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### Getting Started on the World Wide Web: How to Register, Create and Market a Website

#### Introduction

The Following document provides a general information about the Internet and how to register and create a web page or web site. First, some basic background information on what the Internet is and how it was created is presented to provide background material. More detailed information can be found in the following sections.

The Internet has revolutionized the way people communicate, shop, conduct business, and entertain themselves. Understanding the concepts of the Internet and the World Wide Web and how they function can be very encumbering and even intimidating. This publication should provide a basic understanding of the Internet and World Wide Web and how they operate.

According to recent statistics there are more than 80 million<sup>1</sup> Americans actively using the internet and that number is growing daily. Chances are you have had an opportunity to go “online” or have heard about being online via the television, newspaper, friends, and family.

Here we go, you are sitting at a computer ready to connect to the Internet and World Wide Web (WWW). However, having a computer does not automatically allow you to connect to the Internet. You must obtain an **Internet account** in order to have access to the Internet and World Wide Web. This service is provided through an **Internet Service Provider (ISP)**. Finding an ISP is as simple as picking up the phone book and looking under Internet in the Yellow Pages. There are more than 2,600 ISP companies in the U.S. and that number is continually growing.

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<sup>1</sup>The Nielsen/Net Ratings 2002

You should compare rates and services and give you a basic understanding of the services provided and the associated costs.

Once you have obtained an Internet account, you can access the Internet and the World Wide Web. Before exploring the Internet and the World Wide Web, it would be helpful to obtain a general understanding of these terms and how they operate. First, the Internet and the World Wide Web are two distinctly different “things” that work together.

The **Internet**, or “The Net” as it is commonly known, got its start in the United States Department of Defense. The U.S. Department of Defense wanted to create a communication system that could withstand a nuclear attack. The Internet was first known as ARPANet which stands for Advanced Research Projects Agency Network, was developed in the 1960s and 1970s as a way to explore the functionality of linking multiple packet networks of various kinds in an attempt to develop a transparent communication protocol. The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) initiated the NSFNET in 1986 to help in the development of the Internet. The NSFNET serves as a major backbone communication service for the Internet. From there, the Internet evolved into the global communication system we know today. The Internet can be thought of as a system of internationally “networked” or linked computers (cable, software and hardware) which allows the linked computers to communicate.

The **World Wide Web (WWW)** is a system of writing and displaying text, called hypertext. The hypertext system allows text or documents to be accessed in varying levels of detail as well as having multiple links to other text and documents via the Internet. The WWW uses the Internet to link the hypertext system and computers. For example, if you visit a web site, by simply clicking on a prompt, you can be linked to more detailed information within the web site or “linked” or transferred to another web page or web site.

Once you log onto your Internet account, you are generally directed to your ISP’s Web site which functions as a home base or starting point. To gain a better understanding of a web site, you need to become familiar with the terms used to describe a web site and its contents. The terms **web site**, **home page** and **web page** are frequently used interchangeably. However, they are actually different terms. A web site can be thought of as a specific location on the WWW. A web site is a medium for displaying information and may include text, graphics, audio, video, and other information. A home page can be interpreted as the first or front page of a web site for navigating on the web site or as a link to other sites. A web page is commonly thought of as the information that fills the monitor’s screen, however, the web page can be several monitor screens long and is actually defined as a single Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML) file. The HTML file is nothing more than a type of document formatting.

<HTML>	(Opens a HTML file)
<HEAD>	(Contains the Header information)
<TITLE>	(Inserts a title to appear on the title bar of the browser window)
</TITLE>	(Closes the title name)
</HEAD>	(Closes the Header information)

<BODY>      (Contains the page content)  
 </BODY>     (Closes the page content)

</HTML>     (Closes a HTML file)

Many word processing software programs have formats built into their operating codes. For example, the WordPerfect software package has a “reveal codes” function which allows the user to see the document formatting codes. HTML is the document format used for the World Wide Web. The HTML file can be thought of as a chapter in a book. Each individual chapter would be considered a web page. So if a web site has 10 web pages, the analogy would imply that the book would have 10 chapters.

