instead of <http://www.AWDsf.com>. If you can fit your main keyword in the link, all the better.
- **The paragraph surrounding the link** also matters. A link incased in a paragraph about web schools is more likely to be seen as a stronger web school recommendation. A link inside a paragraph holds more weight than a link on it's own.

Getting Good Links

1. **Find worthwhile sites to approach.** Search for your subject matter and all related subject matter on the web.
2. **Find the best place for the link.** Anything you can do to make it easy for them to link to you increases your chances. Write out the HTML for your link and send it to them with your request.
Keep in mind that the closer you get to the root page, the more likely spiders will find your link. You'll also get a higher link rating if the page has a small number of outside links. Getting a link on a "links" page is easier, but not always the most advantageous.
3. **Submit to the right person.** Editorial staff and site owners are more likely to list you than the sales staff. Personalize your email and say something about their site proving you've been there. *Call them personally if you can.*

4. **Link to them first.** People are more inclined to link to you if you link to them, especially if you're *already* linked to them.
5. **Make sure all of your inbound links point to the same page.** You're not building link popularity for your site, but for individual pages. Obviously, the homepage is your best choice.

The following is a good example of a link offer/request.

```
Hello--

Would you consider adding our site, Joe's Shoe World, to your page at:
http://site.com/page.html

We think it would be of great benefit to your visitors. It discusses such issues
as how to select the right running shoes, an interactive shoe comparison tool
and a calendar of running events throughout the year.

Here's our site title, URL and a short description:

Joe's Shoe World
http://www.joeshoeworld.com

Find running shoes, tips on buying athletic footwear and a calendar of running
events.

We've also linked to your site from this page:
http://www.joeshoeworld.com/ourlinkspage.html

Thanks for your consideration!
```

Link Spam

Link spam is just as bad as any other kind of spam.

- **Avoid Link Farms.** A link farm is a site that exists solely for the purpose of trading links and boosting popularity. Engines are on to this trick, and will actually lower your rating.
- **Don't bother with link popularity programs.** They mostly build pages that are seen as Spam
- **Invisible Links.** Trying to hide links on your page will usually not help anyone.

Spamming

Spamming is trying to fool a search engine into giving you a better ranking than your page deserves. It is defined more by intent than action. The search engines all have super smart people working all day to try to figure out how to make their engine differentiate real pages from spammy ones. Spamming can get your ranking devaluated and in some cases, *banned from search engines altogether*.

The following methods can all be considered Spam.

- **Keyword Spam.** "web design web design web design web design web design web design" is overdoing it, folks.
- **Invisible Text** is usually considered spam. Don't match any text with the same color as your Body BGCOLOR tag, even if that text is visible because of the background of the TD it's in.
- **A large amount of sub-default size text** can keep you from a good listing. Size 2 text often looks better, but will sometimes hurt you...
- **Meta-Refresh or JavaScript Redirect** tags are often seen by search engines as a method to divert users to a different page than is listed for the search engines.
- **Duplicate pages** or pages that are very similar are usually seen as spam. If duplicate pages are being used for legitimate reasons, use the <meta name="robots" content="noindex, nofollow"> tag to keep search engines from recording the duplicate page.
- **Page Cloaking** detects what IP address is requesting your HTML, and then serves a search-engine specific page if it detects a spider. Normal users are served the regular HTML. While often effective, page cloaking is regarded as spam by many search engines.

If you think you might be penalized for spamming, contact the search engine and let them know that your site is no longer showing up. They may help you correct the problem or give you a second chance.

Yahoo

Yahoo is by far the most important place to submit your site. Yahoo gets more traffic than any other site on the Internet.

Yahoo is incredibly picky about your submission. If you do anything wrong, they will reject your submission. Yahoo costs \$299/yr for business sites, except for sex sites, which can cost \$699/yr. Once you submit, yahoo will review your site and give you an answer within 7 days. If you are denied, you have a month to make changes and re-submit for free.

Yahoo doesn't care about your Meta tags or your page content. All they care about is what you write form when you fill out the submission form. You'll only get one chance, so be careful.

Some things your site must have before submitting to Yahoo:

1. A complete unique site. Don't give them an "under construction" page or a half finished page with links that don't work. Don't send them a duplicate of another site with a different URL.
2. Commercial sites must list the street address and contact information for the business somewhere on the site. If your address is hard to find on the site, you can direct the Yahoo people to it when they give you the chance to send comments with your submission.

Yahoo Categories

To submit your site to Yahoo, you must first find the category your site belongs in. This is very important. If you submit to an incorrect category, you'll get nowhere. Yahoo likes you to get specific. That said, top-level higher-level categories rank better, unless you can find a category with your keyword phrase in them. Example: "Camping Gear and Equipment > Tents" would be a good category to submit to if your site was called tents-unlimited.com, even though "Camping Gear and Equipment" is higher. To find your category, try to search for a related site and see what category they're in.

After you find your category, you'll click on the "Suggest a Site" link at the bottom of the page.

Commercial sites

IMPORTANT: Yahoo always distinguishes between commercial and non-commercial sites. If you're suggesting a site that is in any way commercial--it sells something, promotes goods and services,

or promotes a company that sells goods and services--then the site belongs somewhere in the Business and Economy section of Yahoo. If you fall into this category start by clicking on the "Business and Economy" link.

Regional Sites

ALSO IMPORTANT: If you are a local based site, that is, your site offers goods and services on a regional basis only, you should submit to the appropriate regional section of yahoo. Start by typing in your city or region, and follow the links from there.

Heed This Warning

OKAY, REALLY SUPER IMPORTANT: Always follow Yahoo's directions to the letter. If they tell you not to do something, *don't do it!* They'll toss your application faster than you can think "Dang, it's been six months. Why isn't my site on Yahoo?"

