

Scott's Guide to Getting Free Web Traffic

By Scott Weaver

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About the Author

Scott Weaver began creating web software in the April of 1998, using Perl to create several small applications. In 1999, Scott began tinkering with the PHP language and initiated plans for a small blogging community. By the beginning of 2000, Scott had created [Sitdiary](#), a small piece of software that would later be home to nearly 30,000 blogs.

For several years, Scott maintained Sitdiary while attending school and working full time.

In late 2006, Scott finally decided to start his next project. By December 1st, 2006 he had released [BlogFlare.com](#), a blog ranking service, into beta.

Since that time, Scott has been maintaining both websites and plans to add features on a continuous basis. In his spare time, he maintains his weblog at [ScottMW.com](#).

If this is your first time promoting a website or if you are a website owner looking for new ways to bring in web traffic, then congratulations! You've come to the right place to get things rolling in the right direction.

Diving Right In

Search Engine Optimization

Whenever I start a new website, I have a generalized process I go through to get the word out.

My first step is always search engine optimization. I know that because I need the website to get listed on search engines more efficiently, it must be search engine friendly. Search engine friendliness is synonymous with Search Engine Optimization or SEO.

Why do I need my website to be listed in search engines?

It's simple—they will bring you TONS of traffic! Once your website is listed within the first few pages of search results for any of the keywords on your web pages, you will notice your traffic will increase almost immediately!

In order for a website to be optimized for search engines, it should have the following:

1. A decent amount of content that is updated frequently, as this will help the search engine to determine what sort of categories and keywords your site fits into and will keep the search engine coming back. If you're starting out, you should have at least five web pages preferably.
2. A set of proper keywords that coincide with the content on your website.
3. A decent description of your website that is concise but informational.

Once you have all three of these things, it is time to place the keywords and the description in META tags. META tags are HTML tags that belong in the <head></head> section of your document.

To place keywords and a description into your web pages, you might want to use code like this (highlighted in red):

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Tropical Fish World</title>
<meta name="keywords" content="fish, tropical fish, aquarium, saltwater,
freshwater, fish tank" />
<meta name="description" content="Everything you've ever wanted to
know about Tropical Fish, Saltwater or Freshwater!" />
<meta name="robots" content="all" />
```

