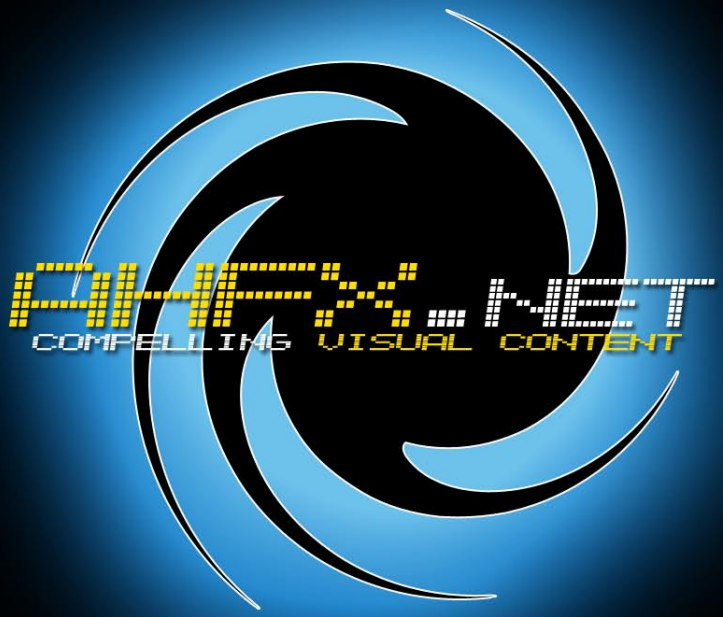

ah digital fx studios

Issue 10.04

News

This Month in the News

There went an amazingly fast month for AH Digital FX Studios. This month we focus on search engine placement, especially Google placement. How to get good search engine placement is one of the most often asked questions by clients. This E-list will explain good tips on how to better optimize your site to place you ahead of your competitors.

Disclaimer: Note that search engines do not give out their exact algorithms and these change quite often. These are just basic tips to help understand the process. Following these tips in no wise guarantees higher placement in any given search engine. They are merely tips that have helped raise the position of sites that AH Digital FX Studios has created.

Contest

The contest for this month is a photography contest. Please see the CONTEST section below for more details.

Writers

AH Digital FX Studios is looking for Actionscript 2.0 coders to support the Flash Community and submit tutorials on Actionscript 2.0. All submissions may be sent to info@ahfx.net.

We are also looking for graphic designers that would like to be published in our monthly e-list. We are looking for designers to teach solid principles that everyone can practice and use in their designs. All submissions may be sent to info@ahfx.net

Unique Artwork

AH Digital FX Studios is calling to the graphic designers out there. We are looking for unique artwork to be displayed in subsequent editions of the E-list. All artwork submitted needs to be in jpg format and should include all pertinent contact information, so that we can give credit to the correct individual. Owners of artwork chosen for the E-list will be notified via e-mail of the edition that will contain their artwork. Send submissions to info@ahfx.net. *Not all entries will be placed in the E-list. Void where prohibited. Contact AH Digital FX Studios for more information.*

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Toolbox

Search Engine Basics—Getting Listed

Many people have been mystified by how search engines work and why they rank so well and don't even appear in others. Hopefully this E-list will give you a better understanding of how search engines work and how to move up the ladder.

There are three ways of getting into most search engines. The first is by paid subscription. Many search engines, like google, have a place for paid listings. There is normally a pay-per-click type of advertising. You pay google anytime someone clicks on the ad that sends someone to your site, regardless of whether they buy anything on your site or not. For many businesses this is a "quick-and-dirty" way of getting a high listing on a search engine. Some search engines do nothing but paid listings. However, with good design and an understanding of how search engines work, this extra expense will hopefully disappear from your budget.

