

SEO On-Page Factoring Guide

Quick Reference "Cheat Sheet"
 Updated September 3, 2008

	Google	Yahoo!	Live
<u>Avg. time: submission, index, cache</u>	1-5 weeks	2-3 weeks	2-4 weeks
<u>Deep Crawls Websites Every ...</u>	30-45 days	4-6 weeks	5-7 weeks
<u>Title Characters Displayed SERPs</u>	65*	71	70
<u>Title Indexed</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Level of Importance of Title Tag</u>	Average	High	Very High
<u>Description Characters Displayed SERPs</u>	156	169	200
<u>Description Tag Indexed</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Description Tag Used as Description</u>	Varies	Yes**	Yes***
<u>Level of Importance of Description Tag</u>	Average	High	Average
<u>Meta Keywords Indexed</u>	No	Yes	Yes
<u>Meta Keywords Characters Indexed</u>	n/a	500+	500+
<u>Level of Importance of Keyword Tag</u>	n/a	High	High
<u>Meta Robot Tags Supported</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Support Frames</u>	Partial	Partial	Partial
<u>Indexes NoFrames Content</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Indexes all Visible Content</u>	No limit	No Limit	No limit
<u>Meta Redirect</u>	Spam	Spam	Spam
<u>Supports Robots.txt file</u>	Fully	Partially	Partially
<u>Indexes Heading Tags</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>LSI Support</u>	Partially	No	No
<u>Word Count Minimums</u> (Recommended)	None	100	None
<u>Keyword Density</u>	2-6%	4-9%	6-9%
<u>Word Stemming</u> (position = positioning)	Yes	No	No
<u>Word Capitalization</u> (search = Search)	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Search Case Sensitive</u>	No	No	No
<u>Plural vs. Singular Difference</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Exact Keyword Order</u> (buy car = buy car)	No	Yes	Yes
<u>Comment Tag Indexed</u>	No	No	No
<u>Link Popularity</u>	Very High	High	High
<u>Link Reputation</u>	Very High	Average	Average

<u>Anchor Text Indexed</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>ALT Text Indexed</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>ALT Text Importance</u>	Poor	Average	Good
<u>Hidden Text Penalty</u>	Yes	No	No
<u>Hidden Text in Form Indexed</u>	No	No	No
<u>Form Option Text</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Dynamic Page Support</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Accept cookies or Session IDs</u>	No	No	No
<u>CSS Indexed (On Page / External)</u>	Yes/Yes	Yes/No	Yes/No
<u>JavaScript (On Page / External)</u>	Yes/Yes	Yes/No	Yes/No
<u>Keyword in Domain</u> – Importance	Average	Good	High
<u>Older Pages Increase in Rank</u>	Yes	No	No
<u>Reviewed Sites Preferred</u>	Yahoo Directory, ODP, Best of the Web, Business.com	Yahoo Directory	None
<u>Authoritative Site Preference</u>	Yes	No	No
<u>Indexes Multiple Levels</u>	Yes	Partial	Partial
<u>"Click Tracking" Influence</u>	In Place	No	In Place
<u>Indexing Limits</u> (Number of Pages)	None	None	None
<u>Supports "nofollow"</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Follows Image Maps</u>	Yes	Yes	No
<u>Index Flash pages</u>	Use PPC	Use PPC	Use PPC
<u>XML Site Map Support</u>	Yes	Yes	No

* Google will cut off the display in the Title not on a specific character count, but on a word break.

** If the site is listed in the Yahoo! Directory, the description in the directory takes priority.

*** MSN will use the first 100 characters of the description and then it will shift to the first text in the body of the document.

Check List for On-Page SEO

1. Validate your HTML code so it is "spider" compliant.
2. Name Files Properly. Use hyphens instead of underscores. Hyphens are considered spaces between words, (blue-widget.html translates to "blue widget" = good). Underscores are not considered spaces (blue_widget.html is read as bluewidget = not good).
3. Add text link navigation at the bottom of the page. Be consistent. Use the same "footer menu" for each page.
4. Use a correct character set tag and place it directly after the opening <html> tag.
5. Write a compelling and focused Title Tag.
6. Ensure your Description Tag works hand-in-hand with the Title to entice the searcher to "click" on the listing.
7. Create a unique Title & Description for each page.
8. Avoid using your "money phrases" in the Keyword Meta Tag.
9. Check to make sure you are using the correct DTD statement.
10. Reference JavaScript as an external file.
11. Reference CSS as an external file.
12. Use a compelling Heading Tag.
13. Assign ALT Tags to all main graphics.
14. Focus on targeting keyword phrases instead of single keywords.
15. Place your keyword phrase in the following areas:
 - i. Title Tag
 - ii. Meta Description
 - iii. H1 tag to begin the content
 - iv. First line of content (or first paragraph)
 - v. Use **Bold** or *Italic* in the first three paragraphs of content
 - vi. Appearing in the filename (with hyphens "-" not underscores "_")
 - vii. Used in anchor text to either an internal page or relevant external site.
16. Add bullet points within your text content to make it "scannable" to the visitor's eye to make it easier to find the key information.
17. Check for bad links. [Xenu](#) or [Dead Links](#).
18. Fix bad links and create XML Sitemap and submit to Google.

SEO On-Page Factors

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is divided into two categories: On-Page and Off-Page Factors. An example of On-Page Optimization would be the content of a website. This is something, which is "on the page", that you have immediate control over. On the other hand, with Off-Page Factors, you normally don't have full control over the outcome and must rely on other websites to a degree. For example, a listing in Google, the world's #1 search engine, is an Off-Page Factor search engine. Due to this, many SEOs and Webmasters have started to ignore the On-Page Factors, citing that they are no longer important.

They still are. And to successfully optimize your site you must focus on BOTH factors.

The following document is a detailed description of each of the On-Page functions listed above in the "Cheat Sheet." Due to the nature of the search engines and the constant state of change, verify you have the most updated copy (within 30 days of release).

The Title Tag

Quick Reference:

	Google	Yahoo!	Live
<u>Title Characters Displayed SERPs</u>	65*	71	70
<u>Title Indexed</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Level of Importance of Title Tag</u>	Average	High	Very High

In terms of SEO, the Title Tag has lost some of its importance. It is of average importance with Google, but still very important with Yahoo! and MSN Live.

Leaving out your web site Title is similar to publishing a newspaper without a headline. The Title not only displays at the top of the browser window, but

also appears when potential customers perform a search in a search engine and review the results. All the major search engines index the Title Tag.

Many SEOs still feel that the Title tag is one of the most important parts for SEO. As the years have progressed this has changed slightly. Yes it is still great for your incoming links, but you will still have the ability to out rank your competition without using any of your keywords in your title, or even anywhere else located on the page.

Here are some examples to show you that Title tags don't require to actually have keyword-based tags anymore:

[disney vacation orlando](#) – when you look at this you'll discover that the main keywords are only involved with 5/10 with most of them being under the page fold.

[used car prices](#) – this is an even better example. Only 1/10 best results contains the actual keyword phrase used.

[mortgage interest rates](#) – Only 3/10 contain the keyword phrase.

[home repair](#) – Only two of the ten contain the keyword phrase.

Yes there are still search results that will give you listings that contain all results with the keyword phrase, but the fact that you are still receiving results that do not include the keyword phrase shows that the Title Tag is no longer necessary to include the main keyword phrase as long as you have an astounding page.

If you are worried that your ranking will not do any good without having the keyword phrase included into your Title Tag please stop worrying. The Title tag seems to not have a major affect on how your page with ranking anymore when you are listed in competitive spaces.

One of the primary influences now is by selling the click. No one anymore seems to usually click the first listing on the page; they click the first listing that appeals to what they are looking for. Make your title compelling instead of keyword stuffed because you will see more results for a title that is

compelling verses keyword stuffed. Clicks are one of the most important things for your site without them your site wouldn't have any traffic so don't worry about getting the top ranking, worry about getting the most appealing title that will pull in your clicks.

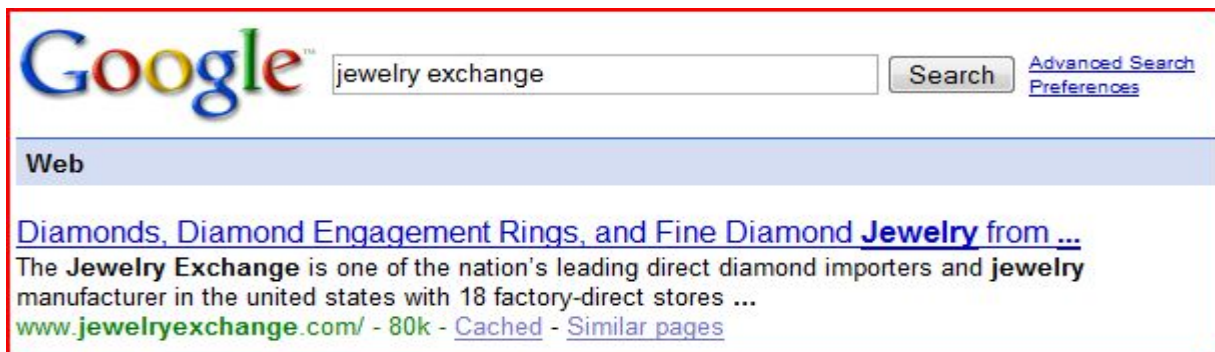
Titles That Attract a Crowd

Your site's Title **MUST** grab attention, create curiosity and evoke emotion, so don't make the mistake of using just your company name or a series of keywords in the Title Tag. Sure you might rank higher, but no one will click through because those types of Titles are, well, boring. Pay close attention to T.V. and radio news programs and how they use short "hooks" or "teasers" to keep viewers and listeners through a commercial break. The same "hooks" can be used for your Title and Description.

Example: For a Corporate Help Desk, instead of using a Title that reads: "XYZ Corporation - Corporate Help Desk", use "Corporate Help Desk - Meeting Core Business Demands".

This Title is more effective because it incorporates the main solution the company can provide a client, and avoids "stop words." This Title will produce more click throughs than the other.

The next thing you should ensure is not happening with your Title tag is having ellipses at the end of your title. Make sure your Title tag is not too long or you will have words cut off that shouldn't be. Here is an example of what the title looks like when it is too long:



As you can see the Title tag has been cut short so you cannot see what is suppose to be said at the end, which in the end could lose you a lot of clicks.

Yahoo! essentially doesn't have a limit of what they will display with 110 characters and MSN will display 70. Your best bet is to focus on Google and have your Title 65 characters or less.

According to testing, more characters are often indexed than which display in the SERPs. For example, Google displays 65 characters, but indexes 72; MSN displays 70 but indexes 82; Yahoo! is the only engine which displays and indexes the same number of characters, 110.

Here are some recommendations to get you the best Title tag possible:

- Use 65 characters or less to ensure no ellipses appear
- Have a unique title
- Make it a very compelling to "sell the click"

Unlike the Yellow Pages and how some directories are formatted, search engines do not alphabetize the results, so refrain from using symbols such as "!!" or "AAA" in your Title. That technique was effective back in the late 90s, but it isn't anymore. Placing your most important keywords in the Title, while it was a focus years ago in SEO, is no longer a requirement. It is far more effective for you to create a killer Title, one that is highly compelling and focus on generating a top rank through incoming links and other On-Page Factors. Remember, your Title must be readable and descriptive, don't just stuff keywords in the Title.

Let's look at some examples:

Example: For "Hawaiian Vacations", one site's Title reads:

"windsurfing vacations lodging Maui budget accommodations Hawaiian vacation".

This Title fails because not only is it unappealing, but it doesn't read well, therefore it doesn't matter if this site is listed at the #1 position, few will click on it.

My suggested Title: **"Hawaiian Vacations in Maui. Budget Lodging Available"**.

Result: Shorter Title, more effective and descriptive.

Now, this Title is effective because it targets people looking to vacation in Maui and those who are on a budget. This hotel is generally a two star hotel with affordable rates. Since they do not cater to the "rich crowd" they make it clear in the Title to ensure only qualified visitors come to their site. This is also very effective in PPC campaigns. By being direct and qualifying your audience up front, you lower your cost per customer acquisition. This is known as "double qualifying" your visitor.

Formatting Titles

Now that you know the *type* of content to add, I want to explain how to *format* it. Do not use ALL CAPS, as it makes it difficult to read and it is considered "shouting" on the Internet. Instead, use initial caps by capitalizing the first letter of each word (when appropriate). Generally, your Title should be 5-7 words in length. Google displays a maximum of 65 characters, so make sure you have 65 or fewer characters in your Title. If you use more than 65 characters, you risk your Title not fully displaying, which can cause other problems for you. MSN and Yahoo! display more characters, but with the market share Google has, you must comply with their current standards.

