

**The Official Pet Sitter's Guide**  
*to*  
Making **Google** Happy

Google Reveals The 10 Best Ways to  
Shoot Your Pet Sitting Website  
Straight to the Top of the Search Results!

**VOLUME 1**

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with attribution**

This special report was for PetSittingOlogy Course members  
but has been updated for the Association of Pet Sitting Excellence.

**Thanks for choosing to download my  
"Make Google Happy" pet sitting website marketing report.**

One of the biggest challenges most of us as pet sitters face is how to gain more clients. Translation: Marketing and SEO (Search Engine Optimization).

You've no doubt built a solid and professional business, know how to discuss your services with others, and enjoy performing each pet care job.

All too often, it just feels like there aren't enough potential clients calling you or visiting your website, right? Well, things are about to change.

As mysterious as SEO may seem, there are at least 10 specific (and quite simple) things you can do RIGHT NOW to your website to help assure that you show up in the Google results for your chosen keywords.

There's a lot of discussion out there about how to give your website the best fighting chance possible to rank well. Some of it is accurate and some of it is not.

This report is not something I figured out on my own. It's not even something the best and brightest SEO Gurus figured out on their own.

These 10 tips, strategies and techniques outlined in this report are the 10 best that Google has come forward to confirm themselves.

And get this, if you are already making changes and adjustments to your own site, you will have NO PROBLEMS implementing most of these yourself.

If you happen to work with a webmaster or web designer who makes changes on your behalf, forward her this report and discuss it together.

I originally put this report together for my members of PetSittingOlogy.

As co-founder of the Association of Pet Sitting Excellence, I wanted to make it readily available to a wider audience and help more pet sitters improve their web site.

Each tip that Google reveals has been simplified and I explain exactly how you can apply it to your own pet sitting website.

If you have any specific questions or comments, please send them my way.

Thanks again for downloading this report.

– Joshua Cary  
Co-Founder, APSE

*Updated: Summer 2010*

## Hello, Pet Sitting Business Owner!

What if you could get your hands on an **actual insider document written by Google** intended only for its search engine engineers?

What if that document contained close to **a dozen of the most important factors** Google recommends on the topic of search engine optimization (SEO)?

What if these factors were taken directly from the search engine giant's mouth and **presented to the pet sitting community** in an easy-to-understand format?

Well, in that case, you'd have this:

### **The Official Pet Sitter's Guide To Making Google Happy** **10 Google Facts You Need To Know**

Looks like Google may not be as mysterious as you think.

Google did in fact create a document originally meant for their team to use as a guide on SEO. Thankfully, it was released to the Webmaster community to work in tandem with Google's guidelines on creating the best websites possible.

Google's job, as you know, is simply to present the best possible search results to its users. This guide highlights the top 10 recommendations so you can turn your pet sitting business website into a quality site that Google will be happy to display in its search results.

Some of the recommendations may seem trivial, perhaps even unnecessary. Understand that when implemented together they can have a big impact on your search engine optimization efforts.

Good SEO is about making your website user's experience the best it possibly can be. Only then will Google reward you with better performance in its search results.

“We believed we could build a better search. We had a simple idea, that not all pages are created equal. Some are more important. – *Sergey Brin, Google Co-Founder*

“It's quite complicated and sounds circular, but we've worked out a way of calculating a Web site's importance.” – *Larry Page, Google Co-Founder*

