Q & A for Google Sitemap Generator for Web Server

1. **What are Sitemaps?**
   Sitemaps are an easy way for webmasters to inform search engines about pages on their sites that are available for crawling. In its simplest form, a Sitemap is an XML file that lists URLs for a site along with additional metadata about each URL. For more information see http://www.sitemaps.org.

2. **What do I get from using Sitemaps?**
   By creating and submitting Sitemaps to search engines, you are more likely to get better freshness and coverage in search engines. The crawlers can use the information in your Sitemap to decide when to re-crawl your site and which parts of the site to focus on.

3. **How can I submit Web Sitemap to search engines?**
   Search engines usually provide a public URL to accept Sitemaps submission. For Google, this URL is:
   http://www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/ping?sitemap=YOUR_SITEMAP_URL
   Webmasters are also encouraged to submit their Sitemaps to Google using Google Webmaster Tools (http://www.google.com/webmasters/start).

4. **What are Sitemaps extensions and how I can submit them to Google?**
   Besides Web Sitemaps, Google have implemented a few Sitemaps extensions for different vertical search engines, for example video search, image search, and mobile search. You can find more information here:
   http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/topic.py?topic=8476. You have to submit these Sitemaps via Google Webmaster Tools.

5. **Can I submit all kinds of Sitemaps to Google?**
   No. Some Sitemaps are only accepted from selected websites. For example, Google only accepts News Sitemaps from Google News source websites.

6. **Can I submit Sitemaps for domain A using domain B URL?**
   Usually no. This is forbidden by the Sitemaps protocol because of spam concerns But if you're verified to own both domain A and B, you can do a cross-domain submission in Google Webmaster Tools. See details in:
   http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2007/10/dealing-with-sitemap-cross-submissions.html. Note that cross-submissions may not work for search engines other than Google

7. **Are URLs submitted by Sitemaps guaranteed to be included in search engine?**
   No. Sitemaps only help search engines find your website content more rapidly and crawl them more effectively. Whether your content will be indexed by the search engine will depend on the content itself.

8. **How do I create Sitemaps?**
   You have several choices:
   - Write the Sitemap XML file manually based on your website content
   - Extend the content management system for your website to create the Sitemaps.
   - Use a third party tool to create Sitemaps
   - Use Google Sitemap Generator for Web Server to create Sitemaps.

9. What is Google Sitemap Generator for Web Server?
Google Sitemap Generator for Web Server is a tool installed on your web server to generate the Sitemaps automatically based on your web server content and traffic.

10. What are the main differences between Google Sitemap Generator and other third party Sitemap generation tools?
Other typical third party tools usually generate the Sitemaps by crawling your website. This process is very similar to the crawling undertaken by search engines, so it may not help too much on coverage. It may also not help too much on freshness for big websites, because crawling is not an efficient way to find new content in a big website. Google Sitemap Generator takes a different approach: it will monitor your web server traffic, and detect updates to your website in almost real time.

11. What's the difference between Google Sitemap Generator for Web Server and Google Sitemap Generator in Python Script?
Google has public released a Sitemap Generator in Python script before: https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/docs/en/sitemap-generator.html. Google Sitemap Generator for Web Server will use a different mechanism (filtering instead of crawling) to create your Sitemaps, and also provide enhanced features and much better usability. It also support more Sitemaps formats. We recommend new users to try Google Sitemap Generator for Web Server.

12. What are other benefits can I get from Google Sitemap Generator?
- Google Sitemap Generator runs on the backend of your web server, and carries out Sitemap generation and some Sitemap submission automatically and periodically. You need not do any administration work again after initial configuration.
- It automatically calculates certain metadata (such as modified time, change frequency) in Sitemaps for you.
- And it generates multiple Sitemaps for different purpose in an efficient way.

13. What are main features of Google Sitemap Generator?
- Create Sitemaps based on web server traffic, web server logs and web server files.
- Supports Web, Video, News, Mobile and Code search Sitemaps format. Calculates Sitemaps meta-data automatically.
- A web based configuration UI to allow you to configure Sitemap Generator settings easily and remotely.
- Great flexibility in URL filtering.
- Automatic submission for Web Sitemaps.

14. Will there be any performance impact to my web server?
Our performance tests show that Google Sitemap Generator should have very minimal (almost unnoticeable) performance impact on your web server.

15. What are the system requirements for Google Sitemap Generator?
- Windows 2003, Windows 2008, Redhat AS 4.0, Ubuntu, or other popular Linux based on Linux kernel 2.4 or 2.6 for x86 (both 32 bit and 64 bit)
- IIS 6.0/7.0, or Apache 1.3/2.0/2.2
- 1 G free hard disk space for about 2M URLs (varies depending on the number of URLs on your site)
- 20~50M free memory

16. Can Google Sitemap Generator submit all my sitemap files to the search engine?

No. Only Web Search Sitemaps can be submitted anonymously. For other Sitemaps, you need to use Google Webmaster Tools (http://www.google.com/webmasters/start). We also highly recommend you submit Sitemaps for Web Search through Google Webmaster Tools too since it's more reliable.

17.Can I exclude some URLs from my sitemap file using Google Sitemap Generator?
Through the Google Sitemap Generator configuration UI, you can configure Google Sitemap Generator to exclude a certain URL pattern from your Sitemaps.

18.Can I remove users' session keys or other per-user sensitive information from the URL?
Yes. You can do this by configuring Google Sitemap Generator to replace specified URL parameters with fixed values, or remove them completely.

19.I have multiple load balanced web servers running for the same website. Do I need to install Google Sitemap Generator on all web servers?
In this kind of load balanced environment, an URL will be served by a randomly selected web server. So you basically need to put Sitemaps on all load balanced web servers, or use cross-domain submission. You have the following alternative options:
• Install Google Sitemap Generator on all web servers, and configure them using same setting so Sitemaps will be generated on all web servers.
• Install Google Sitemap Generator on one web server, and automatically synchronize the generated Sitemaps to other web servers.
• Install Google Sitemap Generator on one web server, setup a new domain name for this web server, and submit it to Google using cross domain submission. See http://googlewebmastercentral.blogspot.com/2007/10/dealing-with-sitemap-cross-submissions.html. Note that cross-submissions may not work for search engines other than Google
Our recommendation is option 3, and 2nd recommendation is option 2.

20.I have multiple sites sharing the same web server. Do I need to install Google Sitemap Generator individually? Or can I configure them separately?
After you install Google Sitemap Generator on your web server, it can work for all sites on the same server. Through the Google Sitemap Generator configuration UI, you can specify different settings for different sites. You can also choose to use Google Sitemap Generator for a few selected web sites in a shared web server.

21.How can I be a Beta partner to try Google Sitemap Generator?
Contact your Google business contact person, and ask about being a Google Sitemap Generator beta partner. Please ensure that your system meets our requirements first.

22.Does Google Sitemap Generator send any private data, or other data I don't want to share, to Google?
No. Apart from the URL of your public Sitemaps, Google Sitemap Generator doesn't send out any of your data to any party.

23.How do I know Google Sitemap Generator is not doing anything malicious on my web server?
For now, you can only trust Google, or do some analysis work yourself if you're a good hacker. In future, we will release our code as Open Source so you can download and examine our source code.

24.Who should I contact if I want to report bugs or get support from Beta testing?

You should contact your contact person in Google first, or you can go to user group of Google Sitemap Generator: http://groups.google.com/group/google-sitemap-generator to post your questions.

25.When will Google Sitemap Generator be public?
It will be released in a few months.