Here is an example of a Title that is too long. Notice the ellipses at the end. Don't let ellipses happen to you.

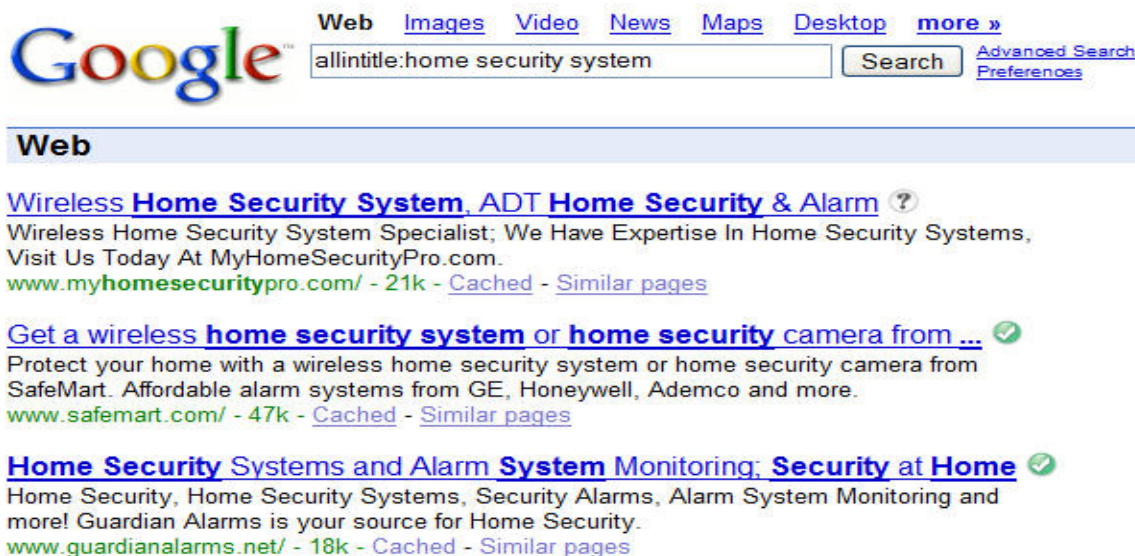
[Hawaiian Vacations: Pleasant Hawaiian Holidays - Hawaii's Premier ...](#) 
How does **Hawaiian Vacations**-Pleasant **Hawaiian** Holidays define value? It's quality + service + selection + price! Our dedicated **Hawaiian Vacations** staff ...
www.gohawaiianvacations.com/home.htm - 31k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) - [Note this](#)

As I stated, in the above example the Title Tag is too long. Due to the length of the Title Tag, "Travel Web Site" was cut from the displayed Title and given ellipses in its place which hurts the message being delivered and the click-through rate will probably suffer because of it.

While Yahoo! essentially doesn't have a limit on what they will index with 110 characters, there is something very important I want you to understand. According to testing, search engines index more Title characters than are actually displayed in SERPs. For example, Google only displays 64 of the 72 indexed characters; MSN displays 70 of 82 indexed characters; Yahoo!, which used to display 110 until recently, has now reduced that number to 70-75 depending on the word break. I can't stress enough, that your best bet is to focus on Google and have a Title that is 64 characters or less.

Never Be Satisfied

One of my mottos is "Success is 50% competitive intelligence and 50% figuring out how to do it better." This is true for the Title tag as well. To further perfect the Title Tag, review the top scoring Titles for your targeted key phrase. To do this type: "allintitle:keyphrase" in the Google search bar (minus the quotes). For example, if I wanted to know the Titles for "home security system" I would type:



Some experts will recommend using the "intitle" command. This is a mistake. In order to see the top Titles, you must use "allintitle" or the entire phrase will not be searched. The above examples are the top three results. I would suggest you examine the Top 30 results for ideas on how to make

your Title more effective. Take a look at what the top ranking sites have in common within the Title. Where, how often, and in what order is the keyword phrase used?

It is important to note PageRank is a factor in the "allintitle" results; so if you have optimized your Title, but have not reached Top Ten results yet, turn your attention to improving the PageRank of that particular page, which is an Off-Page Factor.

Although, it is allowed on some search engines, I want to caution you against using more than one Title Tag per page. It is not a good practice and penalties can be assessed, such as a drop in rank.

Title Placement

By now you know what it takes to research and create a compelling Title, and what pitfalls to avoid. If you don't know where the Title Tag is located, the Title Tag lives in a place called Meta Tag land which is located between the <head></head> tags at the top of the page in your source code. The information in the head tags looks like this:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
<html>
<head>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">
<title>Your Title Goes Here</title>
<meta name="description" content="Your Description Goes Here">
<meta name="keywords" content="Your Keywords go Here">
<meta name="author" content="Your Name, Author Name, or Company Name">
<script language="JavaScript" type="text/JavaScript" src="script/rollover.js"></script>
<link href="style.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css">
</head>
```

The Title should be the second tag following the <HEAD> tag in your HTML code (the character set tag should be first). If you use Microsoft FrontPage, be aware it may place the Title Tag after the META Tags, which may lower your ranking in Yahoo! and MSN. You will need to manually change this by clicking on the HTML tab and moving the Title above the META Tags.

Where is the Title?

The Title can be found in the HTML code. It is contained in the <HEAD> tag near the top of the document. It looks like this:

```
<HEAD>  
<TITLE>Your Site's Title Here</TITLE>  
</HEAD>
```

Reminder: Think of your Title and Description as an Advertising Campaign and spend as much time as it takes writing an effective Title and Description as you would writing an important ad. It is THAT important!

History of the Title Tag

The Title Tag used to be the most important part of your website in terms of SEO. If you didn't have the keyword phrase you were targeting in the Title Tag, you didn't have a chance to rank well.

Times have changed.

Now, it isn't required to have the key phrase in the Title to get a top ranking in Google, in fact, if you look at most of the highly competitive phrases, only 60% of the top ten results will have the keyword phrase listed in the Title.

I have realized during my testing that the power of the Title is not in SEO, but in the all important step in the conversion process. As the Title has lost power in how your site ranks, it has gained power in getting the user to convert. If you think about it, when a person clicks on your listing in the SERPs what are they doing? That's right, they are clicking on your *Title*.

Case in point: How often do you click on the #1 result in the SERPs? Not every time? What is the reason? According to a survey I conducted, the number one reason a user clicks on a search result is that it was "interesting" or "it seemed the best match for me." What made the result interesting enough to be perceived as the best match? That's right - the Title.

In the survey I also asked how many users looked at the Page Title on the web page they were viewing (the upper left hand corner of the browser). Less than 4% said they did. While the Title may be snubbed once a person is actually on the page, 98% responded that they pay attention to and read Page Titles on the search engine results pages (SERPs). I am convinced the other 2% might not have understood the question. To drive home the point again, the Title Tag is invaluable when it comes to attracting potential customers and traffic.

Let's Discuss What Not To Do...

Often, the best way to learn how to do something is to be shown what not to do with real examples. The following are very poor examples of Page Titles. All of these are actual Titles taken from the web:

Untitled Document

logo.

[www.ips.ge/](#) - 8k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

Untitled document: this is a great example of the "Lazy Webmaster" who hasn't taken the time to change the default text. I love the Meta Description ... "Logo."

This web page uses frames, but your browser doesn't support them

This web page uses frames, but your browser doesn't support them. Go to HAI Reports for information on health status in Anchorage. ...

[www.indicators.ak.org/indicators/ChildCareQualOutcms98F.htm](#) - 2k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

"The web pages uses frames, but your browser doesn't support them." Okay, if this is your Title, I am sorry, you are just an idiot Webmaster and you really need to outsource the work to someone else.

Insert Keywords Here

Keyword. All Categories, Automotive, Batteries, Business Electronics, Components, Consumer Electronics, Contract Manufacturers, Control Systems ...

[www.elecdir.com/site/product/74836/index.html](#) - 25k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

Insert Keywords Here: Another example of being lazy, but also telling the world that you are, well, an idiot. At least the "Untitled Document" is descriptive ... "Insert Keywords Here" does not help your online image. It is the online version of a "Kick Me" sign on your back.

Home Page

SIMS Workshop is a non-profit organization of SIMS scientists, SIMS researchers, SIMS private and SIMS public institutions, SIMS educators and others ...
www.simsworkshop.org/ - 24k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

Home Page – That's your Title. "Home Page." Go ahead and cancel your hosting and see if you can get your old job back.

The goal of the Page Title is **not** to give the search engines a brief description of the web page; instead, it is there to get the user to click the search result. I said it before, and here it is again, it is **STEP ONE** in the conversion process. **STEP ONE** is getting them to your site.

💡 **Light Bulb Moment:** You can't convert a visitor if they never make it to your site!

Recommendations - Titles Done Right

Let me briefly explain how to do the Title the right way. It should be understood that the algorithms of Google, Yahoo! and MSN are very different, thus, the "Perfect Title" does not exist for all three of the major search engines. You read that right; the perfect Title in terms of meeting the "Big Three" algorithms does not exist. There is just enough difference in their algorithms to not allow for a top ranking to occur across all three with the Title tag alone.

Instead, concentrate on taking the keyword phrase you have researched, testing it through PPC and verifying it will convert and be profitable, not just drive traffic. Qualifying your keywords in this manner will allow you to focus on qualified traffic, which will help your site to convert a visitor into a buyer at the highest percentage possible.

Here are examples of good Page Titles:

Plastic Surgery - Don't Trust Your Body to Just Anyone - This achieved a 4-1 click through ratio over a listing above it in the SERPS, mainly due to the word "trust" being added.

Looking for the Best Mortgage? - This achieved a 3-1 click through ratio over a listing above it and the conversion ratios were very good as the landing page contained a graphic, "See Us for the Best Mortgage Offer for your Home". This is a strong call to action.

Get Help Finding a New Job - The director reported since changing the Title their overall traffic has decreased, but the number of closes for their resume help service has gone up seven fold. Visitors are not just more qualified, but they come in with an obviously better outlook and attitude. This can be referred to as "pre-selling" the visitor without them seeing a "pre-sales page".

Health Insurance: Avoid the Traps, Get Expert Advice - This Title has boosted leads to the highest point in this firm's web history. They have their top keyword phrase "health insurance" but they also tell them why they should click: to avoid traps and also get expert advice. Notice they did not place their company name in the Title, which is often just a waste, unless your company name is part of your main keyword phrase.

The Meta Description Tag

This is one area many sites struggle with when trying to get Google to post their Meta Description Tag. All you have to do is give Google the little assistance needed and you could have your Meta Description tag posted.

With your Meta Description tag you will once again really want to avoid having ellipses in your description. This is one thing that really does have an effect on the amount of click throughs you get to your site.

Here is an example of a site that has ellipses on their Meta Description tag. We've searched the term "eHealthInsurance":

[Health Insurance, Medical Insurance, Individual Health Insurance ...](#)
Compare health insurance quotes, medical insurance plans. eHealthInsurance helps you find affordable health insurance, individual health insurance, ... [⊕ Stock quote for EHTH](#)
www.ehealthinsurance.com/ - 17k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

When a site has ellipses on their Meta Description tag the first thought that goes into my head is that the person running this site isn't paying too much attention to what is going on. You must ensure that you have your description being used that you want by Google and not Google just taking content from your site that doesn't match what you want.

Now let's look at a Meta Description tag that has taken the time to get the description they want posted. We've searched the term "wedding favors":

[My Wedding Favors - Unique Wedding Favors - Bridal Shower Favors](#)
Unique **Wedding Favors**, click or dial 1-866-942-1311 for Truly Unique **Wedding Favors**.
We've got the Best Prices Guaranteed!
www.myweddingfavors.com/ - 71k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

As you can see with this Meta Description tag it has included some very useful information that will pull in many more clicks then the other example. The keyword phrase has been used amongst the Meta Description meaning it will be searched even better than one that hasn't used it.

There is some exceptions when you do a search for a term and brings up some good results. We have searched up the term bridal favors and were given the following:

[My Wedding Favors - Unique Wedding Favors - Bridal Shower Favors](#)
Unique **Wedding Favors**, click or dial 1-866-942-1311 for Truly Unique **Wedding Favors**.
We've got the Best Prices Guaranteed!
www.myweddingfavors.com/ - 71k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

As you can see even though we have searched up the term "bridal favors" and it is not displayed in the Meta Description, it is still being used. If you use a term that is the same theme as another term you can be given similar results like we just received.

Now you're probably wondering, well how could I get grabbed text from this site instead of receiving the Meta Description? Simple. Search up the owner's name "Jennifer Nichols" and you then see that you are given grabbed text from the site also displaying, wedding favors & bridal in the grabbed text.

My Wedding Favors - Unique Wedding Favors - Bridal Shower Favors
Jennifer Nichols Thank you for visiting My Wedding Favors - your ultimate shopping destination for unique wedding favors and wedding accessories, bridal ...
www.myweddingfavors.com/ - 71k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

As you can see it is a great idea to take the time to develop a great Meta Description tag to further the number of click throughs you get. Just by spending a little extra time developing a great Meta Description could make you more money in return, so take the time to make a Meta Description to get the added results you really do want.

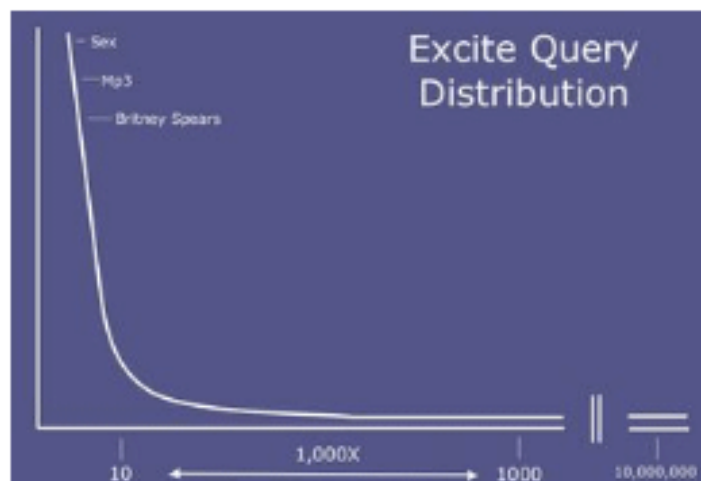
Here are some final recommendations for a great Meta Description tag:

- Avoid ellipses by having 150 characters or less.
- Make sure your description is unique even to your own site.
- Try including some of your offers, guarantees, and even try putting in your phone number to get Call of Action included into your Meta Description.

The Long Tail

As SEOs, we have been taught that writing a Title was as simple as placing the keywords in the right location (usually at the beginning). Today's Titles are much more complex.

By now you have probably heard the term "The Long Tail" and the term comes from Wired Editor-in-



Chief Chris Anderson, who authored an article titled oddly enough, [The Long Tail](#). The Long Tail is the accurate assessment that the sum of less frequent selling products is greater than the sum of the top selling products.

That's fine, but a problem happened. You see, someone decided "The Long Tail" could be adapted to "searches" the same way it was related to "purchases." Even Overture Rep Dan Boberg from the Webmaster World Boston conference in 2003 got into it when he said, *"Four keywords or more, and you are in to their deep buy cycle - you are in the money."*

The problem with these statements is that they are missing the main elements of what made "The Long Tail" so effective. "Long Tail" keywords are not necessarily long keyword phrases in character length, but they are keyword phrases that have *above average rates of conversion*. In other words, they are keyword phrases that **buyers** use. Buyers and searchers are very different.

Experts in the industry will state the **real** story about the Long Tail involves keyword targeting by Webmasters. Simply put, 'nec desktop phones' will convert better than 'desktop phones', 'nec phones' or even 'nec desktop'. It is simply the idea that the human search process is one of refinement. The broader searches are about education, and the longer searches mean the person is on a mission.

How is this known? You can't just simply go into a keyword research tool, type in a phrase and then download all the terms that are four words or more and believe you have "Long Tail" phrases.

It doesn't work that way.

The "Long Tail" along with basic business principles, has always been about conversion. Too many new Webmasters out there have "Long Tail" on their brains running around grabbing longer and longer phrases thinking this will help their business become profitable.

An example would be a real estate professional that targets:

malibu california real estate certified professional

They get frustrated when no one converts, let alone visits their site. The issue is always going to be conversion.

How do you find the "Long Tail" keyword phrases? You test.

In a survey I conducted, I found a person's search behavior search behavior was different based on the time of day he/she searched, the mood, and even what was consumed for lunch! In other words, there are many "unknown" and variable factors related to search so you must test.

The distinction between the search result that gets *clicked* and the others is most often the Title Tag. Is the keyword present (highlighted) in the Title Tag in the SERPs? If so, it has a greater chance of being clicked. With competition, it also matters what the Title Tag says. The Title Tags that are the most compelling are most often the winners; the losers have "bragging rights" of their top ranking, and they also have less real traffic and fewer sales. That's not much to brag about.

Bragging rights mean nothing. You aren't in junior high anymore, are you?.

The key phrase in the Title offers a vital visual anchor for your website. It immediately assures the searcher the listing is relevant to their recent search. The typical searcher doesn't read it and recognize it immediately, largely because the search engine has bolded it. If the keyword phrase is at the beginning of the Title, testing shows it helps "anchor" the eye to the Title. And that is a good thing.

The Keyword Phrase in Titles

Using the keyword phrase in the Title is pretty straight forward, but how you use it is vital. Remember, in Google, having the keyword phrase in the Title is not a requirement for top ranking (as Google is a stronger "off page" engine), but it is recommended, as the keyword phrase will be bolded, thus drawing attention to your listing.

Length

How long should your Title be? Remember, Google chops off the Title display at 65 characters and that is important to realize so you don't create a great, compelling Title, only to have it cut off.

Strong Title Uses to Consider:

- Search Engine Results
- Link Text
- Bookmarks
- Email and Mailing list Titles
- Keep in mind how your keyword might get bolded on the SERP if it matches a search keyword, this greatly helps click-through rates

Recommendations

- Every page should have a unique Title, emphasis on unique
- Keyword Phrase - minimum four (4) keywords
- Try to formulate a question or a strong statement
- If you pose a question, answer it in the Description Meta Tag
- Always describe what the page is about and keep focused
- For the highest click-throughs, incorporate a "Call To Action" into your Title

Things NOT to do:

- Use a keyword more than once in the Title
- No double Title Tags. All the engines have penalties now
- No long Titles

Where to Test Good Titles.

- Forums - Yes, this is a great place to test out 'clickability'. Use different words and combinations to see which gets the most "clicks".
- Email - Always create a good informative Title for EVERY email. Never slack - do the work - it will pay rewards.
- Your own page - It should be the first thing you think of for you page, as it sets the tone for the entire page.

Focus on your Title; rewrite the Title on at least one of your pages every day. Doing so will allow you to see the difference the change makes and over time, you will get more click throughs, and more sales.

Do this and you will see a difference in your traffic and your conversions. Focusing on your Title as an advertisement instead of one more SEO piece of the puzzle can set you apart.

Effective Descriptions

The Description works with the Title to attract potential customers. When a customer performs a search in the search engines, the results displayed are usually the Title and Description. You should spend the same amount of time writing your Title and Description as you would an important ad.

If you do not include a Description, most search engines, by default, will use the first 30-40 words of your store - which could look very unappealing to a customer.

Here are examples of descriptions from each of the major engines:

[Rachael West Designs | Hickory, North Carolina Wedding Flowers](#) 
Specializing in Wedding Flowers in Hickory, North Carolina, **Rachael West Designs** brings a unique approach to your wedding, wedding reception, ...
www.rachaelwestdesigns.com/ - 13k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

Google – As shown above, Google pulls the description from the from the Meta Description Tag within your website's code.

[Vacation Rentals Directory for 1,100 Destinations Worldwide From Vacation Homes .com](#) ✓

Lists privately owned and managed **vacation** rentals available worldwide with detailed listings that include photos, amenities, rates, and availability.

Category: [Vacation Rentals](#)

| Saved by 97 people

www.vacationhomes.com - 26k - [Cached](#) - [More from this site](#)

Yahoo! – If your site is listed in the Yahoo! Directory, your search engine description will be the same as your Yahoo! directory listing. However, Yahoo! is pulls the Title from the website, not the directory listing. Notice how the title spans two lines in the above there is a tip for ensuring Yahoo! pulls the description from you Meta Tag which I'll explain later.

[San Francisco Events and Attractions by Citysearch](#) ✓

Find **San Francisco** concert dates, parades, festivals, top sports **events**, theater reviews, art ... **San Francisco Events** & Attractions Welcome to Citysearch's **San Francisco events** and attractions guide

sanfrancisco.citysearch.com/find/section/sanfrancisco/events.html · [Cached](#)

MSN – Currently “meshes” the description. The first part is from the actual Meta Description and then ellipses will occur followed by the second half, which is taken from the first paragraph of text on the page.

In terms of SEO, the Description Tag is not very important to Google, has average importance to MSN, but is very important to Yahoo!.

Do not use **ALL CAPS** as it is considered shouting on the Internet. Keep your description to 150 characters (including spaces) or less. Your focus should be on creating curiosity with the reader, but not satisfying it with your Description. If you do it right, you will achieve higher traffic to your site. Do not repeat any keyword more than three times, and do not repeat the same word back-to-back.

Example: "Get the training you need and deserve at our state-of-the-art training facilities. Get all six courses, hotel accommodations, catered meals and a free Palm Pilot! We guarantee you will pass."

This description is for a training course offered in a competitive industry. Effective catch phrases are: "need", "deserve", "catered meals", "hotel accommodations", "free" and "guarantee". Use catch phrases to your distinct advantage.

Verify and verify again that you can back up any claims you make in your Description. If you can't, you may be sued. Recently a large on-line site was sued for stating they were "The World's Largest Bookstore". They weren't. They were sued and they lost.

Note: If you have a listing in the Yahoo! Directory and you don't want the Title and Description from the directory to display in the SERPs in Yahoo! use this Meta Tag:

`<meta name="robots" content="NOYDIR">`

Where is the Description?

The Description is placed in the HTML code. It is contained in the <HEAD> tag near the top of the document. It is used in a META tag. It looks like this:

```
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Your Site's Title Here</TITLE>
<META NAME="description" CONTENT="Your Site's Description
Here">
</HEAD>
```

Before moving on:

Is your Title and Description compelling?
Does it solve a problem?
Does it suggest that it solves the problem quickly?

If you answered "no" to any of the above, you need to do a rewrite. Remember when a search is performed on a search engine, two elements are displayed in the results list - the site's Title and Description. Will your site be the one that is clicked? Well, that depends on how compelling your site's Title and Description are.

Keyword Meta Tag

There is usually a lot of misconception regarding the Keyword Meta Tag. Due to spamming issues dating back to the late 90s, the Keyword Meta Tag has been devalued. Google never indexed the tag, and while Yahoo! and MSN give high importance to the tag, the weight is not nearly what it was 5-7 years ago.

It is important for you to understand while Yahoo! and MSN place high importance on this tag still, their market share is such that it is a detriment to you to use your strong keywords here. Why? Would you email a list of your targeted keywords to your competitors with a note reading, "Hi, just thought you might like to see the keywords I'm targeting?" Of course not, so why would you list them in your Meta data for the world to see? There is plenty of software out there to scrape keyword tag information, plus Internet marketing gurus have been saying for years the first place you go to build a keyword list is a competitor's site where you can just grab their keywords from the Keyword Meta Tag.

Instead, it is best to fill this tag with very general or generic terms. The boost you will get from Yahoo! or MSN is worth sacrificing rather than allowing your competition to snag the keywords in seconds--keywords that took you hours to research.

Where Is The Keyword Meta Tag?

The Keyword Meta Tag is placed in the HTML code. It is contained in the <HEAD> tag near the top of the document. It is used in a META Tag. It looks like this:

```
<HEAD>  
<TITLE>Your Site's Title Here</TITLE>  
<META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="keyword1, keyword2,  
keyword3">  
</HEAD>
```

Is it important to use commas? No. Commas are not indexed or considered by search engines. Commas are for aesthetic reasons only for the webmaster.

A word of caution: Do not use your competitor's company name, trademarked products or words in your keyword tag. There have been numerous lawsuits filed because of this. This is because use of trademarked terms in your keyword tag can be interpreted as trademark infringement. Most legal experts will tell you permission is required before using a trademark on your site at all – even in the visible area of your site. Also, there have been lawsuits due to phrases used that sounded or looked similar to the owned trademark. Keep these very important factors in mind when selecting your keyword phrases.

DTD Statements (Document Type Declarations) - DTD Statements are required for most current markup languages according to the World Wide Web Consortium (W3.org). However, according to my testing they are not required in order to allow your site to be displayed in a browser, or for a search engine spider to crawl your site. With the exception of having the pages of a site validated, why is a DTD Statement necessary?

Simply put, a DTD statement will ensure your site is compliant with all browsers across the board, and your site will have a consistent look across all browsers. From a search engine marketing perspective, there is an added bonus. According to my test results over the last three years by including a

DTD statement, websites were spidered 5-18% deeper. Sites are **no longer** experiencing an increase in ranking by having a DTD Statement.

Why is this?

Our theory is by having the DTD Statement, the code may not be fully compliant, but it will be very close. Compliant code is easier for the search engine to index, and since it knows what to expect upfront, there won't be any surprises. Without a DTD Statement, when a search engine crawler comes across code it doesn't know what to do with, it may "hiccup" causing it to prematurely back out of the site. However, with the DTD Statement, it will know how to handle the code and continue to spider the site.

It should be noted nearly all of the top companies use DTD Statements, and it is a standard with programs like Dreamweaver.

The following is taken straight from W3.org.

You should place a DOCTYPE declaration as the very first thing in your HTML document. For example, for a typical [XHTML 1.0](#) document:

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Strict//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-strict.dtd">
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" lang="en" xml:lang="en">
<head>
  <title>Title</title>
</head>
<body>
  <!-- ... body of document ... -->
</body>
</html>
```

For XML documents, you may also wish to include an "XML Declaration" even before the DOCTYPE Declaration, but this is not well supported in older browsers. More information can be found in the [XHTML 1.0](#) reference.