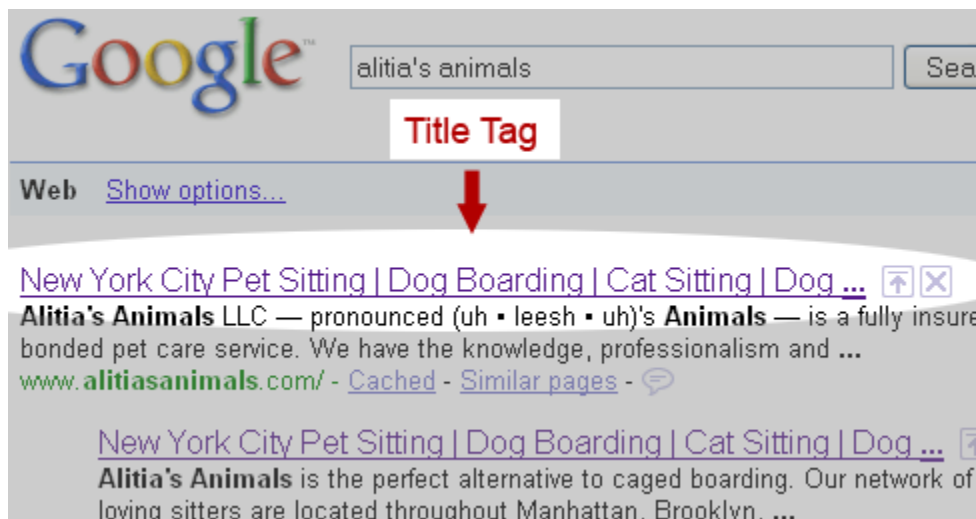
## 1: Create Unique, Accurate Page Titles

Your website's title tag is by far one of the most important elements when it comes to search engine optimization (SEO). SEO is just fancy talk for all the ways you hone, tweak and adjust various elements of your site to give yourself the best chance of popping up in the search results for the terms your clients would use to find you.

Google, along with the other search engines, places a lot of weight on a page's title to determine where it shows up in its search results. Get it right and you'll see a steady flow of potential new clients.

The title tag is what's displayed in the top bar of a user's browser. It's also what search engines display in their search results. You know, that big blue text you click on to visit a site.

While your browser may display over 100 characters of a page title, Google, for example, will only display the first 70 characters of your title tag.

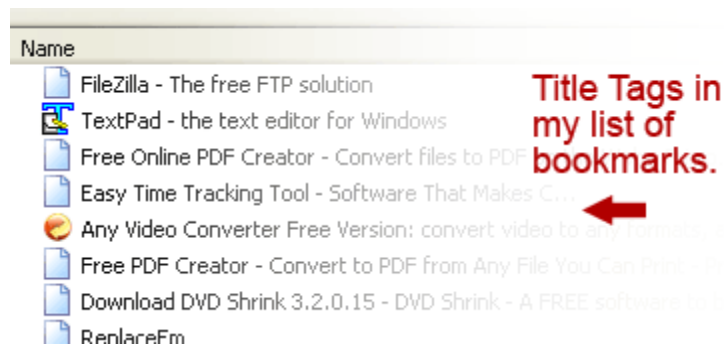


A quick browse through the net shows some title tags that miss the boat. Here are some examples of title tags that do your site little to no justice:

- Home
- Cindy's PetCare
- My Pet Services
- Template 32
- Best Pet Sitting
- Welcome to my website

Why are these titles not ideal? For a few of reasons.

- **They are not keyword-rich.** You want to include keywords in your title tag that potential clients would use to find you. “Pet sitter in Chicago” or “Florida dog walker” for example.
- They do not take advantage of the **70 characters that search engines display**. There is a fine line between formatting a good quality title and looking a bit ‘spammy.’ You don’t want to overdo it and try to include every variation of your keywords, but you do want to get a handful of appropriate descriptive keywords in there.
- Your title is what appears in **users’ bookmarks**. By creating a highly descriptive and appropriate title of your website, a visitor will have an easier time finding it among there bookmarks.



Is your title tag used correctly so that your site appears in the search results and attracts visitors to click through to your site?

Here then are some examples of **good and appropriate title tags**:

Pet sitter, dog walker, Pinellas County, Florida. Tampa area pet sitting services. Professional pet care.

<http://yourdoggonepetsitter.com/services.htm>

Urban Out Sitters - Chicago - Dog Walking, Doggy Daycare, Pet Sitting, Vacation Cat Care, and Boarding Services

<http://www.urbanoutsitters.com/>

Pet Sitting, Pet Sitters, The Pet Nanny of Trinity Florida, Dog Walking, In Home Pet Care

<http://www.thepetnannyoftrinity.com/home.htm>

Give your page title some thought. Is it the best it can be? Does it contain just the right amount of keywords that potential pet sitting clients would use to locate your services?

## How To Adjust Your Title Tag

Adjusting your title tag is an easy task. Depending on how you first created your website, your title tag can be found directly inside your html code. If you used a website publishing tool, it should be clear enough where the title of your page appears.

