

Selfpromotion Tutorial

If you want more people to visit your website, you must know how to create search-engine-friendly webpages, and then submit your URL to all the major search engines. That's what this site is all about.



"Tooter," the most sophisticated submission robot on the net, stands ready to assist you in promoting your website! It does all the hard work for you -- for free!

SelfPromotion.com is the net's leading resource for do-it-yourself Web Promotion. Here you will find all the **information** and **automatic submission tools** you need to do the job **quickly, efficiently**, and most of all, **properly!** If you invest a little time into reading and using this resource, you'll not only do a much better job of promoting your site, but save yourself a lot of time and effort in the process.

And best of all, it's **FREE**. If you feel the site is useful, then pay me what **YOU** think the advice and service is worth! And if you ever change your mind for any reason, you get your money back -- no questions asked.

The grey navigation palettes on the right side of each page let you quickly bounce around the site. Start by reading this page, which will introduce you to the basics of site promotion.

Then, when you're ready to start promoting your site, use the **Create New Account** form (just below this text on the right-hand side) to get started registering your site around the Net!

PS: The infamous **BaldSpotCam** is lower down on this page, as is the link to my "**Tips on Getting Listed in Yahoo**" page.

How to properly promote your site

Site Promotion is really not that difficult. It just takes a little bit of effort, a little bit of thought, and a fair amount of patience. In a nutshell, here's what you do (further site info is located lower down on the page):

- 1. Get your site working properly.** It doesn't matter how many people you attract to your website if, once they get there, they immediately get turned off by an unattractive presentation or a half-built website. I assume you're already happy with how your site looks, but you may want to read my article on [how to win awards](#), which contains a list of website mistakes you should try to avoid.
- 2. Choose keywords and tweak your site for the search engines.** Once your site looks good to humans, the next step is to try to make it look good to the search engines, so you get the coveted high ranking. This involves choosing the right keywords and adjusting your page title, meta tags and first paragraph to showcase them. This is where most webmasters screw up. They choose the wrong keywords because they don't spend enough time thinking about how people are going to try to find them. My article on [preparing your pages for the search engines](#) takes you step-by-step through this process.
- 3. Submit to the major search engines.** Now that your site is all ready, you next submit to all the major search engines. One of the key components of SelfPromotion.com is an extremely powerful and comprehensive automated submission tool that can properly promote your site to all the major search engines and indexes. The good news is that it'll only take you about 10 minutes to create an account and promote to the search engines. **The bad news is that at present, the major search engines are taking months (that's months, plural!) to add new listings.**

Fortunately, while you are waiting for the search engines to get their act together and list you,

there are other things to do.

To learn how to create an account and use the promotion tool, please read the tutorial, also known as [A Boy and his Website](#).

4. Submit to the major indexes. While SelfPromotion.com will submit your site to a ton of places, it does not autosubmit to the major indexes such as Yahoo, Open Directory and Snap. The reason is that listings in these indexes are sufficiently valuable that a hand-done, optimized submission is worth taking the time to craft.

Yahoo is the most important place to have your site listed on the Internet, yet most Yahoo listings are awful. Once you understand how to craft a proper submission to Yahoo, you'll not only greatly increase your chances of getting in, but you'll get many more hits than you would otherwise. If you are already in Yahoo, don't despair; my initial listing in Yahoo was awful, but I managed to double the number of clickthroughs I get from them by successfully requesting a change to my listing. You can learn how to make these all-important submissions by reading [How to get listed in Yahoo \(and the other major indexes\)](#).

Writing the site description you submit to Yahoo is the single most important step you will ever take during site promotion, so spending some extra time on this step is highly recommended. If you follow my advice, and your site is decent, you'll almost always get in without any problems. I get emails all the time saying things like *"I've been trying to get into Yahoo for 6 months, but after following your instructions, I got listed in less than a week."* It's great ego massage, so I want to get one from you too!

5. Submit to the general indexes. There are many "2nd-tier" indexes that are worth submitting to, though not worth crafting an specially optimized listing for (although the advice in the previous step is still valid). I've broken these down into a variety of categories (including general indexes, british and canadian-specific indexes and search engines, international indexes, indexes that accept adult sites, and special-purpose indexes) so that you can submit to them in small chunks as time permits. SelfPromotion.com can autosubmit to over 50 of these, and provides manual links to several hundred more (mostly the special-purpose and international/foreign- language ones). Once you've read the [tutorial](#) you'll understand how to do this. You can also look at the [list of sites](#) if you so desire.

