

### What is a sitemap?

A sitemap is an XML file that contains a list of site URLs and related attributes detailing what should be indexed within a specific site.

The goal of every web site is to increase site visibility and user traffic. One way to increase site traffic is through search engine optimization. Another method is to use sitemaps, which allow you to specify what pages a search engine should process or index. The sitemap concept was originally developed by Google, with Yahoo! and MSN recently agreeing to use the standard.

Search engines use spiders to crawl the Internet to locate pages and index them in their database. A good example is Google's Googlebot spider that traverses the Web for changes and new pages and indexes and ranks them accordingly. Sitemaps provide a way for web sites to specify what pages within the site should be indexed and what new content has been added.

The following sample sitemap shows how sitemap elements may be used for a sample site. It specifies the home page for a fictitious site, along with how often it changes, when it was last changed, and its priority within the site:

```
http://www.sitemaps.org/schemas/sitemap/0.9">
```

```
http://www.testsite.com/  
2009-12-29  
daily  
0.5
```

### Creating a sitemap

XML is the basis for the sitemap, so you can easily create and edit them via any text editor, but there are also special free tools available as is this one: <http://www.xml-sitemaps.com/>

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