Make some educated adjustments to your title tag and I assure you that you'll see an increase of web visitors to your site.

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN" "http://transitional.dtd">

<html
xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml"
lang="en" xml:lang="en">

<head>
<meta name="verify-v1" content="OPDWMpTg2ihs2JjBCkRgPR0c2IjteVvPIpehXtI
<title>New York City Pet Sitting | Dog Boarding | Cat Sitting | Dog Wal
<meta http-equiv="Content-Style-Type" content="text/css" />
<meta name="description" content="Alitia's Animals LLC is a full
have the knowledge, professionalism and expertise to care for your anim
```



## Make Each Tag Unique

Simply put, Google frowns upon a title tag that is replicated across all a site's pages. Think about it. If Google uses the title tag to help determine a page's relevance to a user search, then an identical title tag across all your pages doesn't help any.

Also, your title tag is what's displayed in the search results, so a unique accurate title will help a search user understand what a certain page contains before clicking.

A simple system for creating unique and accurate page titles might be to create a standard element you use site-wide:

Dog Walking and Dog Boarding in Chicago, IL | Professional Pet Sitting for Dogs

Then add a unique tag for each page at the beginning:

Dog Walking and Dog Boarding in Chicago, IL | Professional Pet Sitting for Dogs  
| Rates and Services

## Additional Quick Tips:

- Put your best keywords at the beginning of your title tag.

- There's no need to place your business name in your title tag, unless you are a known company looking to brand yourself, or your keywords are contained in the name.

## 2: Make Use of the "description" Meta Tag

Your website's description meta tag is the **only meta tag that still holds weight** with the search engines. It is a summary of your page content using normal, easy to read language.

At times, a search engine may choose to display your meta description in the results opposed to your on-page content. It's important to give careful consideration when creating your meta description.

While some search engines will display up to 200 characters of your meta description, Google will only **display the first 160 characters**.

Here are some **best practice tips** to formulating the perfect meta description:

- Include your keywords in your description using natural sounding sentences.
- Make your description **sound as enticing and appealing as possible**. Your goal is for search users to read it and feel compelled to click through to your site.
- Create a unique description for each page.
- Describe your page content accurately and honestly.

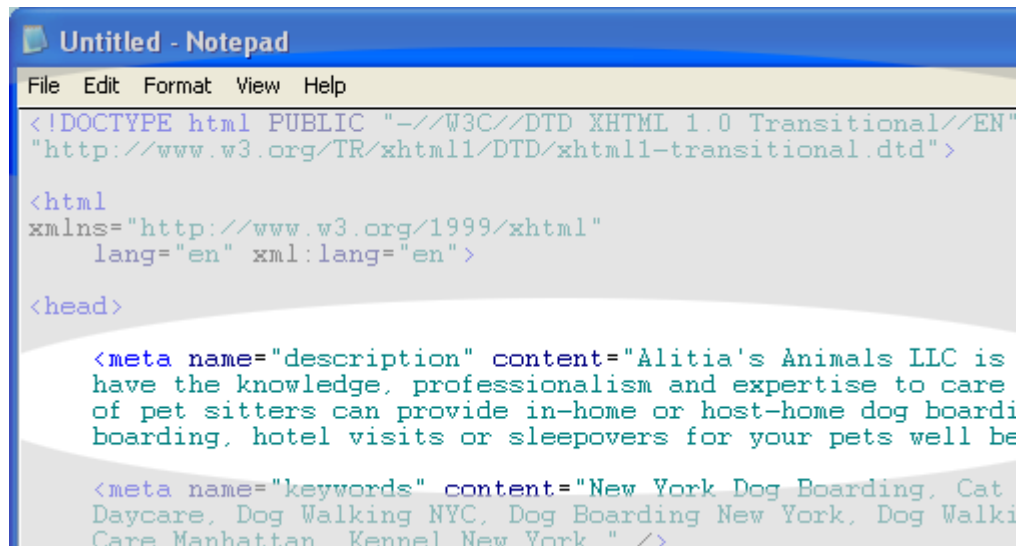
Working Example:

This is the meta description used for the Alitia's Animals home page:

Alitia's Animals is a fully insured and bonded pet care service serving New York City. Our network of pet sitters can provide in-home or host-home dog boarding, dog daycare, dog walking, cat sitting, cat boarding, hotel visits or sleepovers for your pets well being.

Remember, you'll want to adjust each page's description to reflect the unique content on each page. Do not replicate the same description across all your pages.



A screenshot of a Notepad window titled "Untitled - Notepad". The window has a menu bar with "File", "Edit", "Format", "View", and "Help". The text area contains the following HTML code:

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">

<html
xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml"
lang="en" xml:lang="en">

<head>

<meta name="description" content="Alitia's Animals LLC is
have the knowledge, professionalism and expertise to care
of pet sitters can provide in-home or host-home dog boardi
boarding, hotel visits or sleepovers for your pets well be

<meta name="keywords" content="New York Dog Boarding, Cat
Daycare, Dog Walking NYC, Dog Boarding New York, Dog Walki
Care Manhattan, Kennel New York" />
```

