

# How to Improve Your Search Engine Ranking on Google

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It's been some time since the last article on Google appeared in thesitewizard.com's newsletter, giving tips on how you can improve your search engine rank on Google. This article updates the Google search engine promotion tips given in that issue and extends it with new Google search engine positioning tips.

Background: Google's Page Ranking Algorithm

As many of you are probably already aware, Google ranks a page according to the number and quality of links leading to that page. For example, if your page has 100 quality links leading to it, it will rank higher than another page that has only 20 links pointing at it. Quality links come from pages that are themselves "important" (Google's own terminology).

Note that this is not a secret. Google actually publishes information about their ranking algorithm on their website. You can read it for yourself at <http://www.google.com/technology/>.

Improving Your Page Rank on Google

There are numerous tips floating around in webmaster circles about how to improve your ranking in search engine results on Google.

## 1. Get Those Inbound Links

Since Google ranks your pages according to the number of links pointing at your page, it stands to reason that you should try to get as many links pointing at your pages as possible. This is so obvious that I'm only mentioning it for completeness sake.

## 2. Your Title Tag

Google seems to give weight to the title of your page. By title, I mean the text that is sandwiched between the HTML <TITLE> tags in the <HEAD> section of your web page. If you use a Web editor that automatically inserts a title like "New Page", remember to change it to some meaningful text with your keywords inside to reap the benefit of this feature.

## 3. Content-Laden Pages (Keyword Density)

It has often been observed that Google considers keyword density a large factor in ranking pages in search engine results, more so than many other search engines. You can read more about keyword density and how you can improve it on your pages from my other article, [Improving Your Keyword Density for Search Engine Positioning](http://www.thesitewizard.com/archive/keyworddensity.shtml), at <http://www.thesitewizard.com/archive/keyworddensity.shtml>

## 4. Keyword-laden Links?

According to a paper published by one of Google's founders, if the links pointing to your page has the relevant keyword text in them, it will cause your page to be ranked higher in search engine results. For example, a link with the text "Cheap Shoe Store" pointing at your site will cause your site to be listed earlier if a visitor searches for "cheap shoe store" than if the link simply said "click here". You can find a copy of the paper online at <http://www7.scu.edu.au/programme/fullpapers/1921/com1921.htm>.

## **Other Google Tips**

### **1. Will Disabling Caching of Your Page Affect Your Page Rank?**

Some time ago, it was claimed that Google would penalise pages that forbade it from caching their pages. As you know, Google caches the pages it indexes unless otherwise instructed. To avoid problems with people who feel that this is a copyright infringement (and other reasons), they allow sites to instruct the Google spider not to cache those pages using various means. One such method is outlined in my article on using META tags to manage the search engine spiders and listings, at <http://www.thisitewizard.com/archive/metatags.shtml>

Google has apparently publicly denied that disabling caching would affect the page's ranking in any way. I tend to believe their claim.

### **2. Dynamic Pages and Google**

Unlike some other search engines, Google is able to index dynamically generated pages, so long as a link exist to those pages somewhere. For example, a page like "<http://yoursite.com/showstuff.php?id=stockprices>" can be indexed by Google.

So if you have a dynamically generated page that you think should be indexed, make sure you put a link to it somewhere on your site.

### **3. ALT tags on Images**

If you have been placing images on your website without bothering to place ALT tags, now is a good time to add ALT tags. Google apparently indexes the text given in the ALT tags of images.

### **4. META Keywords Tag is Ignored**

Google ignores the META keywords tag, so, optimising of this tag is not going to help you any with Google.

### **The Google Toolbar**

If you use Internet Explorer, you can get an idea of what Google thinks of how important your site is in general, by downloading the Google Toolbar. The latter is an ActiveX control that installs into IE, and shows the Page Rank of any page that you visit. The toolbar can be obtained from <http://toolbar.google.com/>

Unfortunately, to obtain the page rank of the pages you visit, the toolbar actually transmits information about the pages you visit to Google. Thus if you are worried about people tracking your Internet activity, you might want to restrict its use to times when you check your site's ranking.