



## **The Handbook**

### **Codex**

[http://codex.wordpress.org/Search\\_Engine\\_Optimization\\_for\\_Wordpress](http://codex.wordpress.org/Search_Engine_Optimization_for_Wordpress)

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# Search Engine Optimization for Wordpress

WordPress, straight out of the box, comes ready to embrace search engines. Its features and functions guide a search engine through the posts, pages, and categories to help the search engine crawl your site and gather the information it needs to include your site within its database.

WordPress comes with several built in search optimization tools, including the ability to use [.htaccess](#) to create apparently static [URLs](#) called [permalinks](#), [blogrolling](#), and [pinging](#). There are also a number of third party [plugins](#) and hacks which can be used for search engine optimization (SEO).

However, once you start using various [WordPress Themes](#) and [customizing WordPress](#) to meet your own needs, you may break some of those useful search engine friendly features. To maintain your WordPress site's optimal friendliness towards search engine spiders and crawlers, here are a few tips:

## Good, Clean Code

Make sure your site's code [validates](#). Errors in your code may prevent a search engine from moving through the site successfully.

## Content Talks

Search engines can't "see" a site. They can only "read" a site. Pretty does not talk to a search engine. What "talks" to a search engine are the words, the content, the material in your site that explains, shares, informs, educates, and babbles. Make sure you have quality **word** content for a search engine to examine and compare with all the parts and pieces to give you a good "score".

## Write Your Content with Searchers in Mind

How do you find information on the Internet? If you are writing something that you want to be "found" on the Internet, think about the words and phrases someone would use to find your information. Use them more than once as you write, but not in every sentence. Learn how search engines scan your content, evaluate it, and categorize it so you can help yourself get in good favor with search engines.

## Content First

A search engine enters your site and, for the most part, ignores the styles and [CSS](#). It just plows through the site gathering content and information. Most WordPress Themes are designed with the content as close to the top of the unstyled page as possible, keeping sidebars and footers towards the bottom. Few search engines scan more than the first third of the page before moving on. Make sure your Theme puts the content near the top.

## Keywords, Links, and Titles Meet Content

Search engines do not evaluate your site on how pretty it is, but they do evaluate the words and put them through a sifter, giving credit to certain words and combinations of words. Words found within your [meta tag keywords](#) listings and within your document are compared to words found within your links and titles. The more that match, the better your "score."

## Content in Links and Images

Your site may not have much text, mostly photographs and links, but you have places in which to add textual content. Search engines look for `alt` and `title` in link and image tags. While these have a bigger purpose of making your site more accessible, having good descriptions and words in these attributes helps provide

more content for search engines to digest.

#### Link Popularity

It is not how good your site is, it is how good the sites are that link to you. This still holds weight with search engine favoritism. It's about who links to you. [Blogrolls](#), [pingbacks](#), and [trackbacks](#) are all built into WordPress. These help you link to other people, which gives them credit, but it also helps them link to you, connecting the "links." The number of incoming links your site has that have been recognized by Google can be checked by typing `link:www.yoursite.com` into Google (other search engines have similar functions). Other ways to generate incoming links to your site include:

- Add your site's url to your signature on forum posts / comments on other sites.
- Submit your site to directories (see below).

#### Good Navigation Links

A search engine crawls through your site, moving from page to page. [Good navigational links](#) to the categories, archives, and various pages on your site will invite a search engine to move gracefully from one page to another, following the connecting links and visiting most of your site.

## Search Engine Site Submissions

There are many resources that will "help" you submit your site to search engines. Some are free, some for a fee. Or you can manually submit your site to search engines yourself. Whatever method you choose to use, once your site has been [checked for errors](#) and is ready to go, search engines will welcome your WordPress site.

Here are some tips for successful site submissions:

- Make sure you have content for search engines to scan. In general, have more than 10 posts on your site to give the search engines something to examine and evaluate.
- Do not submit your site to the same search engine more than once a month or longer, depending upon their criteria, not your anxiousness to be listed.
- Have ready to type, or copy and paste, a description of your site that is less than 200 words long, the title of the site, and the categories your site may belong to in a search engine directory.
- Have a list of your website's various "addresses/URLs" ready. You can submit your root directory as well as specific categories and feeds to search engines, expanding your search engine coverage.
- Keep a list of the various search engines and directories you submit to so you do not accidentally resubmit too soon, and you can keep track of how they include you among their pages and results.

#### Directory Sites

It is also useful for traffic generation and search optimization purposes to submit your site to directories. Both comprehensive directory sites and those specific to the subject or localisation of your site can be used.

[DMOZ.org](http://www.dmoz.org) (<http://www.dmoz.org>) this is the most important directory - it's content is licensed in an open fashion allowing it to be syndicated through out the web -- its content is also used directly in some fashion by almost all of the major search engines.

# Search Engine Optimization Resources

While WordPress comes ready for search engines, the following are more resources and information you may want to know about preparing and maintaining your site for search engines' robots and crawlers.

