

The Power of Web Directories

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Web directories are an important component to search engine positioning. Directories come in all shapes and sizes, some are generic, while others are highly specialized. Directories, are defined as categorized topics or collections of information organized into a tree like structure where categories are used to define each groups association.

Large directories like Yahoo tend to have general themes and may charge for listings. While smaller niche directories like <http://www.finance-investing.com> offer free listings and profit from advertising revenue or pay per click models like Google AdSense.

Being listed in a directory not only brings in targeted traffic, it provides a one-way link from a website with similar content. Directories are generally highly ranked in search engines, and are considered well respected resources, two traits that are desirable in link partners.

While smaller directories that focus on a specific niche might generate less traffic, the quality of the traffic from a niche site is usually highly targeted and will be superior to that generated from general search engines.

If you are selling fire alarms, traffic from yahoo will be less qualified than traffic from Alarm Tools, <http://www.alarm-tools.net> . Most visitors to Alarm Tools will have a genuine interest in alarms and alerting systems. The nature of highly specialized directories result in visitors who have a serious interest in the directories theme, or a at the very least an interest in a theme related to the directory.

As a result, web publishers need to make a conscience effort not to ignore the value of directory listings. Regardless of their size, a related niche directory listing can be extremely valuable.

Many directories offer sponsorship opportunities. Vendors can optionally purchase sponsorship to increased their exposure with a bold listing or top category listings.

Determining a Directories Value It is difficult to assess the value of directory listing, as there is an obvious advantage to a listing of a closely related theme directory that is difficult to measure and quantify. In general, webmasters can use common web guidelines to determine the popularity of a directory and assess the directory link's value.

To assess the value of a web directory, consider the PageRank of the webpage where the link placement of your site will occur. The PageRank is indicative of how important Google may find a specific page. Another reliable third party measuring tool is Alexa. The Alexa ranking provides insight into how popular a website is. In general, a link from a web page containing a PageRank of 5 or higher is considered very good. A link from a site in Alexa's top 100,000 is also generally very desirable.

Compare the following two directories' Monitoring Tools <http://www.monitoring-tools.net> and RSS Specifications <http://www.rss-specifications.com> . Monitoring Tools' main page has a PageRank of 5 but most internal pages that contain links have low page ranks and the overall Alexa ranking of the site is over 650,000. While RSS Specification's claims a main Google PageRank of 6 and subpages all contain a minimum of a 5 for PageRank, the overall site is ranked 32,000. Clearly if you are in the syndication business, RSS Specification's would be a very desirable link partner, while you would have to weigh the cost benefit and position of a link from Monitoring Tools.

To determine a sites PageRank without downloading the Google Toolbar, use the following online tool from RustyBrick <http://www.rustybrick.com/pagerank-prediction.php> . A website's Alexa ranking can be found by entering the URL into Alexa <http://www.alexa.com> .

It is recommended that PageRank and Alexa ranking be only used as a guide when determining a directories reputation. It is important not to get too caught up in either Google PageRank or Alexa Ranking as webmasters can use "tricks" to artificially inflate their numbers.

The bottom line, links from directories that are small but niche, can provide quality web traffic.

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