

It's no surprise that the AdSense program is much beloved by Webmasters running information sites, as opposed to service, subscription, or transaction sites that generate nonadvertising revenue. Information sites are often labors of love, having been constructed from the ground up out of passion for the subject. When AdSense burst on the scene, these hard-working, under-rewarded folks began experiencing Internet-derived revenue for the first time. In those cases, AdSense is the only source of site income. More established media sites that build AdSense into the revenue mix are sometimes surprised to find it contributing a larger-than-expected portion of income. No matter what your site's focus or scope, cleanly optimized content delivers more pertinent ads and higher clickthrough rates.

The following is an AdSense-specific checklist of optimization points:

- ✔ **Have only one subject per page.** Get your site fiercely organized, and eliminate extraneous content from any page. Don't be afraid to add pages to accommodate short subjects that don't fit on other pages. Let there be no question as to what a page is about.
- ✔ **Determine key concepts, words, and phrases.** For each page, that is. Then, make sure those words and phrases are represented on the page. Pay particular attention to getting those words into headlines. Your concentration of keywords should be skewed toward the top of the page. Don't go overboard; your text must read naturally or your visitors (and Google) will know that you're spamming them.
- ✔ **Put keywords in your tags.** Take those keywords and phrases from the preceding item and put them into your meta tags (the keyword, description, and title tags). See Chapter 4 for details. Don't use any word more than three times in any single tag.
- ✔ **Use text instead of images.** Google doesn't understand words that are embedded in images, such as what you often see in navigation buttons. (Navigation buttons and other images are important in defining the subject of the page and the site.) Replace the buttons with text navigation links.



Try to fulfill these points *before* opening an AdSense account. Ideally, your site is in its optimized state when Google first crawls it. You don't know how often your site will be crawled in the future, so getting properly indexed the first time is key.

These optimization points apply more to home-grown information sites than to database-driven media sites, such as online editions of newspapers, where content deployment is determined by offsite editorial determinants. An online newspaper follows the news, not the other way around, so the topicality of a page might be torn apart by diverse stories. But even sites that drop in their content from offline sources (such as reporters in the field) can optimize