The effects of the dot-com crash are quite interesting. Since the spring of 2000, about 40 2nd-tier indexes and searchengines (and several of the big guys) that I used to auto-submit to have curled up and died. But there's still plenty to submit to.

6. Send me money! This is the step my wife likes the best. SelfPromotion.com works like shareware. If you like what the site does, you can contribute what **you** think it's worth. That's right, you set the price.

If you contribute, then I keep your data around for a year (making future promotions easier, since most of the typing gets done for you) and you also get access to a bunch of cool tools (see below for more details), as well as the ability to apply for awards.

If you don't contribute, then after 4 weeks, your account gets deleted to make room for the next person.

7. Consider paying for hits. The good news about listing in the search engines and indexes is that it's free. The bad news is that you don't have much control. While it is certainly worthwhile to tweak your pages in search of high rankings, it's not always possible to get the ones you want. There are, however, several places that can provide you with well-targeted traffic for pennies a visitor. My favorite is **Overture.com** and I have a page dedicated to [getting the most out of this and other similar services](#).

8. Learn more about sales and promotion. In the almost three years I've been running this site, I've written a number of articles that you may find of interest. You'll find the links on the right-hand side of the page under **Tutorials** and **Articles**. I've also found some good [Marketing Courses](#) that will help you plan how to handle the traffic you get. After all, if you're

selling on the web, it's not how many hits you get, it's how many sales you make. If your wonderful widget website doesn't do a good job of selling widgets, then all the search engine traffic in the world isn't going to do you much good -- and it's much easier to double your site's effectiveness than it is to double its traffic (even better, of course, is to do both!) Finally, I have a well-stocked [Links of Interest](#) page that contains listings of other great promotion and webmaster resource sites.

9. Read the rest of this page! Assuming I haven't completely turned your brain to mush with all of the above verbiage, read on. The rest of this page explains in more detail what the site does, and how it does it.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did you build this site?

This site was originally created because I got repeatedly spammed by some scam artists who promised they'd "register my URL at the top 500 search engines." The truth is that there aren't anywhere near 500 search engines. There are in fact about a dozen major english-language search engines that are of any value in generating hits for your site. There are also about 200 general and special-purpose indexes that are useful. The vast majority of the "search engines" the hype-artists will "promote" your site to are Free-For-All links pages that are at best worthless for generating site traffic, and at worst will get your email address on multiple spam lists. Not the kind of promotion you had in mind, eh?

So, having been quite annoyed, and given that there is nothing more dangerous than an annoyed hacker (in the original, honorable meaning of the word), I decided to build a site that would let everyone properly register their URL to all the important search engines and indexes.

What's the difference between a search engine and an index?

A search engine (eg: Altavista) is a database of webpages. You give them your URL, and they read your page, extract relevant information from it, and store it in their database. Many search engines also run "spiders" that roam around the net looking for new pages.

An index (eg: Yahoo) is a database of web sites. Your listing in an index depends on what you tell them in your submission, not what is on your page.

What does the SelfPromotion.com submission tool do?

Each index and search engine has an "[Add URL](#)" page that lets you enter information about your site into their database. The problem is, of course, that if it takes 10 minutes to find and fill out the information on one of these pages, and you need to register with 90 sites, that's 15 hours -- 15 very boring hours -- of typing! And since most of the sites want the same information (name, email address, [URL](#) of your site, etc), you'll spend those 15 hours typing the same things over and over again!

SelfPromotion.com automates this process. You decide what sites you want to register with, and the site will generate a custom form that asks for exactly the information needed to register with those sites. You fill out this single form.

Then "Tooter," the tireless submission [daemon](#) goes around the net and does all the typing for you. Tooter also saves all the information you entered -- when you return to promote to some more sites, it can fill out most of the form for you -- saving you a huge amount of time!

This automatic data entry is one of SelfPromotion.com's most powerful and subtle features. There are many minor indexes out there that might only generate 5 or 10 hits a year for you. It isn't worth spending 5-10 minutes at each of these sites to register by hand, but because the *extra information* you have to enter to promote to one more site using SelfPromotion.com usually takes you less than a minute to enter, it makes it possible for you to register at

more sites than you otherwise would if you were doing it by hand.

It wouldn't be cost-effective for you to spend an extra hour or two of your time doing registrations that might get you an extra 100 visitors a year (and maybe 1 or 2 sales). But if it only took you 10 minutes, it's a different story. Which is the real power of this site. It saves you time.

Embarrassing Comments...

Here's what some of my users (none of whom are my friends or relatives!) have to say about the site:

Subscribing to 'Selfpromotion.com' (in my second year now) was the smartest thing I ever did. All the tools, tips, links and general exposure to the "language" of the search engines and directories has catapulted my website, [A Passion for Jazz](#), into "Yahoo's Most Popular Sites!"

