Google Webmaster Guidelines

Following these guidelines will help Google find, index, and rank your site.

Even if you choose not to implement any of these suggestions, we strongly encourage you to pay very close attention to the "Quality Guidelines," which outline some of the illicit practices that may lead to a site being removed entirely from the Google index or otherwise penalized.

When your site is ready:

- Submit a XML Sitemap. Google uses your Sitemap to learn about the structure of your site and to increase our coverage of your webpages.

- Make sure all the sites that should know about your pages are aware your site is online.

Design and content guidelines

- Make a site with a clear hierarchy and text links. Every page should be reachable from at least one static text link.

- Offer a site map to your users with links that point to the important parts of your site. If the site map has an extremely large number of links, you may want to break the site map into multiple pages.

- Keep the links on a given page to a reasonable number.

- Create a useful, information-rich site, and write pages that clearly and accurately describe your content.

- Think about the words users would type to find your pages, and make sure that your site actually includes those words within it.

- Try to use text instead of images to display important names, content, or links. The Google crawler doesn't recognize text contained in images. If you must use images for textual content, consider using the "ALT" attribute to include a few words of descriptive text.

- Make sure that your <title> elements and ALT attributes are descriptive and accurate.

- Check for broken links and correct HTML.

- If you decide to use dynamic pages (i.e., the URL contains a "?" character), be aware that not every search engine spider crawls dynamic pages as well as static pages. It helps to keep the parameters short and the number of them few.

- Review our image guidelines for best practices on publishing images.

Technical Guidelines

- Use a text browser such as Lynx to examine your site, because most search engine spiders see your site much as Lynx would. If fancy features such as JavaScript, cookies, session IDs, frames, DHTML, or Flash keep you from seeing all of your site in a text browser, then search engine spiders may have trouble crawling your site.

- Allow search bots to crawl your sites without session IDs or arguments that track their path through the site. These techniques are useful for tracking individual user behavior, but the access pattern of bots is entirely different. Using these techniques may result in incomplete indexing of your site, as bots may not be able to eliminate URLs that look different but actually point to the same page.

- Make sure your web server supports the If-Modified-Since HTTP header. This feature allows your web server to tell Google whether your content has changed since we last crawled your site. Supporting this feature saves you bandwidth and overhead.

- Make use of the robots.txt file on your web server. This file tells crawlers which directories can or cannot be crawled. Make sure it's current for your site so that you don't accidentally block the Googlebot crawler.

- If your company buys a content management system, make sure that the system creates pages and links that search engines can crawl.

- Use robots.txt to prevent crawling of search results pages or other auto-generated pages that don't add much value for users coming from search engines.

- Test your site to make sure that it appears correctly in different browsers.

- Monitor your site's performance and optimize load times. Google's goal is to provide users with the most relevant results and a great user experience. Fast sites increase user satisfaction and improve the overall quality of the web (especially for those users with slow Internet connections), and we hope that as webmasters improve their sites, the overall speed of the web will improve.

Quality Guidelines

These quality guidelines cover the most common forms of deceptive or manipulative behavior, but Google may respond negatively to other misleading practices not listed here (e.g. tricking users by registering misspellings of well-known websites). It's not safe to assume that just because a specific deceptive technique isn't included on this page, Google approves of it. Webmasters who spend their energies upholding the spirit of the basic principles will provide a much better user experience and subsequently enjoy better ranking than those who spend their time looking for loopholes they can exploit.

Quality guidelines - basic principles

- Make pages primarily for users, not for search engines. Don't deceive your users or present different content to search engines than you display to users, which is commonly referred to as "cloaking."

- Avoid tricks intended to improve search engine rankings. A good rule of thumb is whether you'd feel comfortable explaining what you've done to a website that competes with you. Another useful test is to ask, "Does this help my users? Would I do this if search engines didn't exist?"

- Don't participate in link schemes designed to increase your site's ranking or PageRank. In particular, avoid links to web spammers or "bad neighborhoods" on the web, as your own ranking may be affected adversely by those links.

  Link schemes:
  Your site's ranking in Google search results is partly based on analysis of those sites that link to you. The quantity, quality, and relevance of links count towards your rating. The sites that link to you can provide context about the subject matter of your site, and can indicate its quality and popularity. However, some webmasters engage in link exchange schemes and build partner pages exclusively for the sake of cross-linking, disregarding the quality of the links, the sources, and the long-term impact it will have on their sites. This is in violation of Google's webmaster guidelines and can negatively impact your site's ranking in search results. Examples of link schemes can include:

  - Links intended to manipulate PageRank
  - Links to web spammers or bad neighborhoods on the web
  - Excessive reciprocal links or excessive link exchanging ("Link to me and I'll link to you.")
  - Buying or selling links that pass PageRank

  The best way to get other sites to create relevant links to yours is to create unique, relevant content that can quickly gain popularity in the Internet community. The more useful content you have, the greater the chances someone else will find that content valuable to their readers and link to it. Before making any single decision, you should ask yourself the question: Is this going to be beneficial for my page's visitors?

  It is not only the number of links you have pointing to your site that matters, but also the quality and relevance of those links. Creating good content pays off: Links are usually editorial votes given by choice, and the buzzing blogger community can be an excellent place to generate interest.

- Don't use unauthorized computer programs to submit pages, check rankings, etc. Such programs consume computing resources and violate our [Terms of Service](#). Google does not recommend the use of products such as WebPosition Gold™ that send automatic or programmatic queries to Google.

Quality guidelines - specific guidelines

- Avoid hidden text or hidden links.

- Don't use cloaking or sneaky redirects.

- Don't send automated queries to Google.

- Don't load pages with irrelevant keywords.

- Don't create multiple pages, sub domains, or domains with substantially duplicate content.

- Don't create pages with malicious behavior, such as phishing or installing viruses, trojans, or other badware.

- Avoid "doorway" pages created just for search engines, or other "cookie cutter" approaches such as affiliate programs with little or no original content.

- If your site participates in an affiliate program, make sure that your site adds value. Provide unique and relevant content that gives users a reason to visit your site first.

If you determine that your site doesn't meet these guidelines, you can modify your site so that it does and then [submit your site for reconsideration](#).