The W3C QA Activity maintains a [List of Valid Doctypes](#) you can choose from, and the WDG maintains a document on "[Choosing a DOCTYPE](#)".

Some “experts” will tell you that you need to have a W3C compliant code website in order to rank well in Google, or worse, they will recommend placing “HTML errors” purposely in your pages and this will allow for higher rankings.

Neither is true.

There is a big difference between “W3C Compliant Code” and “Search Engine Compliant Code.” In my testing, having “Search Engine Compliant Code” is more important. Trying to get your site W3C Compliant could cause severe mental and physical pain for you or your Webmaster in the nut house.

ALT Text Importance

There is a major difference between indexing and importance, or what SEOs call “relevancy.” Many Webmasters will point to the fact their site comes up #1 for the term “Glendale Arizona top residential and commercial real estate specialist for 2006” and state, “See, the only place that text occurs is in the ALT tag, so search engines do index it and it counts.”

Okay, let’s be reasonable here. What is the likelihood of a potential customer actually typing in the above string? Besides the SEO, the person being referenced and his mother, the chances are slim to none, right?

Over the last two years I have seen a trend that shows using ALT text for SEO purposes has diminished. The American Disabilities Act (ADA) has strict guidelines as to what your site needs to contain in order to be ADA compliant. I guarantee you; they do not look favorably at ALT text that has been keyword stuffed.

Have you ever witnessed a visually impaired individual using the Web? With a device which reads aloud the contents of a Web page, the impaired individual will be inundated with what I refer to as, “ALT Text Spam.” Sometimes the reader is stuck on one graphic for more than 40 seconds reading all of the keywords that have been stuffed. That isn’t a good experience for them.

According to a Google engineer, what you should do is create an ALT [text] that is relevant to the picture, so it gives the user a good experience, including the visually impaired. The ALT text is indexed, but it is downgraded in the algorithm. The reason?

"We see ALT text as being about as relevant as the Keyword Meta tag," said the Google engineer. That should say it all, as Google has never used the Keyword Meta Tag due to the high spam rate.

Use ALT text in the manner in which it was designed to be used by the W3C: *to describe the image*. If appropriate, a keyword phrase can be used, but under no circumstances should you stuff the ALT tag with keywords. Keep it to a simple description.

For example, let's say you sell skin care products and have images of items throughout your site. A relevant and simple ALT tag would read: image of anti-aging eye cream, or sunspot fading cream image.

SPAM Tip: Although ALT text may or may not be counted for relevancy; search engines may utilize it when evaluating sites for possible "spamdexing."

Remember the purpose of ALT text is to describe the image for the benefit of those who surf the Web with images turned off and for those who have the contents of Web pages read out loud to them. There are people who are "sight impaired" and there is nothing worse than having 200 meaningless keyword phrases jammed into the ALT text read aloud to you by your OCR. Don't ruin someone's day. The WC3 highly recommends Web site owners use ALT text to describe images appropriately, and I second that recommendation.

Basically, remember to be compliant, not just with the W3C, but also with the ADA.

Submission to Showing in Index

This refers to the time from when the page is spidered by the search engine to the time it shows up in the index. This is for new sites only, as sites already in the index generally get new pages listed in the index in a few days to a week.

Crawls the Web Every ...

This refers to the search engines ability to index "the web," which is their "version" or "reality" of the web. No search engine has indexed, or makes available, the entire web. Google has the largest index and estimates are that it has less than 10% of what is currently available online.

Generally, each search engine can crawl their "web" once per month. Your web stats should indicate how often search engine crawlers visit your site, and how many pages are visited. If a search engine isn't visiting your site at least once per month, you have major problems that need to be addressed as soon as possible.

ALT Text Indexed

Currently all the major search engines are indexing the ALT Tags that you have placed in your web page.

Indexes Heading Tags

There are six types of Headings, or Headline Tags: <h1>, <h2>, <h3>, <h4>, <h5>, and <h6>. They also rank in the same order for importance, so <h1> is the most important and <h6> is the least important in terms of On-Page SEO.

You can use the headings to list your "headline" (h1) with its "tagline" underneath (h2). For example:

```
<h1>Complete Home Security System</h1>  
<h2>Self-install your home security system in One Hour or Less!</h2>
```

In the above example, it allows for the key phrase "home security system" to be used naturally in both headings, thus increasing the On-Page Optimization scores for the key phrase.

Accept Cookies or Session IDs

Session IDs (SID) are unique identifiers that allow visitors to be tracked through the site's session. Most eCommerce sites use SIDs in order to track items in a shopping cart. The main issue with SIDs is that most systems are not equipped to recognize search engine spiders, thus, they feed the bot a SID.

Bad idea.

Since the search engine bot does not accept cookies, so the server thinks the bot is a new visitor each time it requests a new page to index. Thus, the server keeps feeding the bot new URL strings. The result? The bot indexes the same page multiple times, but with several different ID strings. Yahoo! is especially bad at this and it is why a site 5,000 pages in size can have 40,000 or more pages in the Yahoo! index. This is generally called a "Spider Trap" and can lead to your site getting deindexed as it clutters the search engine's index.

An example of a SID URL would be:

<http://www.domain.com/store.cgi?id=45f321>

The problem is created when the bot requests another page and the id changes, thus the loop begins. How do you solve this? There are two ways:

- 1) IP Detection. By detecting the known IPs of the major engines, when they request to index your site, your server can disable the

SIDs from being served so the bots can index without SIDs.

- 2) Switch from a URL based tracking system to a cookie based system. You risk of having 10% of your user base to be non-trackable.

Support Frames

Using frames is just a bad idea if you want search engine traffic. This has been the same advice for more than a decade. While I do respect the fact some designs require the use of frames, but you can't have it both ways. If you want search engine traffic, don't bother with the "no frames" tag – just go with creating a proper design or create a new domain – for content only for the spiders to index.

Indexes NoFrames Content

All three major engines index the "No Frames" content area, however, I advise against using it and instead creating a new domain for the search engines themselves and deny bot access to the framed domain. It will just make the overall process easier for you.

You know, scratch that, if you are using frames, you really aren't all that interested in getting organic search traffic. I suggest moving to PPC. Using frames is just a bad idea.

Indexes all Visible Content

All the major engines will index all visible content that is actual text. If there is text that is contained in a graphic, that text is not indexed, unless, of course, it is included in an ALT tag.

Meta Redirect

Using fast Meta Redirects is not recommended. Especially Google looks it at as "spam". Instead, use a 301 redirect in your .htaccess file or IIS Control instead.

An example of a Meta Redirect:

```
<META HTTP-EQUIV="refresh" CONTENT="1;URL=index.html">
```

Supports Meta Robots Tag

The Robots Meta Tag is used by new or unskilled Webmasters. For example, many Webmasters use the following tag on their pages:

```
<meta name="robots" content="index,follow">
```

Their rationale is, "I want to make sure my pages get indexed and all the links are followed." Well, that is what a search engine bot does by default. Using this tag as listed above makes as much sense as posting a sign at your desk which says, "Remember, breathe and blink your eyes every few seconds." You do that already without even thinking about it - same with a search engine bot. Don't waste your time with tags you don't need.

Now, here are the other flavors you can use:

<meta name="robots" content="noindex,follow"> - the page is not indexed but all links are followed.

<meta name="robots" content="index,nofollow"> - the page is indexed but no links are followed.

<meta name="robots" content="noindex,nofollow"> - the page is not indexed and the links are not followed.

Note: This is NOT the same as the "nofollow" tag that you can place on links. This works a lot differently. When you use "nofollow" in the Meta

Robots tag the spider will not follow any links. However, if you use the rel="nofollow" on a link the spider WILL follow the link and index the page, however, it will not pass link popularity or PageRank.

All the major engines support the use of the robots.txt file, but all three also do not obey it from time to time. For a sample of a robots.txt file that will help keep bad bots out, you can use [mine](#).

LSI Support

LSI stands for Latent Semantic Indexing and only Google has support of LSI. It is a mathematical process that aligns themed words together to allow for the search results to be more accurate. There are two camps out there, one states that LSI is "magic" and will get you top ranking and the other camp states that LSI is fictitious and should be ignored. I have tested this at length and have seen strong results from LSI, however, over the last year I have isolated those results, eliminated LSI and the ranking didn't move.

I do feel it is useful to know and understand LSI and even incorporate "themed" words into your pages as they can actually improve the way the copy reads. You can use a free product called [Quintura](#) to discover themed keywords. There is also a membership site run by Russell Wright called [Theme Zoom](#), which is excellent.

Note: I used to recommend OptiRanker, an on-line LSI tool; however, the person who created it is no longer supporting that tool and I just don't see a benefit from using it over Quintura and Theme Zoom.

Word Count Minimums (Recommended)

From my testing, only Yahoo! has a word count minimum. Generally, pages with 400 words or more usually score better in the major engines. Do not take this number and then stuff a page with "fluff" in order to reach the 400 word minimum. Always create highly focused content. If you are having trouble coming up with additional content, consider combining two similar pages.

Keyword Density

This is the percentage of times the keyword phrase appears in the body of the document. For example, if there are 100 words on the page and the keyword phrase is used three times, it would have a density of 3%. Yahoo! and MSN allow for higher percentages, but generally speaking, if you kept your density between 2%-9% you would be within range. Google's range is usually lower than the other search engines.

One aspect that keyword density fails to provide is the "location" of where the keywords appear. The keyword density is more of a "gauge" in today's SEO than a rule. There are top ranking pages in Google that have a 30+% keyword densities; just as there are also others that rank high with a 0% keyword density.

As you did with the Title Tag, perform a search for your keyword phrase of interest and analyze the density of the top 10 ranking sites.

Comment Tag Indexed

None of the major engines index the Comment Tag any longer. Originally Comment Tags were notes within a website's raw code that were unseen visually on the web page. Normally, these tags were notes between programmers or webmasters used to track changes or to state things like <do not edit below this line>, or <script starts here>. That way if there are multiple people in charge of editing the code there is no confusion. Additionally, by placing comments in the code, when a new Webmaster is assigned the project he/she can fully understand what was done without hunting down the last Webmaster and asking questions. An example of the Comment Tag in the code looks like this:

```
<! – Code below is for the web tracking tool, do not edit past this line. -->
```

It didn't take long before people were abusing the Comments Tag, stuffing it with keywords, and using it beyond the intended purpose. Due to the abuse and spam, the search engines discontinued indexing Comment Tags years ago.

Link Popularity (Off-Page Factor)

This refers to the QUANTITY, or the number of web pages linking to a particular web page. All the major engines use link popularity as a gauge for ranking. While each gives a different weight to the importance of link popularity, Google has a strong importance factor here.

Link Reputation (Off-Page Factor)

This is a term coined by Leslie Rohde around 2002. This refers to the QUALITY of the links pointing to a particular web page. For example, a link from CNN.com would be worth more than 100 links from small town newspapers because of the authoritativeness of CNN. Google gives the highest criteria to link reputation of all the major engines.

Anchor Text Indexed

“Anchor Text” is also known as “Link Text” and “Hyperlink Text”. It refers to the linked text that is visible in the browser. For example:

This is an example of [linked text](#) in a web document.

