

SEARCHDEX



BEST PRACTICES
&
CODE OF ETHICS

Leading the Industry in
White Hat Practices

end to end search solutions

SEARCHDEX

Best Practices Policy



At SearchDex, ethics and integrity play a vital role in how we develop e-commerce marketing solutions. Our search solutions are developed and implemented following the highest standards of practice in the industry following all published guidelines and standards set by search engines. Additionally, membership in and cooperation with industry organizations such as the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) gives SearchDex a leading advantage by keeping SearchDex informed of industry trends.

There are many different ways to optimize visibility and relevancy within search engines' organic results. A complex formula with many elements, visible and invisible to viewers, helps increase a site's potential to appear at the top of organic search results. Focusing too much on one aspect of optimization can have negative effects on a site and can even cause a site to drop in the rankings. In addition, violating any of the search engine guidelines could lead to penalization by that search engine, up to and including being banned from the search engine results.

Since 1998, the SearchDex platform and approach to organic search visibility has evolved based on research, experience and client feedback. Additional research into the ever changing algorithms inside the search engines allows SearchDex to continuously implement new and improved compliant approaches. When the landscape changes, the SearchDex platform allows for a rapid automated upgrade.

As Search Marketing experts, SearchDex serves our clients with two clear goals:

- As a trusted advisor on industry compliance and ethical standards
- As an innovative leader in measured ROI on Internet marketing initiatives.

SearchDex.com
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Client Services: 877-500-6834 ext. 706
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Fundamentals of SEARCHDEX

SearchDex maintains compliance with published industry guidelines while maximizing ROI, increasing relevancy, and boosting conversion for our client sites. Strict standards are in place to maximize client investment into our programs without engaging in techniques that may be counter-productive in the long term.

Making invisible pages visible

One of the fundamentals of SearchDex Best Practices is ensuring that the content a user is searching for is the same content a search engine indexes and subsequently ranks. SearchDex creates user friendly client-site pages that are indexable by the search engines, and are the same pages available to users that find them in the search engine results. SearchDex allows sites with dynamic and browser-adapted content to present that content to search engines with efficiency and fidelity:

- by allowing search engines to crawl site without session IDs or URL parameters.
- by supporting IMS headers through identified relevant database state changes.
- by preventing, limiting, or proxying sessions for site efficiency.

Creating systems that help avoid resource degradation during search engine content acquisition

Search engine activity on a site with dynamic URL's with multiple variables can result in a client's bandwidth being consumed by the vast number of possible combinations a robot may follow. SearchDex subscribers are protected from this annoyance, while SearchDex provides a client's content to the search engine efficiently and completely.



Search Engine Compliance

A guiding principle in the development and implementation of the SearchDex Organic Search Platform involves following search engines' published guidelines. On the last two pages of this brochure, SearchDex addresses the published guidelines of Google and Yahoo!, the two largest search engines, which collectively account for an average of around 75 percent of all search queries. Each guideline is followed by orange text, which addresses the SearchDex features, development guidelines, and general principles that are employed to ensure compliance.

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SEARCHDEX Code of Ethics

SearchDex Pledge to our Clients

- Adhering to Search Engine guidelines: Strict search engine guidelines require that SearchDex maintain compliance to ensure maximum results for client pages and micro-sites created by SearchDex.
- Preserving Brand Identity: Effectively optimized SearchDex pages and micro-sites often require many visual elements a client might not normally include on their branded portion of their website. SearchDex ensures that the essence of the client's brand is maintained while incorporating search-essential elements.
- Research & Innovation: SearchDex has a team of researchers and developers constantly testing new products and better solutions to existing search issues. SearchDex passes this knowledge on to our clients in the form of new programs, platforms, and elements included in search campaigns brought forth to keep client sites competitive in the search horizon.
- Teamwork: With trained and experienced professionals on staff, SearchDex team environment works with client representatives to ensure a seamless collaboration of efforts.

SearchDex Pledge to the Internet Community

SearchDex operates in a manner consistent with the needs and desires of the internet community. SearchDex ensures that work performed on behalf of our clients prevents needless duplication of data found in search results, and helps reach prospects that have general or specific informational needs.

SearchDex Pledge to the Search Engines

SearchDex does not engage in or do business with companies that engage in any tactics that may cause a loss in effectiveness of search results, or in any methods that may cause a negative effect on search engine operations.

