

Monitoring Your Search Engine Rankings

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Once you've submitted your site to the major search engines and directories, you just need to be patient - it takes anywhere from one day to two months or longer for your URL(s) to be added to the various indexes, depending on the search engine you're submitting to.

Some search engines will index your site right away, while others will simply make a note of it and return later. Likewise, some search engines will index your main page first, and add the rest of your web pages later. Either way, once your web pages are indexed they still need to be added to the live database and this can take some time (For more information about the time it takes each search engine to index your web site, [click here to read the article "Submitting Your Site to The Major Search Engines"](#)).

After you've waited for the appropriate amount of submission time, the next step is to check and make sure that your web site has actually been indexed by the Search Engines. Some search engines make it easy to confirm that your URL(s) are listed in their database, while others make it more difficult. Below, you'll find some instructions for a few of the Major SE's on how to find out if your URL is listed...

[Alta Vista](#) / [Northern Light](#)

AltaVista and Northern Light make checking for your URLs easy. Simply enter the URL you want to check in their search box, prefaced by "url:" like this...

- url:yourdomain.com
- url:yourdomain.com/products/
- url:yourdomain.com/products/new.html

The first example will list all URLs under a domain that are listed, the second example will list URLs within a particular directory and the last example will list just the specific URL entered. Note that the URLs you enter after url: shouldn't include the www prefix. You can add this, but if Alta Vista has indexed your site without it your pages won't turn up. You can also forget about starting off with http:// -- it's not necessary.

[HotBot](#) / [MSN](#) / [Looksmart](#) / [About](#)

Checking for your pages in the inktomi database driven engines is an easy process. Simply enter the URL you want to check in their search box, prefaced by "domain:" like this...

- domain:yourdomain.com

you should see a list of all of your pages in the Inktomi database - in no particular order. To search for pages within one directory only, use this search string...

- domain:yourdomain.com originalurlpath:directory

For example, a search for "domain:yourdomain.com originalurlpath:products" would display indexed pages in the directory at <http://www.yourdomain.com/products/>. This is the easiest way to find your listings if you don't have your own domain name. You would simply search for your web host's domain and your directory.

If you click on "advanced search" from the left hand menu bar, you'll come to a page of advanced search options. Scroll down until you see a "location" field. If you enter yourdomain.com in that field and then scroll back up and hit "search" without entering any search terms, you will also be able to display all pages on that domain name which are listed in the database.

[Fast / All the Web](#), [Lycos](#)

To see if your URL(s) have been added to the Fast / Lycos database you'll have to search for them manually. Try searching for both "www.yourdomain.com" and "yourdomain.com", as well as searching for particular phrases that are contained in the title and/or body of the page you're looking for.

If you can't seem to locate your URLs after waiting a few weeks, try resubmitting them and see what happens. If you're feeling lucky you could also email the search engine in question and see if they can help - you may or may not get a reply any time soon.

While it's nice to know if your site has been added to a search engine's live database, it's even more important to know where it's ranked. Generally speaking the way to do this is to simply perform a search for the keywords or keyword phrases that you've targeted to see if and where you show up - but the resources below can also help.

Quick Reference Chart

Search Engine	Search String
Alta Vista	● url:yourdomain.com
Northern Light	● url:yourdomain.com/products/ ● url:yourdomain.com/products/new.html
HotBot	● domain:yourdomain.com
MSN	● domain:yourdomain.com originalurlpath:directory

[Fast / All the Web](#)

[Lycos](#)

[Google](#)

- [www.yourdomain.com](#)
- [yourdomain.com](#)

Automated Software and Services

Services and software programs can be used to reduce the time you spend on searching for your listings in the major search engines - and a few can even automate much of the process. Take a look at 2 of my picks, but unless search engines are a top priority you probably shouldn't worry about any of the paid services or commercial software...

[PositionAgent](#)

Now part of the Bcentral Submit-it! Service, this service helps you monitor your web site ranking on the top search engines for different keywords and receive weekly email reports. PositionAgent also tests your URL for search engine readiness, browser compatibility, bad links, and more.

[WebPosition Gold](#)

Probably the most popular of them all, WebPosition generates comprehensive reports on all aspects of your search engine rankings. There's a free trial version available, but it's not nearly as powerful as WebPosition Gold. If search engines are a top priority for you, this is the one software program to consider purchasing. Not only can you use this Web Position Gold to verify whether or not your url has been indexed, but you can also check to see where your pages rank for specific keywords in all of the major search engines.