Ranking High on Yahoo

- When a user searches *by category* Yahoo returns results in *alphabetical order*. "Academy of Web Design SF", wasn't chosen entirely by accident, you know. If you can, you're best off with a site that starts with the letter "A" or a number. Only about 20% of Yahoo users ever search by category, so if you can't think of a good alphabetical name, don't worry about it too much.
- While submitting, you will come to a "Site Information" page, which will ask you for three things, Your URL, your Title, and a short Description. *What you type in these three fields determines your keyword density*. You'll only get one shot at this, so it's very important to be careful. Some web designers print out the Yahoo submission form, fill it out by hand, and wait a night before submitting on the web. It's easier to take your time without a "submit" button glaring up at you.
 1. **URL:** You must submit your URL. Hopefully it contains your most sought after keywords. Note that Yahoo can only detect keywords in your domain if they're separated by dashes. For example: As far as Yahoo is concerned, Web-Design-School.com is much better than WebDesignSchool.com.
The order of keywords in your domain matters too. You main keywords should be at the beginning of the domain.

2. **Site Title:** Usually the site title is the same or very close to your URL. Keyword Density, baby!
3. **Description:** A short, no nonsense description of your services. Yahoo reviewers love to hack and slash descriptions, so make it as short and concise as possible. Although Yahoo doesn't want you to, you want to work the same keywords from your URL and Title into the description. This can often be achieved by making sure the site offers a Unique Selling Point (USP) that compels the use of your target keyword.

Example:

URL: LiveHorseRacing.com

Title: Live Horse Racing

Description: Offers online betting and the ability to watch Real-time Live Horse Racing.

Listing with the Open Directory Project www.dmoz.org (free)

The Open Directory Project is an indexed database that allows itself to be searched by other search engines. It is gaining extensive use and widespread recognition. The Open Directory Project is staffed by volunteers and is currently the number-two queried search tool. It's used extensively by AOL, Netscape Search, and Lycos. The Open Directory Project is gaining on Yahoo, and therefore a must for submission.

1. Determine the correct category.

- a. Search for your most desired keyword in the ODP and find the most desirable and appropriate top ranked (showing on page one) category.

****Sites that offer online commerce must originate in the "Shopping" category**

- b. Search Netscape, AOL Search, and Lycos, to make sure that your chosen category also exists in those engines. If you can't find a desirable appropriate category that matches in all three ODP major affiliates, keep in mind that AOL is about as popular as Netscape and Lycos combined.

Category	AOL	Nscape	Lycos
Business > Industries > Arts and Entertainment > Equipment > Staging > Tents and Canvas Structures	Yes	Yes	Yes
Recreation > Parties > Party Supplies > Rentals	Yes	No	No

Example: Your Client Sells Party Tents

Click the Add URL link at the top of the page and follow the general Yahoo submission guidelines.

- You can submit to more than one category if you like, but when submitting to more than one *sublevel* of the same category, you should be careful to avoid the appearance of spamming. It is often a good idea to email and ask the editor for advice before you proceed. You can find the editor's email by clicking on the editor's link at the page bottom.
- You can submit multiple pages from your site as long as each provides some unique value. Example: A page describing how to set up party tents would be acceptable, where as a price list would not.

Listing with Google www.google.com (free)

- **Use the following address to send Goggle's spider to your homepage.**
<http://www.google.com/addurl.html>
- **Google places almost no importance on meta-tags**, but instead builds keyword density by searching the whole page for search terms.
- **Google places heavy weight on inbound link analysis.** Even links from your own site count.
- **Google builds its displayed description from words that surround the first instance of the search term in your page.**
 - You can effectively write a description by crafting your most sought after keyword into the first HTML sentence on the page or by making the first thing in your page an image and writing a keyword rich description in the ALT tag.
- **Search terms that appear in bold, header, and large text** all help marginally to boost rankings
- **Paid ads are available** on a pay-per-impression basis, and appear at the page top, marked "Sponsored Listings." The fee is \$8-\$15 per thousand impressions, depending on the desired keyword. You can purchase premium ads for a minimum of \$10,000 spent over three months. Premium ads appear inside an outlined box in the upper right of a results page.
- **ALT tags play an important roll in Google listings.** Make sure you have them and maximize them for keywords.

Google listing usually takes about 1 month. Google will automatically re-spider your site every month.

Paying For Listings

Of course you should submit by hand to every free search engine you can, but paying for listings is often necessary to effectively create a net search presence. Paying for listings is often also an effective way to build traffic.

Paid Inclusion: (you must pay to be included in the database)

- **Yahoo** \$299/yr Acceptance is not guaranteed, answer within 7 days. If denied, you have one month to redesign and resubmit.
- **Inktomi** \$39/first site, \$25/each following site, acceptance is guaranteed barring spam. Inktomi provides results for AOL, Hotbot, and MSN. Your site will be spidered every 2-7 days, which is good if you want to "tweak" your site. There is no limit to the number of pages you submit. Inktomi takes submissions through its partner sites. Hotbot is probably the easiest. <http://hotbot.lycos.com/addurl.asp>
- **LookSmart** \$149/standard submission (8 weeks), \$299/express submission (7 days). LookSmart provides most of the results for MSN, the number two used search engine.

Paid Ranking:

- **Overture.com** provides paid listings for Yahoo, MSN, and Ask Jeeves. You bid on keywords. If you are within the top three bids for a searched term your site will display at the top of Overture's partner sites. Minimum bid is 5 cents per click, but you must start you account with \$50.00.
- **Google** works on a pay-per-impression basis. Google as appear marked "Sponsored Listings." The fee is \$8-15 per thousand impressions (views), depending on the desired keyword. There is some evidence that advertising increases your normal Google ranking.

