

# Having a Website Is One Thing, Reaching an Audience Another

by Rob Wheeler

If we build it, they will come ...

Actually, when we build a website, nothing will happen until someone sees it. Your congregation may mention it to their friends, and others may visit should they happen to stumble across it, however, that doesn't encourage repeat visits. The question becomes how do you promote your website?

## Adwords (or any search engine ad at all)

Google is a household name and, at the moment, the top dog of search engines. Adwords lets you create simple, effective ads and display them to people already searching online for information. However, there are many other decent search engines that will get you good traffic as well.

## Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

SEO is very important. The whole point of online promotion is to get people to find you and that means being on top or as high as you can be on search engines. Search engines are the #1 way people find things on the net.

## Keywords

Know what keywords your audience will be using, and write content that conveys your message and matches those keywords. If you're having a hard time coming up with keywords, follow this logic: If you were online and wanted to find a website like yours, what would you do? What word

or phrase would you type into a search engine? Ask yourself that question and then ask everyone you know. You will learn what people are searching for.

## Page Titles

Titles like "untitled" or "Home Page" are less likely to attract attention than "Christ Unity Church | Medford | Oregon" and every page should have its individual title which should be unique and keyword rich. Also add Meta tags with keywords and descriptions to all your pages. (From Wikipedia: "Meta elements provide information about a given webpage, most often to help search engines categorize them correctly. They are inserted into the HTML document, but are often not directly visible to a user visiting the site.")

## Measure

Every website should measure performance. If you aren't measuring what's happening, you aren't really promoting at all. Even though SEO generates "free traffic," we all know that it's anything but free. What you really need is a planning cycle. You start with assessing your current situation and setting some goals.

You make the plan, execute it, measure the results, and go right back into another cycle. Remember, SEO is a long term process.

There are a number of ways to promote your site. The more continual, consistent effort you put in, the greater the benefits for your website and ultimately your church attendance.

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