The second way of getting into a search engine is by "submitting" your site and waiting for them to visit your site. Search engines have a couple of ways of "indexing" your site. The first (and not widely used) is by human indexing. This is where an actual person goes to your site and determines what areas to index your site under. This is normally a very slow process and is not done by many search engines. (The main one is dmoz.org which we will talk about later.) If your site isn't human indexed, then it will be crawled by "spiders" or "robots" (commonly called "bots"). These bots are merely a program that looks at your site and by using certain criteria, indexes your site. Once your site has been crawled it normally takes a few days before the crawled site will end up in the index. Once your site has been indexed, the spiders will return at least monthly to re-index your site.

The final way to get into search engines is to just wait. No it isn't that easy, but if you have a link to your site from an all ready indexed site, the next time that site is spidered it will find the link to your site and your site will be indexed. This may take some time but is normally the most productive method if you don't want to spend out thousands of dollars for a paid listing.

Spiders

Good design can help you get great placement. I want to repeat. **Good design can help you get great placement.** Before I do one thing on a client website, I find out where they want to position themselves on the web and what keywords they want to be found under. If they have properly defined who their customers are, this is a very simple task (For further information see the SEVEN TIPS TO MAKE YOUR WEBSITE MORE COMPELLING, you can request it from info@ahfx.net). People who know their customers will know what words people would use to look for their site. Almost all search engines use "keyword density" as one of their criteria for ranking a site. Keyword

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Toolbox (cont.)

density is the amount of times your keyword shows up in the main body of your text, the title, headings, and your meta tags. Most people suggest shooting for a keyword density of 5-12%. However, this isn't a hard and fast rule. I've seen sites with a 25% keyword density be #1 on the rankings.

Inform your clients that they should be thinking of their keywords when they write the content for their websites. This will help more than any other suggestion in this E-list. Having good content always wins. (I will explain this more in a moment).

Because all spiders don't index the same way, here are a few things that I have found that will help your placement for certain indexes.

1. Google
   - •Google places very high emphasis on PageRank (explained in detail later)
   - •Google places very high emphasis on the number of inbound links (explained in detail later)
   - •Google places high emphasis on the page title
   - •Google places high emphasis on headings
   - •Google places high emphasis on keyword density
   - •Google places high emphasis on when the content was last updated
   - •Google places high emphasis on words between Bold tags
   - •Google places high emphasis on aprox. the first 25 words on the page
   - •Google places emphasis on image alt tags
   - •Google does not care about meta tags
2. Yahoo
   - •Yahoo places very high emphasis on meta tags
   - •Yahoo places high emphasis on keyword density
   - •Yahoo places emphasis on when the content was last updated
   - •Yahoo places emphasis on click-through rates. (Number of people that find and use your site through their search engine)
   - •Yahoo does not care as much about inbound links
3. MSN
   - •MSN doesn't use their own spiders
   - •MSN gathers its results from Overture, LookSmart, and others (mostly paid listings)
4. Netscape
   - •Netscape gathers its results from Google
5. Teoma, Alltheweb, Dogpile, et. al.
   - •Most of these have a mixture between Yahoo and Google placing a lot of emphasis on meta tags

As you can see, Google and Yahoo are the two big dogs of the search engine arena. Getting a high ranking in either of these two will help you get placed high in numerous other search engines.

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Toolbox (cont.)

Submitting to Search Engines

If you get listed in the two "big dog" search engines, the chances are pretty good that you will begin to popup in the other search engines. Here are the main submitting URLs for each of these. You need a yahoo account to be able to submit to yahoo.

Google http://www.google.com/addurl.html
Yahoo https://login.yahoo.com/config/login?.src=srch&.done=http://submit.search.yahoo.com/free/request

Now you can also do a paid submission to overture and the such to get a global submission, but I don't feel that it will be worth as much as a great placement in google.

Now before you run off and submit your site, here is a pre-submit checklist.