*The meta description tag is found in your html code.*

### Notice Something Missing?

Nowhere in the Google notes do they even make mention of the **keyword meta tag**. Over time, the search engines have placed less and less weight on the meta tag for keywords.

This is not to say that you should ignore it since other search engines may place some value on it, but do not waste your time or energy trying to discover the most appropriate keywords to use for the keyword meta tag.

Continue to follow and implement the guidelines set forth by Google here and you'll be well on your way to a search engine optimized pet sitting website.

## 3: Improve The Structure of your URLs

Believe it or not, **the way you name your document pages** can have a big impact on your search engine optimization efforts. Google loves file names that are relevant and easy to read.

For example:

[www.example.com/pet-sitting-fees.html](http://www.example.com/pet-sitting-fees.html) is a much better file name than [www.example.com/Page1.html](http://www.example.com/Page1.html)

The URL in the first example above contains the phrase 'pet sitting fees' which helps Google **better determine what's on the page** and gives a search user a strong idea of what she can expect to find on that page.

Remember, Google's job is to produce **the most relevant search results** to its users. Assisting the search engine in this way allows you and Google to work side by side to produce the best and most accurate search results possible.

Your page file names should include relevant words and follow specific rules. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when developing your file name URLs:

- Keep the document file name relevant to the page content.
- **Avoid generic file names** like Page1.html or template6.html
- **Use dashes** between words(pet-sitting.html), opposed to underscores (pet\_sitting.html), spaces (pet sitting.html), or no spaces (petsitting.html)
- Don't overuse or add unnecessary keywords into the file name.
- Use **only lower-case lettering** in your document names.

An added benefit to accurate file names is that Google will use your URL to help determine search term relevance. For example, if someone is searching for 'pet sitters,' Google will bold the search term in the URL if it's found in its results.

Notice the green highlighted term in the URL:



Web [Show options...](#)

[List \*\*pet sitter\*\* assignments, find \*\*pet sitters\*\* and walkers ...](#)

Online directory of **pet sitters**, walkers and **pet sitter** assignments. Dedicated to matching **pet sitters** and dog walkers with **pet** owners worldwide.

[www.pet-sitters.biz/](http://www.pet-sitters.biz/) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#) -

[Find \*\*Pet Sitters\*\* in Your State](#)

Find a **pet sitter** by browsing. Select your state to find **pet sitters** in your area.

[www.petsittersnetwork.com/](http://www.petsittersnetwork.com/) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#) -

[Pet Sitting Springdale AR, Fayetteville Arkansas, Angel \*\*Pet\*\* ...](#)

Worry-free **pet** and home care while you are traveling! Don't board your **pet**-we will feed, walk, pamper your **pet**, AND care for your home and plants!

[www.angelpetsitters.com/](http://www.angelpetsitters.com/) - [Cached](#) - [Similar](#) -

## 4: Make Your Site Easier To Navigate

When considering the navigational structure of your pet sitting website, you'll need to consider two elements: the user and the search engines.

A website that's easy to navigate is a website Google will appreciate. Google's mantra is **'what's good for the search user, is good for Google.'** In other words, the easier it is for your website visitors to find what they are looking for on your site, the better off you'll be.

