

SEO Glossary of Terms

Algorithm: **Search Engines** all have their own set of programmed rules, their algorithm, for how they determine the **rank** of the results of specific **queries**. They keep these rules private to prevent **spamming**.

ALT Tags: These are **HTML** tags that determine the text that pops up when you scroll your mouse over an image. It is handy for people who view pages as Text-Only, so they see descriptions of the images they are not seeing.

Anchor Text: See **link text**.

Backlinks: Links that are **inbound** from another website to yours, as opposed to **outbound links** (links that take visitors away from your website) and **internal links** (links within your site or that move a visitor around within your website).

Banned Pages: Web pages that Search Engines remove from their results for **spamming** or violating content guidelines.

Boolean Search: A search that limits your terms with AND, OR, or NOT. For example, you may type into a search box: “knitting AND sweaters NOT scarves”. So your results will be about knitting sweaters specifically, with no results about knitting scarves.

Browser: A program used to view web pages such as Internet Explorer or Netscape.

Category: See **Channels**.

CGI: Common Gateway Interface is the standard that allows the server to communicate with **CGI programs**. There are many examples of programs that use the CGI standard to communicate with the server. For example, programs that keep track of how many hits a site has had are often CGI programs.

CGI PROGRAM: Programs that communicate with the server via the CGI standard as explained above.

CGI Bin: The name of the folder (directory) in which CGI programs are stored. Web hosts sometimes allow you access to the programs in a personal CGI bin so you can include interactive components on your website, such as order forms.

Channels, Channel Listings: Simply a category in a directory, such as MOVIES or HOTELS.

Clickthrough Rate: It is the percentage of people who click through a particular link (ad) out of the total number of people who view the link (ad). For example, if 100 people view a web page that has a link on it, and 50 of those people actually click on that link, its

clickthrough rate is 50%. Also called CTR for short.

Client: A computer that requests information from another computer. A web browser is a client of the servers it requests information from.

Cloaking: To “cloak”, or hide, the content of a web page by having two versions of the same page, one submitted to search engines and one available to others. Cloaking is considered completely taboo by legitimate SEO companies, and search engines frown upon the practice completely.

Clustering: When you perform a search, sometimes you get so many results that they are hard to sift through. Clustering is a technique that categorizes the results for you in hierarchical folders, so you can more easily find exactly what you were looking for. For an example, see vivisimo.com

Comment Tags: **HTML** tags that make the text between them invisible to browsers. Some search engines ignore the content between these tags, others do not. Programmers use these tags to insert comments for any other future programmers that might look at the HTML code. However, you cannot and should not stuff your comment tags with keyword terms in an attempt to rank higher, for it is considered comment tag **spamming**.

Conversion Rate: The percentage of total visitors of a website who actually purchase something, request more information or another action you want the visitor to the website to complete.

Cost Per Click: A kind of advertising such as that offered in Yahoo and Google’s **sponsored link** sections where you pay by the click, i.e., you pay a set rate for each person who clicks on your ad.

CPC: See **Cost Per Click**.

CPM: Somewhat like CPC, only payment is based on impressions or how many times an ad is viewed, regardless of whether they follow the link.

Crawler: See **Spider**.

CTR: See **Clickthrough Rate**.

Dead Link: A link that leads to a web page that no longer exists.

De-listing: When a web page is removed from a search engine’s index, either because it has been **banned** or due to some technical glitch.

Directories: Sites that supply lists of websites compiled manually and organized into **categories**. Yahoo! Directory is an example.

Just to demonstrate, this is what a directory looks like, you can see that it is organized differently than a **search engine**.

Web Site Directory - Sites organized by subject		Suggest your site
Business & Economy B2B , Finance , Shopping , Jobs ...	Regional Countries , Regions , US States ...	
Computers & Internet Internet , WWW , Software , Games ...	Society & Culture People , Environment , Religion ...	
News & Media Newspapers , TV , Radio ...	Education College and University , K-12 ...	
Entertainment Movies , Humor , Music ...	Arts & Humanities Photography , History , Literature ...	
Recreation & Sports Sports , Travel , Autos , Outdoors ...	Science Animals , Astronomy , Engineering ...	
Health Diseases , Drugs , Fitness ...	Social Science Languages , Archaeology , Psychology ...	
Government Elections , Military , Law , Taxes ...	Reference Phone Numbers , Dictionaries , Quotations ...	