I have been trying for months to get listed on Yahoo, I tried your method, and I got listed in 2 days!!! -- Jill Annette Johnson Kiser

The methodology I learned from [your] site with regards to meta tags, file size, graphics, and the use of keywords and phrases in my title, description and body was priceless. -- Bob Vickers

I have been online for years and this is probably the most functional, useful and well designed site I have ever found. It's a blessing for registering a lot of similar pages quickly. -- Sophia Cornet

Great job on this site! It works great for original and re-submissions, and delivers more accurate results than many other so-called "promotion" companies. -- Jonathan Pajion

You should really be impressed you're getting money out of me. I NEVER pay for ANYTHING, but I am THAT impressed with your site. Keep up the good work. Or I'll kill you. -- Jim P Reardon (aka eviljim)

and my current favorite, which proves my mother was right about guilt being good for you:

I know I don't have to contribute again, but your site has saved me so much time and effort that I feel guilty not giving you more money. -- Paige Louise Young

You can [read more embarrassingly nice things about the site here](#).

Is manual submission better than automatic submission?

Some people will tell you that manually submitting your site is the only way to go (and offer to do it for you for a fee). While it's true that some sites should only be promoted to in person (in particular, Yahoo; read my [tips on submitting to Yahoo](#) for all the secrets of doing it right), the automatic submissions done by SelfPromotion.com are absolutely as good as manual promotion. For example, some sites only let you have a 10 word description, while others allow 20 or more words. In such a case, you might be asked for two descriptions, so Tooter can give each site what it wants.

My rule of thumb is, if I can't do the submission as well, or better, than you could manually, I won't do it automatically.

Why should I choose SelfPromotion.com?

It's Easy! You enter your information only once. All the information you enter is stored, so you never have to type the same information twice!

It's Comprehensive! Tooter knows how to talk to all the important sites (and a lot of the semi-important ones), and the [list of sites](#) is growing steadily. I also have compiled a list of over 500 specialty indexes and search engines targeting particular topics and regions.

It's Economical! You can use SelfPromotion.com for **FREE!** If you like what the site does, then, and only then, help to pay for it by [making a contribution](#). You can "try before you buy," and pay me what **you** think this service is worth. SelfPromotion.com is a "ShareService™."

It's Faster! Expect to spend a minute or so entering the information for each site you promote to. The more sites you promote to, the more efficient it is, because more and more of your information can be reused. Most of the time will be spent choosing the right categories for each promotion, as each site categorizes the universe differently. Of course, if you return in a few weeks and do some more promoting, it will only take a few minutes, as you'll already have entered most of the information required.

If you are using Navigator 4.x or Explorer 4.x, the data entry form can be seriously JavaScript enhanced, and is even easier to fill out. The [Category Autoset](#) feature has to be seen to be believed! It can cut your data-entry time in half by automatically setting categories for you.

It's Different! Other promotion services promote your site to a few search engines and indexes for free as a teaser, then ask you to pay \$50, \$100 or even more to have them submit to "the top 500 search engines and indexes." Even assuming that they actually have a good list of special-purpose indexes, and aren't submitting your site to a bunch of useless Free-For-All links pages, of those 500 sites, perhaps 50 are appropriate for any particular promotion and will actually generate hits for you. The truth, which most people won't tell you, is that the top 10 sites on the net (places like Yahoo, Excite, AltaVista, etc.), will probably generate 90% of the hits you'll get! (No kidding, check out the [research I did on this](#)).

And by the way, here at SelfPromotion.com, if you have more than one website, you can promote them all (well, up to 10 of them per account), as often as you want, at no extra charge.

And finally, **the webmaster has a sense of humor** and tries to make this essential process reasonably entertaining.

What extra goodies do I get for supporting the site?

Contribute \$10 or more and you'll get priority service (your promotions get done first) and the ability to automatically apply for hundreds of awards. I'll also store your data for a year (if you don't pay, your data gets deleted after 4 weeks) Finally, you'll gain access to a suite of "Secret Net Tools" that let you:

- ?? Track your Search Engine Rankings
- ?? Spy on other people's pages and find out why they rank high
- ?? Figure out what your crucial keywords really are
- ?? Diffuse your Keywords around your site, improving your Search Engine rankings
- ?? Find out what pages have linked to yours
- ?? Prettyprint your HTML and find coding errors
- ?? Quickly submit multiple URLs to all the search engines
- ?? Find a cool domain name to use
- ?? Manage your bids on Overture.com and other pay-per-click search engines
- ?? and even generate Vanity License plates!

