



## Introduction to Search Engine Marketing

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Before we begin, it's important to make a distinction between search engine submission and search engine optimization. These terms, along with others, are sometimes used synonymously to discuss different efforts to promote sites on search engines. However, they refer to some very specific activities.

### Search Engine Submission: Getting Listed

"Search engine submission" refers to the act of getting your Web site listed with search engines. Another term for this is search engine registration. Getting listed does not mean that you will necessarily rank well for particular terms, however. It simply means that the search engine knows your pages exist. Think of it like a lottery. Search engine submission is akin to you purchasing a lottery ticket. Having a ticket doesn't mean that you will win, but you must have a ticket to have any chance at all.

### Search Engine Optimization: Improving the Odds

"Search engine optimization" refers to the act of altering your site so that it may rank well for particular terms, especially with crawler-based search engines (see "An Introduction to Search Engine Optimization" for details on how search engines work and what you can do to improve your rankings). Returning to the lottery model, let's assume there was a way to increase the odds of winning by picking your lottery numbers carefully. Search engine optimization is akin to this. It's making sure that the numbers you select are more likely to win than purchasing a set of numbers at random.



## **Search Engine Placement & Positioning: Ranking Well**

Terms such as "search engine placement," "search engine positioning" and "search engine ranking" refer to a site actually doing well for particular search terms or phrases with search engines. This is the ultimate goal for many people -- to get that "top ten" ranking for a particular keyword or phrase.

## **Search Engine Marketing & Promotion: The Overall Process**

Terms such as "search engine marketing" or "search engine promotion" refer to the overall process of marketing a site on search engines. This includes submission, optimization, managing paid listings and more. These terms also highlight the fact that doing well with search engines is not just about submitting right, optimizing well or getting a good rank for a particular term. It's about the overall job of improving how your site interacts with search engines, so that the audience you seek can find you.

## **Human-Edited Directories**

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Directories are search engines powered by human beings. Human editors compile all the listings that directories have. Getting listed with the web's key directories is very important, because their listings are seen by many people. In addition, if you are listed with them, then crawler-based search engines are more likely to find your site and add it to their listings for free.

## **The Open Directory**

<http://dmoz.org/>

The Open Directory uses volunteer editors to catalog the web. Formerly known as NewHoo, it was launched in June 1998. It was acquired by AOL Time Warner-owned Netscape in November 1998, and the company pledged that anyone would be able to use information from the directory through an open license arrangement.



While you can search at the Open Directory site itself, this is not recommended. The site has no "backup" results that kick in should there not be a match in the human-compiled database. In addition, the ranking of sites during keyword searching is poor, while alphabetical ordering is used when you choose to "browse" categories by topic.

Instead, to scan the valuable information compiled by the Open Directory, consider using the version offered by Google, the Google Directory. Here, keyword searching uses Google's refined relevancy algorithms and makes use of link analysis to better propel good pages from the human database to the top. In addition, when viewing sites by category, they will be listed in PageRank order, which means the most popular sites based on analyzing links from across the web will be listed first.

### **Submitting to the Open Directory**

The Open Directory is a volunteer-built guide to the web. It is provided as an option at many major search engines, including Google. Given this, being listed with the Open Directory is essential to any site owner. The good news is that submission is absolutely free. The bad news is that this means there's no guaranteed turnaround time to getting a yes or no answer about whether you've been accepted.

### **Yahoo!**

<http://www.yahoo.com>

Launched in 1994, Yahoo is the web's oldest "directory," a place where human editors organize Web sites into categories. However, in October 2002, Yahoo made a giant shift to using Google's crawler-based listings for its main results. If Yahoo is now powered by Google, then why bother using it? For one thing, you might find that the way Yahoo "enhances" Google's listings with information from its own directory may make search results more readable. In addition, Yahoo's search results pages still show Categories links. When offered, these will take you to a list of Web sites that have been reviewed and approved by a human editor.



It's also possible to do a pure search of just the human-compiled Yahoo Directory, which is how the old or "classic" Yahoo used to work. To do this, search from the Yahoo Directory home page, as opposed to the regular Yahoo.com home page. Then you'll get both directory category links ("Related Directory Categories") and "Directory Results," which are the top Web site matches drawn from all categories of the Yahoo Directory.

Sites pay a fee to be included in the Yahoo Directory's commercial listings, though they must meet editor approval before being accepted. Non-commercial content is accepted for free.

Consider Yahoo any time you think you might be well served by having a list of human-reviewed Web sites. It's also a good choice for popular queries, since the category listings it provides may help you narrow in and refine your query. Doing a pure Yahoo Directory search also provides a unique human view of the web.