All of the blue text links above would be links that go to pages within the directory that were edited and compiled manually. Directories (as you can probably tell) were originally modeled after yellow pages...

The yahoo **search engine** looks like this:



It is fed by websites in the directory but ALSO by sites that have been picked up by Yahoo's search engine spider. Therefore Yahoo is a search engine as well as a directory.

Domain Name: For most practical terms, the name of your website such amazon.com or yahoo.com. Also known as URL.

Doorway Page: See Gateway Page.

Dynamic Content: The information on a web page that changes based on certain user settings, actions or preferences. Information that does not change is called static content.

Fake Copy Listings: When someone steals portions or the entire content of another web page and republishes it under a different **URL**. This can result in a loss of traffic to the original site and is considered spam by search engines (not to mention being a copyright infringement and illegal.)

False Drop: When a website is included in results for a particular search but is not actually relevant. This can happen due to a technical glitch, **spamming**, or simply that the web page included the word which was searched for, but not in the same context.

Frames: An **HTML** coding practice that allows more than one web page to be viewed in the same open window or in sub-windows. However, search engines may have a hard time with frames.

Gateway Page: A web page created specifically for **submission** to a search engine, these pages usually have the **keywords** or phrases repeated several times in an attempt to influence search engine results. The page is designed for submission and is not viewed by your actual visitors. Gateway pages are in poor taste and are considered **spamming**. Also known as an entry page, doorway page or bridge pages.

Graphical Search Inventory: Banner ads, pop-ups, or toolbar media designed to match search keywords.

Heading Tags: The **HTML** tags (<h1>, <h2>, etc.) that contain text of the headings or sub-categories for the written content on your web page.

HTML: HyperText Markup Language- the language (code) most commonly used to create documents and pages for websites.

HTTP: HyperText Transfer Protocol. The most common protocol for the communication between web **servers** and web **browsers**.

Image Map: An image that has links embedded in it, such as a picture of a house in which there are links if you click on the windows, front door, or chimney. It is a good idea to also include text links, for people viewing the page as Text-Only, and to help search engines recognize the links.

Inbound Links: Links leading to your website or a specific web page from elsewhere (i.e. other websites).

Internal Links: Links within the same website, used to move a visitor around within your website.

Index: The list of web pages maintained by a search engine. It is the database from which search results are culled.

Indexing: The process that a search engine uses to collect data and build its database of information from which it will pull its search results.

Javascript: A programming language often used for smaller tasks within an HTML web page, such as running calculators, clocks, and other tools.

Keywords: The words you use when performing a search on a search engine. See also **Search Terms** and **Query**.

Landing Page: The page that a visitor is brought to after clicking on a link from the

results in a search engine.

Link Popularity: Determined by the number of other relevant websites that have links to your site.

Link Text: The text that constitutes a link. Also known as anchor text.

Log File: A file that is created by the **server** that logs information known as requests. It typically logs where a websites visitor has come from and which search queries brought them there.

Manual Submission: Submitting your website by hand to a **search engine** or **directory** following the various specific guidelines of each search engine or directory.

Meta Search Engine: A search engine which searches several other search engines and then combines all the results for you. IxQuick.com is an example.

Meta Tags: Tags within the **HTML** code of a web page that allow you to include information about that specific web page. Sometimes used by search engines to help rank web pages, the two most known Meta Tags are **KEYWORDS** and **DESCRIPTION**.

Meta Description Tag: The **DESCRIPTION** tag allows the author to write a summary about the web page that sometimes will be displayed under the **TITLE** in search engine results.

Meta Keywords Tag: You can include several **keywords** regarding your web page in your keywords tag, and some, but very few, search engines factor this tag into their ranking systems.

Meta Robots Tag: You can use the Meta Robots Tag to instruct search engines to index, or not index certain pages of your website, although using a **Robots.Txt File** is typically considered better form.

Mirror Sites: Sites that all contain exactly the same content but hosted on different domains, IP's, or servers. This practice can be considered **spamming**, since having many sites with the same content is an attempt to saturate search results.

Organic Listings: These are index results which are not paid to be indexed, but are rather included by the search engine in the results because the search engine feels that the site's contents are of particular relevance to the query. For example, if you mention Brad Pitt in your blog all the time, your blog may eventually wind up in search results for a query about Brad Pitt, even if you did not submit it to be indexed.

Outbound Links: Links that take you away to a different site.

