

How to organize your web pages so your customers can find you



Creating a website that reflects your business services or products can be a rewarding experience - but you need to ensure that the people who you would like to visit your site can find it. There is a massive array of websites out there, so how can you make yours stand out from the rest and entice people to visit?

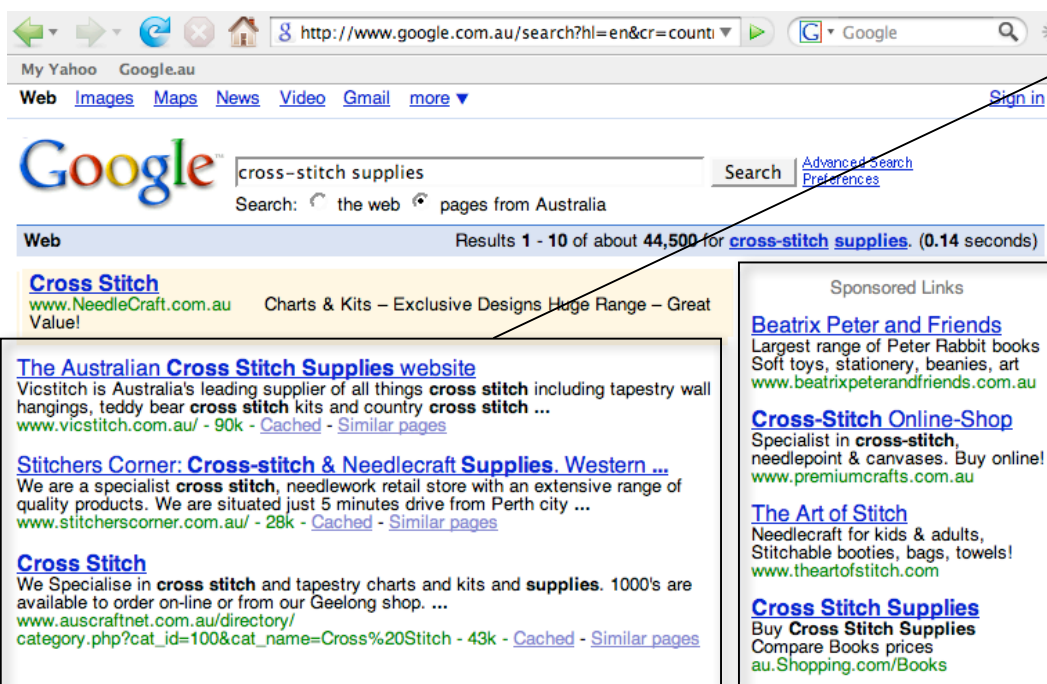
1. A good looking site that provides clear and logical access to your products and services is essential.
2. Then the dark-art of “search engine optimisation” (SEO) needs to be invoked to give your site the best chance to be found among the plethora of websites on the Internet.

The aim of SEO is to have your web page appear as near to the top of the search engine results page as possible.

To do this it is **vital** that terms (keywords) that describe your business are used in your web page so that a match can be made to the search terms a potential customer types into their search engine.

Sponsored or natural listing

This graphic shows a typical Google search. The “Organic” or “Natural search” panel contains pages returned according to the search term match as well as the ‘quality’ or ‘rank’ of the site. To the right is Google’s AdWord panel which contains ‘pay-per-click’ ads that are useful for purchase-ready people looking to buy services or products.



“Organic” search results are often good for research information

“AdWords” ‘Pay-per-click’ can drive purchase-ready customers to your site

Each type, Natural or Pay-per-click, has its own advantages.

Natural: Studies have shown that top placement in search engines provides a more favourable return on your investment compared to traditional forms of marketing, such as snail mail or radio and television advertising. SEO is the primary method to guarantee a top ten search engine placement.

Pay-per-click: Pay-per-click is becoming very popular as people are using these links to compare products and services before buying .

This can be a cheaper way of targeting your customers than other forms of advertising. As per its name, you pay for this type of sponsored advertising but the costs against return can be better than traditional advertising.

How they find you

Search engines such as Google, Yahoo! and MSN use software “robots” to crawl the websites across the Internet. The robots crawl each site and score pages based on how relevant they are. A website's score is derived from many variables, such as links to your page, density and frequency of keywords in page content, correctness of web-page code, longevity of site, frequency of updates and more. Two of the most influential factors are links pointing to your page and the page content.

Google is the most popular search engine. Its database currently has about four billion pages indexed and it is known for finding the most relevant information. This is partly due to the way Google crawls the web and finds sites by travelling through links. The more sites that link to you, the more important the engine considers your content to be. Therefore you should try to have sites link to your site. You can do this in many ways:

- » **submitting** to online directories like DMOZ,
- » **exchanging links** with business partners, and
- » **pay to place your link** on industry-related sites.

Be careful with whom you link as some sites that sell links can in fact **diminish your ranking!**

Search engines can only crawl through text. They will use the content on your site to determine what your site is about, which in turn will help to decide how highly your site will be ranked for specific keyword phrases when visitors type them into search engines. For this reason, careful keyword selection and usage is critical to obtaining top search engine placement.

With knowledge of your business industry it is possible to make a good guess at what people are searching for and the keyword phrases they will use to search for web sites like yours. Take a look at your competition, they can often give you hints on what is working when attempting to obtain a top spot in the search results.

Search engines constantly update and refine their ranking algorithms in order to index the most relevant sites. You can learn more about search engine optimisation or search engine marketing yourself or give us a call to assist.

Some web page ranking questions you should consider:

- Do you know your page rank (or even find what it is)?
- Do you use relevant business keywords on your web pages?
- Do you monitor the movement of keywords within your industry?
- Are you using meta tags and description tags within web pages?
- Are the images of your services or products on the web pages named?
- Do you avoid using frames within your website?
- How many sites are linking to your site?
- Does your flash web page have alternate HTML code?

For SEO enquiries

PA Marsh & Associates - e-mail admin@pamarshandassociates.com.au or phone 03 9005 2215