Another term used to describe a web site and its content is the **main page**, which may or may not be the same as the web site’s home page. A main page can provide visitors with navigational short cuts that link them with other pages within the site. The main page does not appear on each of a site’s pages, but is a page that the visitor can link to in order to find links to other interesting topics within the site. The main page can be thought of as a table of contents or site map providing a brief description and link to each page contained within the site. Ideally, every page on the Web site can be directly accessed from any page on the site with only a few clicks. For example, each page on the site should have an easy to find link to the site’s main page or table of contents. The visitor can then use the main page to link to any page they want using the main page.

When you visit a web site or web page, your computer uses a program referred to as a **browser** to view, access, download, and up load text and graphics material from the web page. The browser reads and interprets the HTML file contained on web pages, translates and displays the information in a format that we see as the web page (i.e., text and graphics). Without the browser, the web page would look like a regular text document with formatting codes imbedded in the text. Two of the most common browsers are Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer.

Assume you are browsing or “surfing” the Net, the act of navigating through the Internet and WWW by simply pointing and clicking. In order to go to a specific web site, you need to know the web site’s address. For example, The University of Georgia’s web site address is [www.uga.edu](http://www.uga.edu), the uga.edu is considered The University of Georgia’s web site address. As with other Internet and WWW terminology, there are multiple terms used to describe the same concept. The concept of a web site address is also described by several terms including **Domain Name** and **Uniform Resource Locator (URL)**. For example, [uga.edu](http://uga.edu) is The University of Georgia’s URL, Domain name and web site address. It is important to have your web address reflect the name of your company or product because it will makes recalling your web site’s address easier for customers and reinforces your company name. There are free web sites that allow you to search domain names and determine if a specific URL has already been registered. For example, [www.register.com](http://www.register.com) or sites allows you to search domain names to determine if a particular web site address has been registered. If the name has not been registered, you can then register the web address with the US Domain Registry online at with one of the many registrars

(companies that can provide domain name registration services). Once you have determined that your URL is not registered, you can register it for a fee of \$150 for five years with an additional maintenance fee of \$35/year thereafter. These prices are effective as of February 2002 with register.com or \$64.95 for five years. Prices are slightly higher if a shorter registration time is selected.

A list of registrars can be found on the US Department of Commerce's InterNIC web site ([www.internet.net](http://www.internet.net)). Site registration gives you the right to a particular domain name or web address but typically the registration has to be renewed annually. Once you complete the registration process, your URL is registered with The US Domain Registry at the Information Sciences Institute of the University of Southern California (USC-ISI) in Marina del Rey, California. An ISP or web designer/developer can also register your URL for the same cost as mentioned above. However, some ISPs may try to charge you a registration fee in excess of the \$64.95 mentioned earlier.

With the number of web sites increasing daily, and increasing at an exponential rate, it is a good idea to register your web site address as soon as possible. You may want to consult a web site registry when deciding on a product or business name to determine if a proposed name's corresponding web site address has been previously registered. After selecting a web site address, register it, even if your web site has not been developed. You may lose your desired web site address if you wait until your site has been developed as another organization may decide on the same name and register the address before you have the opportunity.

Electronic mail is one of the great features of the Internet. Your ISP will provide you with one or more e-mail addresses. The address names will be developed by you and have your ISP's URL following the @ sign. E-mail is a fast and cheap way of being able to correspond and send graphics, text, and other electronic media to other e-mail participants. The web site address, URL or domain name can also be found at the right of the @ sign for an e-mail address. For example, [kwolfe@agecon.uga.edu](mailto:kwolfe@agecon.uga.edu) is my e-mail address. The [kwolfe](mailto:kwolfe@agecon.uga.edu) can be thought of as my street number and the [agecon.uga.edu](mailto:kwolfe@agecon.uga.edu) as the street name, city and zip code.

