

Review of FirstPlace Software's Web Position Gold

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While being first to market may carry some advantages, being first in a search engine listing can be just as important. After all, if someone can't find your site, how can they buy your products or services? FirstPlace Software's "Web Position Gold" demystifies the magic behind search engine rankings. It walks you through the process of optimizing your website content so you, too, can appear near the top of the listings. Be warned! Though the software makes this seem to be a painless process, this is not a trivial task and requires you to do your homework.

After installing the software (it went smoothly on a Windows 98 machine) you should also install the accompanying pc-based video. Start viewing it as soon as possible. Depending on your technical knowledge and free time, it may take a few weeks before you become comfortable with the concepts and general rules. And time is of the essence. Not just so you can get up there in the rankings but because a number of services used by the software "time-out" and require you to pay for additional time (more on this later.)

You begin with the Reporter, which prompts you to enter keywords that might be used to find your site. Discovering the right keywords is not just a matter of what you might use to find your website but what keywords OTHERS might use. If you need help, the software's help file will guide you. However, in the middle of the help file window is a "link" to a website. Get your credit card ready. While the website it sends you to offers a set of basic keywords, you'll have to pay to get more keywords. The service is provided on a subscription basis and costs about \$220 dollars for one year.

Next, you determine if your site has already been indexed by your target search engine(s). The result is a detailed report of your present search engine ranking. Its findings may be quite depressing. To rectify your poor results, the Page Generator helps you create search engine-optimized pages with all the right tags and content. You again select your targeted search engine(s), enter keywords or phrases, generate a page and move on to the Page Critic.

The Page Critic offers many helpful hints and it asks you for the URL of a top-ranking page that you want to outrank. After making the necessary changes, you can use the software's Upload Manager to upload your optimized files and then the Submitter to submit your site to the search engines.

So, how do you know if you have been successful? Using Web Position Gold's "Traffic Analyzer" you will be presented with a set of statistics displaying, among other things: Unique Visitors; Average Daily Hits; Number of repeat visitors; the path visitors take through the site (e.g., they hit your home page and then go to page X, etc.). For it to work properly you'll need to add a "tracking script" to your pages. Get the credit card ready

because Traffic Analyzer is a "service" and after 90 days, you'll need to ante up. Hopefully you won't be TOO successful since the analysis service is a monthly fee based on the number of hits you get (the more successful you are, the more hits, the more expensive).

So, does the software really improve your search engine rankings? Go to www.google.com and type in "html scraper." You'll see that my company appears third in the list. But don't get too excited. We're a technology company and we have the time (and expertise) to work on search engine rankings. You, on the other hand, will need to decide if you have the time to learn the concepts; to optimize your website; to check your rankings; to revisit the application and re-optimize the pages if you start to slip in your rankings; etc. You also need to evaluate all of the on-going costs (e.g., fees for continual application updates; keyword information; traffic analysis, etc.) and compare this with the cost of using a company that performs search engine optimization. If you have the time to spare, then Web Position Gold may be the answer to your search engine ranking prayers.

\$149.95 for the Standard Edition; \$349.00 for the Professional Edition.

<http://www.web-positiongold.com/>

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