The text “linked text” is the Anchor Text. All the major search engines index this text and Google gives high priority to the text listed in this area in terms of the page the link is pointing to. Anchor text, Link Reputation, and Link Popularity are a major part of Google’s PageRank algorithm.

Dynamic Page Support

All the major engines claim to support the ability to index dynamic pages, but all have limitations and restrictions. Use mod_rewrite (Apache) or ISAPI rewrite (Windows) to verify the URLs delivered to the browser can be properly indexed and navigated by the search engine spiders.

CSS Indexed (On Page / External)

A CSS (Cascading Style Sheet) is a file that allows for all of your formatting being consistent throughout your page or site. Instead of having a font code appear at the beginning of every paragraph, the system knows to display "Verdana 10pt." based on your CSS file.

Create a text file named style.css, include your formatting, and reference it in the <head> section of your page like this:

```
<link href="style.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css">
```

Having your CSS files embedded into your pages is just a bad idea. It takes up space and pushes your important code downward.

Using processes to hide keywords or text in your CSS file can be detected by Google. Be very careful if you use CSS to stuff keywords or adjust the formatting to allow your page to receive a bigger boost from On-Page Factors than you should.

JavaScript (On Page / External)

Due to indexing issues and ensuring your page file sizes stay as small as possible, it is highly recommended you send your JavaScript code to an external file. This is especially helpful when you have the same JavaScript appear on every page.

How do you do this? Simple. Cut your JavaScript from the page, open Notepad, paste the script in and name the file code.js (or whatever name you prefer). Upload the file to a folder called "javascript" and disallow the folder in the robots.txt file. Next, on the page where you removed the JavaScript, add this code to the page:

```
<script language=JavaScript src="javascript/code.js" type="text/javascript"></script>
```

Adding this keeps the functionality of the JavaScript, while removing the code that may interfere with rank. I have noticed Google will index, from

time to time, .js files unless they are disallowed in the robots.txt file, so be sure to do that.

Indexes Flash Content

Flash content is attention grabbing, but it is not easily optimized for search engines and can often turn away visitors.

Search engines have difficulty indexing pages with Flash since crawlers determine what your web pages are about by using the keywords in your page's text. Depending on the search engine, it's difficult to impossible for them to extract keywords from Flash files.

As Mike Grehan said at Webmaster World in New Orleans in 2005 when asked if the search engines indexed Flash, "Of course they do, just do a search for "loading ... loading ... loading." As expected, his comment created big laughs because it is true.

If you really want to use Flash make sure you employ the following rules:

Don't make your entire page one big Flash file. Moderation is the key here. Use a smaller Flash file as part of a normal HTML page with plenty of indexable text on the page. At the very least, you want well-optimized, text-based menus on the same page as your Flash files.

Use the <noembed> tag. If you must create all Flash pages or the entire site is programmed in Flash, the link to your Flash file must be enclosed in an <embed> tag. HTML also contains a <noembed> tag and you should always put an HTML version within these tags. The <noembed> will give the bots something to index and will provide an alternative to those visitors who do not have Flash enabled browsers.

Although Google has made some progress with indexing Flash pages they still don't do it very well.

Recommendation: If your site is based on Flash, it is obvious you are not concerned with organic traffic. Drive visitors with Pay Per Click networks.

YSlow – With the help of YSlow Webmasters can determine how their site is ranking, as well as see what changes they could do to get a better ranking with Yahoo! and other search engines.

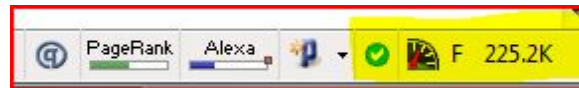
Developers can make good use of Yahoo!'s and FireBug's YSlow program. When you want to use this program you will have to ensure that you are on a FireFox web browser or it will not work at all since YSlow hasn't been designed to work on any other web browser as of now.

There are three steps to take once you've decided to use YSlow for your web site needs.

Step One: Installation of FireBug.

Step Two: Installation of YSlow.

Step Three: You should now see the following image at the bottom right hand side of your browser:



In this image you are seeing an area that has been highlighted in yellow for this example. It is displaying a green check more to inform you that the site is okay, but will display a red "x" when the has errors, also display the number of errors that are occurring.

You will then see that there is a letter "F". This is displaying the letter grade for this site which it is receiving an overall (59/100). I have used my site for this example and is currently at an "F" which can also mean "Failure".

The last thing that you will see is a total size number. This number is the sum of my entire sites content including such things as page, scripts, text, images, and much more that has been included into my site.

Now that you know how to install YSlow let me explain how you can use it.

As the years have progressed websites seem to be having a slower response time between the "request sent" that is coming from the server to "data received" by your web browser making Internet users even more impatient

when waiting for sites. This can cause web sites not to open at all, or load various content incorrectly, which tends to lead users to go to someone else's site.

With the use of YSlow you can now have the chance to improve your site's response time by at least 20-50%, which goes way beyond what you'd receive just by optimizing your website's graphics. By using YSlow you can improve the following areas:

- Reduction of "Bounce Rate"
- Improved Conversions
- AdWords will give you a better quality score
- A decreased per click charge

The main area of your site that will be optimized tends to be the front-end performance. This tends to be where most of your clients are most of the time, so of course it should perform the best.

Now you are probably asking, "What exactly is front-end performance?". Yahoo! Has given 13 rules towards front-end performance, which we will now go through the first three steps for you to fully understand what exactly front-end performance is. We currently are only including the first three steps, but will update in due time to help you even further.

Before you start making any changes to your site PLEASE make a backup of your site, then a test copy of the home page that will be used for you to work on. This ensures that if there are any screw-ups you won't have any problems with your homepage.

YSlow will be analyzing your web page with all of the rules being weighted to its importance. You will have deductions for any infractions, applying a grade to all of the rules, and then will go through and give you a final score for all of the rules and page. All the rules that are looked at by YSlow will be listed as follows with explanation of each to further assist you in receiving a great grade from YSlow.

Rule One: Making Fewer HTTP Requests

There are three major myths that have been affecting your HTTP requests since trying to create fewer HTTP requests seems to be one of the major priorities in helping your site get better grades.

The first myth happens to be making your larger images into smaller images by slicing them up to give them a faster speed to load. Instead of just slicing things up use an Image Map for the hyperlinks and optimize the image. This will cut back on the number of requests coming in to the server for the images giving just one for each image.

The second myth is using a background image. Many people use background images but do not place them in correctly. Instead now it is a good idea to have them placed through your CSS file.

The last myth is using several smaller scripts for an improved load time. This is really not going to work. You are best to combine all of these smaller scripts into one larger script for faster loading time. This makes it that you will not be loading several server requests, but just one.

When I did a test on my own site I was shown that I have five external JavaScript files that have been loading. This area is on the edge for HTTP requests, but the files that I have used tend to be much smaller giving me an "A" grade for this.



You should really analyze these requests that are going through. For mine one was an affiliate graphic for the website WordTracker, with minimal conversions going through. I decided it be a good idea to remove this banner giving myself a reduced number of HTTP requests.

To get the best grade like I have for HTTP requests you should really work on this area as long as you have to and receive an "A" grading, it is truly worth your while.

Rule Two: The Use of a Content Delivery Network (CDN):

This is one area Yahoo! has said that placing content on multiple servers can assist in loading your page faster. This is not entirely necessary to do especially if you don't have an oversized website. It might be better to go with a server that is close to OC3 giving fewer hops to the browser from the server.

Rule Three: Addition of an Expired Header:

This seems to be one of the most confusing areas when it comes to trying to help your websites score through YSlow. I have determined a better way for you to do this step with less confusion so I hope this helps you out.

Now you are probably wondering what exactly an Expires Header is doing. Expired Header's have been placed to assist with the browser knowing the length of time information should be held onto in the cache. This makes it that when users come back to your site they will not have to actually download all the content again as its been saved into the cache.

Browsers tend to flush out the cache occasionally so yes browsers do already have this step emplace, but without putting the Expires Header it will not be there for good. Now Yahoo! is telling you what you should place for the Expires Header, but you are not given any steps. This doesn't really help many out especially if they have no idea where codes are suppose to go.

Let me show you what YSlow gave me for my site "Web Marketing Now" since they did give our site an "F".

F 3. Add an Expires header ▾

These components do not have a far future Expires header:

- 🔍 (no expires) <http://www.webmarketingnow.com/style.css>
- 🔍 (no expires) <http://www.webmarketingnow.com/script/rollover.js>
- 🔍 (no expires) <http://hits.webstat.com/cgi-bin/wsv2.cgi?40676>
- 🔍 (no expires) <http://www.webmarketingnow.com/script/uacct.js>
- 🔍 (no expires) <http://www.webmarketingnow.com/images/logo.jpg>
- 🔍 (no expires) <http://www.webmarketingnow.com/images/top1.jpg>
- 🔍 (no expires) <http://www.webmarketingnow.com/images/home1.gif>

After doing some research I discovered there are many fixes that I could do for several areas in my site. I actually discovered something that would work perfectly in the config file or also the .htaccess file, which is as follows:

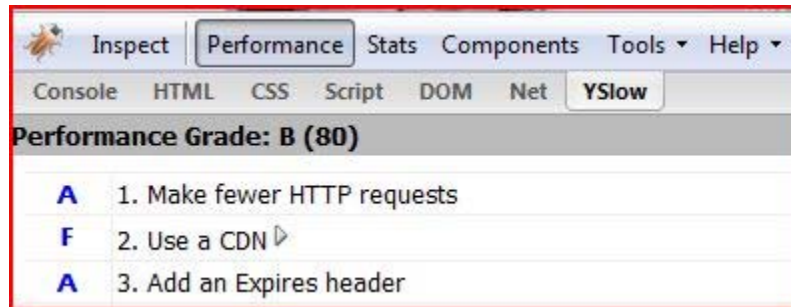
```
<FilesMatch ".(ico|pdf|flv|jpg|jpeg|png|gif|js|css|swf|cgi)$">  
Header set Expires "Wed, 1 Oct 2008 22:00:00 GMT"  
</FilesMatch>
```

As you can see there are three very simple lines of code. This code is for Apache servers only so please do not place for a Windows server you'll have to get the code for there to ensure everything is correct.

To ensure you are fully aware of what's seen in the above code please read the following points:

- Extension listed "Files Match" is for an area I was having an issue in the report. Place in your extension if it is not the same as mine as each extension is for somewhere different.
- The date that has been listed is my sites birthday, but you can change this to suit your needs. The date must at least be a minimum of 48 hours and one second into the future for YSlow to work correctly. The date can be set for anything as long as it is past that range.
- If you see that your site is no longer responding after you've placed in this code please remove it and contact your administrator about this error. This means your server may need an Apache update that may take 2-3 hours for completion.

Okay so now we've added the code. Do you want to see what has happened since we've done this? Well take a look:



As you can see at the top we have now received a performance grade of "B" which is 80/100. We've now received a 21-point advance earning ourselves an "A" in the HTTP requests section and in the Add an Expires header section.

To just get this far into the process of getting a better grade on your site it should take approximately an hour or so to accomplish. Just take your time and keep track of all your changes just in case you run into any problems you can easily back track what you've done to get everything working correctly again.

Keyword in Domain – Importance

This usually gets Webmasters to go out and register odd sounding domains, or ones with many hyphens in them to gain a better spot in the search engines. New domains are harder to rank than older ones, so you may want to create a subdomain instead. Example:

[\(http://keyword.domain.com/\)](http://keyword.domain.com/)

This works very well for MSN, has little significance for Google and a slightly higher influence on rankings for Yahoo!. Further, Google no longer treats sub domains as separate domains.

Older Pages Increase in Rank

It has been well documented that one aspect of SEO that cannot be manipulated is the age of the page in the index. Google is known historically to give an edge to older pages. While just because a page is older, does not mean it will rank at the top, but all things being equal, Google will display the oldest page at the top of the results.

It should be clear when the term “oldest page” is used, it is not meaning the page hasn’t been modified in “x” years. Instead, it is referring to when it was first indexed. Google knows when pages have been updated, and also tends to reward those with updated content.

Authoritative Site Preference

Google is the only major engine that highly rewards authoritative sites. Meaning sites are large in page quantity and incoming links from respected sources.

This is why “mini-nets” only work for small niches right now in Google consistently, as more focus is to the authority sites.