Paid Inclusion: You can pay a search engine to index your page somewhere in their directory, guaranteeing it will be returned on the results, but not securing any particular

ranking or guaranteeing under which search terms you will appear.

PPC: Pay-Per-Click, same as **Cost-Per-Click**.

Paid Listings: The opposite of **organic listings**, advertisers pay to be indexed and included in search results under certain queries. The same as sponsored listings, they can be either in the form of a flat fee or CPC.

Pay-For-Performance: Term similar to **Pay-Per-Click** and **Cost-Per-Click**, used by search engines to emphasize to their marketing customers that they are paying for advertising that performs, i.e., brings in traffic.

Pay-Per-Click: Same as **Cost-Per-Click**.

Paid Placement: An advertising program whereby search engines sell actual placement in the results for particular search queries, and in this case, as opposed to **paid inclusion**, the more you pay, the higher you can rank.

Portal Site: Any site that proves an entry point for users to the rest of the Internet, for example, Yahoo!, AOL, or MSN.

Position: Your site's position in a search is your rank as determined by your relevancy to the particular query. If you rank 3rd in relevancy on a search for "bunny slippers" your position is 3.

Query: Same as **search terms**, the words you put in when searching, for example, you want to know about Chinese hamsters, so you type "Chinese hamsters" in the search field. That is your query.

Rank: Your **position** in a search based on your relevancy to the search terms. See also: position.

Reciprocal Link: Two sites can exchange links, linking to each other, helping each other get traffic and gain **link popularity**.

Referrer: The web page that sent a visitor to another page. For example, if you wind up at a site about cheese logs, and you came from a link on a site about party snacks, the party snack's site is the referrer. The **Log File** keeps track of where visitors come from, and if the referrer happens to be from a search engine, it can also log which search terms are bringing the most visitors.

Registration: Alerting a search engine that your website exists and should be indexed.

Relevance: A search engine subjectively decides how well your site satisfies a **query** and how much information your site provides about a certain search term. That is, if your site is about cats, it's probably not very relevant to a search about blue jeans.

Relevancy Algorithm: The “rules”, i.e., method, by which a search engine reads a site’s content to determine how relevant it is to a query.

Re-Submission: Multiple submissions of a site to be indexed by a search engine. Can spark suspicions of **spamming**.

Results Page: The page that lists the results of a query, the results being the ranked pages that are most **relevant** to the search terms.

Robots.txt: A file used to instruct search engines which pages of a site should or should not be indexed. See also: **Meta Robots Tag**.

ROI: Return On Investment. Not just an SEO term, it refers to how much money you make compared to how much you shelled out on an advertising campaign. If you paid \$2000 dollars for indexing but generated \$10,000 dollars in sales, your ROI was 500%.

Search Engine: A server that indexes web pages, then stores and shares the results in the form of lists ranked according to **relevancy** to various **queries**.

Search Engine Optimization: In short, doing everything you can to make your website as attractive to **search engines** as possible.

Search String: See **Search Terms** or **Query**.

Search Terms: The words you type in the search field, i.e., the words you want to find more information about.

SEO: See **Search Engine Optimization**.

SERPS: See **Results Page**.

Server: A special type of computer that is powerful enough to store information to be shared over a network. A server is sort of like a telephone operator, connecting computers to other computers and storing, retrieving, and sharing information. Every web page is hosted by a server.

Spam: No longer just the popular spiced ham product, “spam” now also refers to any sneaky method of illegitimate **search engine optimization** designed to cheat the system. You have probably also used it in reference to junk mail clogging your mailbox.

Spamdexing: The act of spamming (see above) in attempts to rank higher on search engine indexes.

Spider: It’s the element of a search engine that spends its time crawling around on the web (get it?). It follows link to link to link and stores pages to be indexed.

Sponsored Link: Advertisers can pay to have a link located on a page, you see them all the time, they are usually colored or labeled as “sponsored links”.

Stop Word: A word that is so common it is ignored in search terms, words such as “the” or “a”.

Submission: Submitting your website to be considered by a search engine.

Title: The text displayed at the top of your browser window, which is included between the HTML **title tags**.

Title Tag: The **HTML** tag between which you write the **title** of your page, to be displayed at the top of the browser window.

Traffic: The people visiting your site.

Unique Visitor: An actual person visiting your site. And if the same IP address (computer) visits your page 30 times, it'll only be documented as one Unique Visitor, but with 30 page views (hits).

URL: Stands for Universal Resource Locator, it is the address of your site, how people find you. See **Domain**.

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