The WWW is an enormous entity. For example, in February 2002, the Google search engine, searches an estimated 2 billion web sites. This number has grown substantially and it is believed that the number of web sites doubles every 53 days. However, this figure has not been substantiated. Finding what you want on the Internet would be virtually impossible without the use of search engines and directories. **Search Engines** can be compared to the more traditional library card catalog and categorizes the library's contents by subject matter, authors, etc. The search engine maintains an index of web resources and allows individuals to query, or search, these indexes using key words (words related to the subject being sought). For example, an individual can search for strawberry preserves by entering the word(s) strawberry, preserves, or strawberry preserves. The search engine then searches its indices and databases for web resources containing these words.

Some of the major search engines are not search engines by definition but are actually **directories** of web sites. Directories are dependent on humans to classify a web site based on a

site description supplied by the web site owner/designer. The directory is different from a search engine in that by adding meta tags, which are used to specify information about the web page and “loading” your web page and web site with key words has no effect on improving the directory listing. The key to receiving a good listing within a directory is to offer an excellent site, with good content. These site features increase a site’s likelihood of being reviewed by the directory. The most popular of this type of search engine is Yahoo.

Companies, organizations, or people register their web sites and web pages with search engines and directories so people surfing the WWW can find their sites. One of the tools used to help index a web site and/or web page are meta tags. The various public WWW documents, Gopher documents are then categorized into different indices according to the document’s meta tags, which are supplied by the web developer. Then, the search engine searches these indices using the key words typed by the search engine user. Search engines also use programs called spiders or crawlers that prowl the Internet. Spider/crawler programs prowl the Internet searching for new and updated, publically accessible WWW sites and pages and other archives. The information these programs gather is then logged into a database or index. The search engine utilizes company registration information and the information provided by the spider/crawler programs to create and maintain their indices.

### **Finding an Internet Service Provider and Web Site Designer**

Finding an ISP and/or web site developer can be as simple as looking in the telephone book’s yellow pages under Internet Services. The ISPs and web developers advertise similar products and services but like any other product or service provider there are significant differences in what the company offers and the prices they charge.

I contacted seven ISP/web developer providers in the Atlanta area. I was surprised to learn that what a company charges for web site design, registration and maintenance differ significantly by company. The following are some service issues that should be researched and explored before signing up with an ISP/web developer:

1. **Domain name (URL or web site address) registration.** There appears to be a significant difference in the price ISPs charge to register your web site address and there are discounts for long term registration. The fees range from an initial registration fee of \$19.95 for one year, \$40 for two years and \$150 for ten years, with an annual renewal fee of \$35 there after.

An in-depth investigation found that some companies are registering your site at cost while others are nearly doubling the initial registration price charged by the U.S. Domain Registry. Thus, it is a good idea to shop around or try and negotiate the registration fee with a company that charges more than the required \$12.99 initial registration fee and \$35 annual renewal fee.

2. **Web site design.** Web site design companies typically charge by the hour. The price starts at around \$50 per hour. To derive an estimate of website construction costs, seven ISP/Web design companies were contracted and were asked what it would cost to get a simple web site with order taking capabilities. In all fairness, these companies were providing a rough estimate based on a single telephone conversation. Interestingly, there was a tremendous variation in quoted prices. The quotes range from low \$300-\$500 to a high of \$1,500 for the web site design. Again, it is important to shop around and try to negotiate the best price with a company.
3. **Setting up a web site for selling.** To sell products and take credit card numbers over the Internet, you need to make sure a secure server is being used. A secure server ensures that the information being exchanged between computers cannot be corrupted or intercepted. The ISP companies that were contacted can provide a secure server connection ranging from \$25-50/month. However, to accept credit cards on your site you will need to establish a merchant account with a financial institution. An online merchant account is identical to the merchant accounts brick and mortar retailers use to process credit card transactions.

In addition, the web site host may charge your business with one of two typical transaction fees. The first is a fixed per transaction cost (i.e., \$0.10/transaction) or a fixed percentage of the transaction price. These terms need to be investigated thoroughly before signing up with an ISP. Another feature that can be added to a web site is the shopping cart. The shopping cart feature allows a visitor to select a number of different items and put them in a cyber shopping cart. When the shopper is finished, the cart's contents are then tallied and the shopper is presented with a shopping bill. The shopper then enters a credit card number and the transaction is complete. The product is then delivered via U.S. or a commercial delivery company. The shopping cart feature price can also range from a low of \$150/month to more than \$200/monthly.

