

SFO Technology News

Technical Updates for SFO Clients and Contacts

January 2005

What's the Deal with Getting Listed on Google?

A Few Tips by Mark Waller

Search engines such as Google, Yahoo, and MSN Search, are one of the best ways for businesses large and small to find customers and for customers to find them. However, the challenge for small businesses that don't have the name recognition of a Coca-Cola or a Microsoft is being able to utilize the engine technology effectively. (For example, it's unlikely that anybody looking for a CPA firm in Minnesota would randomly type "Simma Flottesch and Orenstein" into a search engine!) How, then, can a company increase its rankings in search engines by utilizing keywords?

Before tackling how to do that, let's explain how a search engine actually finds your website. According to their website, Google is a "fully automated" search engine that utilizes technology that essentially sweeps over all websites on the internet. Google does not use human editors to decide what gets placed in their search engine, essentially meaning that without doing anything to or for your web site, you aren't fully utilizing your

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Buying Technology and Going to Tahiti

Finding the Best Deal and Earning Miles

The online world has an enormous number of places that allow you to purchase software. Choices range from discount stores supplying outdated software to the manufacturers of the software themselves (who typically charge the list price, which is often more than retail). In all, when searching the web for prices on software you can find differences that are sometimes larger than 50% FOR EXACTLY THE SAME SOFTWARE!



So how do you get the best deal? If you are shopping in bulk it is best to search around, as buying 10, 50 or 100 copies of software at a discount can save your business quite a bit of money. One common way to begin any search is with a shopping search engine such as Google's Froogle or Yahoo's Shopping. Both offer you the ability to search for specific products and then narrow down vendors by price, product specifics and vendor rating. Another common method is to take advantage of the values that can be found on sites such as eBay or uBid for purchases of more expensive software. Server software can often be found for hundreds of dollars less than retail on these sites.

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Getting Listed on Google (from 1)

potential rankings. Because Google likely wants to keep their technology a secret, they do not reveal their trade secrets on the specifics of algorithms used to “crawl” the World Wide Web. However, there are some very likely ways as to how it happens.

First, the most likely way sites are ranked is based on how frequently a web site is linked to other sites in the World Wide Web. For example, Coca-Cola is a world-wide brand and has thousands, if not millions, of visitors to its web page every day from various people. In contrast, <http://www.sfotechnology.com> generally garners about 70 unique visitors per month. Naturally, SFO Technology is not a site that comes up as easily as Coca-Cola in a search engine. One way to increase your ranking is to simply register in some search databases. Perhaps the most interesting one right now is the DMOZ Open Directory Project (<http://dmoz.org>), which is an ongoing project intended to keep search engine directories current. It is free to register your site here. You might also want to try searching Google for the industry your business is in and see if there are any commercial directories you can register in.

Another way of increasing the likelihood of being found by a search engine is by adding metadata to your website. This method is not as reliable as adding your page to a director, as search engines do not rely as heavily on metadata as they used to. However, adding metadata to your website is very simple and may still help your ranking. This is done by adding keywords that you believe potential customers would type into a search engine and properly tagging it within the <head> </head> tags within your web page. For more information on how to do this, visit <http://www.ucar.edu/wag/metadata.html>, or ask Michael or Jeff at SFO Technology.

It may not be possible to move your page to the top of Google’s most searched websites, but there are certainly ways to increase your standing. As the internet continues to become more of a tool for getting your business to the people you want to get it to, continue to stay on your toes with your webpage. The internet revolution continues; make sure your business is a part of it! ◀

Technology and Tahiti (from 1)

One interesting way to get additional value out of your online software purchase is to search for special offers from reward programs. For example, Northwest Airlines has relationships with several large online retailers including Dell, HP, Best Buy and Officemax. They offer miles for each item purchased from these sites, typically 1 mile per dollar, though some vendors offer as much as 3 miles per dollar. To qualify for these additional miles user’s must link to partner sites through the Northwest Airlines website.

To visit Yahoo! Shopping point your browser to

<http://shopping.yahoo.com>

To visit Google’s Froogle point your browser to

<http://froogle.google.com>

To access the nwa.com Worldperks Mall point your browser to

<http://www.nwa.com/mall/>

How About Some Technology Planning?

Are your servers getting old? How about your core software applications? It is often the case that we find customers struggling with how to replace aging and/or outdated technology. The struggle often gets worse when the company fails to act and just lets the equipment or software age. As information systems get older it often becomes harder and more expensive to replace and harder still to move and migrate data to a new or updated application.

While there is no easy solution to this problem, there are some things a company can do to stop and reverse this downward spiral. One is to consider the creation of a technology plan. A few hours spent working with the staff and management and a few hours of planning can be beneficial to a company struggling with the choice of when, how and how much to replace or update. A well drafted technology plan can help a company take control of their outdated systems in a manner that works within their business, budget and that will eventually lead to a successful transition.

If you are interested and would like to know more about how a Technology plan would work for your business, contact Michael Fox at mfox@sfotechnology.com or 612-337-8122.

End of the Year Checklist – Keep Your Network In Good Shape

1/3/05

Thinking about these issues and double checking your key systems can save you time, money and insure that your information is safe and secure.

1. Confirmation of Complete Backups

Check your backup to make sure all of the jobs are running successfully. Tapes also need to be rotated and the most recent weekly or daily tapes taken offsite. If tapes are more than two years old they should be replaced with a new set.

2. Updates for Operating Systems and Applications/Windows XP Service Pack 2

Do you have the most recent service packs and patches installed? Are you aware that you need to check for windows updates at a minimum every 3 months and preferably every month? SFO Technology Professionals is recommending to all of its clients that they upgrade to **Windows XP Service Pack 2**.



3. Emergency Repair Disk

If you installed software or changed settings on your server this past year then you need to update your emergency repair disk using the rdisk command.

4. Change Passwords

It is a good idea to change passwords on a regular basis. If you have not done so, the new year is a good time to evaluate old users, remove unnecessary users and groups and change passwords.

5. Internet Setup

Do you know when your **domain name expires**? Is the contact information associated with your domain up to date? Do you need to update the information on your website for 2005?

6. Anti-virus software

If your anti-virus software is more than 2 years old then it is time to update it to a newer version. You also need to check and make sure all of your anti-virus installations are updating on a weekly basis and performing a complete system scan at least every month.

7. Server Battery Backup

Make sure that the battery is still good and that the system can successfully survive a power outage without any problem. If you don't know what this is then maybe you need one!

8. Pop Up/Spyware

If your computer frequently has popups or has applications that you did not install, it would be a good idea to run Ad-Aware. This software does a good job of eliminating rogue programs and decreasing or even eliminating the number of popups that your computer displays.

9. Check Application Support

If you use software that is more than 3 or 4 years old it is a good idea to check with the manufacturer regarding support. Often operating systems and software packages will no longer be supported as updates to the product are released. If you wait too long to upgrade the expense and effort involved in converting data can be prohibitive. ◀