



TorontoSmallBusiness.com

Make your website work for you

Relevancy - how to make your site “Search Engine Friendly”

© 2010 bernie schmidt

Go to your favorite search engine and type in a phrase. The resulting page will list a number of websites and it is instructive to see how the results are displayed. In Google, typing in “real estate” for example yielded this result:

The screenshot shows a Google search interface with the search term "real estate" entered. The search results are categorized into "Web" and "News results for real estate".

Web Results:

- Sponsored Links:**
 - [Real Estate in Ontario](#) (HomeFinder.ca/Real-Estate) Find Maps, Pictures, Property Info & Virtual Tours For **Real Estate!**
 - [Toronto Real Estate](#) (www.TerrEquity.ca) Search thousands of listings, get a free online evaluation 416-496-9220

News results for real estate:

- [Your comments: Real estate fees and sex scandals](#) - 1 day ago (Geoff Howe/Canadian Press) The Competition Bureau is taking on the Canadian **Real Estate** Association with claims the group limits consumer choice. ...
 - [CBC.ca - 462 related articles >](#)
 - [Brookfield picks up JPMorgan properties for \\$200M U.S. - Montreal Gazette - 56 related articles >](#)
 - [Q&A: Real estate association defends MLS - CBC.ca - 78 related articles >](#)

Realtor.ca
Official gateway to all Canadian MLS information sponsored by The Canadian **Real Estate** Association.
[www.mls.ca/- Similar](#)

Note that your search term “real estate” shows up in bold:

- in the page title
- in the URL (web address)
- description.

These are first three ways you can use words related to your business to convince search engines that your page is relevant to the topic “real estate”, and all are readable by the person reviewing the search results.

It's important to note that all three elements are not visible on the actual page after you click on its link. This tells you that there are elements of the web page (code) that are visible to search engines but not readable by the person looking at the text and pictures on their computer screen.

Web Page Elements that help determine Relevancy

Because the web page-seeking programs run by search engine companies (spiders, spiderbots) can only understand text elements, it's important to take a look at all the ways text is used in a page:

1) Webpage URL (URLs=Universal Resource Locators)

The first URL a spider sees is the name you have given your website i.e. www.yourwebsite.com. Many companies use their company name (www.ford.com) because it is part of their brand. Other companies will include a word that helps describe their business (www.OttawaRealEstate.org).

Beyond the home page, the spider follows the links to the other pages in your site. This is a great opportunity to use creativity in naming your other webpages by using words that describe aspects of your business - example: if your business is about chocolate and your name is Carol, rather than have your page link "about us" go to a page URL "about-us.html", you could use "about-chocolate-lover-Carol.html" as the link destination, and you have now used a key descriptor for your business "chocolate" built into the webpage address, something that the search engine will read and document.

2) Page Titles

The Page Title is the string of text that headlines the webpage in the search results and becomes the name shown in your web browser tab once you've clicked through to the page.

If you decide to bookmark the page for future reference, this is the descriptor that will be used when bookmarking the link.

The title of the page is your first opportunity to convince the person scanning the search results that your page is relevant to what they are looking for.

By way of example, if you are selling homes in Toronto, then a Page Title might be: "Toronto Homes for Sale by ABC Real Estate"



3) Page Description

This is the sentence of text (about 20-25 words, 200 characters) that appears below your Page Title in the search results. If the Page Title attracted attention, then the Page Description represents your opportunity to convince the person that clicking on your link will give them the information they seek.

Following along on the real estate example, a Page Description might be:
“Luxury three bedroom homes in Toronto. We are your best resource to find those real estate listings that fit your home buying needs, with access to competitive mortgages to help you secure financing.”

Combining the above examples (for someone searching for “real estate Toronto” in a search engine) would have a search result similar to this:

Toronto Homes for Sale by ABC Real Estate

Luxury three-bedroom homes in **Toronto**. We are your best resource to find those **real estate** listings that fit your home buying needs,

www.abcrealestate.com

4) Headers

These are the titles of paragraphs, tables and lists, usually formatted differently than the detailed information content. Often fonts are used that are larger, coloured, bolded or italicized or even a different style of font.

5) Text Content

This is the actual readable content that is (hopefully) providing your visitor with the information they seek.

6) Graphic Content

Images such as pictures, logos, charts are objects that search engines cannot decipher for content - if the graphic contains text as part of its image, the text will not be recognized.



There are two ways to add information so that a graphic contributes meaning:

- Rather than calling a picture of house “image1.pg”, make the name of the picture descriptive i.e. “3-bedroom-bungalow-in-toronto-ontario.jpg” would add relevancy to a real estate web page.
- Graphic objects can have a text attribute - the “Alt Tag” whereby text can be attached to the image - hovering your mouse above a picture will usually result in a text box popping up - this is the information entered into the Alt tag during web page setup.

With respect to points 4, 5 and 6 above, here’s what Google has to say:

Our search engine analyzes page content. However, instead of simply scanning for page-based text (which can be manipulated by site publishers through meta-tags), our technology analyzes the full content of a page and factors in fonts, subdivisions and the precise location of each word. We also analyze the content of neighboring web pages to ensure the results returned are the most relevant to a user’s query.

Knowing how search engines look at your web pages is a huge step forward. Deciding what it is you want to be discovered for is a topic best left for an article on keywords.

Thanks for reading! Other articles on making your website work for you can be found at the [TorontoSmallBusiness.com website](http://TorontoSmallBusiness.com)

© 2010 Bernie Schmidt. Article may be copied and distributed “as is” with attribution to Bernie Schmidt and TorontoSmallBusiness.com