## **For The User**

One way to make navigation easy is to make sure **your menu navigation bar is consistent** throughout your pages, and that all the menu items are always in the same order.

When we navigate through a site, we expect that the various elements will remain in the same position throughout the pages. The logo, menu bar, content and footer information should stay consistent throughout your pages.

You'll also want to avoid using images for the buttons, when possible. This makes it harder for Google to find and can cause usability issues if a visitor has images turned off in the browser or if an image doesn't load properly.

If you choose to use images, either in your menu bar or on your pages, make sure to utilize the 'alt' tag. Most web publishing programs will have a place to define the title or alt tag for an image. (More about the 'alt' tag later.)

Your alt tag is what would be shown in the event your image doesn't load or a user is browsing from a browser without image support, like a Smart Phone, for example.

Your alt tags also help Google determine the relevancy of your images, so try to include accurate and descriptive words in your alt tag.

Warning: There's no reason to stuff your alt tag with unnecessary or irrelevant keywords to try and influence Google. Use honest and natural descriptions.

## **For Google**

A brief overview on **how Google finds and adds your pages** to its search results:

Google sends out its web crawler, or spider, called Googlebot to find new and updated pages for its search engine. **The more content a website has**, the more likely it will be included. Likewise, **the more often a site's content is updated** or added to, the happier Google will be to add those pages to its index.

This is one reason you'll often be told 'content is king,'

To make your site easy for Google to navigate and find your pages, you should **include a sitemap** on your website.

A sitemap should be created in its two necessary formats, html and xml, and added to your site. By placing a properly formatted sitemap on your web server, you enable search engine crawlers (like Google) to find out what pages are present and which have recently changed, and to crawl your site accordingly.

You can find **free sitemap creation tools** online that enable you to input your web address and within seconds, a properly formatted sitemap is available for use.

You then download the file and upload it to your server.

Free online **sitemap creator**: <http://www.xml-sitemaps.com/>

### **Use A Custom and Helpful 404 Page**

A 4-0what?! A 404 page is that frustrating page we've all encounters many times online. You know, that "**Oops, the page you are looking for does not exist...**" page.

Google is all about creating the best possible user experience and provides specific guidelines for creating a top-notch 404 page. In its simplest form, a 404-page should **look like the other pages of your site** and provide the user with helpful information on where to go next.

At the very least, **a link back to your site's home page** will work fine.

Want to know what your current 404 page may look like? Type in your domain address followed by something like /blah.html.

### **Google's Got Your Back**

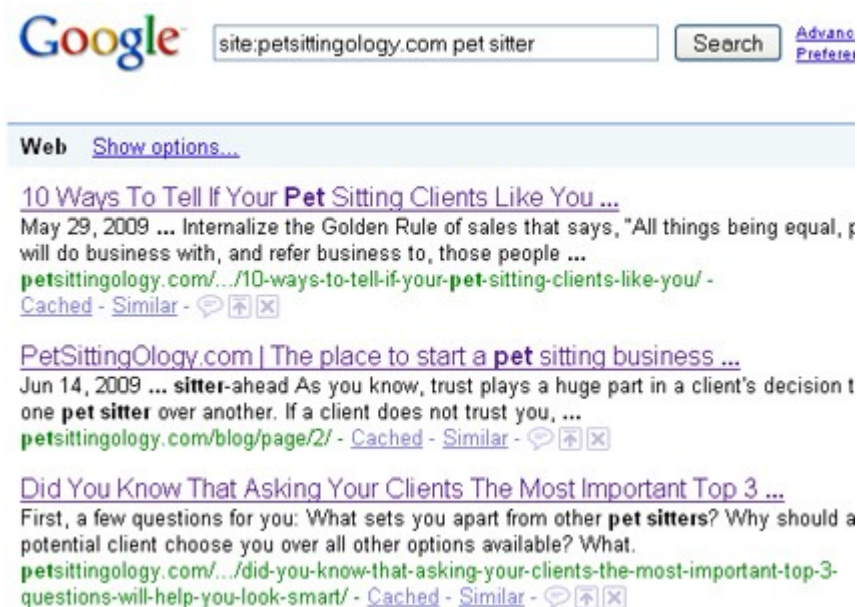
Always one to help, Google provides a free, helpful way to automatically bring your 404 page up to speed.