1. My site has a title that isn't longer than 60 characters
2. My site has a title that doesn't include the domain name
3. My site has a title that isn't the same as the file name
4. My site has a meta "description" tag that is no longer than 100 characters
5. My site has a meta "description" tag that has less than 25 words
6. My site has a meta "keywords" tag that has less than 250 characters
7. My site has a meta "keywords" tag that has all keywords starting in capital letters
8. My site has a meta "keywords" tag that lists a keyword then , (comma space) keyword
9. My site has a meta "keywords" tag that doesn't use any word more than 3 times
10. My site has between 6-18% keyword density
11. My site has an index page that loads fast (not too much content or images)
12. My site has NO BROKEN LINKS

Once you have submitted to google and yahoo, you will also want to submit to www.dmoz.org. This is an open source project that is indexing the web. Getting listed on dmoz will greatly increase your chances of being indexed and ranking higher on other search engines. DMOZ is a human index site so submit early and be prepared to wait.

After submitting, make sure that you have a tracking program in place to see when your site is spidered by google and yahoo. Furthermore, make sure you track the keywords that people are using to find your site. Are the keywords you planned for the ones that they are using? (See SEVEN TIPS TO MAKE YOUR WEBSITE MORE COMPELLING for more details).

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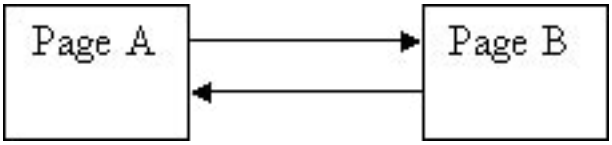
Design Concepts

Google's PageRank Explained.

The following article comes from http://www.iprcom.com/papers/pagerank/. It explains pagerank and why inbound links are so important.

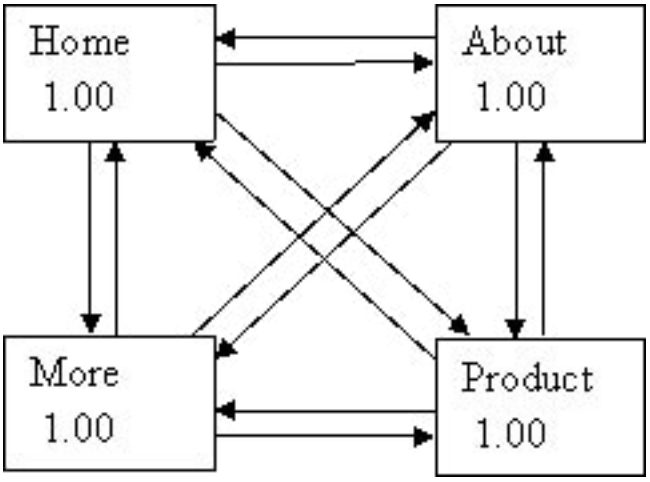
Google's PageRank system is key to getting a high ranking on Google. PageRank can be found by downloading the google toolbar. It shows a "simplified" pagerank from 1-10 (0 rankings simply haven't been assigned a ranking yet.) A site gets a higher pagerank by having a higher number of links pointing at it from other pages. It is like counting votes for a site. The more votes the higher the rank. However, each vote isn't worth the same amount. A higher pagerank page has more "votes" to give to pages that it votes for. To begin a site has 1.0 vote. A simple fully interlinked site would have a pagerank of 1 on every page.

Example:



A votes for B (1.0 vote). B votes for A (1.0 vote)

As we continue we could have the same results with the following complex layout.



Every page evenly spreads its votes across the other sites and so we get a 1.0 PageRank for all pages. However, we don't just want a PR of 1. We want to move up on the rankings so we will try to increase our index PageRank.