After some initial investigation into the ISP/Web site development business, it was determined that prices for services and products can vary significantly. It is a good idea to shop around, do your own research and evaluate all the information you have collected before deciding on an ISP or web design company. Given the wide range in prices, some companies may negotiate their prices, but only an informed consumer possesses enough knowledge to know the difference between a good deal and one that is too expensive.

### **Business Web Site Development Considerations**

The web developer will work with you to design a web site that meets your business needs. However, before the actual web site creation begins, a great deal of thought and planning needs to take place. The following are some issues that need to be addressed prior to and during web site development:

1. **Audience or target market** - The more you know about your target market the more you can adjust your web site contents. Some very important questions to ask before creating a web site are: Who is my audience or target market? Who are the people that will be visiting my web site? For instance, what is the purpose of your web site, to provide information or to market and sell a product or service? Another issues to consider, is the audience or target market's level of familiarity with the site's subject matter.

If your site is set up to market or sell a product and/or service, the site's presentation needs to be informative but concise. You should provide easy to find answers to anticipated questions, i.e., minimum orders, shipping, warranties, and pricing schedules. You may also want to include an e-mail option that allows the visitor to submit questions directly to you via e-mail. Again, this provides you with one more opportunity to sell your product as you respond to potential customer questions.

In addition to having a concise and informative web site, the site needs to be user-friendly and as time efficient as possible. Surfers may be reluctant readers and by encumbering them with volumes of information you may encourage them to resort to "channel-switching" (surf) to look for competing products. For example, the number one complaint among Internet users is long load times. By incorporating a lot of information and/or large graphics into a web site, the load time may take too long to hold a visitor's attention and they surf to another site.

However, if your web site visitors are interested in the information contained in your web site as opposed to shopping, there is more room for providing a more thorough description of your topic. You need to make sure that you can provide your visitors with the information they are looking for in the most convenient and efficient method available. Try to avoid supplying bits and pieces of information that require navigation to other pages or links within the site or other sites to obtain a complete set of information on a topic.

2. **Provide exceptional service.** Make your web site user friendly by offering visitors easy to following instructions on how to find what they are looking for at your Web site. In addition, you should offer them various means of ordering and paying for the items they select. You should offer the visitor the opportunity to order on-line, by telephone or by mail. A complete mailing address is essential as is a telephone number - both of which should be included with order information. You should include a statement about your web site's security system to help alleviate fears of using a credit card online to make a purchase.

Once an on-line order has been submitted, you should e-mail the customer and let them know their order has been received and then send another email message the day the product is actually shipped. Some Web companies indicate that if your product is available it will be shipped in a specified amount of time. The customer does not know if they will get their product or not until it shows up at their door. This is very frustrating

for the customer. The on-line shopping experience needs to be as painless as possible for the customer.

3. **Briefly describe your site.** A business web site should provide visitors with a brief description of the business and available products. Briefly describe any unique aspects of your business from inception to the current operation to include unique manufacturing, service, distribution, and other processes. This type of seemingly useless information provides your company the opportunity to differentiate itself from competing products as well as showing pride in the business. Be careful, too much seemingly useless information may actually become useless if you cannot retain the visitor's interest.
  
4. **Use graphics and photos on the Web site.** You should ensure that all graphics and photos are incorporated in a way that does not cause extended load times. Graphics and photos provide visitors with a wealth of information in an easy-to-digest format. Try to avoid using graphics just to grab a visitor's attention. Try to minimize the load time of your web page. Research indicates that 80% of web users cite load time as the web's single biggest problem.<sup>2</sup> A graphic should not exceed 4 kilobytes (K)<sup>3</sup> to help minimize load time. The following provide some Web page size recommendations and their correlation to loading time (size includes both text and graphics):<sup>2</sup>
  - 0 - 10 K - Extremely well optimized, very fast load time. Page loads quickly.
  - 10 - 20K - Well optimized. Fast load time. Page loads quickly.
  - 20 - 40K - Adequate. The load time is acceptable but not quick.
  - 40 - 60K - Not very well optimized. Slow load time and page loads slowly.
  - 60K + - Extremely inefficient. Very long load time.

