

Site Owner Help

MSN Search Web Crawler and Site Indexing

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Recent customer questions

- [How can I control which pages of my website are indexed?](#)
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Guidelines for successful indexing

Here are some recommendations that may help MSNBot and other web crawlers effectively index and rank your site. We've also provided a list of items and techniques that MSN Search discourages.

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Technical recommendations for your website [\(back to top\)](#)

- Use only well-formed HTML code in your pages. Ensure that all tags are closed, and that all links function properly. If your site contains broken links, MSNBot may not be able to index your site effectively, and people may not be able to reach all of your pages.
- If you move a page, set up the page's original URL to direct people to the new page, and tell them whether the move is permanent or temporary. For more information, see [What to do when your site moves](#).
- Make sure MSNBot is allowed to crawl your site and is not on your list of web crawlers that are prohibited from indexing your site.
- Use a robots.txt file or meta tags to control how MSNBot and other web crawlers index your site. The robots.txt file tells web crawlers which files and folders it is not allowed to crawl. The [Web Robots Pages](#) provide detailed information on the robots.txt Robots Exclusion standard. This site may be available in English only.
- Keep your URLs simple and static. Complicated or frequently changed URLs are difficult to use as link destinations. For example, the URL [www.example.com/mypage](#) is easier for MSNBot to crawl and for people to type than a long URL with multiple extensions. Also, a URL that doesn't change is easier for people to remember, which makes it a more likely link destination from other sites.

Content guidelines for your website [\(back to top\)](#)

The best way to attract people to your site, and keep them coming back, is to design your pages with valuable content that your target audience is interested in.

- In the visible page text, include words users might choose as search query terms to find the information on your site.
- Limit all pages to a reasonable size. We recommend one topic per page. An HTML page with no pictures should be under 150 KB.
- Make sure that each page is accessible by at least one static text link.
- Keep the text that you want indexed outside of images. For example, if you want your company name or address to be indexed, make sure it is displayed on your page outside of a company logo.
- Add a site map. This enables MSNBot to find all of your pages easily. Links embedded in menus, list boxes, and similar elements are not accessible to web crawlers unless they appear in your site map.
- Keep your site hierarchy fairly flat. That is, each page should only be one to three clicks away from the home page.

Items and techniques discouraged by MSN Search [\(back to top\)](#)

The following items and techniques are not appropriate uses of the MSN Search index. Use of these items and techniques may affect how your site is ranked within MSN Search and may result in the removal of your site from the index.

- Loading pages with irrelevant words in an attempt to increase a page's keyword density. This includes stuffing ALT tags that users are unlikely to view.
- Using hidden text or links. You should use only text and links that are visible to users.
- Using techniques to artificially increase the number of links to your page, such as link farms.

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