Place a few pieces of code on your 404 page and **Google will automatically try and suggest a better page from your site**. In addition, they'll place a search box for the user to be able to search only your website pages to help find the information.

See <http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=136085> for complete documentation and details.



*The highlighted section is automatically produced by the Google code, and clicking on the 'Google Search' button only produces results from your site.*



*Search results are exclusively for the website where the search box is placed.*

**Side Note:** To understand how to actually **customize your 404 page and upload it to your server**, contact your web host or look through their knowledge base for information on customizing your 404 page.

## 5: Offer Quality Content and Services

Since Google is all about delivering the best and most relevant search results to its users, it only makes sense to offer quality content and services.

However, as a pet sitting website owner, you need not only be limited to the standard array of pages typically found on most pet sitting websites.

Let's see how we can look beyond the typical 'services, fees, photos, testimonials and contact' pages.

Adding good quality content to your website will play double duty in your search engine optimization efforts:

- It'll **keep your site visitor engaged** and increase the chances of gaining a new client.
- It'll make Google happy by being able to **find new and updated content** to add to its search engine.

In order to add the right content, we'll first need to consider who are target audience is. I'd say pet owners at the very least, right? Now, let's think about what content you can add to your site that will **add value to the user experience**.

Aside from the services you offer, look for **content that will compliment** those services. Here's a list of ideas you can **turn into original content** for your website:

- A list of pet fun facts
- A list of the most common pet names
- A list of the most common dog breeds
- A journal of your experiences as pet sitter
- Tips on keeping your pet safe, happy, healthy...
- Spotlight on fun or interesting pet toys or gifts

You can find any of this information online and add your own spin to it. Remember, the **more original content** your site offers, the more likely it'll appear in the search results. And the **more often you add new content**, the more likely it'll appear in the search results.

Sure it might take a little work, but you want more pet sitting clients, right?

**Quick Tip:** It's better to create no content than to publish someone else's content. This is considered duplicate content and is frowned upon by Google.

## 6: Write Better Anchor Text

Anchor text is the clickable text that your users click on to follow a link.

**Example Code:** Please take a moment to `<a href="contact.php">contact me</a>`

**Example Output:** Please take a moment to [contact me](#)

The phrase '**contact me**' is your **anchor text** and is an important element. A good descriptive anchor text tells Google and your user what they can expect on the linked page.

It's good practice to use anchor text that helps users make an informed decision whether to click through or not. It also helps Google to understand what the page you are linking to is about.

Consider proper anchor text whether you are linking to other pages within your site or to external websites.

**Bad Example:** View my business profile on [this site](#).

**Bad Example:** View my business profile on LinkedIn by [clicking here](#).

**Good Example:** View my business profile on [LinkedIn](#).

### Quick Tips:

- Your anchor text should use short, descriptive words
- Avoid generic terms like 'click here'
- Make sure your links are easy to spot and do not blend in with the content of your page

## 7: Use Heading Tags Appropriately

Heading tags – not to be confused with the `<head>` tag – offer visual cues to your site visitors based on the tag level.

Heading tags include `<h1>` `<h2>` `<h3>` `<h4>` `<h5>` and `<h6>`

Heading tags are **placed within your html code** and come in 6 different sizes to place different weight on a headline. By default, a web browser will display each heading tag as larger text than the standard text on your website.

Proper use of your heading tags will place importance on certain keywords on your page.

For example, on your 'services' page you may consider the following html structure:

```
<h1>Pet Sitting in Chicago Services</h1>
```

```
...
```

```
<h2>Dog Boarding in Chicago</h2>
```

```
...
```

```
<h2>Cat Boarding in Chicago</h2>
```

```
...
```

```
<h3>Ready To Reserve?</h3>
```

```
...
```

```
<h4>Our Policies & Procedures</h4>
```

```
...
```

This will create an outlined system and could look something like this:

# Pet Sitting in Chicago Services

```
...
```

## Dog Boarding in Chicago

```
...
```

## Cat Boarding in Chicago

```
...
```

### Ready To Reserve?

```
...
```

Our Policies & Procedures

```
...
```

As you may have figured out, we keep going back to **'what's good for the user, is good for Google.'** In this case, you are giving the user a system hierarchy to help determine the importance of certain sections.

