Search engine optimization (SEO)

Background information:

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the volume or quality of traffic to a web site from search engines via "natural" or un-paid ("organic" or "algorithmic") search results as opposed to search engine marketing (SEM) which deals with paid inclusion. Typically, the earlier (or higher) a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine. SEO may target different kinds of search, including image search, local search, video search and industry-specific vertical search engines. This gives a web site web presence. Read more through http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Search_engine_optimization.

See:

For search engine friendly URL's see: Apache Clean URLs

Also: Meta Tags Canonical link element

Tiki functions

Encouraging search engines to fully index your site is somewhat of an 'art' rather than a 'science' since the processes used by the search engines are not usually published and they can change from time to time, typically to stop web site owners from 'gaming' the system to get an unfair index position.

The bottom line is that the only certain way to get a good index position is to have a site with extensive content that is interesting enough for other web sites to cross reference it.

However Tiki does provide a growing range of tools that automate or make easier the management of key aspects of a site that 'help' the indexing processes, as follows:

Meta Tags

- the Meta Tags admin is the first place to start where:
  - universal keywords (ie which will applied to every page) can be entered, or more usefully
  - Freetags applied to individual pages can also be applied as keyword meta tags to the page
  - a universal description meta tag can be defined - but Google for example will flag the multiple use of the same description as bad practice, so it is recommended that you also use
  - the option to use the wiki page description as the description meta tag - which obviously takes some effort but is better than just applying a default to every page

- Automated description meta tags are applied to:
  - blogs using the blog name text
  - blog posts using a concatenation of the post title and the blog name

- Automating the alt tag for images (increasingly important for indexing images) when using the IMG plugin
  - if a specific alt tag is set in the IMG plugin this is used as the first preference, but if not set
  - if some specific text is provided as a caption using the 'desc' parameter in the IMG plugin, then this is used as the alt tag as a second preference, but if not set
  - the description field applied when the image was loaded into a File Gallery is used, or if this is not set then
The alt tag defaults to "Image"
- **Canonical link element** (activated by default)

## Site maps

Finally from Tiki 9.2 the ability to automate a site map generation has been provided so that this can be 'told to' the various search engines to encourage them to index the most important pages.

At present the site map is a simple .txt file - although consideration is being given to a more sophisticated xml format as a possible further enhancement.

A new parameter 'links' has been added to tiki-browse_categories.php which when used will generate a 'plain' page where all the selected items are listed with their full url (respecting sefurl if applied to the site). This can therefore be used to list items in specified categories - ie typically items that are viewable by Anonymous.

An example could be something like:
/tiki-browse_categories.php/?find=&deep=on&type=wiki+page&parentId=5&sort_mode=name_asclinksmaxRecords=1000000

which will list all the wiki pages in category#5 and its child categories, sorted in ascending name order, and limiting the list to 1000000 items.

Concatenating the type parameter like:
&type[]=article&amp?type[]=blog+post&amp?type[]=blog

will also let you include additional content types.

A simple manual method then is to cut and paste the resultant listing into an appropriate .txt file and to use it to 'tell' a search engine what to index.

In theory an even more automated method is possible if the search engine is 'told' what the file name is and would routinely recheck it. For this case a redirect could be added to the .htaccess file to automate the 'updating' of the .txt file. A placeholder for such an approach has been added to _htaccess in Tiki 9.2 that would be need to be customised for the specific case that applies to your site. HOWEVER this approach does not seem to currently work for Google since (it is suspected that) they seem to want to download a physical file. So the simple manual approach is the way to go for now.

### Tips

- Turn error messages off to anonymous (as useless text is indexed)

### Alias

- SEO
- Search Engine Friendly
- SEFURL
- SEFURLs