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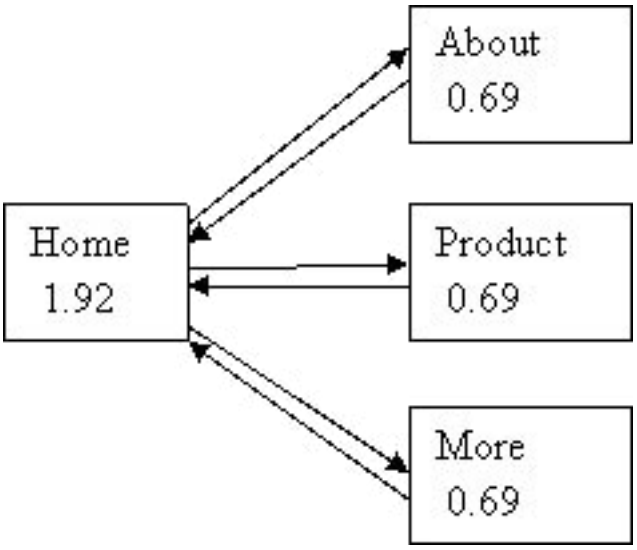
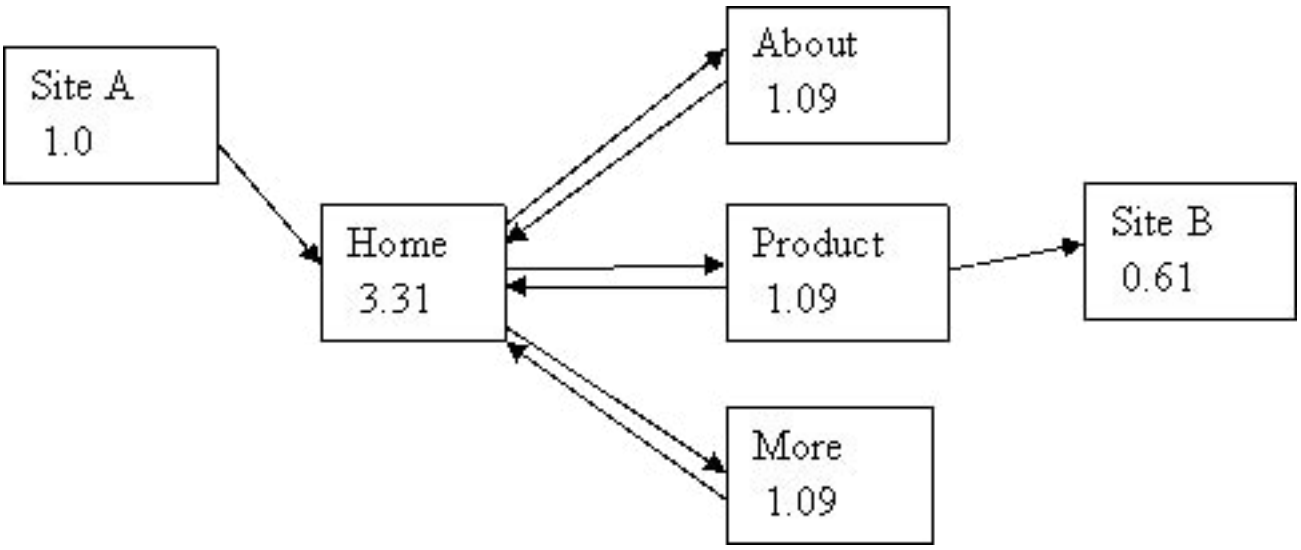
Design Concepts (cont.)



We wanted to increase our index (home) page. this was accomplished by creating a hierarchy. All three pages vote for Home but not for each other. Home in return votes for each of the three underlying pages. Lets look at a more complex layout with incoming links and outgoing links.



Again using the hierarchy you can see how the incoming link increases the total PageRank considerably. However, this isn't a very user friendly layout. Navigating from About to Product required two clicks instead of just one. Consequently, we might sacrifice a little pagerank to create a better user experience. (Please note that if you have great content and easy navigation, other people will enjoy your site and link to it. This will most likely increase your PageRank more than if you had built the difficult to navigate site.)