According to Terry Sullivan with The Pantos Organization, after the first 10K, a web graphic can actually hurt the web page in that the page takes too long to load and annoys visitors who may leave. According to Mr. Sullivan, for every 1K a graphic exceeds the 10K standard and the web page may anticipate a 1% to 2% decline in readership. Mr. Sullivan's simple formula for calculating a graphic's impact on readership is:

$$((\text{graphic file size in kilobytes} - 10\text{K}) * \%2) \text{ Where K is kilobytes}$$

This formula provides an estimate of the loss in readership caused by excessive graphics. For example, a graphic that is 18K may reduce a Web page's readership by 16% according to Mr. Sullivan's rule-of-thumb.

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<sup>2</sup> Site Optimization Strategies, Terry Sullivan, All Things Web ([www.pantos.org/atw/3505.html](http://www.pantos.org/atw/3505.html)).

<sup>3</sup> A Kilobyte or K is a thousand bites.



5. **Make sure that your web site is easy to read.** The Web page's background should not impair the visitor's ability to read and see the information provided on the page. For example, recently I visited a web page with a dark blue background and black text. It was difficult to see the text which made reading the material laborious. This may actually discourage visitors from reading about your business as there are numerous competitors offering more legible web pages. Again, keep your web pages short to keep visitors from having to scroll down to read material and to increase load time.
6. **Develop your site for speed.** Develop an efficient main page for your web site. Providing visitors with an optimized, speed-enhanced main page, can make your site more user friendly. Visitors may enter a web site through the home page or one of the web pages within the site. However, chances are they will end up on your home page given a clear, easy to find link. By creating a main page, which may or may not be the same as the web site's home page, you can provide visitors with navigational short cuts that link them with other pages within the site.

A more sophisticated way to provide visitors with navigational short cuts on each web page in the web site is referred to as a **navigational bar**. A navigational bar can be found on each web page and serves the same function as a web site's main page. The navigational bar allows the visitor to read brief descriptions of other web pages in the site as well as providing a link.

7. **Keep web pages small (file size).** The web site's home page should not be over 20K to ensure a reasonable load time. Additional pages in the site can be larger. You do not want to discourage visitors to your site by having them wait for the home page to load. Once the visitor enters your site and starts looking for specific information, they can be linked to larger web pages (file size) and are more apt to wait while the page loads because they are looking for specific information.
8. **Graphic formats.**<sup>5</sup> There are two main graphic formats that are utilized on the WWW, the JPEG and GIF formats. The JPEG format was designed to work with full scale color or gray-scale color images and works well on photographs, naturalistic artwork and similar real-world material. However, JPEGs do not work very well on lettering, simple cartoons or line drawings. The JPEG format allows for greater compression, making the file smaller (fewer kilobytes) reducing the graphic file sizes needed to represent the image graphically, with less loss of quality. This method of file compression is referred to as Lossy, which means that after an image has been compressed, and then decompressed, the final image is not identical to the original image. JPEG files are intended for images that are going to be viewed by humans and not machines. The JPEG compression technique takes advantages of limitations in the human eye that would be picked up by machines even if they are invisible to the human eye.

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<sup>5</sup>Adapted from NetLingo: The Internet Language Dictionary, [www.netlingo.com](http://www.netlingo.com)

The GIF format was developed by CompuServe using Unisys technology. GIF files are very popular on the WWW because they are small and can be down loaded quickly. The GIF format is different from the JPEG format in that file compression cannot be controlled directly. However, the GIF image does allow part of the image to be transparent and the image can be interlaced, neither of which can be done with a JPEG image. Interlacing refers to how an image first appears blurry but its resolution continually increases as the image is loaded. This feature allows the visitor to get an idea of what the image is while they are waiting for the total image to download. The GIF format will also ensure that the image is displayed identically each time it is viewed.

