

# How to get listed by the top search engines

## ***Overview:***

When users search on the web they are looking through the search engines indexes, in much the same way as you might thumb through the Yellow Pages looking for a plumber. And just as your Yellow Pages may not list all of the plumbers in your area, so search engines won't automatically list all web sites.

Search engines are essentially large directories or databases that contain an index of words gathered from a selection of web sites, along with the addresses of those sites. Users look up a word and the search engine tells them which web sites that word appears in.

There are many search engines and each one can only index some of the millions of web sites that currently make up the World Wide Web. For this reason you need to ensure that your site is listed in several different search engines - ideally the most popular ones as well as any specialist ones that are likely to be used by your target audience.

Not sure whether your site is already listed? Try searching for it!

There are essentially two types of search services - crawlers and directories.

## ***Crawlers***

Google is the most popular crawler based search engine and it continuously scans the web using programs known as robots. These follow links from one site to another collecting text as they go and building their database. This means that their robots will eventually find your site automatically as long as there are other sites with links to yours. You can sometimes speed up the process by submitting your home page through the search engine site.

## ***Directories***

The Open Directory Project (used by several major search engines) and Joe Ant are examples of directories. Their databases are compiled by human beings who decide which sites to include and how to classify them. You can usually suggest your site through the search engine's own site. Most offer free submissions but with the most popular sites, this can take several months, if it works at all.

## ***Paid for submissions***

In the case of some directories the only option for business sites is to pay for submissions - although these don't guarantee inclusion. Your site may still be rejected if it doesn't meet the search engine's criteria, e.g. typically, it must be complete, have at least several pages, be legal and technically stable.

At the time of writing you need to budget between \$600 and \$1,000 for paid submissions to the most popular search engines. (Figures are in dollars because submissions are done over the web through US sites).

## ***Submission services***

Submitting to several search engines means putting almost identical information into several different forms. If you don't have the resources (or the inclination) to do this in-house then you can get other companies to do it for you.

DesignSpring submits all their clients' sites to the top free search engines as part of the site launch. We also carry out paid for submissions if our clients want them, with the costs added onto our design fees.

A note about on-line automated bulk submissions: these enable you to enter your site details, description and keywords into an online form and, for a small fee, the site is automatically submitted to a number of search engines. Watch out for services which claim to submit your site to hundreds or thousands of search engines - there simply aren't that many worth submitting to and you are risking a mass of unsolicited emails (spam) to your contact address.

## ***Problems getting listed?***

There are usually good reasons why a web site is rejected by search engines, but they often won't tell you what they are. Check your site against some of the most common problems in 'Can't get listed?'