## ***Meta Tags***

[Meta Tags](#) contain information that describes your site's purpose, description, and keywords used within your site. The meta tags are stored within the `head` of your `header.php` template file. By default, they are not included in WordPress, but you can manually include them and the article on [Meta Tags in WordPress](#) takes you through the process of adding meta tags to your WordPress site.

The WordPress [custom fields](#) option can also be used to include keywords and descriptions for [posts](#) and [Pages](#). There are also several WordPress Plugins that can also help you to add meta tags and keyword descriptions to your site found within the Codex's [Plugins - Meta Tags](#) list.

## ***Feed Submissions***

WordPress comes built-in with various [feeds](#), allowing your site to be viewed by various feed readers. Many search engines are now accepting feed submissions, and there are many site which specialize in directories of feeds and feed services.

To submit your site's feeds, you need to know the link to the various feeds your site provides. The article [WordPress Feeds](#) lists the various links of the feeds that come built into WordPress.

For information on customizing these links, see the article on [Customizing Feeds](#).

- [Pingomatic](http://pingomatic.com/) (<http://pingomatic.com/>)
- [Feed Shark](http://feedshark.brainbliss.com/) (<http://feedshark.brainbliss.com/>)
- [Robin Good's RSSTop55 - Best Blog Directory And RSS Submission Sites](http://www.masternewmedia.org/rss/top55/) (<http://www.masternewmedia.org/rss/top55/>)
- [Ari Paparo's Big List of Blog Search Engines and Feed Services](http://www.aripaparo.com/archive/000632.html) (<http://www.aripaparo.com/archive/000632.html>)

## ***Technorati Tags***

[Technorati](http://www.technorati.com/) (<http://www.technorati.com/>) is a "real-time search engine that keeps track of what is going on in the blogosphere — the world of weblogs." According to the site, "Technorati tracks the number of links, and the perceived relevance of blogs, as well as the real-time nature of blogging. Because Technorati automatically receives notification from weblogs as soon as they are updated, it can track the thousands of updates per hour that occur in the blogosphere, and monitor the communities (who's linking to whom) underlying these conversations."

[Technorati tags](http://www.technorati.com/tag/) (<http://www.technorati.com/tag/>) are used to categorize the different topics

and information used by blogs. Technorati uses WordPress categories as tags automatically. You can [add more tags](http://www.technorati.com/help/tags.html) (<http://www.technorati.com/help/tags.html>) by adding a `rel="tag"` to any link on your site. For example:

```
<a href="http://www.wordpress.org/" rel="tag">WordPress</a>
<a href="" rel="tag">Codex</a>
```

There are also several WordPress plugins for maximizing Technorati tags on the [Plugins - Technorati](#) list.

**Note:** In WordPress v1.5.x, Technorati will automatically recognize your category names as tags. For more info, see: [WordPress Categories, Technorati Tags and Search Engine Optimisation](http://www.tomrafteryit.net/wordpress-categories-technorati-tags-and-search-engine-optimisation/) (<http://www.tomrafteryit.net/wordpress-categories-technorati-tags-and-search-engine-optimisation/>)

## ***Permalinks***

[Permalinks](#) are enhancements to your existing URLs which can improve search engine optimization by presenting your post, page, and archive URLs as something like <http://example.com/2003/05/23/my-cheese-sandwich/> rather than <http://example.com/index.php?p=423>. See [Using Permalinks](#) for more information.

As search engines use links and the `title` as part of their information gathering, links to posts and articles within your site gain importance with Permalinks.

See also:

- [Boost Search Engine Optimisation \(SEO\) using Permalinks](#) (<http://www.tomrafteryit.net/boost-search-engine-optimisation-seo-using-permalinks/>)

As an added bonus, enable the [Permalink Redirect plugin](#) (<http://scott.yang.id.au/2005/05/permalink-redirect/>). This plugin "replies a 301 permanent redirect, if request URI is different from entry's (or archive's) permalink. It is used to ensure that there is only one URL associated with each blog entry."

## ***Google Sitemaps***

As of June 2005, Google is now accepting **sitemaps** of your site as part of their website submissions. A *sitemap* or "site map" is a single page listing of all the posts, categories, and archives on your website. Google needs to have this sitemap formatted in a special way using XML. You can find more information about [Google's Sitemap Submissions](#) (<https://www.google.com/webmasters/sitemaps/login>) from Google, and the discussion on the [WordPress Forum](#) (<http://www.wordpress.org/support>) about [WordPress and Google Site maps](#) (<http://wordpress.org/support/topic/35465>).