Indexes Multiple Levels

Google has always been strong in indexing multiple levels of a site, more so now with their introduction of the XML site map feature. MSN and Yahoo! still struggle, and one of the main reasons I believe is because of their bots. Yahoo!’s bot, Slurp, which is Inktomi’s old bot hasn’t been updated in years and has always struggled to index multiple levels of a site, especially past the third level. This, despite the introduction of XML feeds into Site Explorer. Yahoo! made changes to their bot in June, but unfortunately, the change was in name only, as the “new” crawler is showing the same sloppy behavior of Slurp.

“Click Tracking” Influence

There have been “mouse down” attributes detected in the URL strings in the SERPs in both Google and MSN lately. Rumors of “click tracking” and using that information to influence the top ranking sites has been circulating.

DirectHit tried this approach in the late 90s and it failed miserably. Webmasters were forging clicks to gain a higher ranking, and there were even services that sprouted up that would “guarantee” a certain ranking and keep you there through their “ghost clicks”.

What is going on? My belief is that the clicks are being tracked to allow the engines to have a better understanding why the organic listings are getting clicked on instead of the revenue generating paid results. They are “surveying” – nothing more.

Supports “nofollow”

All the major engines support the “nofollow” tag which does not allow for PageRank to be passed. Example:

```
<a href="http .... .com/" rel="nofollow">Text Link</a>
```

It is highly recommended that you use the nofollow attribute on all affiliate links, internal links to non-marketing pages and any site you do not wish to give PageRank to.

On the flipside, when exchanging or requesting strategic one-way links make sure this tag will not be used when linking to your site.

Hidden Form Text

Many forms and shopping carts use hidden form tags to process information. Unfortunately, many Webmasters have used this area to keyword stuff hoping to gain high rankings in the SERPs. Why do they do this? The reason keywords do not show on the page, but are indexed by the search engines.

This means they try to manipulate rank without the site appearing spammy to potential customers.

In my testing, I have not seen this work consistently with Google and I believe the times it has worked in Google it was due to other factors. This strategy is definitely not recommended.

An example of the code would look like the following:

```
<INPUT TYPE="HIDDEN" NAME="hidden" VALUE="keyword stuffing here">
```

There are other options to use, such as JavaScript and Perl scripts, however, the time and effort that go into those techniques do not allow for enough of an increase in ranking to making them worthwhile.

Form Option Text

All the major search engines index the Options Text area. However, in terms of increased rankings, there is no significant increase in rankings that is consistent, which would not make this a recommended option for SEO.

Reviewed Sites Preferred

When it comes to giving your site a needed boost to overtake your competition, one area that greatly helps is to get "reviewed sites" linked to you. While this can be looked at as "Off-Page Factoring" it goes hand-in-hand with your On-Page Factoring to verify the category is related to the content on the home page. For Google, listings in the Yahoo! Directory, the Open Directory Project and GoGuides allow the reviewed site faster crawling and fewer links are needed in order to compete effectively. For Yahoo!, they seem to only trust their own directory and MSN has no preference.

Indexing Limits

Are there "indexing limits" for the search engines? No. Rumors about this are unfounded and untrue. Search engines do not have limits on what they can spider, from a page count or from a page size angle. However, what the

search engine decides to show is dependent upon the current algorithm and filters used.

Website Usability & Rankings

Now with the Internet having several major search engines you'd expect to be given flawless search results, but this is of course not happening. With the amount of websites that are being posted onto the Internet daily it is going to be a difficult task to get the right ones properly indexed.

I recently performed a search test on Yahoo! to see how well the search is performed for the results that you'll receive.

The first search that I did was for *car insurance quotes*. Yes, I am given some good results, but if you keep looking down the first page of the results you will see that #8 "unitrindirect.com" This site first off fails to even load since there are so many resources that it is attempting to send. There is your first example of how Yahoo! is violating its own patent that it has set.

Let's do another search for the term *weight loss*. Scroll down to the fifth result that you are given "weightlosswand.com". You will soon discover that this site is violating a large amount of the "51 Rules" that have been outlined with Yahoo!.

Now here is the last search that I have done. I searched the term *wrinkle cream*. Once again scroll down to the 5th result "wrinklecreamdirect.com". This to me is one of the worst top ranking sites that I have ever encountered. YSlow states that this site only takes 18 seconds to load, but still this site should not even come close to being one of the top ranking sites for wrinkle creams.

As you can see Yahoo! still has a few too many sites that are not quality sites receiving rankings and usability rates that they do not deserve. This violates the own rules they have set, so this is something Yahoo! should really attempt fixing or it shows that they can't even follow their own rules. Usability in their search results isn't the greatest, but it is wise for you to still put as much thought as you can in regards to your conversion choices to get those top rankings that you deserve.

Never depend solely on the first few results you are given when you do a search because the usability and ranking will not always be perfect. Navigate around and find the sites that you feel will work for you because as you can see the ranking and usability of these sites is not correct what so ever for these terms that I searched.

SEO Site Audit Assistance

There are many areas to consider when you are attempting to do a SEO Site Audit. Not many of the steps taken seem to be Pure SEO steps, but seem to be a bit more like Webmaster Steps. They are still exactly what you will need and will help you perform a great site audit.

Before you start anything please ensure that the site is completely ready. This is very necessary since you can't do much of an audit without the site being completed. First things first, determine what the keywords are that have converted into the PPC that you will optimize.

Let's begin... There are ten steps in total that I am going to take you through so get comfortable.

Step One: Open the Site

You are probably laughing or thinking in your head, well Duh! of course I'll open the site. Well shocking enough this step tends to get ignored by many SEOs at first. Open up the site first thing so you can ensure that the site design isn't completely horrid making your analysis pointless.

Step Two: Check for Non-www Protection

You want to ensure that the site has zero internal duplicates content. This is a major area that could put a damper on your site. Be aware that duplicate content can cause your site to receive bad ratings so make sure it isn't occurring for you.

Step Three: Site Command

It is a great idea to see how many of the pages are being listed in Google's index. To do this you will need to do the follow step:

site:domainname.com

This will show you all the pages that have been listed for the site giving you a total number. At first you may be quite shocked at the number especially if it's double the size of what is actually there. This will also show you that you have duplicate content so you may want to fix this problem as well.

Step Four: Domain Check

One area that you should check your domain on is DomainTools.com. You will receive five areas of great information that will further assist you in your audit:

1. Title and Description: this will verify that you have an appealing and relevant Title and Description
2. SEO Text Browser: get detailed information by clicking on this area
3. Keyword Meta Tag: determine the relevancy of your keyword Meta tag
4. Domain Registration date: see when the domain was registered and if there are any red flags
5. IP Address: do you have a dedicated IP address or is it being shared

Step Five: Check YSlow

Checking the YSlow will allow you to determine the server type and version that are displayed at the bottom of your browser, the size of your page, and the number of HTTP load requests you have.

Step Six: Verification of Google Webmaster Tools Account

You will need to look for the verification Meta tag that will be displayed. If the site doesn't have a Google Webmaster Tools account you may want to explain to them how important this could be for them.

This is the code that will display if they do have a Google Webmaster Tools account:

```
<meta name="verify-v1" content="m8MsBWJofAzkmDYYN+I0omW8gBnI6OgoUMTcnIvTrwo=" />
```

Step Seven: Verification of Targeted Keyword Phrases

It is better to determine the targeted keyword phrases yourself instead of letting the client tell you them. The website itself will tell you what they are with the use of the Ultimate SEO Tool and step one. This will ensure that none of the targeted phrases have a double digit for their keyword density. Step two will also show you the key phrases that are being used on the page more then twice and what they have been ranked in Google.

Step Eight: Link Saturation

The SEO Visibility Checker is something you will want to run on your site. You will then be given results, which can be exported, to an Excel file. Combine all of the spreadsheets together to give you a list of all the unique domains.

Step Nine: Cache Rate in Google

Every site should be cached on a regularly. SEOMoz (a paid service) provides a Crawl Test that can test the top 50 of your pages that may have difficulty being crawled regularly. To determine when you site was last crawled type in the following into Google's search:

cache:www.domainname.com

Step Ten: SpyFu Analysis

Lastly you will want to run a quick analysis through SpyFu which will export all of the organic rankings, paid ranking, and competitors. This will allow you to show your client who exactly is their competition and be aware of what they are offering.

Now once you combine all of these steps you should be given a very fulfilling report that will help your client get their site back on track before its way to far-gone. Ensure to be very detailed with everything you need to be, you can never have too much detail when you are writing up a SEO Site Audit.

Bonus Section

Avoid "Stop Words" as Keywords. Stop Words, also called "Dead Weight Words" are common words most search engines ignore. They ignore these words to keep the size of their indexes within reason. If you must use Stop Words as your keywords, place them in quotation marks and they will be indexed.

List of "Stop" Words

The following list contains words that the search engines tend to "ignore."

Why?

By excluding these words, search engines can reduce their database size up to one-fifth. This is just a partial list. [Complete Stop List](#).

a	how	since
about	htm	site
all	html	text
an	http	than
and	i	that
any	if	the
are	in	this
as	inc	to
at	is	two
be	it	us
been	join	use
but	link	view
by	links	was
click	me	we
com	more	web
copyright	most	website
do	net	welcome
find	new	what
for	no	when
from	not	where
get	of	which
go	on	who
has	one	why
have	or	will
he	org	with

help
home

other
page

www
you
your

What Negatively Affects Ranking

I wish to stress again there are no "secrets" or "never before revealed tips" or even "jealously guarded secrets" on Internet Marketing. Steer clear of these types of sales pitches. The reason why they are secrets and never revealed techniques is they don't work. It's that simple.

What works is by understanding the problems the visitor has and what they perceive a good solution would be. Additionally, you need to understand their search behavior so you can present your solution to them. This manual's main objective is to teach you this process so you can win.

Old-Style Doorway Pages

Doorway pages serve as "multiple entrances" to a web site. The thinking is, if numerous pages are created based on a keyword phrase; it should rank well in the search engines. Does this work? It used to, however, the major search engines frown upon the use of Doorway Pages, as it clogs up their index, and they have started penalizing sites for the use of Doorway pages. Who penalizes the most? Google.

Instead of "Doorway Pages," I recommend marketing each page individually. Many website owners ignore the potential of optimizing each individual product page. Yet, if you optimize each product page, treating each as the first page a visitor might see, imagine how your web visibility and sales might increase!

Ensure each page meets your high standards in design, layout and ad copy of at least 300 words, but I would prefer the page have about 400 - 600 words. You want to make sure the page is worth the visitor's time, not just text crammed with keywords.

I highly suggest you review [Google's guidelines](#) at least monthly for up-to-date information and updates to their guidelines, as they openly state not to use "Doorway Pages".

Keyword Stuffing (see "Spamming The Index")

This process is repeating the same keyword multiple times, often dozens of times either in the Meta Keyword Tag or in the body content (either as visible or hidden text). For example, "ebay tools, ebay tools, ebay tools," Doing this can result in your page being penalized, or even possibly having your domain banned.

Redirect/Refresh

Some marketers use this technique unethically. They create a page that is not visibly engaging, yet scores well with the search engines. Once a person clicks on the page in search engine results, they are automatically redirected to, the "real" page. This is wrong in the view of the search engines because the page that appearing in the search engine results should be the page that is shown to the visitor. Some search engines have caught up to this tactic and are penalizing pages - sometimes even banning the domain for life. See below for an example of a redirect/refresh tag:

<META HTTP-EQUIV="refresh" CONTENT="1;URL=index.html">

Symbols

Avoid symbols in your URLs such as ?, +, =, &, and %. Some search engines are unable to read them. These are found in database-driven (dynamic) sites.

Example:

<http://exampleURL.com/Default.asp?p=refrigerator+magnets>

While Google can index any page, including pages with question marks in the URL, it can get stuck in what is called a "Spider Trap" and Google might index the same page repeatedly. This can cause your site to be dropped from Google's index.

Spamming the Index

What is Spamming the Index?

- Repeated use of the keyword phrase
- Keywords in a very tiny font (-1) at the bottom of the page
- Using text the same color as the background color so it is "invisible"
- Hidden <div> or Heading Tags (<h1>, <h2>, etc.)
- Using a Meta Tag redirect
- Multiple Title Tags
- Using Keywords in the META Tags that do not apply to your site's content.
- Stuffing ALT or Comment Tags with keywords

What Yahoo! Wants to See in its Index? ([According to Yahoo!](#))

- Original and unique content of genuine value
- Pages designed primarily for humans, with search engine considerations secondary
- Hyperlinks intended to help people find interesting, related content, when applicable
- Metadata (including title and description) that accurately describes the contents of a Web page
- Good Web design in general

Submission Tips for Yahoo! Directory

With the Yahoo! search engine and the way Yahoo! is now displaying search results, is it still crucial to get your site in the Yahoo! Directory? Despite the downfalls with their directory, I would have to say, "Yes". While the direct benefits of having your site in the Yahoo! Directory have diminished, the indirect benefits have increased. For example, the actual number of "click throughs" your site receives from the Yahoo! Directory may not reach 100

for the year; however, by having your site listed, you will need fewer links to achieve top rankings.