Client's Duties to SearchDex

Before engaging SearchDex to assist with any optimization strategies, SearchDex requires that all clients agree to comply with the guidelines set forth by the search engines, by SearchDex in this Code of Ethics and the SearchDex Best Practices policy, including:

- Clients must agree to keep data provided to SearchDex fresh, updating regularly to ensure new data is present when SearchDex pulls data for the regular publishes.
- Clients acknowledge that the pages produced by SearchDex must fall within compliance for all search engines.
- Clients must agree to follow all of SearchDex Decommission of Service procedures when suspending or transferring service.

SearchDex Duty to Competitors

Because of the large variation of appropriate search techniques available to clients, there are instances when a technique may be appropriate for a given client's needs but inappropriate in another context. In communicating the nuances of specific methods to a particular client, there exists an opportunity to mislabel a technique as being noncompliant or unethical. We pledge to not make false or misleading statements regarding the methods or techniques that our competitors use or recommend. At SearchDex, we believe that client's interests are best served through education and understanding of their needs.

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SEARCHDEX Response to Google Technical Guidelines:

Use a text browser such as Lynx to examine your site, because most search engine spiders see your site much as Lynx would. If fancy features such as JavaScript, cookies, session ID's, frames, DHTML, or Flash keep you from seeing all of your site in a text browser, then search engine spiders may have trouble crawling your site.

Client sites that support browser-adapted content delivery treat search engine agents as Lynx browsers. Recommendations are that clients maintain informative content textually, and use non-textual mechanisms for user experience enhancement only.

Allow search bots to crawl your sites without session ID's or arguments that track their path through the site. These techniques are useful for tracking individual user behavior, but the access pattern of bots is entirely different. Using these techniques may result in incomplete indexing of your site, as bots may not be able to eliminate URLs that look different but actually point to the same page.

SessionIDs are eliminated, prevented, or handled by proxy. Query parameters are re-engineered or eliminated.

Make sure your web server supports the If-Modified-Since HTTP header. This feature allows your web server to tell Google whether your content has changed since we last crawled your site. Supporting this feature saves you bandwidth and overhead.

Proper IMS responses are generated by knowing the database state (alpha testing).

Make use of the robots.txt file on your web server. This file tells crawlers which directories can or cannot be crawled. Make sure it's current for your site so that you don't accidentally block the Googlebot crawler.

A robots.txt file is on client sites to cordon sections of the site that employ interactive navigation, login, sessions, cookies, or other crawl-averse architecture.

If your company buys a content management system, make sure that the system can export your content so that search engine spiders can crawl your site.

Integration to databases and content management systems enable content export.

SEARCHDEX Response to Google Quality Guidelines:

Make pages for users, not for search engines. Don't deceive your users, or present different content to search engines than you display to users.

Clients which use SearchDex make available indexable content that is the same as presented to users.

Avoid tricks intended to improve search engine rankings. A good rule of thumb is whether you'd feel comfortable explaining what you've done to a website that competes with you. Another useful test is to ask, "Does this help my users? Would I do this if search engines didn't exist?"

Only site original content is made accessible; tricks are not possible nor approved.

Don't participate in link schemes designed to increase your site's ranking or PageRank. In particular, avoid links to web spammers or "bad neighborhoods" on the web as your own ranking may be affected adversely by those links.

SearchDex does not support link scheme architectures.

Don't use unauthorized computer programs to submit pages, check rankings, etc. Such programs consume computing resources and violate our terms of service. Google does not recommend the use of products such as WebPosition Gold™ that send automatic or programmatic queries to Google.

Rank checking is not possible with SearchDex.

Avoid hidden text or hidden links.

Sites which employ these techniques are not eligible for the SearchDex license. Indexed pages do not contain hidden text or hidden links.

Don't employ cloaking or sneaky redirects.

Sites which employ these techniques are not eligible for the license. No content is cloaked – content presented to users is presented to search engines. No sneaky redirects and no ad-popup pages are allowed on the published pages.

Don't send automated queries to Google.

SearchDex does not allow this.

Don't load pages with irrelevant words.

Sites which employ these techniques are not eligible for the SearchDex license. Only product descriptive text and content developed by the client is presented.

Don't create multiple pages, sub domains, or domains with substantially duplicate content.

Sites which employ these techniques are not eligible for the SearchDex license. The published pages exist only on the primary domain.