### **Submitting to Yahoo**

Do a search on Yahoo, and the main results that come back generally will be "powered" by Google. Despite this, Yahoo maintains its own independent "directory" of Web sites, which are compiled by its human editors. Being listed in this Yahoo Directory MAY potentially help you get included and ranking better in Google's results. And, since Yahoo uses Google results for its main listings, this means it MAY help you at Yahoo itself.

Yahoo has two submission options: "Standard," which is free, and "Yahoo Express," which involves a submission fee. Why might you choose to pay when the free search engine submission option is available? Simply for a fast turnaround time. If you use the free submit choice, there's no guarantee that your submission will be reviewed quickly or at all.

As for commercial categories, Yahoo requires that sites pay a Yahoo Express submission fee of \$300 (well, \$299) per year. This fee doesn't guarantee that you will be listed, only that you'll get a yes or no answer about being accepted within seven business days. However, the vast majority of most decent sites are accepted.



If accepted, you'll be reevaluated after a year and charged the submission fee again, if you want to stay in Yahoo's commercial area. You should review the traffic you received from Yahoo over the past year, to decide if it is worth paying the fee again. If not, you can decline to be listed, and you will not be charged.

But what about Google? If you originally signed up with Yahoo hoping to influence Google, won't dropping your Yahoo listing cause you to be dropped by Google? Not necessarily. Google will keep listing your site on its own. Whether it will rank it well is a separate question. However, after a year of existence, your Web site may have other important links pointing at it. This means that losing your link from Yahoo may not have much of an impact on your ranking. If money is tight, you could try dropping the Yahoo listing and only submit again if you find it does have an impact with how you rank in Google's results.

The annual fee only applies to commercial categories. If you submit to a non-commercial category using Yahoo Express and get accepted into that area, the fee is charged only once, not on an annual basis. You might get the opposite impression, because you'll keep seeing references to "recurring annual fee." However, in the terms and conditions for Yahoo Express, the annual fee is only for sites in the Yahoo Commercial Directory.

## **Crawler-based Search Engines**

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Crawler-based search engines automatically visit web pages to compile their listings. This means that, unlike directories, you are likely to have several if not many pages listed with them. This also means that by taking care in how you build your pages, you might rank well in crawler-produced results. See "An Introduction to Search Engine Optimization" for more details on how to achieve higher search engine rankings.



## Google

<http://www.google.com>

Google has a well-deserved reputation as the top choice for those searching the web. The crawler-based service provides both comprehensive coverage of the web along with great relevancy. It's highly recommended as a first stop in your hunt for whatever you are looking for.

In addition to Google's unpaid editorial results, the company also operates its own advertising programs. The cost-per-click AdWords program places ads on Google as well as some of Google's partners. Similarly, Google is also a provider of unpaid editorial results to some other search engines. Google AdWords and other pay-per-click programs will be discussed later in this document.

### Google Local

Sometimes the information you're looking for is related to a particular place – like the all-night doughnut shop that's nearest to your house. Google Local locates neighborhood stores and services by searching billions of pages across the web, then cross-checking those results with Yellow Pages data to pinpoint the local resources you want to find. This innovative approach gives you access to the most – and most relevant – results for your search.

To use Google Local, just include a zip code or the name of a town or city with your regular search terms at [www.google.com](http://www.google.com). Your local results will appear at the top of the results page.

You can also go directly to the Google Local home page (<http://local.google.com/>) to show only the local results, to view your results on a map of the region, or to limit your results to those listings within a set distance of your starting point.



## Submitting To Google

Arguably the most important crawler-based search engine is Google, as several major search engines such as Yahoo and AOL Search have their main results "powered" by Google. In addition, many people also go directly to Google to search.

The absolutely best way to get listed with Google is to build links to your Web site. Indeed, this is the best way to get listed for free with all the major crawlers listed on this page. Crawlers follow links, so if you have good links pointing at your Web site, the crawlers are more likely to find and include your pages.

Here's the good news: if you submitted your site to the major directories and got listed with one or more of them, then Google and other crawlers will almost certainly pick up the URL that was listed. This means you may not need to do additional work to get listed with crawlers. If you have a brand new Web site, it will probably take about a month before Google lists your web pages. Because of this, you might consider making use of its paid placement program, which is covered later in this guide.

## AllTheWeb.com

<http://www.alltheweb.com>

An excellent crawler-based search engine, AllTheWeb provides both comprehensive coverage of the web and outstanding relevancy. If you tried Google and didn't find it, AllTheWeb should probably be next on your list. Indeed, it's a first stop search engine, for some. In addition to web page results, AllTheWeb.com provides the ability to search for news stories, pictures, video clips, MP3s and FTP files.

Until recently, AllTheWeb.com was owned by a company called FAST and used as a showcase for that company's web search technology. That's why you sometimes may sometimes hear AllTheWeb.com also referred to as FAST or FAST Search. However, the search engine was



purchased by search provider Overture in late April 2003. It no longer has a connection with FAST.