If you want to submit to the Yahoo! Directory, follow these guidelines.

To give your site the best advantage in Yahoo! Directory, be sure to:

- Create unique and original content for your Web site. Use the name of the domain/keyword phrase in the graphics for the site, in a headline tag across the top of the page, and in the copyright notice at the bottom of the page.
- Make sure the site looks good. It doesn't have to be professionally designed, but it does help. It needs to be presentable, with no misspellings, no broken links, no missing images, etc. Your site should be more than just one page. It should be "ready for business." Contact information should be easy to find and read at the bottom of the home page.
- On the submission form, the Title will be your company/website name. Create a captivating description. Choose the most appropriate subcategory, and give a 2nd subcategory if appropriate. When choosing categories, try to choose a subcategory that is close to the upper-level category.
- If your site is commercial, you must submit within the Business and Economy category.

Spamming – Page/Site Removal

To report a site that is Spamming, fill out a [Search Spam Report](#).

Here is a listing of some of the [unwanted pages](#) Yahoo! does not want to include in their index.

- Pages that harm accuracy, diversity or relevance of search results
- Pages dedicated to directing the user to another page
- Pages that have substantially the same content as other pages
- Sites with numerous, unnecessary virtual hostnames

- Pages in great quantity, automatically generated or of little value
- Pages using methods to artificially inflate search engine ranking
- The use of hidden text
- Pages that give the search engine different content than what the end-user sees
- Excessively cross-linking sites to inflate a site's apparent popularity
- Pages built primarily for the search engines
- Misuse of competitor names
- Multiple sites offering the same content
- Pages that use excessive pop-ups, interfering with user navigation
- Pages that seem deceptive, fraudulent or provide a poor user experience

To Remove a Page or URL from Yahoo!

To have a page removed from Yahoo!'s index, [visit this URL](#) for more information.

There are several ways to prevent Yahoo!'s crawler from indexing your site or portions of your site:

- Create a "robots.txt" file on your Web site to prevent their crawler from indexing your site
- Add a "noindex" meta tag to your documents
- Remove the original document from your Web site
- Host the document on a secure section of your Web site (HTTPS or login)

After you have made these changes to the site content or control documents to stop your pages from being crawled, you may still see the pages listed in Yahoo!'s databases for some time. The changes will take effect in their search database when the information is updated in their next refresh cycle.

Yahoo! will not manually remove sites or pages from the index as they do not have the means to verify the validity and authority of each request.

Google

Optimization tips for Google:

- Google likes fresh content. Blogs or RSS feeds are a plus but not required, but you need to entice GoogleBot to come back regularly.
- You'll do much better with Google if you have 350-500 words of content on your Web pages.
- Put regular html links to your important interior pages wherever possible, and use link text containing your targeted keyword phrases.
- Make it easy for GoogleBot to crawl your site.
- Keep your Title tag short and compelling.
- Use ALT text to correctly describe the image.
- Use Header Tags containing your targeted keyword phrase.
- Use link text containing your keyword phrase.
- Aim for a 3-7% keyword weight for the visible body text.
- Build link popularity and link reputation. Change up the link text you use for incoming links.
- Use a DOC TYPE statement on all pages. You'll find more info on DOC TYPES in this material. Here's an example:
`<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN">`
- Use HTML Tags for the purpose for which they were designed to be used. Always.

Google Algorithm

The Google Algorithm is one thing you see referred many times throughout so I figured it would be a great idea to give you some insight on the Google Algorithm.

With Google continuing to be unstable into the year of 2008 with the inconsistent data that is being brought in there is much to see in the Google Algorithm. You will discover soon that the Supplemental Index is still not working, and many domains keep on reeling after the major data purge that occurred with Google in late April and early May.

Google no longer counts partially indexed sites into their list, meaning you will only see sites that have been fully indexed when you search with the "site" command. Google themselves haven't removed millions of pages, it is due to the fact that they are no longer counting that pages that are partially indexed. This explains why there was a massive purge to the index.

As we've gone through up to this point you will see that a lot of the areas included are seen in Google's Algorithm twelve areas. All of these areas are analyzed every single time you begin the process of getting your site in the top page ranks on Google.

I've included a diagram that follows how Google's analysis on websites has changed over the past two years. You will be astounded on exactly how much it does fluctuate in a two year time frame, so just imagine what it will be like two years from now.

With the Algorithm there are twelve areas that are going to be analyzed from your site. The following is an image of how Google has evolving over the years:

	2006 June/July	2006 Aug./Sept.	2006 Oct./Dec.	2007 Jan./March	2007 Apr./June	2007 July/Aug.	2007 Sept./Dec.	2008 January	2008 Feb/May
Keyword in Title	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7
Total Words in Title	7.3	7.5	7.6	7.5	7.1	7.3	7.2	8.0	7.8
Keyword in Meta Description	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.6
Total Words in Meta Description	14.1	15.0	16.1	16.4	15.6	17.1	16.8	15.9	16.2
Keyword in Meta Keywords	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.4	0.5
Total Words in Meta Keywords	18.7	18.7	20.6	20.2	21.1	23.9	23.2	21.3	20.9
Keyword in Content	4.3	6.6	2.8	2.8	2.7	3.6	3.7	5.3	4.6
Total Words in Content	546	557	545	515	535	568	554	626	611
Keyword Density in Content	0.8	1.2	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.9	2.4	2.1	2.2
Keyword in Link Text	0.4	0.7	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.1	1.3	2.0	1.8
Backlinks	2,366	2,473	1,464	1,875	1,379	1,081	771	567	512
Google PageRank	6.3	6.3	6.6	6.4	5.6	5.4	4.5	4.8	5.4

Total Words includes ALL words on the page. Keyword Density percentage is calculated with all "stop words" removed.

Top Myths About Google

Myth #1: *The Higher Your Google PageRank (PR), the Higher You'll Rank in the Search Results Listing* – PageRank has nothing to do with the ranking of web pages, it has to do with the level of authoritativeness the page has and how often it is re-indexed. Higher PageRank pages tend to be reindexed more often.

Myth #2: *The Google Toolbar will List Your Actual PageRank* – The toolbar displays PageRank and backlink information that is generally 2-5 months old.

Myth # 3: *PageRank is a Value Based on the Number of Incoming Links to Your Site* – It has more to do with the **QUALITY** of the links coming into your site.

Myth # 4: *Searching for Incoming Links on Google Using "link:" will Show you all Your Back Links* – Google only shows you a small number of the links they know about and they have publicly stated the links they show you may not all be counted towards PageRank. Instead, use Yahoo! as a gauge to your link progress, or log into your Google Webmaster account for more complete list of incoming links.

Myth #5: *Being Listed in the Open Directory Project Gives you a Special PageRank Bonus* – There is not a "special" bonus for being listed in the ODP. PageRank from the ODP is passed the same as it would from any other site. No special treatment is given.

Myth #6: *Being Listed in Yahoo! Gives you a Special PageRank Bonus* – See #5. No special bonus given, although more "trust" has been detected in testing across hundreds of domains.

Myth #7: *Google Analytics is used to track your users' behavior for future products with Google* – Google does not use the data per the terms of use. There is no real value for Google to analyze that information, unless Yahoo! or MSN decided to use Google Analytics, then THAT would be beneficial.

Myth #8: *Google Will Not Index Dynamic Pages* – Google indexes dynamic content regularly. The issue is, it doesn't always index it correctly, and that is the responsibility of the Webmaster, not Google.

Myth # 9: *Google Will Not List Your Site, or Penalize it, if you use Popups* – Google does not view pop-ups as an indexing problem. However, if the popups are abusive, you could be manually penalized or de-indexed.

Myth # 10: *Google will Penalize you if You're Linked to by a Link Farm* – While Google has stated you cannot be penalized because of something that is not in your direct control, they do have systems in place to determine if you are participating in programs which are against their terms of use.

Need to Remove a Page from Google?

Use the Remove URL option in your [Google Webmaster](#) account.

Spamming and Google

There are things that could get you in trouble with Google. "Trouble" meaning penalized or banned from the engine "permanently":

- Using hidden links.
- Participating in link farm programs aimed at manipulating Google's results.
- Using hidden text.
- Keyword stuffing.
- Cloaking/IP Detection to present different content to users than search engines.
- Using JavaScript or Meta Redirects to "cloak."
- Creating domains, subdomains, or doorway pages with substantially the same content.
- Using Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to hide text or links.
- Using hidden divs to hide text.
- Using hidden frames and iFrames.

Read Google's [Terms of Service](#) thoroughly. Be careful about promoting or using products that go against their Terms of Service. Also, read through their [Guidelines](#) carefully.

SEO Questions & Answers

This is one area that is always having many questions asked so of course we had to include this in. Hopefully these questions will help you answer some of the questions you may have been asking yourself or been trying to find the answer to.

Question: For non-.com domains, do they rank the same as .com domains in Google?

Answer: Approximately 4% of the top ten results that you receive on Google are non-.com domains, so yes they do have the chance to be ranked just like .com domains. It is recommended to use .com domains mainly because most people generally have the habit of typing in .com domains over other domains available.

Question: Do domains that include dashes (-) have a better chance at higher ranks then domains that do not include dashes (-)?

Answer: It shows that only 4% of top ranked domains have the inclusion of dashes (-), so no domains that include dashes do not have a better change at higher ranks then domains that do not include dashes. If you decide to put dashes in your domain try to keep it to a minimum, but try to avoid the use of underscores since this can loose the SEO some benefits.

Question: Are the SERP's actually being taken over by Google's "Universal Search" option (video, images, news, etc.)?

Answer: Out of the top ten results that you'd get on Google Universal Search includes approximately 7% in inserts. Right now the hype of Google Universal Search isn't as much as we thought it would be, but currently it will rarely appear on your search results unless you search for them.

Question: With all the new changes that have occurred with Google and other available search engines, should I refrain from using my sub-domains in my site structure?

Answer: Currently approximately 8% of the top rankings received are coming from sub-domains. There is a downward trend occurring with the use of sub-domains, but if you already have them don't stop using them. If you plan of developing a new site though try refraining from the inclusion of sub-domains with Google planning on treating sub-domains like a part of the parent domain that is currently quite mixed.

Question: Is there are concern with the amount of sites that have site Inlinks and double listing on Google?

Answer: There is definitely an increase in the amount of sites that do have double listings and site Inlinks appearing all over Google. With 8% of the top ten sites having double listings and 3% having site Inlinks you may want to look further into this. When a site has used Site Inlinks they tend to be even more likely to receive the clicks then other sites.

As you can see questions will always keep coming up as the years progress. There is so much changing every single day with Google and other search engines that will keep people asking more. Keep asking these questions; it is the only way you can be fully informed on what is going on.

Glossary of Terms

ALT Tag: The alternative text the browser displays when the visitor does not want to or cannot see the pictures present on a web page.

Cloaking (IP Detection): The process by which a site can display different pages under different circumstances. It is primarily used to show an optimized page to the search engines and a different page to humans. Most search engines will penalize a site if they discover cloaking is being used.

Comment Tag: The text present within the <!-- and --> tags on a web page. Also referred to as HTML Comment Tag.

Directory: A site containing links to other sites that are organized into various categories. Directories can be general, niche, or regional. Examples of directories are Yahoo!, Open Directory Project, GoGuides, etc.

Doorway Page (Gateway Page, Bridge Page, Entry Page): A page that has been specially created in order to get a high ranking in the search engines. Primarily, there is very little, if any relevant content and requires a "click through" to get to the real page. Search engines discourage use of these pages because they do not benefit the visitor and it clogs up their index.

Dynamic Content: Information in web pages that changes automatically, based on database or user information. Search engines will index dynamic content in the same way as static content unless the URL includes a "?" mark or other characters. However, if the URL does include a "?" mark, many search engines will simply ignore the URL.

Frames: An HTML technique allowing web site designers to display two or more pages in the same browser window. Many search engines do not index framed web pages properly, instead only the text in the NOFRAMES tag is indexed.

Hallway Page: A page containing links to various Doorway Pages. This technique was very popular in the late 90s.