Avoid "doorway" pages created just for search engines, or other "cookie cutter" approaches such as affiliate programs with little or no original content.

Sites which employ these techniques are not eligible for the license. The product descriptive text and content developed by the client is presented. No pages are created just for search engines. The content of pages presented to search engines is identical the content presented to users. There are no doorway pages nor are there any special "engine only" pages.

These guidelines can be found at <http://www.google.com/webmasters/guidelines.html>

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SEARCHDEX Response to Yahoo! Guidelines:

Some, but not all, examples of the more common types of pages that Yahoo! does not want included:

Pages that harm accuracy, diversity or relevance of search results.

SearchDex pages are always specific to the keywords used in the search topic. SearchDex does not create pages that misdirect or mislead browsers.

Pages dedicated to directing the user to another page ("doorway pages").

SearchDex does not allow this.

Pages that have substantially the same content as other pages on the web, including affiliate content.

SearchDex works to ensure that content appearing on SearchDex pages is unique content. No duplicate or 'mirror' pages are constructed or allowed.

Pages that change user preferences, reset default home pages, resize browser windows, disable back buttons, or otherwise interfere with a user's ability to navigate.

Sites which employ these methods are not eligible for the SearchDex license.

Pages with automatic software downloads including viruses, adware, spyware, or other self-installing programs.

Sites which employ these methods are not eligible for the SearchDex license. These techniques should never be employed by sites of any type, and SearchDex will not be associated with sites that engage in these practices.

Sites with numerous, unnecessary virtual hostnames.

This technique is unnecessary and can actually cause a site to be banned from the search engines.

SearchDex does not allow this practice.

Pages in great quantity, automatically generated, with minimal content or of little value.

All SearchDex pages are configured to facilitate buyer conversion, and therefore, by their nature, are specifically generated to offer useful content of great value to engage the consumer.

Pages using methods to artificially inflate search engine ranking.

This is not possible with the SearchDex application.

Pages with text that is not easily read, e.g., text that is too small or is obscured by the background of the page, or is located in an area of the page not visible to users.

Sites which employ these methods are not eligible for the SearchDex license. These techniques should never be employed by sites of any type, and SearchDex will not be associated with sites that engage in these practices.

Cloaking or stealth; a technique used by some web sites to deliver one page to a search engine and a different page to all other users.

SearchDex pages are configured to provide useable content based upon the compatibility of the browser requesting the page. All SearchDex pages, including pages sent to the search engines, are fully functioning pages that can easily be read by both search engines and users.

Cross-linking to inflate a site's apparent popularity, including participation in link exchanges or "link farms", and the use of non-navigational links.

SearchDex does not support link scheme architectures.

Pages built primarily for search engines or pages with excessive or off-topic keywords.

Sites which employ these techniques are not eligible for the SearchDex license. Only unique product descriptive text written by SearchDex plus content developed by client is presented.

Misuse or inaccurate use of competitor or brand names.

This practice is unacceptable to SearchDex. SearchDex methods obtain results without 'cheating' or 'stealing' traffic.

Duplication of content, either by submission of multiple pages with same content, submitting the same content from multiple domains, or submitting the same content from multiple hosts.

Sites which employ these techniques are not eligible for the SearchDex license. The published pages exist only on the primary domain.

Pages that rely heavily on content or links to content created for another web site, such as affiliate content.

SearchDex subscription provides unique content, therefore there is no need to link to 'affiliate' providers.

Pages that have pop-ups, pop-unders or exit consoles.

SearchDex goal for clients is conversion, and these strategies have little positive affect on conversion rates. Sites that employ these strategies are not eligible for the SearchDex license.

Pages that seem deceptive, fraudulent or provide a poor user experience (Descriptions that are not relevant to the page content).

SearchDex pages are user friendly, and functional. The information provided is intended to relate directly to the user's query.

Pages that result in a 404 error.

SearchDex experience in data feeds and publishing prevents needless errors.

Content, domains, titles, metadata or descriptions that (i) violate any applicable law or regulation; (ii) infringes in any manner any copyright, patent, trademark, trade secret or other intellectual property right of any party ... and/or (v) are defamatory, libelous, slanderous or threatening.

Sites that employ these techniques are not eligible for the SearchDex license.

These guidelines can be found at http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com/srchsb/sse_gl.php

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