### **Submitting To AllTheWeb**

AllTheWeb is an important crawler-based search engine primarily because it powers the primary results for the popular Lycos service. The search engine was also recently purchased by paid listing provider Overture, so its listings could potentially be used by some Overture partners, in the future. Expect a delay of up to six weeks until your pages show up, assuming they are indeed accepted.

### **AltaVista**

<http://www.altavista.com>

AltaVista is an important crawler-based search engine because, while its popularity has dropped over the past year, significant numbers of people still use it to search the web. It has also been recently purchased by Overture.

AltaVista is the oldest crawler-based search engine on the web. It opened in December 1995 and for several years was the "Google" of its day, in terms of providing relevant results and having a loyal group of users that loved the service. Sadly, an attempt to turn AltaVista into a portal site in 1998 saw the company lose track of the importance of search. Over time, relevancy dropped, as did the freshness of AltaVista's listings and the crawler's coverage of the web.

Today, AltaVista is once again focused on search. Improvements have been made, but crawlers such as Google and AllTheWeb provide more comprehensive results. Because of this, AltaVista is probably a third-choice crawler, one to try if you haven't found what you are looking for at one of its competitors.



AltaVista does remain strong in terms of some of the specialty searching it offers. It provides a good image search service, and you can look for video and audio clips, as well. It also has an outstanding news search service.

AltaVista was originally owned by Digital, and then taken over by Compaq, when that company purchased Digital in 1998. AltaVista was later spun off into a private company, controlled by CMGI.

## **AOL Search**

<http://aolsearch.aol.com> (internal)

<http://search.aol.com> (external)

AOL Search provides users with editorial listings that come from Google's crawler-based index. Indeed, the same search on Google and AOL Search will come up with very similar matches. So, why would you use AOL Search? Primarily because you are an AOL user. The "internal" version of AOL Search provides links to content only available within the AOL online service. In this way, you can search AOL and the entire web at the same time. The "external" version lacks these links. Why wouldn't you use AOL Search? If you like Google, many of Google's features such as "cached" pages are not offered by AOL Search.

## **Netscape Search**

<http://search.netscape.com>

Owned by AOL Time Warner, Netscape Search uses Google for its main listings, just as does AOL's other major search site, AOL Search. So why use Netscape Search rather than Google? Unlike with AOL Search, there's no compelling reason to consider it. The main difference between Netscape Search and Google is that Netscape Search will list some of Netscape's own content at the top of its results. Netscape also has a completely different look and feel than



Google. If you like either of these reasons then try Netscape Search. Otherwise, you're probably better off just searching at Google.

## **Paid Listings (PPC or Pay-Per-Click Campaigns)**

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Every major search engine with significant traffic accepts paid listings. This unique form of search engine advertising means that you can be guaranteed to appear in the top results for the terms you are interested in within a day or less. Given this, paid listings are an option that should be explored by site owners who wish to quickly build visibility. They may also be a long-term advertising option for some.

### **Overture**

<http://www.overture.com/>

Formerly called GoTo until late 2001, Overture is an extremely popular paid placement search engine that provides ads to many of the leading search engines such as Yahoo!, MSN and AltaVista, CNN, InfoSpace, Excite, Go2Net, Juno, NetZero, DogPile, WebCrawler, MetaCrawler, AllTheWeb, and ESPN. While Overture has traditionally been a paid listings provider, the company is expanding into offering crawler-based editorial results. To do this, it purchased AllTheWeb in March 2003 and AltaVista in April 2003.

### **Overture Pay-for-Performance™/Overture Premium Listings™**

Overture allows sites to "bid" on the terms they wish to appear for. You agree to pay a certain amount each time someone clicks on your listing. This is why it is sometimes called a "pay-per-click search engine."

While some people go directly to the Overture Web site to search, most people encounter Overture's paid listings via other search engines. For example, the very top listings for "running



shoes" at Overture would also appear in the "Sponsored Links" section at the top of AOL Search's results.

If your goal is to build visibility on search engines quickly, then Overture is an essential option for you to explore. No other route can put you in the top results of many major search engines in such a short period of time.

Advertising in Overture's Premium Listings™ (the top three positions for a search term) enables you to appear on more search sites and reach 80% of active Internet users.

Overture Premium Listings requires a \$20 minimum monthly spend with a minimum bid of \$0.10 per click-through.

### **Overture Site Match™**

Overture Site Match™ is a pay-per-click program that also provides search results to the major web portals mentioned above. You submit your URLs for review and pay an annual fee for a quality review of your submitted pages. Once reviewed and accepted into the program, your pages are added to a database of sites that powers search results for the leading web portals.

