

**SEARCH ENGINE POSITIONING AND OPTIMISATION – ALL YOU SHOULD
KNOW**



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WHAT IS SEARCH ENGINE POSITIONING?

The internet is vast: there are billions of web pages, with millions of new ones added every day. In fact, for search engines to deliver a significant amount of visitors to your site, you really need to be one of the top five matches. While this can sound daunting, there are lots of things you can do very cheaply to improve your rating on the major search engines. This document contains information on how search engines work; how you can boost your positioning; and whether you should consider using an agency to help you.

HOW DO SEARCH ENGINES WORK?

Not all search engines work in the same way, which means you need to tailor your approach according to which search engine you want to position yourself on.

There are two kinds of search engines:

- Directories
- Web crawlers.

Directories

Directories are staffed by human editors who consider every new website submitted and, if they decide it is acceptable, assign it to the appropriate category or subsection. Examples of directories include Yahoo! and Open Directory. Some website owners try to cheat computerised search engines by claiming their site is relevant to lots of popular subject when it isn't – some, for example, try to attract passing traffic by claiming to sell cheap CDs or electronics. This is much less likely to happen with directories because entries are reviewed by hand.

The Benefit is that, if you get your site included in a directory, it will be competing against fewer entries and users will regard the results as more authoritative and reliable.

Web crawlers

Web crawlers are automated systems that catalogue websites by sending out special programs to check web pages and absorb information from each web page – like words or phrases– which can be used to generate search results. These programs, which are known as 'spiders', 'crawlers' or 'bots', can check up to 100 web pages per second. Although this might seem quick, the sheer size of the web can mean that it could take up to two months from a page being 'spidered' (visited by a crawler program) before it appears in search engine results. Examples of web crawler search engines include **Ask Jeeves, Google, Lycos and AltaVista.**

How do web crawlers assess your site?

Key words

When web crawlers visit websites, they look for key words or phrases that help them create entries for search engine indexes. Spiders from the various search engines have slightly different collection criteria – some ignore common terms like 'a', 'and', and 'the'. Most have a finite number of keywords they take from any website. And all look for key words and phrases in different ways. To get a high placement on a search engine, it's critical to understand what make good key words and where to put them on your website.

Link analysis

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As well as key words, some programs, like Google, rank sites according to the number of sites that link to them and the quality of these links. If a site that links to you has a hundred other sites linking to it, this will give you a higher rating than if the site had only 10 sites linking to it. In this way, web crawlers try to establish the popularity and relevance of websites. You can boost your search engine placement by approaching other websites and suggesting you link to each other. Good sites to link to are industry bodies and discussion sites that your customers might visit.

Ranking algorithms

Most web crawlers use a mix of the above criteria for assessing pages. Where they differ is how they weigh and balance this information to rank pages. This is done by complex Mathematical formulas called ranking algorithms. After their brand names, these pieces of software are the search engines' most valuable assets and, as such, they are closely-guarded secrets.

When should you use search engine positioning?

The more you've invested in your website, the more it's worth investing in search engine positioning. For single page or homepage websites that simply establish a presence on the internet and provide contact details, there's little point in trying to drive more traffic to them. However, sites that promote products and services, and e-commerce websites that allow customers to browse, order and pay for goods online, should consider employing search engine positioning to improve their visibility, popularity, and profitability. You also need to consider your audience and the purpose of your site. If your website aims to serve existing customers or grow through word of mouth, then perhaps your search engine positioning won't be a priority. However, if you are trying to acquire customers, you work in a price-sensitive market or you offer a niche product or service, then you might want to try and use search engines to entice visitors.

Paying extra

Over 90% of all referrals to e-commerce sites come from the four largest search engines: Google, Yahoo!, MSN and AOL. Because search engines have considerable brand loyalty from their users, they have developed a range of premium services that can bump your site up in the rankings for a fee.

Pay for inclusion

Although most web pages are eventually assessed and included automatically by web crawlers, the size of the web can cause a delay. Generally, crawler search engines will let you by-pass this by submitting your URL to them. In addition, most also offer the option of paying to speed up the process still further. Looksmart, for instance, charges about £150 for submission of new sites. Directories also let you jump the queue. Yahoo!, for example, offers an express service which costs £199 a year.

Pay per click

Most search engines will let you buy a position in the search listings. The highest bidder for a particular keyword or phrase appears first, with the second highest appearing second, and so on. You can often specify how much you are willing to pay per click – anywhere from about 15p to 35p per click. How much you pay, and how many click-throughs you receive, determines your position in the search engine's ranking. Google also offer a flat fee based option with a minimum spend of between £5,000- £10,000 a year.

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Maintaining your position

Once your listing is established, keep trying to maintain your website rankings, and improve them. Keep your pages fresh so that visitors find something new each time they visit, and constantly try to establish more links to high profile sites. Track how you are doing with the search engines, to see where traffic to your website is originating, and which traffic sources prove the most rewarding.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Register, Register, Register.** List your website in **all online directories** to make sure your site appears in non-sponsored sections. Most of the directories offer standard listing for free but at times may not allow you to exhibit your web URL . You can later on update your listing to a premium one if you have facts to prove that the listing is generating business for you.
- Construct a system in place to monitor the inquiries generated from various online directories to measure the Return you are getting for your time and money.
- It is important to bear in mind that search engines rely on web crawler system & do not guarantee your listing. As a result delays are usually unavoidable as the listing are reviewed and added from time to time. The time generally varies from 1 week to 4 Months. It is not advisable to wait around till that time and not take any action to generate business through other available means. Gather information about how you can link to other websites using reciprocal marketing, start advertising your website address in all your stationery, and your emails as a standard policy.
- It is important to review and invest time in understanding Google Adwords as this is a DIY approach to creating and managing your own paid listing. It also generates daily reports, web site traffic generated through the paid listing, and which key words are giving your more site traffic.

To initiate the search engine positioning, we have listed your websites in eight popular directories and submitted the websites to Google and Yahoo for standard listing. Please continue this process by making sure that your website is listed on **ALL ONLINE DIRECTORIES** thus increasing your chances of seeing your site appear more.

SHOULD YOU OUTSOURCE YOUR SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION TO A OUTSIDE COMPANY?

If you are a small company and have limited budgets, it is best to approach the strategy by doing it yourself. As it is very easy to manage and free to implement except for paid listings. An outside agency is likely to prove a very expensive solution for doing tasks which can be implemented by yourself at no cost! Just as:

- a) Listing in directories
- b) Create campaigns in Google Adwords and manage them
- c) Update the content in your website periodically to keep up with the changing keywords that customers are likely to type in while searching for a business like yours.
- d) Measuring and monitoring business generated through online marketing

Areas where you can consider getting an outside consultancy:

- Creating web site trackers that can track multiple sites and multiple pages
- Creating web site referrals banners
- Linking websites
- Many business specific website solutions

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ABOUT US

With NIVID LTD's E-commerce and website design solutions, you can reach out to customers by adopting a customized approach to match the product and service offerings.

Our sites are designed with your customers needs in mind. Our sites are simple to navigate and search. We've all seen sites that are frustrating to use and difficult to find what you want and with this in mind we always design sites that are simple with a modish look, easy to navigate, search, highly functional and company message is conveyed with accuracy without too much complication.

You can reach our Web design consultant on 0207 101 9233 or alternatively email us on info@nivid.net Please visit www.idmsol.com for more information about our services and our company.

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