```
<meta name="author" content="Scott Weaver" />
</head>
```

You notice I've placed keywords that might appear throughout a website that is all about Tropical Fish and that's exactly what you should do.

An excellent way of coming up with words to use for both keywords and your description is to use the [Keyword Analyzer Tool from SubmitExpress.com](#) (click the title for the link).

This tool is most useful after you've already created content, as it will search your webpage and find all the words you use in it and count how many times you use each word!

Personally, I always use the keywords that appear most often as words on my webpage. If you use the Keyword Analyzer Tool from SubmitExpress.com, you can find this area toward the bottom and it's titled "Keywords found on page: Keyword – Times Found – Keyword Density." The cool part about this is that it is ordered by density and you can just start at the top and use about 25 or so.

What you'll notice next about the Keyword Analyzer Tool is that it lists each META tag that search engines will look for and tells you whether they contain errors or if they're optimal for search engine friendliness. You can find this area under "Meta tags analysis" near the top of the page.

The additional META tags you can use are called **Robots** and **Author**, which I highly recommend using. For the Robots META tag, in most cases I put “all” in as the content so that search engines may index my webpage with no limitations. For more on the Robots tag, do a search on Google for “META Robots” and you can find out more detail. As for the Author tag, if you’d like your name to be recognized, you can place your name or business name here.

If you’re not good with HTML coding, you can have your META tags generated for you. Just use the [META Tags Generator over at SubmitExpress.com](#).

Get Listed

Search Engine Submission

Now that your website is optimized for the search engines, it’s time to submit it to as many as possible as FAST as possible!

Some search engines won’t index your website for a couple of weeks, while others will have it listed within a few days, depending on their technology. This is why it’s important to get optimized and submitted ASAP!

A quick way to submit your websites to more than 40 search engines at once is to use [the Free Website Submission Tool at SubmitExpress.com](#).

After you've submitted your website to a bunch of search engines, I've found there's not much you can do to speed this process along, unless you have an RSS feed to your website.

What is an RSS feed?

An RSS feed is basically a text version of your website in a very strict format so that it can be standardized across the web. RSS is an acronym that stands for Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary. [You can read more about it by clicking here.](#)

If your website is a Blog, then in most cases, you already have an RSS feed built into it. Otherwise, you may have to build it yourself or pay someone else to do it for you.

Once you've found or created your RSS feed, you're ready for the next step. This is a little known secret, but you can actually help some search engines index your website FASTER using the following technique.

For search engines like Google and Yahoo, you may have a personalized area that you can customize with RSS feeds to different websites. You also have the option of adding your own feeds in so that you can more easily keep track of them.

On Google, you can find your "Personalized Home" at the top right of <http://www.google.com>. Once logged into your Google

Account and in the “Personalized Home” area, you can click on the “Add stuff” link and then click on the “Add by URL” link that is right next to the search button near the top. Type the address to your RSS feed into the box and submit it!

For Yahoo, simply browse to <http://my.yahoo.com> and log in to your Yahoo account. Once you’re logged in, click on the “Add Content” link and submit your RSS feed address.

I’m sure there are other search engines that allow you to do something similar, but these are the two I care most about because they bring me the most traffic.

The Traffic Express

The Value of Back Links

One of the biggest sources of incoming traffic on any website will be back links. A back link can be defined as any outside website linking back to yours. One of the main benefits to having good back links is that search engines scouring someone else’s webpage will discover your link and queue it up for indexing, so you can imagine the value of having a lot of these!

The trick is actually getting other websites to link to your website, but fear not—there are several excellent ways to do this.

One great way of getting back links is to submit your website to web directories. Web Directories are simply a catalog of websites that have been categorized and given descriptions. I recommend submitting your site to at least 100 web directories. I know it sounds like a lot of work, but it's worth it in the end.

Here is a list of 25 directories I recommend:

[DirYou.com](#) (My web directory, of course!)

[A1dir.com](#)

[Add2us.com](#)

[Alldotweb.com](#)

[Artoolinks.com](#)

[Bitwide.com](#)

[Boingboing.net](#)

[Cantufind.com](#)

[Directhoo.com](#)

[Freebielist.info](#) (great for free stuff!)

[Freewd.org](#)

[llinkr.com](#)

[lwebinfo.com](#)

[Miriblack.com](#)

[Mystickcal.com](#)

[Riotnews.com](#)

[Roqz.com](#)

[Sanory.com](#)

[Sloppylinks.com](#)

[Theseoking.com](#)

[Tikifind.com](#)

[Topcity.net](#)

Topdot.org

Urlchief.com

Visitalink.com

You'll notice that all of these directories allow free submission (at least, at the time I'm writing this article). Now obviously you can choose to pay for a featured link and that will give you an extra boost in traffic as well, but it all depends on your budget.

Once you've added yourself to 25 or even 100 (as suggested), you will notice your traffic starting to increase within a day or so.

Another excellent way to get back links is using forums. If you can find a web forum that has content relating to your website, you have found a perfect method for promotion! Forums typically allow you to use one or two links in your signature and in general, allow you to post threads about your website.

So in posting to a forum, not only are you creating a back link but you're also creating a good reputation. In keeping with that idea, make sure you post quality feedback and posts on forums. This will guarantee that your posts do not get deleted and the administrators won't see you as a spammer.

Personally, I like to use the DigitalPoint.com forums to promote my websites and to get great feedback and tips on them as

well. Additionally, you have the option to earn money there by participating in their AdSense Revenue Sharing program!

An alternative way of getting great back links is to look for sites with similar content to yours and merely doing an exchange; you link to their site and they link to yours. It's a mutually beneficial relationship.

Blogging

Blogs & Content Generation

Not only is blogging one of the best ways to generate traffic, it is also a great way to get noticed by search engines. Depending on the blogging software you use, there are tons of features that make it easy to get immediate traffic to your website(s) in a matter of minutes.

I personally use Word Press for all of my blogs, because I feel it is the most feature-rich blogging software. It offers features that other popular blogging platforms do not, such as track-backs, plug-ins and spam protection.

The track-backing feature of Word Press allows you to specify the website address of another blog article (from a different website) that you're referencing and ping it. Once you publish your post containing the track-back link, the blog you pinged (if it has the compatible feature) will display the first sentence or

so of your post as a comment for that post on the other person's blog.

The cool part is that you can do this for any number of blogs and get immediate back links this way. What more could you ask for? It's free content AND back links.

Plus, people like it when you reference their work and so, they'll like you. Just make sure the other blogs have similar content to yours and that you're being a positive force, rather than a negative one.