By formatting each headline in an outline style, the user **can easily find the information** she is looking for.

Similarly, **Google places more weight on the keywords** placed between the higher heading tags. For example, the keywords placed between your <h1> tag should only include your most targeted keywords.

Please note: It's good practice to **use only one <h1> tag per page**. Google frowns upon multiple headlines placed in the <h1> tag.



Think of your heading tags the same way you would if you were writing a paper or outline for school. Consider what headline will **best describe the content** to follow.

## 8: Optimize Your Use Of Images

The images on your site can easily be taken for granted and overlooked. However, a smart website owner can make the most out of their images by making them more search engine-friendly.

### The 'alt' Tag

As we touched upon earlier, each image on your site will contain a piece of code called the 'alt' tag. It looks something like this:

```

```

If you view your source code and find your images, you'll see what's included. Sometimes it'll be left blank while other times a web builder asks for an image title, which then will get used as your alt tag.

Consider your alt tag carefully. Google will look to your alt tag to help determine what the page, and image, is about. You also may get lucky by having appropriate images indexed within Google Image search results.

It's important to use good alt tags for a few reasons:

- If a visitor has images turned off in their browser, or an image does not load properly, your alt tag will be displayed and the user can still understand what belongs there.
- If a visitor is browsing your site with a screen reader or phone that does not support images, your content can still make sense.
- Your alt tag plays a similar role in your images as the anchor text plays in your links

### What Makes A Good alt Tag

- Use descriptive words to accurately describe the image.
- Keep your alt tags short
- Avoid generic tags such as 'image067.jpg' or 'pic.jpg'

### How Bulky Are Your Images?

The last thing to consider when adding images to your site is how long do they take to download when a user visits your site.

All too often, website owners will upload a huge photo taken directly from their camera. This is not a good idea. You want your website to load as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Before you upload a big bulky image to your website, consider reducing its file size by 'crunching it' through an image file reducer.

You can utilize a **free image optimizer online** at <http://www.imageoptimizer.net/Home.aspx>

Simply browse to the image on your computer, select the output size (default is OK) and click 'Optimize Now!' Your new leaner image is ready for use.

## 9: Make Use Of Free Webmaster Tools

Google really does love webmasters! And to drive this point home, they created a helpful resource center called **Google Webmaster**.

This resource center is plenty more than your typical resource center containing relevant articles. Started back in 2006 for a place to add your sitemap, Google Webmaster has evolved into a **diagnostic tool to keep your site functioning properly** in the eye's of Google.

(It's sort of like the garage or **mechanic for your website**.)

Once you log in to your free Google Webmaster account, you'll first want to add your pet sitting website to your dashboard by placing a piece of code in your home page html file.

At this point, **Google will start to give you valuable info** about your site including:

- Any issues it may run into while crawling your site
- Suggestions on how to make better use of your pages
- Top search queries that visitors are using to find your site
- External pages that link to your site
- A place to submit your sitemap

Make it a habit to check back every few weeks or so to see what issues, if any, Google found with your website.