When comparing the JPEG and GIF image format, there are a number of issues to consider. The JPEG typically loads faster than the GIF. However, the GIF image can be interlaced.

9. **Place key or strategic words** in critical locations on web page(s). The key words need to be included in the web page's title, the page's headline, the first paragraph of your web page and should be used frequently. The trick is to keep your key words as high up on the top of a web page as possible. Use key words frequently but do not spam or include words numerous times in a web page in a blatant attempt to bolster ratings (this is referred to as spamming). Words that are found lower on a page are considered to be less relevant because they are located lower on the page.

Key words need to be placed before tables and/or graphics that may be on the web page. Tables and/or graphics may visually follow the text containing key words or the text may be placed next to a table or graphic. However, the browser may see the table and graphic first, then the text. As a result, the text containing the page's key words is perceived by the search engine as less relevant to the web page because it is located lower on the page. You should not remove or exclude tables and graphics because of this potential problem, just be aware what effect a table or graphic might have on your web page indexing. Meta tags are one way to circumvent this problem. The meta tags can be placed at the top of a page where they are picked up by the search engine.

It is important to remember that strategically placing key words and using meta tags will not help a web page to achieve a high search engine ranking if the words do not reflect the contents of the page. Again, it is very important that the key words and meta tags reflect a page's content.

Web sites and web pages consist of HTML files. Within these HTML files the web developer can include **meta tags**. Meta Tags are used to specify information about the web document. The tags are key or strategic words used to describe the site. The search engine uses programs called spiders or crawlers that prowl the Internet searching for new and updated, publically accessible WWW documents and other archives. The information gathered by the spider/crawler programs is then logged into a database or index. The various public WWW documents, Gopher documents are then categorized into different indices according to the document's meta tags,

which are supplied by the web developer. Then, the search engine searches these indices using the key words typed by the search engine user. The search engine then provides a list as well as a link to the web documents that contain words specified in the search.

Key words or strategic words are also an important part of a web site. The search engine searches for words typed into its search box. The search engine then cross-references the word or words it is searching for with its indices of web sites and documents. Your strategic words need to reflect the content of your web page. Again, you should have different key words for each page, if the content differs. For example, if you are selling preserves and crafts, chances are you will have a web page dedicated to presenting only preserve products, complete with pictures, descriptions and prices. You may have another web page dedicated to your craft products, again with pictures, descriptions and prices. Your craft page needs to have “crafts” as one of your key words for that page. Similarly, you need to include preserves as part of the key words to describe your preserve web page.

The different web sites and web documents you browse are the creation of a **Web Designer** or **Web Developer**. The Web designer is the person that designs the aesthetic and navigational architect of a web site-this would include the background, color, text layouts, text style, font size, graphics layouts, etc. The Web designer can be thought of as a graphic artist whose creative talents are put to use creating electronic material opposed to more traditional printed materials. A Web Developer is the web designers’ technical counterpart. The Web developer provides the programming and technical expertise required to make a web site function as envisioned by the web designer.

### **Registering a Web Site with Search Engines and Directories and Tips for Promoting Your Web Site**

Once a web site has been constructed, it is very important to register the web site with all of the major search engines and directories. Registering your web site is not as complicated as it seems and can be done without soliciting the help of a professional. The following provides a simple explanation of how you can register your web site with search engines and directories.

#### **How Do I Submit My Web Site to a Search Engine?**

A search engine can be compared to the more traditional library card catalog that categorizes a library’s contents by subject matter, authors, etc. The search engine maintains an index of web resources and allows individuals to query, or search, these indexes using key words (words related to the subject being sought). The first step in registering your web site with a search engine is to go to the search engine’s home page. Contained somewhere on the search engine’s home page, is a link that refers to the “Add URL.” The URL is an acronym for Uniform Resource Locator which is nothing more than another term used to describe a web site address. This link can generally be found at the bottom of the page. For example, on the

www.infoseek.com site, the “Add URL” link can be found at the bottom right of the page under the heading “Tools.”