Now it's not always necessary to write a post to leave a track back to your site, so you can always just leave a comment on most any blog and you will be able to place a link back to your own blog. Comments are a great way of getting noticed, so make sure to leave quality comments that pertain to the article or other commenter remarks.

Creating a blog that becomes popular will be a great medium on which you can link to any of your small sites starting out. You can do what I do and write a release for each website you launch. That has worked for me.

How do I make my blog popular?

Simple. Just write excellent content, comment and track back to other, similar blogs, and submit your blog to blog directories. My favorite blog directory also happens to be one I recently

created, called BlogFlare.com! BlogFlare works by placing a small image on your blog that tracks unique hits and regular views. There are other services similar to BlogFlare, such as BlogTopSites.com and BlogTopList.com.

Most of these blog promotion websites work in a similar fashion. For BlogFlare.com, statistics and rankings are updated hourly and collected over each month, but deleted at the end and only the totals are stored. It's a great way of keeping excellent sites freshly near the top and a great way to let people know your blog exists!

Blogs can be promoted just like any other website though, if not more so. For that reason, you should read this guide to the end to make sure you maximize your incoming traffic.

The Swarm Effect

Social Bookmarking

If you've been living under a rock for the last couple of years, you might not have heard about social bookmarking, but chances are you have.

For all those rock dwellers out there, I'm going to give a brief explanation of what these sites are all about.

Social bookmarking is essentially making your bookmarks/favorites public so that other people can see the

cool stuff you find. Beyond that, other features have been added into the mix to make it a more refined system, such as votes and comments. Typically votes dictate which bookmark will end up on the home page of a social bookmarking website.

If a website gets enough votes, it will zoom to the front of the website and then get flooded with traffic. You can see why this has become the aim of millions of website owners.

Social bookmarking sites such as Del.icio.us, Digg.com, Reddit.com, Furl.net and others have become immensely popular for their ability not only to flood websites with traffic but to actually test the strength of web servers as most can't handle the traffic from said sites.

Now that people are aware of this fact, you can find hundreds of submissions every minute to these websites from people trying to get their story/article/tutorial/etc. to the front page of the social bookmarking sites.

Once this happens and the traffic spikes, ad revenue increases, back links pop up all over the internet. On Digg.com, this is referred to as the "swarm," and can be viewed on <http://labs.digg.com/swarm/>.

So what's the lesson here?

If you can build unique quality content that actually helps people, you've got a great chance at being swarmed with traffic

once you submit the link to these sites. Or if you simply found a great deal on something. Perhaps you have something odd or funny to show off. Any of these things will increase your chances of the swarm effect happening to you.

I will admit that every time I write a story or come up with an eBook, the first thing I will do is submit it to the main social bookmarking services. Even if you don't make it to the home page, you will still get a decent amount of traffic if you aren't duplicating what someone else has posted.

Traditional Advertising

Google AdWords And More

After search engine optimization, I believe that traditional advertising is your next best bet when it comes to bringing traffic into your website.

The tool I use to bring traffic in is Google AdWords which is an easy-to-use advert program. True, there are alternatives, but AdWords has brought me the most successful traffic flow.

This program is excellent if you have a small advertising budget. Say you have around \$30 to spend. With AdWords, you can specify your daily maximum and also set the amount you are willing to pay per click.

Remember: the higher you pay per click, the more prominent your ad will be so it's good to mess around with the settings so you don't pay too much or too little. Typically, I pay around \$0.20/click and I set my daily maximum to \$1.00.

There are some campaigns I will start out paying \$0.46/click with a daily maximum of \$5.00 if I want to get more exposure. You also have the option to display the ads as quickly as possible or to spread them out over time.

Honestly, the best way to learn about what you can do with AdWords is to just sign up and mess around with it. Go in and create a campaign, create an ad and just start out with a \$1.00 per day maximum and set your max per click to \$0.05. This way, you'll get at least 20 new visitors per day guaranteed.

Viral Advertising

Word of e-Mouth

This method of advertising uses the same idea behind the infection of a virus in that one person spreads the virus to two people and two spread it to four and so on. Essentially, it uses a sort of twist on word-of-mouth to generate hype on the internet and eventually a swarm to a new idea.

A few of the aforementioned ideas can be used to spark viral advertising into action. Blogging and Social Bookmarking are

great ways to begin the spread of a unique idea, but it goes beyond that.

An excellent example of viral marketing was Google's Gmail software, which was initially open to a few choice people who were allowed to invite people. Once people were invited and signed up, they were allowed to invite a specific amount of people in.

This invitation-only approach led to Gmail being used by thousands and thousands of people.

When I launched BlogFlare.com, I tried to think up a way to spread the word innocuously while benefiting people. So I came up with the idea to have a month-long traffic contest. It was worth \$50.00 so I didn't expect more than 20 people to join in but by the end of the month, I had more than 100 people signed up on BlogFlare and more started trickling in.

Viral advertising is all about making something low-key so people feel like they're joining something unique and community-like. Remember, people will always root for the underdog.

Mass Solicitations

Mailing Lists That Aren't SPAM!

Newsletters are another great way to bring traffic to your website residually and effectively. The trick to having a newsletter is to avoid being blacklisted as a spammer. Much like the general public at large, I hate spam and spammers so I do all I can to avoid the label.

So what can you do to avoid being blacklisted? Simple- don't spam!

Instead, only e-mail people that request said e-mails from you. Believe it or not, if you offer great information, people will want to get more information from you and there are plenty of services that allow you to do just that.

AWeber.com is an example of a service you can use that will handle newsletter opt-ins and opt-outs, as well as scheduled emails and provides you with a set of templates you can use.

GetResponse.com is another example of a service that offers essentially the same service.

They allow you to place a form on your website or blog that will allow users to sign up to receive updates from you. Also, AWeber and GetResponse allow you to set up groups of e-mails that can be sent out in whatever intervals you'd like.

Say someone signs up on Tuesday, you can set up a 5-day e-mail tutorial that e-mails them once a day for those five days.

Not only does this keep people interested and thirsting for more, but it also gives you a chance to repeat specific advertisements in the emails and to an ever-growing audience.

Conclusion

The methods described in this document have helped me to get decent rankings in search engines and bring in a decent amount of traffic every month.

Like anything else that is worthwhile, these things do take time so it is important that you be patient when applying these methods to your website or blog.

Additionally, if you have any ideas of your own to contribute, please do so! I will add them to this document in upcoming versions. You can contact me by commenting on my blog at ScottMW.com.

Check back often for upcoming guides on ScottMW.com!