10 Tips for Enterprise Search
A best practices tip sheet

Google™

Use these tips to find, index, and rank pages on your company websites more effectively as you improve your users' search experience.

1. Keep your search users happy

People use tools that get the results they need, and avoid the ones that don't work. Unless your employees actually use the search tools you provide, the technology you deploy—and the information assets they would have found—are wasted investments. So ask enterprise search users what they think of your current search tool, and what would make it better.

2. Keep search speedy

Searching should be fast, and faster search encourages users to search more often. Choose a search technology that's simple to use and returns results quickly.

3. Make search ubiquitous

It should be easy for users to search for information from any page on your company sites. Every page should include a search box or at least a link to a search page. And every results page should also include a search box to facilitate subsequent searches.

4. Keep your search pages clean and simple

Layout matters. Keep your main search page simple. Put advanced search features on a separate page. On results pages, try to keep navigational elements that aren't search-related to a minimum.

5. Crawl as much content as possible

The biggest reason people don't find things is that they aren't there. If a document is important to the information flow of your organization, make sure it gets into your index.

6. Don't forget your non-HTML content

Besides crawling your company's HTML pages, make sure you're also crawling servers where other file types (PDFs, Microsoft Office documents) reside. One way to web-enable file shares for crawler access is through directory browsing.

7. Publish, publish, publish

Too much information stays in employees' heads or on their desktops because it's "too much work" to put it where others can find it. Do everything you can to lower the bar to publication. Saving to a crawlable server should be as easy and routine as saving to your desktop.

8. Don't be afraid to crawl secure content

Enable your search engine to crawl secure information (password-protected areas and HTTPS content, for example). At the same time, don't block documents that don't need to be secure. Use authentication to display protected documents only to authorized users, while giving everyone a single, coherent view of all generally available information.

9. Run test queries against your content

After running a crawl, run test queries for important or representative documents, using keywords that seem likely to make a given document appear in the search results. Use a search solution that allows you to easily troubleshoot for missing URLs. Most importantly, get your users involved in testing.

10. Measure the benefit and look to the future

The amount of information inside companies is growing, and it's harder than ever to find it all. Establish benchmarks around number of searches per user, per day or other metrics that will help you understand enterprise search improvements. Make sure your search solution scales easily—without a painful increase in the time and expense required to administer it.

For more information, visit **http://www.google.com/appliance**