When you are connected to a web page describing the procedures for submitting a URL the first thing you need to do clicks on the “Add URL” link. The page provides in-depth instructions on how to submit your URL to the search engine. The search engine will then ask you to type in your site’s URL and then click on the add/update URL button. These simple steps will submit your URL to the search engine. You will then be notified via a confirmation page if the site has been successfully reached and indexed. Up to fifty URLs may be submitted but only one can be submitted in a 24-hour period. More than fifty URLs can be submitted via e-mail. Actually, some search engines require you to submit your URL with your e-mail address regardless of the number of URLs being submitted. It is a good practice to submit your web site’s key pages, those pages you think are the site’s most important. Search engines generally follow links from your pages for indexing. However, in some instances, they may not follow page links. By submitting key pages to the various search engines and directories you can hopefully avoid this problem. Submitting two or three key pages should be sufficient.

A good starting place, which boasts registering your site with more than 400 search engines and directories, is [www.register.com](http://www.register.com).

### **How Long Do Search Engines Take to Index (List) the Site?**

The time required for a search engine to index your URL varies significantly. There is no standard length of time for a search engine to index a site, but rather, each search engine will generally take a different amount of time to index a site. The following provides an example of site indexing time estimates for some of the larger search engines:

Altavista (1-2 days)	AOL Netfind (2 weeks)
Excite (2 weeks)	Hotbot (3weeks)
Infoseek (1-2 days)	Lycos (2-3 weeks)
Northern Light (No documentation)	Webcrawler (2 weeks)
What-u-seeek (24 hours)	Planet Search (1-2 weeks)

Note: Do not be surprised if any one of the search engines listed above takes longer than presented to index a site.

### **How Do I Submit My Web Site Address to a Directory?**

To submit a URL to a directory, you need to go to their site and browse the different site categories. Yahoo.com is a good example of a directory. Yahoo has categorized web sites and web pages into that visitors can explore. These broad categories like *Arts and Humanity*, *Business and Economy*, *Recreation and Sports* allow the visitor to narrow down their search by

providing information starting points. These initial categories contain sub categories which in turn, contains sub categories. The idea is to provide the visitor with a means of narrowing down their search for information. As you click on a category you will be presented with a subset of related subcategories until you finally get a listing of web sites or web pages that contain information related to the subject being sought.

To register your site with a directory you need to pick a category that best fits your web site material. If you are not certain of the category your site should be listed under, the directories offer a listing of categories with a simple explanation and description. The category description and explanation can be useful in deciding which category to submit your site's URL. After selecting a category to submit your site's URL, use the available page links to go to that section of the web site. In Yahoo, you would go to the "suggest a site" link found at the bottom of the desired category. Next, click to enter the submit site. Before you can submit or suggest a site you generally are asked a number of questions concerning the web site. In addition, you may be required to submit a written description of your site which will include a list of keywords that you would like to be associated with your site. Generally, the list of key or strategic words are words that describe the contents of your web site or web page. If your site falls under multiple categories, the procedure must be repeated for each category the site is to be listed under.

### **Verify, monitor and update your web site<sup>6</sup>**

After submitting your URL (address) to search engines and directories, check on them to make sure it is listed properly. Some search engines and directories have links that allow you to verify that your web site has been registered. This check should be done after about a month or so to allow the search engines and directories to get things registered. Don't stop there, it is important to frequently check on your web site pages as pages sometimes disappear, dead links may develop or the page may be deleted from a search engine or directory catalog.

It is important to resubmit a web page after major changes have been implemented. By resubmitting the page, the search engine and directory have the opportunity to index your new page. The new index may significantly impact your search engine results ranking or place the page in another category. Resubmitting a web site after significant changes have been made is one way to ensure that your site's content is current within the various search engines and directories. It is suggested that a site be resubmitted every 6-12 weeks. Repeatedly and/or frequently resubmitting a web site is also referred to as spamming and may cause the search engine to block your site. The word spam was originally created to describe mass mailing of identical unsolicited email but has been broadened to include the frequent submission of a web site address to search engines and directories.