Submitted URLs are presented in search results based on relevance to search terms. When a user clicks your Site Match™ listing in search results, you pay a set cost-per-click fee for that lead which is based on the category of your listing (cost per click fees currently range between \$0.15 and \$0.30). URLs are refreshed (re-crawled) every 48 hours to ensure that the most up-to-date content is available to search users.

Site Match™ charges an annual fee per domain of \$49 plus cost-per-click charges.



## Key Distinctions between Overture Site Match™ and Pay-for-Performance™

Site Match™	Pay-for-Performance™/Premium Listings
Web page submission program	Paid listing advertising program
Listings appear in the main body of the search results page	Listings appear in the sponsored search results sections of partner sites
Position determined by the relevance of your site content to the user's search request	Position determined by bidding on a specific keyword
Listings automatically generated based on your Web page content	Advertisers create listings by writing titles and descriptions

**Pay-For-Performance™ Search**

Yahoo! Search Technology powered results (includes all web pages)

Site Match™ Enhanced and structured way to participate in Yahoo! Search Technology

The screenshot shows a Yahoo! search for 'DVD'. At the top, there are navigation tabs for Web, Images, Directory, Yellow Pages, News, and Products. Below that, there are sponsored results for DVD rentals from Netflix and Columbia House. The main section is titled 'TOP 28 WEB RESULTS' and lists several organic search results related to DVD reviews, rental services, and retailers.



## Google AdWords

Google sells paid listings that appear above its editorial results called "Premium Sponsorships" and those that appear to the side of its regular results called "AdWords." Since it may take time for a new site to appear within Google, these advertising opportunities offer a fast way to get listed with the service. Also, as with Overture, they may be a continuing option you may wish to explore.

Google AdWords is a quick and simple way to purchase highly targeted cost-per-click (CPC) advertising, regardless of your budget. AdWords ads are displayed along with search results on Google, as well as on search and content sites in our growing ad network, including AOL, CompuServe, Netscape, Ask Jeeves, AT&T Worldnet, EarthLink, Excite, HowStuffWorks, & Blogger.

With more than 200 million searches on Google each day and even more searches and page views on their ad network, your Google AdWords ads reach a vast audience.

Google's self-service AdWords program charges a per click fee, similar to Overture. AdWords charges a \$5 activation fee with no monthly minimum.



## Search Engine Results Chart

Search Engine	Type Of Main Results	Provider Of Main Results	Paid Results	Directory &/or Backup Results
AllTheWeb	Crawler	AllTheWeb (Overture-owned)	Overture	n/a
AltaVista	Crawler	AltaVista (Overture-owned)	Overture	LookSmart
AOL Search	Crawler	Google	Google	Open Directory
Ask Jeeves	Crawler	Teoma (Ask-owned)	Google	Open Directory
Google	Crawler	Google	Google	Open Directory
HotBot	Crawler	Inktomi (Yahoo-owned)	Overture	Also available: AllTheWeb, Google, Teoma
LookSmart	Human	LookSmart/Zeal	LookSmart	Backup from Inktomi
Lycos	Crawler	AllTheWeb (Overture-owned)	Overture	Open Directory
MSN Search	Human	LookSmart/Zeal	Overture	Backup from Inktomi
Netscape	Crawler	Google	Google	Open Directory
Overture	Paid	Overture	Overture	Backup from Inktomi
Open Directory	Human	Open Directory	n/a	n/a
Teoma	Crawler	Teoma	Google	n/a
Yahoo	Crawler	Google	Overture	Yahoo



## **Partner with TriDigital for your Search Engine Marketing Needs**

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TriDigital Inc. develops and manages Search Engine Marketing (SEM) Programs for businesses and organizations who want to increase qualified traffic to their Web site. Our team has been involved in interactive marketing and e-commerce since its inception and has deep knowledge of current online marketing strategies. The commercialization of Internet search is the most significant recent development on the Web, and TriDigital's SEM Programs are designed to help our clients develop a cost-effective strategy and take advantage of this exciting new marketing opportunity.

Paid placement of "sponsored listings" on search engines allows businesses to reach a huge national audience of consumers searching online for specific products and services. The ability to dynamically bid for specific "keywords" on a "pay per click" (PPC) basis results in qualified, measurable traffic at a predictable cost. With proper tracking and analysis, advertisers can continuously improve their campaigns and the return on their online marketing investment.

TriDigital can perform Search Engine Optimization of your site to improve and track your rankings on unpaid "editorial" listings of the major search engines including Google, Yahoo, AOL, and MSN.

TriDigital offers comprehensive, cost-effective Search Engine Marketing Programs to help our clients acquire new customers and grow their businesses.

Partner with TriDigital. Make things happen.

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*This report was compiled by TriDigital Inc. from a series of articles appearing on SearchEngineWatch.com.*