

Proper Site Structure for SEO

It's imperative that a website is well structured and provides ease in terms of navigation, as well as allowing crawlers/search engines to better understand the CONTENT of the website.

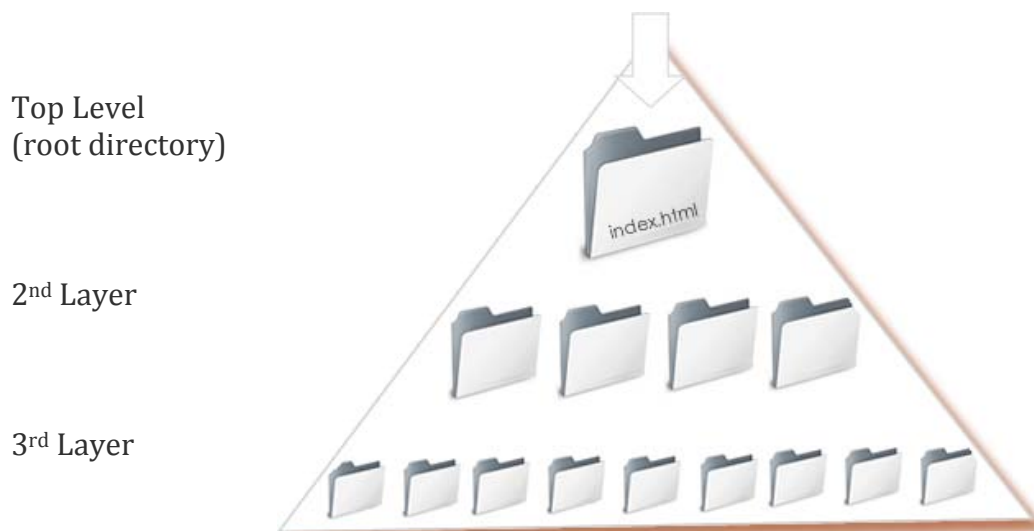
Every site has a home page (index.html, index.htm, default.asp, index.php etc), which is the entry point or the very first page that loads when you type a domain URL.

One of the first thing clients are asked prior to starting any website project, is the structure of the site they would prefer, or more significantly how would their potential/current customers like the site laid out? A good question for them to prod over is how would they like the categories sectioned, i.e. for an electronic store, the structure could be

TV & VIDEO	AUDIO	CAR & GPS	CAMERAS & CAMCORDERS	COMPUTERS	MOBILE PHONES & OFFICE
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Followed by the Computers section having, Laptops, Desktops, Networking, Printers, Data Storage etc.

The ideal SEO tip for arranging information in a website structure is to allocate the most important information (files) at the root directory of the website (index page). Then, like in a hierarchy of significance, second important files in the second layer, below the top layer. The third layer belongs to the third most important set of information to be placed, and so forth.



The advantage of building such a website structure is that both search engines and site visitors can find website's main information fairly intuitively and quickly. Of course, it doesn't mean that you shouldn't display or mention your main product on the homepage.

Top Layer of a Website Structure: The homepage of a website should introduce the website/services/products being offered or sold. There should be links to the most important information files in the root directory of the website from the homepage. The various services/products the website is offering should be available from the home page. Other files that should also exist in the root folder should be the [sitemap](#), this need to be located by crawlers as soon as they enter the root directory of a website.

Second Layer of a Website Structure: Files in this section will be crawled by search engines after the ones in the root directory. So, they should be the ones that aren't needed to be immediately found by crawlers, but still do have significance.

Third Layer of a Website Structure: Least important website files belong in this section. They are the files containing the ultimate information website visitors are looking for. In other words, people aren't looking for anything deeper than them. The rule of thumb is to reduce the number of clicks it takes a visitor to get to its final destination.

Professional SEO Services Inter-Link Website Structure Tightly

A well-structured website is a primary objective for every website owner. In addition to the above, it is good practice to cross link (inter-link) pages, and results in effective search engine optimization as well as having content available for the visitor.

Sitemaps for Websites

Sitemap page help visitors to visit the internal pages from a single page and is good from a SEO stand point, because search engines will also visit this page and easily crawl the pages on your site.

There are two types of site maps a file sitemap (html/php/asp), and a xml sitemap.

A **sitemap.html** is a link to a single page found on the site, that has a list of all the pages on the website, and is commonly beneficial for visitors seeking quick reference to what they are looking for.

A **sitemap.xml file** is an xml file generated for crawlers, and can be submitted to the likes of Google via **Google's Webmaster Tools**.

Example of a typical sitemap.xml file

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>

<urlset xmlns="http://www.google.com/schemas/sitemap/0.84">
<url>
  <loc>http://www.visualwebz.com</loc>
  <lastmod>2010-04-08</lastmod>
  <changefreq>weekly</changefreq>
  <priority>0.5</priority>
</url>
<url>
  <loc>http://www.visualwebz.com/search-engine.html</loc>
  <lastmod>2010-04-08</lastmod>
  <changefreq>monthly</changefreq>
  <priority>0.5</priority>
</url>
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</urlset>
```

Tips for Creating Site Navigation

Practice:

- Simple is always better for both visitors, and search engines. Add navigation pages in all pages relevant to content and category.
- Use Text for navigation from page to page on your site through text links. This will make it easier for crawlers to understand and index your site.
- Use "breadcrumb" navigation - A breadcrumb is a row of internal links at the top or bottom of the page that allows visitors to quickly navigate back to a previous section. i.e. Home > Services > Production Control
- Create a HTML sitemap page as well as a XML Sitemap.
- Have a useful 404 page

Avoid:

- Navigation based entirely on drop-down menus, images, or Animations (Flash Based).
- Linking each and every page to every other webpage, use this in moderation where and when required.
- Repetition of content
- Going overboard with slicing and dicing your content.