### **Tips for Promoting and Increasing Web Site Traffic**

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<sup>6</sup> [www.searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/tips.html](http://www.searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/tips.html)

In addition to registering your web site with the major search engines and directories, to fully reach your web site's potential as a marketing and selling tool, it needs to be marketed. The Internet and the WWW are touted as the great equalizers, however, if a company's web site is not known or cannot be found, it is not being utilized to its full potential. Via the Internet small companies now have the means to compete with larger established companies in the marketplace.

The following are tips for increasing web site customer traffic:<sup>7</sup>

- **Direct market your web site address.** Include your business' Web address on all collateral marketing material (i.e., brochures, business material, stationary, newsletters, fliers) as well as correspondence materials (i.e., fax cover sheets, quotes, invoices). The purpose of including your Web address on all business material is that it allows you to expose a current and potential customers to your address. The key is to get your Web address in front of as many people as possible.
- **Get your web address on as many and directories as possible.** Make sure your Web address is added to the directories of the various organizations in which you're involved. This does not have to be limited to professional organizations. For example, add your Web address to any trade organization in which you or your company is a member but in addition, make sure your Web address is added to your health club's membership directory or any other directory where your name may be listed.
- **Make sure your web site name,** and if possible your Web address, are identifiable with your company name. For example, Coca-Cola's Web address is [www.coke.com](http://www.coke.com). If it is possible, it is a good idea to have your company name in at least part of your Web address.
- **Register your web site,** Web address, company name, products and services, and any key words that can be used to describe your company or product with all Internet search engines. Research has shown that 85% of Web surfers find sites via search engines and directories. A Search Engine is a remotely accessible program that lets you do keyword searches for information on the WWW. The search engine enables people browsing the WWW to search for words or phrases anywhere on your web site.
- **Try and develop as many "hot links" to and from other web sites as possible.** Many Web sites are glad to include a "link" to and from web sites that offer similar topics (i.e., trade associations, vendors, customers, chambers of commerce, state or local governments), especially if your site has something of value to offer. This will allow you to attract the attention of web browsers who visit sites linked to your Web site. For example, a business visiting a chamber of commerce's Web site may decide to look at the

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<sup>7</sup> "How's your web site doing," by Jeffery Gitomer. January 1999, Atlanta business Chronicle ([www.amcity.com/atlanta](http://www.amcity.com/atlanta)).

chamber's membership list. By having your Web site linked to the chamber of commerce's Web site, the visitor can "link" to your Web site by simply clicking on your Web address. The ISP can provide you with information on the number of times your site has been visited, where (web sites) the customers came from and where they went (sites they surfed after visiting yours).

- **Generate promotional programs** (i.e., electronic coupons) that can only be obtained from visiting your Web site. This helps to attract customers to your Web site where they can learn more about your business and its products and services.
- **Advertise your web site.** Use banners to advertise your web site on web sites with similar content. These web sites are targeting the same consumers as your web site. This provides the surfer with the opportunity to learn of your web site as well as providing them a link to make "surfing" to your site easy. Search engines and directories offer banner advertising space. Search engines and directories place ads in front of surfers based on the key words they use for their search. For example, assume you are a manufacturer of organic compost. You place your organic compost ad with a search engine. Now, assume a surfer is searching for organic gardening. The search engine will serve your advertising banner to this surfer because he is searching on a topic that has the same key words as your advertisement.
- **Make your web site appealing.** The web site needs to be informative and interesting. It is tempting to include too much information about your business. The customer has decided to visit your sight to seek information about specific products and services you have to offer and not to learn about every aspect of your business and its entire history. This is not to say that an abbreviated interesting version of your company and its history is not needed. There is a fine line between providing the visitor with enough information about your business and its products and providing too much. For example, a brief description of how your company's family recipe was discovered and finally brought to market is a good way to convey your company's marketing position (i.e., family-owned small business producing homemade products). On the other hand, a painstakingly detailed account of Aunt Pauly's life is not necessary and may end up boring the visitor.
- Finally and most important, do not forget to supply your Web site visitors with information on how to order your product. You should have a telephone number, preferably a 1-800 number and complete mailing address.