

## Optimizing your web pages for Search Engines: Part One.

A few small changes can make a big difference to your website's position in the search engines. This five part article will help you to identify problems with your website and shows you how to make a significant difference through quick fixes. &nbsp; Is Your Site Indexed? &nbsp; It's important to find out if your site is actually in a search engine or directory. Does your site come up when someone searches at Google for your keywords? Can you find it in the Yahoo! Directory? Perhaps it simply isn't there. In the next several sections, we explain how to find out if your website is indexed in a few different systems. &nbsp; Search Engine Basics &nbsp; Some of the systems into which you want to place your website are not household names. However, these are extremely important as only a handful of search systems provide all of the world's search engine data. &nbsp; Google &nbsp; Google is the largest of the search engines around today and therefore one of the most important. Open up your browser (We are assuming that you're using Internet Explorer and have downloaded the Google Toolbar &mdash; available at [toolbar.google.com](http://toolbar.google.com) &mdash; to your computer.) and type in `site:yourdomain.com`. This will bring up all the pages that Google have cached from your website. &nbsp; 1. Click the information icon on the Google Toolbar. If you don't have the toolbar, don't worry; we explain a non-toolbar method in a moment. &nbsp; 2. Select Cached Snapshot of Page from the drop-down list that appears. Hopefully, Google loads a page showing you what it has in its cache, so you know Google has indexed the page. If you're unlucky, Google tells you that it has nothing in the cache for that page. That doesn't necessarily mean Google hasn't indexed the page, though. A cache is a temporary storage area in which a copy of something is placed. In the context of the Web, a cache stores a Web page. If you don't have the Google Toolbar, you can instead go to Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) and type the following into the Google search box: `cache:http://yourdomain.com/` Replace `yourdomain.com` with your actual domain name. When you click Search, Google checks to see if it has the page in its cache. &nbsp; What if Google doesn't have the page? Does that mean your page is not in Google? No, not necessarily. Google may not have gotten around to caching it. Sometimes Google grabs a little information from a page but not the entire page. &nbsp; Now try this little trick. Search Google for the following: `site:yourdomain.com-ppppp` This tells Google to find all the pages on the `yourdomain.com` site that do not have the text `ppppp`. The dash (-) before the text tells Google to omit pages with this text. Of course, you can replace `ppppp` with any text that you're sure doesn't appear on your site. &nbsp; Google should show you all the pages on your site that it knows about. (For some reason, though, if you change the garbage text, Google will provide a different result; `site:yourdomain.com -ppppp` is not the same as `site: yourdomain.com -oiuiyiy`.) Look at the blue bar at the top of the search results. It says something like Results 1 - 10 of about 254,000. If your site has 30 pages, and it says of about 30, you're in good shape; Google has found them all. If it says of about 3, you have a problem &mdash; most of your pages are not indexed by Google. &nbsp; What if Google doesn't return any search results? Try removing or adding the `www.` bit; that is, if you searched for `site:yourdomain.com -ppppp`, try `site:www.yourdomain.com -ppppp`, or vice versa. Sometimes Google returns results one way but not the other. Also, make sure that you didn't mistype the search string; try again to be sure. If nothing works, then Google doesn't know about your website. &nbsp; You can search for a website at Google another way, too. Simply type the domain name into the Google search box and click Search. Google returns just the home page of that site. If you want to use the search box on the Google Toolbar to do this, type the domain name and then click the binoculars button. (If you type the domain name and press Enter, Google simply redirects your browser to the specified domain name.) &nbsp; Yahoo! &nbsp; At the time of writing, Yahoo! search results are provided by Google, so you don't need to check Yahoo! However, by the time you read this, Yahoo! may be providing its own search results. Here's how to check. Go to Yahoo! ([www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)) and type any keyword into the search box and click Search. When the results page appears, go to the bottom of the page and look for the text Search Technology provided by Google, or something similar. If you don't see this message, Yahoo! may be using its own index. If this is the case, use a technique similar to some of the others we describe in this article to see if you can find your site in the Yahoo! index.

### About the Author

Webs Hosters have been in the website hosting business for 10 years. Their customer base ranges from large corporations to small businesses, but their priority has always been to provide honest affordable hosting for all. [www.webshosters.com](http://www.webshosters.com)

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