

5 tips to make your content search engine friendly

Is Your Publication Shunned by Search Engines?

What Search Engines Want from Your Content

As an avid researcher, it is obvious that articles from trusted periodicals and newspapers rarely appear on the first page of a search engine query. This is disturbing as some of the most unbiased, current, in-depth coverage exists in newspapers and periodicals, yet these sources are often overlooked. The following tips will help determine if your site is properly optimized for search engines.

Search engine results are determined by a complex set of algorithms involving inbound and outbound links, text characteristics, URL formations and HTML tags, to name a few. How content is managed behind the scenes is crucial in determining whether it is search engine friendly.

There has been a rise in dynamically delivered content from databases and content management systems in the last ten years to handle the large volumes of posts. Many of these systems create URLs involving arcane strings filled with abbreviated identifiers and punctuation commands that are not human readable. Title tags are often generated from the story's headline. And large publishers lacking a long-term Web publishing strategy often opt to publish and perish their stories.

All these scenarios hurt periodicals when it comes to search results. Readers rely on information from sites that appear on the first page of search results – regardless of the credibility of the periodical. If your periodical isn't on the first page, readers tend not to look further.

Search engines use *indexing* to determine the content and order of search results. Indexing uses programs called robots to count and analyze the words on an HTML page. Excessive use of white space or comments can prevent the robot from properly indexing the page. Dynamically generated pages run the risk of not being indexed at all. To make sure your site is indexed, put a piece of code such as
`http://www.yourdomain.com/sitemap.xml` in your robots.txt file.

Your business must decide how to put content onto your Web site. Remember, if your articles appear high on a search result page they yield more traffic to your site. And higher traffic equals higher revenue. If you wish to require readers to pay or register for content, summarize articles to “tease” readers into registering or subscribing for this content.

*By Diane Burley
E-publishing Specialist*

#	5 Tips to Capitalize on Search Engines
1	Make sure your content is indexed. On any search engine line type site:yourdomain.com . You will see a listing of all the stories being indexed by that engine. If the number of stories does not appear lengthy enough or descriptions are missing, it could indicate a programming problem. See tips 2 and 3.
2	Eliminate arcane URLs in favor of human readable ones. Separate keywords with + signs or underscores.
3	Create static HTML pages so search engines can find your content. You can always add dynamic content to an HTML page. Add the code: http://www.yourdomain.com/sitemap.xml in your robot.txt file.
4	Create Title Tags with keywords – Automate if you can or custom create tags. Don't waste characters on articles & unimportant words. Make every character count.
5	Use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) and proper HTML code. Search engine robots only scan so far down a page — CSS eliminates unnecessary code to maximize scanned content.