

Internet search and rescue

My practice's Web site isn't showing up on Internet search engines. Why?

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VETERINARY ECONOMICS



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There are a lot of ways to improve your site's Web presence, says Linda Wasche, president of LW Marketworks in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. One method is to link to other Web sites and encourage them to link to you. The more links, the more likely it is that Google, Yahoo, and the other big daddies will "see" you. Here are three more suggestions:

1. Join online directories that list local businesses and pet services. For example, if you're in the town of Springfield, Colo., input relevant terms into a search engine: Springfield vets, Springfield veterinarians, Springfield pet care, veterinary hospitals Springfield, or Colorado veterinarians. Take note of the top sites in your search results, then contact those sites about being included. A listing is free on most online directories, and others charge as little as \$15 a year.

2. Use keywords. Include the key search terms you identified in step one in your titles, content, and Web page descriptions. Did your Web designer take these keywords into account? If not, work with him or her to incorporate them.

3. Pick the right domain name. Does your "www" address make use of your most important keywords? If your practice is named Springfield Animal Hospital, "www.sah.com" isn't the best. Try to get "www.springfieldanimalhospital.com" instead.

Unfortunately, there's no silver bullet for a solid online presence. "Building Web site visibility takes time and effort," Wasche says. Don't be discouraged. Every directory you're in and every keyword you tweak will eventually add up to sparkling Internet visibility.

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