Heading Tags: A paragraph style that is displayed in a large to small, bold typeface, depending on the exact tag used. Heading, or headline, tags range from <h1> which displays the largest text and has the most importance, to <h6> which displays the smallest text of the tags. Having text containing keywords in the Heading Tags can improve the search engine ranking of a page for those keywords.

Hidden Text: Text that is visible to the search engines but is invisible to humans. It is mainly accomplished by using text in the same color as the background color of the page. Hidden text is primarily used for the purpose of including extra keywords in the page without distorting the aesthetics of the page. Most search engines penalize web sites that use such hidden text. Also be careful when using small font sizes. A font size of "-1" or smaller might be considered by search engines as an attempt to hide text.

Image Map: An image containing one or more invisible regions that are linked to other pages. If the image map is defined as a separate file, the search engines may not be able to index the pages to which that image map links. The way out is to have text hyperlinks to those pages in addition to the links from the image map. However, image maps defined within the same web page will generally not prevent search engines from indexing the other pages.

Inktomi: The old database that is now owned and controlled by Yahoo!. The main spider is called Slurp. Yahoo! retired Slurp in June 2007.

JavaScript: A scripting language commonly used in web pages. Most search engines are unable to index these scripts properly.

Keyword: A word or phrase you type in when you are searching for information in the search engines.

Keyword Frequency/Density: Refers to how many times the keyword phrase appears on the page in comparison to the total words on the page. For example, if your keyword was "photography" and your Title was, "The best photography in Arizona", your keyword density would be 66.7%. Stop words are not counted when determining keyword density.

Keyword Placement. The place on the page where the keywords appear is very important. Keywords in the Title or Heading tags will give a higher relevancy score.

Keyword Prominence. Refers to how "early" the keyword phrase appears in your Title, Description or document body.

Keyword Proximity. Refers to the placement of the keywords in relation to each other. For example, if the search term "memorial markers" is used, sites with the connected phrase "memorial markers" will outrank those with "memorial bronze markers".

Keyword Relevancy. There are two parts to Keyword Relevancy. First, are the keywords you are focusing on the page relevant to the overall "theme" of your site? If so, the keyword relevancy is high. Second, keywords that appear in the Title, Description, Keyword Tag and the Body are more relevant than keywords that just appear in the Keyword Tag. I suggest you rarely use keywords in your META Tags that do not appear in the body text. The reason: it adversely affects your relevancy.

Keyword Weight: Refers to the number of keywords appearing on your page in relation to the total number of words appearing on that page. If there were 100 words on your page and your keyword appears 10 times, the Keyword Weight would be 10%.

Exact Keyword Order: Google does not force their results to verify the keyword order the searcher inputs is the same as is listed on the page in the results. For example, if the searcher types in "rental snowboard" the results will also include "snowboardrentals". Yahoo! and MSN are more restrictive and generally return sites with the keyword phrase in the same order it was inputted.

Link Popularity: The number of sites that link to a particular site. Many search engines use link popularity as a factor in determining the search engine ranking of a web site.

Meta Description Tag: The tag present in the header of a web page that is used to provide a short description of the contents of the page. Some search

engines will display the text present in the Meta Description Tag when the page appears in the results of a search.

Meta Keywords Tag: The tag present in the header of a web page that is used to provide alternative terms for the words used in the body of the page. The Meta Keywords Tag is becoming less and less important in influencing the search engine rank of a page. Some search engines ignore the Meta Keywords tag.

Meta Refresh Tag: The tag present within the <head> section of a web page, which displays a different page after a few seconds. If a page displays another page too soon, most search engines will either ignore the current page and index the second page or penalize the current page for spamming. For example, to protect links to advertised affiliate products, one might use a Refresh Tag. One problem with that is that search engines may detect the refresh and eventually point the result directly to the product page skipping your affiliate link completely. You may also be penalized.

Pay Per Click Search Engine: A search engine in which the ranking of your site is determined by the amount you are paying for each click from that search engine to your site. Examples of pay per click search engines are Google AdWords, Yahoo! Search Marketing, MSN adCenter, etc.

Robot: In the context of search engine ranking, it implies the same thing as a spider or bot. In a different context, it is also used to indicate software that visits web sites and collects email addresses to be used for sending unsolicited bulk email.

Robots.txt: A text file present in the root directory of a site, which controls which pages are indexed by a robot. Only robots that comply with the Robots Exclusion Standard will follow the instructions contained in this file.

Search Engine: Software that searches for information and returns sites that provide information. Examples: Google, Yahoo! and MSN.

Search Engine Placement: The practice of trying to ensure that a web site obtains a high rank in the search engines. Also called search engine positioning, search engine optimization, etc.

Spamming: Using any search engine ranking technique that causes degradation in the quality of the results produced by the search engines. Examples of spamming include excessive repetition of a keyword in a page, optimizing a page for a keyword that is unrelated to the contents of the site, using invisible text, etc. Most search engines will penalize a page that uses spam techniques. This is also called spamdexing. In a different context, spamming also means the practice of sending unsolicited bulk email.

Spider: Software that visits web sites and indexes the pages present in those sites. Search engines use spiders to build up their databases. Example: The spider for Google is called GoogleBot.

Title Tag: The contents of the Title Tag is generally displayed by the browser at the top left of the browser window. The search engines use the Title Tag to provide a link to the sites, that match the query made by the user. Having keywords in the Title Tag of a page can significantly increase the search engine ranking of the page for those keywords.

Word Stemming: Use longer forms of your keywords. With the use of "stemming" search engines will return a result for the term "travel" if the word "traveling" is contained in your site. However, it does not work the other way, a search for "traveling" will not include a site that only uses the term "travel". A simple solution is to add the letter(s) "s" or "ing" to the end of your keywords in your META tags.

Always be conscious of your word choices and make sure there isn't another version of the word that won't cover more bases for you. An example is to use full state names, instead of abbreviations. For example, using "Illinois" will show up in searches for "Illinois," "IL," even "Ill"; "Connecticut," will appear when someone searches "Connecticut," "CT" (which appears in the middle of the word), or "Conn," etc.

Plurals: Search engines identify plural versions of a word through "word-stemming." Ideally this means a search engine would know that "search" and "searches" are in essence the same word. In reality, however, the search results for singular and plural versions of a keyword are rarely ever the same.

My Suggestion: Optimize for both versions by working them into the visible text on your web pages.

Synonyms: A word having the same or nearly the same meaning as another word or other words in a language. A word or an expression that serves as a figurative or symbolic substitute for another is a synonym.

A site that sells auto parts might want to optimize for variations on the keyword car parts, such as auto parts and automobile parts. Although you can work all the synonyms into the body text, my recommendation is you may want to focus separate pages around each unique phrase. Have a page for “car parts”, “auto parts” etc. This would allow you to highly optimize for each search phrase and dominate the market.

Merged and Hyphenated Words: Some terms, like “website” and “web site” or “ecommerce” and e-commerce” can in some cases get an equal number of searches while in other cases one may have a much higher search volume. In all cases search engines treat them as different words. Use a tool like [WordTracker](#) to determine search volume and frequency. In some cases you may want to optimize for both variations, in others, only the most commonly used.

Capitalization/Case Sensitive: Gone are the times where you had to ensure your keywords were case sensitive. Now “keyword” is the same as “Keyword” and “KEYWORD”. You want to format your text in a way that would be most pleasing to your visitor.

List of Domain Extensions

COM US Commercial	CG Congo	GT Guatemala	MN Mongolia	SH St. Helena
EDU US Educational	CH Switzerland	GU Guam	MO Macau	SI Slovenia
GOV US Government	CI Cote D'Ivoire	GW Guinea-Bissau	MP Northern	SJ Svalbard and Jan Mayen
INT International	(Ivory Coast)	GY Guyana	Mariana Islands	Islands SK Slovak Republic
MIL US Military	CK Cook Islands	HK Hong Kong	MQ Martinique	SL Sierra Leone
NET Network	CL Chile	HM Heard and	MR Mauritania	SM San Marino
ORG Non-Profit	CM Cameroon	McDonald Islands	MS Montserrat	SN Senegal
Organization	CN China	HN Honduras	MT Malta	SO Somalia
ARPA Old style	CO Colombia	HR Croatia	MU Mauritius	SR Suriname
Arpanet	CR Costa Rica	(Hrvatska)	MV Maldives	ST Sao Tome and Principe
NATO Nato field	CS Czechoslovakia	HT Haiti	MW Malawi	SU Former USSR
AD Andorra	(former)	HU Hungary	MX Mexico	SV El Salvador
AE United Arab	CU Cuba	ID Indonesia	MY Malaysia	SY Syria
Emirates	CV Cape Verde	IE Ireland	MZ Mozambique	SZ Swaziland
AF Afghanistan	CX Christmas Island	IL Israel	NA Namibia	TC Turks and Caicos Islands
AG Antigua and	CY Cyprus	IN India	NC New Caledonia	TD Chad
Barbuda	CZ Czech Republic	IO British Indian	NE Niger	TF French Southern Territory
AI Anguilla	DE Germany	Ocean Territory	NF Norfolk Island	TG Togo
AL Albania	DJ Djibouti	IQ Iraq	NG Nigeria	TH Thailand
AM Armenia	DK Denmark	IR Iran	NI Nicaragua	TI Tajikistan
AN Netherlands	DM Dominica	IS Iceland	NL Netherlands	TK Tokelau
Antilles	DO Dominican	IT Italy	NO Norway	TM Turkmenistan
AO Angola	Republic	JM Jamaica	NP Nepal	TN Tunisia
AQ Antarctica	DZ Algeria	JO Jordan	NR Nauru	TO Tonga
AR Argentina	EC Ecuador	JP Japan	NT Neutral Zone	TP East Timor
AS American Samoa	EE Estonia	KE Kenya	NU Niue	TR Turkey
AT Austria	EG Egypt	KG Kyrgyzstan	NZ New Zealand	TT Trinidad and Tobago
AU Australia	EH Western Sahara	KH Cambodia	(Aotearoa)	TV Tuvalu
AW Aruba	ER Eritrea	KI Kiribati	OM Oman	TW Taiwan
AZ Azerbaijan	ES Spain	KM Comoros	PA Panama	TZ Tanzania
BA Bosnia and	ET Ethiopia	KN Saint Kitts and	PE Peru	UA Ukraine
Herzegovina	FI Finland	Nevis	PF French Polynesia	UG Uganda
BB Barbados	FJ Fiji	KP Korea (North)	PG Papua New	UK United Kingdom
BD Bangladesh	FK Falkland Islands	KR Korea (South)	Guinea	UM U.S. Minor Outlying
BE Belgium	(Malvinas)	KW Kuwait	PH Philippines	Islands
BF Burkina Faso	FM Micronesia	KY Cayman Islands	PK Pakistan	US United States
BG Bulgaria	FO Faroe Islands	KZ Kazakhstan	PL Poland	UY Uruguay
BH Bahrain	FR France	LA Laos	PM St. Pierre and	UZ Uzbekistan
BI Burundi	FX France, Metro	LB Lebanon	Miquelon	VA Vatican City State
BJ Benin	GA Gabon	LC Saint Lucia	PN Pitcairn	VC Saint Vincent and the
BM Bermuda	GB Great	LI Liechtenstein	PR Puerto Rico	Grenadines
BN Brunei	Britain(UK)	LK Sri Lanka	PT Portugal	VE Venezuela
Darussalam	GD Grenada	LR Liberia	PW Palau	VG British Virgin Islands
BO Bolivia	GE Georgia	LS Lesotho	PY Paraguay	VI U.S. Virgin Islands
BR Brazil	GF French Guiana	LT Lithuania	QA Qatar	VN Viet Nam
BS Bahamas	GH Ghana	LU Luxembourg	RE Reunion	VU Vanuatu
BT Bhutan	GI Gibraltar	LV Latvia	RO Romania	WF Wallis and Futuna Islands
BV Bouvet Island	GL Greenland	LY Libya	RU Russian	WS Samoa
BW Botswana	GM Gambia	MA Morocco	Federation	YE Yemen
BY Belarus	GN Guinea	MC Monaco	RW Rwanda	YT Mayotte
BZ Belize	GP Guadeloupe	MD Moldova	SA Saudi Arabia	YU Yugoslavia
CA Canada	GQ Equatorial	MG Madagascar	SB Solomon Islands	ZA South Africa
CC Cocos (Keeling)	Guinea	MH Marshall Islands	SC Seychelles	ZM Zambia
Islands	GR Greece	MK Macedonia	SD Sudan	ZR Zaire
CF Central African	GS S. Georgia and	ML Mali	SE Sweden	ZW Zimbabwe
Republic	S. Sandwich Isls.	MM Myanmar	SG Singapore	