Some utilities have been created to help the WordPress user to create a Google site map of their site for submission to Google. For more information on these and Google sitemaps:

- [Googlebot's Blogspot discusses Google sitemaps](#) (<http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2005/06/webmaster-friendly.html>)
- [Arne Brachhold's Google Sitemap Generator Plugin for](#)

- [WordPress](http://www.arnebrachhold.de/2005/06/05/google-sitemaps-generator-v2-final) (<http://www.arnebrachhold.de/2005/06/05/google-sitemaps-generator-v2-final>)
- [Google sitemap generator for WordPress](http://www.sci7.com/cms/34/google-sitemaps.html) (<http://www.sci7.com/cms/34/google-sitemaps.html>)
- [Social Patterns Google sitemap for WordPress](http://www.socialpatterns.com/search-engine-optimization/google-sitemaps-with-wordpress/) (<http://www.socialpatterns.com/search-engine-optimization/google-sitemaps-with-wordpress/>)
- [Sidney's Keeping Pace with Google Sitemap Generator for WordPress](http://sidney.ws4f.us/2005/06/04/keeping-pace-with-google) (<http://sidney.ws4f.us/2005/06/04/keeping-pace-with-google>)
- [Shupe's Google Sitemap Generator for WordPress](http://www.shupe.ca/articles/website/687) (<http://www.shupe.ca/articles/website/687>)
- [Automatic Sitemap generation via Plugin](http://www.dirkz.com/google-sitemaps/). (<http://www.dirkz.com/google-sitemaps/>)

## More Resources and Tutorials

There is a lot to learn about search engine optimization and site submission. Here are just a few sites to help you learn more about how this works:

- [More WordPress Codex Articles on Website Development](#)
- [All About Search Indexing Robots and Spiders](http://www.searchtools.com/robots/) (<http://www.searchtools.com/robots/>)
- [Boost Search Engine Optimization \(SEO\) Using Permalinks](http://www.tomrafteryit.net/boost-search-engine-optimisation-seo-using-permalinks/) (<http://www.tomrafteryit.net/boost-search-engine-optimisation-seo-using-permalinks/>)
- [Effectively Marketing Business Blogs](http://www.tomrafteryit.net/effectively-marketing-business-blogs/) (<http://www.tomrafteryit.net/effectively-marketing-business-blogs/>)
- [Getting Ready for Search Engine Submissions](http://www.cameraontheroad.com/index.php?p=193) (<http://www.cameraontheroad.com/index.php?p=193>)
- [Preparation for Website Search Engine Submissions](http://www.cameraontheroad.com/index.php?p=168) (<http://www.cameraontheroad.com/index.php?p=168>)
- [Search Engine Optimization - Step 1. Identification of Aims](http://www.tomrafteryit.net/search-engine-optimisation-step-1-identification-of-aims/) (<http://www.tomrafteryit.net/search-engine-optimisation-step-1-identification-of-aims/>)
- [Search Engine Optimization - Step 2. Benchmarking](http://www.tomrafteryit.net/search-engine-optimisation-step-2-benchmarking/) (<http://www.tomrafteryit.net/search-engine-optimisation-step-2-benchmarking/>)
- [Search Engine Optimization - Step 3. Keyword and Keyphrase Research](http://www.tomrafteryit.net/search-engine-optimisation-step-3-keyword-and-keyphrase-research/) (<http://www.tomrafteryit.net/search-engine-optimisation-step-3-keyword-and-keyphrase-research/>)
- [Search Engine Robots that Search Your Site](http://www.jafsoft.com/searchengines/webbots.html) (<http://www.jafsoft.com/searchengines/webbots.html>)
- [Search Engine Test-Webpage Spider and Crawler Test](http://www.0email.net/) (<http://www.0email.net/>)
- [Search Engine Watch](http://www.searchenginewatch.com) (<http://www.searchenginewatch.com>)
- [Search Engine Watch Site Submission Tips and Tricks](http://searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/index.php) (<http://searchenginewatch.com/webmasters/index.php>)
- [Search Engine Watch's Tips and Articles on Optimization](http://searchenginewatch.com/resources/article.php/2156511) (<http://searchenginewatch.com/resources/article.php/2156511>)
- [How to Search the Web - Understanding How People Search](http://daphne.palomar.edu/TGSEARCH/) (<http://daphne.palomar.edu/TGSEARCH/>)
- [Understanding Search Results Pages](http://www.clickz.com/search/results/article.php/3291021) (<http://www.clickz.com/search/results/article.php/3291021>)

- [Website Development Step-by-Step](http://www.cameraontheroad.com/index.php?p=204) (<http://www.cameraontheroad.com/index.php?p=204>)
- [Why is Search Engine Optimization Important?](http://www.tomrafteryit.net/why-is-search-engine-optimisation-important/) (<http://www.tomrafteryit.net/why-is-search-engine-optimisation-important/>)
- [WordPress Categories, Technorati Tags, and Search Engine Optimization](http://www.tomrafteryit.net/wordpress-categories-technorati-tags-and-search-engine-optimization/) (<http://www.tomrafteryit.net/wordpress-categories-technorati-tags-and-search-engine-optimization/>)