

## SEO Sitemaps Give Websites a Boost

A lot of web pages will find an SEO sitemap useful in improving their performance. SEO stands for "Search Engine Optimization", the process that aims to create or revise Internet sites so that it can be better found by search engines. The objective of SEO campaigns is to have websites appear in the top listing or first results page of search engines.

Internet search engines, such as Google and A9, maintain a very large database of Web pages and available files. To do this, they devise a program called a web crawler, or spider. This software automatically and continuously surfs and hunts content in the Web. Pages that the spider finds are retrieved and indexed according to text content, giving more weight to titles and paragraph headers. Spiders never stop navigating the web from page to page, to index the relevant content of the Internet. Besides looking at the text of titles and headers, some programs are able to identify default tags and keep a library of these page keywords or key phrases in the index.

When a user connects to the Internet types a query, which is automatically interpreted as keywords, the search engine scans the saved index and creates a list of web pages that is most appropriate to what the user is searching for.

SEO will use all the combined techniques of keyword analysis, smart code, good content literature, link popularity study and website organization to place the subject web page as high as possible in the list of search results in search engines. Web pages displayed on the top of results pages are assumed to get the most attention, and therefore, opportunity for earnings for web businesses and pages with sponsor links.

Search engines usually return a list of results ranking pages according to the number of Internet sites linked to them. Results can be classified as organic, or sponsored links. Sponsored links are shown prominently because their creators or agents paid the search engine. Sponsored links are the main source of income of search engines. "Organic" search results are the lists of actual results from the engines index and are directly related to the keyword typed in the request.

One of the more effective techniques of SEO is the creation of a well-organized site map in a website. Since the site's main page and other content are directly linked to a site map, spiders can more easily move through the website, identify the key words of the content, and index these for a search engine. This is where the SEO sitemap helps the website creator or administrator.

Site maps are usually pages filled with links. These are shown as tables or

lists, although lists are generally more effective. Writing code for SEO sitemaps is very easy and simple to format and maintain. These are ideally basic HTML pages with default tags, logical titles and keywords scattered in the Meta description. Introduction areas can contain more of the keywords. The site should have a main heading for every directory.

A simple list layout helps reduce unnecessary tags that might "hide" your keywords. Some spiders give more weight to the following, than text in the normal body of the webpage: heading text, content within link elements, text nearer the top of the page and the text written for a link. Therefore, writing the keywords and links in these areas could somehow move up the web page's ranking. This goes for SEO sitemaps as well.

Web sites should be designed consistently, so navigation models should follow the flow of the site map. Therefore, the first section in the site map should be the first link in the navigation bar.

In an SEO Sitemap, and most pages, the headings contain title attributes where more key phrases in the site map can be added. Keywords are generally well chosen and written in the body of a webpage. However, in an SEO site map with little text, key words should be added as much as possible. As much as possible, web links should follow web page titles, and must undergo SEO during coding. Care must be exercised not to cram the page with keywords and links, or the page will be interpreted as blatant spamming and not receive any traffic at all.

There is no way to guarantee that a website will be shown in the topmost ranking of "organic" search results for an extended period of time. However, smart and responsible SEO sitemap techniques can be used to place the website high up in the search position. Regular monitoring and adjustment of the SEO Sitemap and search results would ensure that a website is kept near the top ranking and receiving lots of web user traffic.