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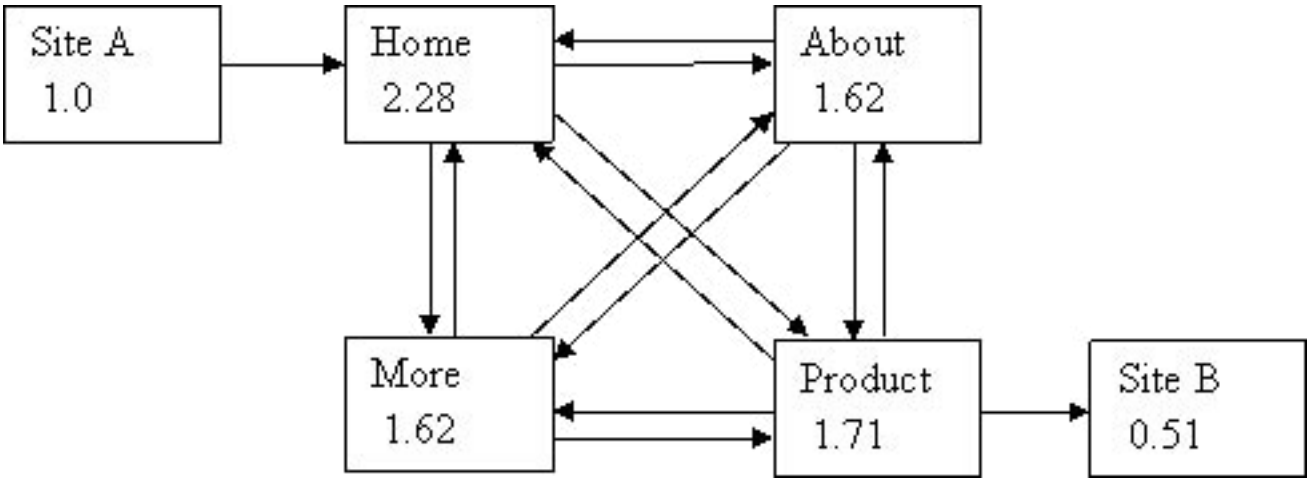
Design Concepts (cont.)



Notice that PageRank decreased for the home page but is still higher than just internal linking because of the inbound link. Furthermore, the about, more, and product pages have higher PRs because of the interlinking between them.

Consequently, understanding what PageRank you want on each page is critical to know BEFORE you start designing the linking structure. Keep increasing links to your pages. However, DO NOT USE LINK FARMS. I repeat do not use link farms. Google views these as spam and you will be penalized. Building good links between different businesses will help you increase your PageRank.

If you have further questions, feel free to contact us at info@ahfx.net.

Useful Links

Here are a few useful links that will help you move up in the rankings.

Google rankings will help you know your google position, keyword density, and find out current optimized keywords

•http://www.googlerankings.com/

Yahoo rankings (when it is working) provides your yahoo position. I've found that this is sometimes not available or just plain doesn't work.

•http://www.yahoosearchrankings.com/

Search Guild offers a great little tool for all of the Flash people out there. This tool will open .swf files and show what Google will see if it indexes that .swf.

•http://www.searchguild.com/seflash.html

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Contest

Best 7 Tip Picture

The rules for this contest are as follows:

1. The photo must be 500 K or smaller.
2. The photo must follow at least 7 of the tips.
3. The photo must be your original work.
4. You must agree to let AHFX publish the work in the e-list
5. The top two photographs will be included in the next E-list.
6. We will only accept images in .jpg format.
7. All entries must come from e-list subscribers. (You may subscribe and enter the contest on the same day.)
8. All entries must be received by October 23rd, 2004.

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Contact

Contact Information

Thank you for joining AH Digital FX Studios' E-list. If you would like AH Digital FX Studios to do an in-depth evaluation of your current web site, email us at info@ahfx.net. If you have any questions, require our services, or know of someone that might need our services please contact us with the information below.

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