

## Search Engine Optimization Basics Part 4

### “ Submissions “

*This is the latest article in the “Back to Basics” series. Previous articles include the importance of search engine marketing (SEM), effective keyword research, title tag formats and Meta tag use. In this topic we take a look at how to submit to the search engines.*

Do you remember when a website needed to be submitted every day in order to get listed on the search engines? Or the time when we all needed to submit our sites to over 50,000 search engines in order to achieve traffic? Well, actually we never needed to do any of the above, but in a rush to achieve top search engine positioning, many businesses were convinced that submitting often and to thousands of search engines would bring that pot of search engine gold they so desperately wanted.

Fast-forward to today and the concepts behind submitting your website have dramatically changed. While many people believed that the submission process played a large part in the search engine ranking achieved, most businesses now realize that the submission process is merely a means of delivering optimized pages to the search engines. I often find analogies to be beneficial, so let's try this one. If your optimized website was this summer's blockbuster movie, then the movie theatre's projector would be the submission process. You want to make sure that the movie is shown using the best projection methods possible, but the actual projector does not make the movie a blockbuster. However, without the projector, your movie would not be seen. With search engine optimization, it's the changes to the website that ensure top positioning, but without correct submission to the search engines, no one will see them. Still with me?

So now that you've started to optimize your website, how do you make sure that your “blockbuster” reaches its target audience? No doubt, you can name the most important search engines and I would hazard a guess that you could name many of the smaller ones too. Which ones are important and how should you submit to them? Let's take a look.

### The Big Four

**Google 29.5% of searches\***

[Google](#) is everyone's favorite search engine, but how do you get your website listed? First there is the [submission form](#), located on their website. The instructions provided by Google

are pretty straightforward: submit your top-level page and Google will spider the rest of the website. However, submitting your website this way does not guarantee that you'll be indexed. Google has always preferred to find new websites by spidering existing sites in its index and following new links from there. If you want to increase your chances of seeing your website indexed, find some quality websites or directories to link to your new site now. You don't need hundreds of links, but 3-5 quality links at this stage will encourage Google to index your site. Google typically updates its full index once a month, so do not panic if 4 weeks have gone by and there's still no sign of being indexed. However, if after 6 weeks, your site is still not indexed, concentrate on adding more quality links and work on getting listed in the Open Directory. See below.

### **Yahoo 28.9% of searches**

Up until about 18 months ago, the best way to get listed in [Yahoo](#) was by paying the annual \$299 fee to be listed in their directory. However, at this time, Yahoo gets its results from the Google index and a directory listing is no longer vital (although many like having the directory listing as well). So for the time being, I recommend concentrating on getting your website listed in Google, and that will take care of Yahoo (although with Yahoo acquiring Inktomi, this could soon change).

### **MSN 27.6% of searches**

There are two effective ways to get your website listed in the [MSN](#) results (sponsored listings aside). You can submit your website to Looksmart (see below) and find your site listed in the 'Web Directory Sites' or you can favor Inktomi and have your website listed in the 'Web Pages' section. The Looksmart results are shown ahead of the Inktomi results, so if you choose just one option, make sure it is Looksmart. However, Inktomi is a crawler and is very useful if you have lots of content or hundreds of different products. If someone searches for a multiple-word search term or a particular model number, it will be Inktomi that will likely have the answer, not Looksmart. We'll cover submissions to Inktomi, below.

### **AOL 18.4% of searches**

The submission process for [AOL](#), is well, non-existent. AOL uses the results from Google, so obtaining a listing at Google is important if you wish to be shown in AOL.

[NetRatings](#) for January 2003. Results do not add up to 100% as some searchers use more than one search engine.

## The Directories

### The Open Directory

[The Open Directory](#) is also referred to as ODP or DMOZ. It is a vast directory updated and maintained by thousands of volunteer editors. To get your website listed in the directory, simply find the most appropriate category for your website and click the 'add url' link. Follow the instructions carefully. Not only are there standard instructions for each category, but also some editors have their own quirky set of guidelines. Do not be tempted to write a description that is full of dozens of keywords. Pick 3-4 of your most important keywords and write a 20-30-word description that includes these terms. DMOZ editors are known for changing the descriptions submitted by website owners, so make sure yours is well written so that you reduce the chance of it being edited; it could be your keywords that are edited out. Remember, editors are unpaid at DMOZ, so don't expect to see your website listed after just a few days. It could take weeks or even months. You can read further instructions at the [DMOZ site](#).

### Looksmart

[Looksmart](#) used to ask for a simple \$299 fee to have your site reviewed by editors and then listed in the directory. That is long gone, and now they use their own unique combination of paid-inclusion and editorial review. Pay the \$29 to have your site reviewed and listed in the Looksmart directory. Once listed, you will pay \$0.15 per click for the first 5,000 visitors that Looksmart generates to your website. After that, your click-thru rate is adjusted depending on the type of business you operate (rates range from \$0.23 to \$0.75 per click). The good news is that you can set your monthly budget to ensure that you do not overspend (minimum spend is \$15 a month). You can submit your site via [this link](#). (Note that these are basic instructions for getting listed in Looksmart - you can view further information on their website).

### The Crawlers

There are many other search engines that you should consider. So that we are not here all day, let's take a brief look at the best way to submit to each of them.

**Inktomi provides results to Looksmart, MSN, Hotbot and Overture.**

[Inktomi](#) does not have its own search engine interface but provides crawler results to many other search engines. The best way to get listed in Inktomi is to use one of the many paid-inclusion services. The cost is typically \$39 a year for the first URL you submit and \$25 for

each URL thereafter. The subscription is for one year and usually ensures your site is listed within 48 hours. Two of the main providers of Inktomi paid-inclusion are: [PositionTech](#) and [Network Solutions](#).

### **Ask Jeeves**

[Ask Jeeves](#) is a growing search engine with many loyal users. The crawler results for Ask Jeeves are provided by [Teoma](#) (which Ask owns). Unless Teoma happens to spider your website from another already in its index, the best way to get listed is to use their paid-inclusion service. Fees are in line with Inktomi and are \$30 per year for the first URL and \$18 for each additional URL. The main paid-inclusion partners are [PositionTech](#) and [Ineedhits.com](#).

### **Fast *provides results to Lycos and AllTheWeb***

[Fast](#) is similar to Inktomi in that it is not a search interface. However the sites indexed are displayed at both [AllTheWeb](#) and [Lycos](#), so submitting is definitely worthwhile. The fees are typically \$34 per year for the first URL and \$16 for each additional URL. The main paid-inclusion partners are [PositionTech](#) and [Lycos InSite Select](#).

### **AltaVista**

[AltaVista](#) is no longer the search engine power it once was and with Overture recently acquiring the company (and Yahoo acquiring Overture), its future is unknown. That being said, should you wish to submit your website you can use either its [basic submit](#) service, which is free but very slow, or you can use the [paid inclusion](#) option which will cost you \$39 for your first URL (this is for 6 months only).

### **Netscape and iWon**

Both [Netscape](#) and [iWon](#) receive their crawler results from Google.

### **In Summary**

Now for some caveats and clarification on the above. While some search engines offer free submission services and others will index your site eventually if you have inbound links, the advice above concentrates on the quickest and most effective means of getting your website indexed. In addition, I have not delved into the realms of 'Direct-Feeds' or Pay-Per-Click which would need articles in their own right. However, for most small to medium sized businesses

looking to follow the best methods of submitting a website, the above information should be enough to ensure that your site is indexed. If you're ready for your website to be the next 'blockbuster' then following the guidelines above will help ensure your success.

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