People can use the site for Free?! Are you Nuts?

My mom says yes. My wife says it doesn't matter, she loves me anyway. My 8-year-old says it depends on how many toys I buy him, and my 5-year-old is reserving judgment at this time. The bottom line is, I'm trusting that you'll make a contribution to support the service once you see how useful it is. And because the last thing I want is a dissatisfied user, I offer an absolute 100% money-back guarantee. If at any time you feel you haven't gotten your money's worth, you get it back. No questions asked.

A lot of people think I'm nuts to let my users decide how much they should pay, but it actually works out extremely well. After a couple of years of doing this, it was finally pointed out to me that what I'm really doing is "working for tips", and that turns out to be a very interesting business model. I've even written [a short paper](#) about how it works.

Myths about Search Engine Registration

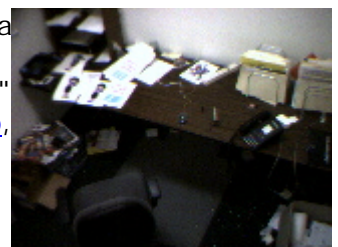
Many people expect to instantly get a lot more hits after registering their site. This will not happen, and anyone who promises such results is what James (my 8 year-old) colorfully refers to as a "silly peanut-butter" (in other words, a liar).

Registering your site will get you more hits, but it will take weeks or months for the increased traffic to become noticeable. After you register your site with a particular search engine or index, it can take anything from 5 seconds to 5 months for them to actually list you, if in fact they actually do. Registering at a particular index doesn't guarantee that you'll actually be listed; many indexes are very selective and only list a small percentage of the submissions they get. And the major search engines? Well, they're all taking months to add new listings. Furthermore, just because you are listed by a particular site doesn't mean that your listing will appear on any particular search. Even if you're selling something obscure, like, say, Polish Sausage, a [search on AltaVista](#) finds over 3500 webpages, only 10 of which get on the coveted "first page." So registration by itself isn't enough; you have to have web-pages that "rank highly" with the search engines. I've already mentioned [my page](#) on this topic, and there are also tons of great sites out there that can help you learn how to improve your rankings; I particularly recommend [Search Engine Watch](#) as a good place to learn about how search engines work.

Finally, while registering your site (and getting good rankings on the search engines) is an important part of site promotion, it is important to understand that it is only one part of the process; there are other equally important things you should do (read [The 500 Sites Fallacy](#) for more thoughts on that subject).

About Your Host:

My name is [Robert Woodhead](#), and back in the early days of the PC era (1981), I was one of the creators of the Wizardry series of computer-roleplaying games. I also created the Macintosh anti-virus tool "Virex." When not pretending to work on this website, I allegedly run [AnimEigo](#), one of the first Japanese Animation companies. Recently, there have been unconfirmed reports that I've been subtitling cool [Samurai Films](#) as well. I live in Wilmington, NC, with my beautiful and brilliant wife Natsumi, and my two toy-loving children, James and Alexander. To the



right is a semi-live feed from my office (it only updates when you replot the page). If I appear to be tearing out what little hair I have left (the office nickname for the cam is the "BaldSpotCam"), it's probably because someone just emailed me asking why the site doesn't work when used in Japanese on the Lithuanian version of Netscape. I'm currently transitioning to working more out of my home, so right now you'll rarely see me on the webcam; eventually I'll install the cam at the house. If all you see is an empty chair and a messy desk, then [click here to see what I look like](#) after I log in and find 500 emails waiting for me...

You can also have my server speak to me! Please try to be creative with your insults! Remember, if you can't see me on the webcam, you're basically talking to yourself, and since

the messages are spoken, asking me long questions and asking for an email reply is somewhat futile! Asking me to smile, wave, dance, or otherwise make a fool of myself for your amusement will only be granted if you've actually made a contribution, and usually not then!

The all-time best message I've heard someone say is this : *"Robert, this is God. Keep up the good work."* All I can say in reply is, "Yes sir! Right away, sir!"

Still Reading?

Assuming I haven't bored you too much, it's time you got to work! Start by reading how to [prepare your site for the search engines](#).

Oh, and if you're still looking for the link to the Yahoo tips page, [here's an extra copy of it](#).

PS: If you're interested in the unusual payment philosophy of this site (it took me years to realize I'd reinvented tipping!), you may wish to read a paper I've written on the subject: [Tipping - a method for optimizing compensation for intellectual property](#).

information available at www.selfpromotion.com