**Begin your webmaster partnership** with Google here: <http://www.google.com/webmasters/>

## 10: Take Advantage Of Web Analytics Services

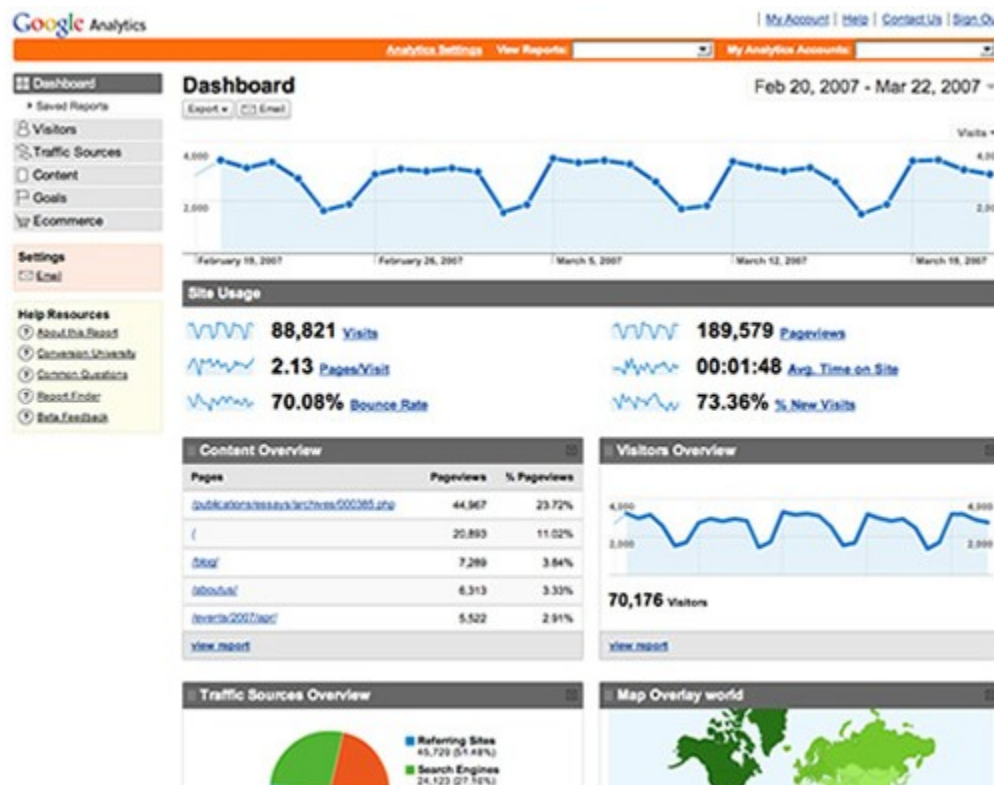
As you've no doubt discovered by this point, in order to make Google happy, you first need to **make your website visitors happy**. That's right. Google rewards websites that are created with the user in mind.

A website that is easy to navigate, understand, and use will rank higher for its chosen keywords than a website that is not.

However, without a system in place to **monitor exactly what your users are doing**, you may miss the opportunity to give your users precisely what they are looking for.

A simple stats program can help. One of the most powerful and often used stats programs is **Google Analytics**.

Google Analytics is a free product offered by the search giant that gives you insight and control over what your users are doing once on your site and how they are interacting with it.



Some of the more popular features include:

### **Number of Visitors**

See detailed figures regarding the number of visitors to your site in any given timeframe.

### **Length of Stay**

The longer a visitor remains on your site, the better. This stat reveals if users are leaving your site too quickly, or if they are absorbing much of what you have to offer.

### **Referring Pages**

Are your visitors arriving at your website from another website or a specific search engine? This section will tell you exactly what link was clicked on to land on your page.

### **Search Terms**

Slowly but surely, you'll start receiving traffic directly from the search engines. You'll see exactly what terms your visitors typed into each search engine to find your website.

### **Bounce Rate**

Bounce rate refers to the percentage of visitors who landed on your website and left before exploring any additional pages beyond the one they landed on. The lower the percentage, the better.

### **Popular Pages**

Wondering why visitors keep emailing you the same question when it's clearly written on your FAQ page? Perhaps your FAQ page is not being viewed enough. This section will spell out exactly what pages are your most popular.

## **Get Up and Running**

**Installing Google Analytics** on your web pages is quick and simple. After you sign up for an account, you'll be asked to verify your site by placing a piece of code inside the html. Once complete, you can then place the provided tracking code on your pages.

Tracking begins immediately and works quietly behind the scenes. You should make it a habit to check in on your stats every so often to see how your visitors are interacting with your site.

Only then can you continue to **provide the best user experience** for your visitors.

## **One Account, Many Tools**

You can sign up or log in to Google Analytics using the **same Google account** you may have created for Google Webmaster. Also, if you currently have a Gmail account (Google's free email service, which I highly recommend), you can go ahead and log in to any and all of Google's tools.

### Thank You for Reading...

I hope you enjoyed reading this guide. Feel free to pass it along to other pet sitters you think could benefit from it.

For more tips, advice and resources on how to grow your pet sitting business, see our blog at <http://petsittingology.com/blog>

And if you haven't yet heard the buzz, come see the next generation of pet sitting associations at <http://www.petsittingexcellence.com>



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