

# Widgets and SEO

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Widget Promotion and SEO are two almost entirely different things but have one important similarity

- Paid model

- Organic (natural) model

Most of the discussion at this conference has been about the paid method of widget spread

-You pay money to someone

-You get installs

How to improve your widget spread  
without spending any money

(Really)

# 1. Submit your gadget to platform specific directories

- Directories are important and represent one of the main ways to spread gadgets, particularly for recognizable brands

## 2. Use existing interaction points to promote your widget to your users

- If you provide a receipt page or confirmation page, use that page to promote your widget
- Promote your gadget from your webpage – example a “tools” page

### 3. Ensure the widget is useful

- Widgets should do something
  - Get second opinions

## 4. Make it Simple

- The most popular organic widgets are almost all simple and serve one purpose rather than many
- Virtually any online presence can create a “search” widget
  - Many of the most popular Google gadgets are just a search boxes or rss feeds

## 5. Do it now

-Time is an important factor

## 6. Have different versions of your gadgets so that you can cover all platforms

- iGoogle

- Facebook

- Flash

- UWA

- Sidebar

- Doing so allows you to be in more directories and can often be achieved via widget platform wizards.

## 7. Use as much care (or more) for your thumbnail and preview images as you do in your gadgets design.

- When a user installs a widget they are often taken to a preview page and asked “are you sure?”.
- If your preview image sucks then less users will install
- Express the functionality of the gadget in the preview image, rather than your logo.

8. Write about your widget in your blog, and keep it displayed in the sidebar

-If you have a blog, use it.

9. Employees should, er...  
“test” the widget to see if it works  
on their various favorite platforms.

- If your employees do not know what their favorite platforms are, give them a list of their favorite platforms.
- This can help you rank first for your brand and keywords, particularly in the directories that list widgets in their usage order.

# 10. Learn about platforms and directories

# Directories and Platforms

# Free Widget Directories:

iPhone  
iGoogle  
Netvibes  
Facebook  
Widgetbox  
MSN Live  
Yahoo  
Sprout  
Typepad  
Springwidgets

# Directory inclusion helps in many ways

- Represents brand in directory (if somebody searches for your brand they will find something)
- Creates links to your widget that would otherwise not exist
- Often directories have an “Author page” that links to the authors website.

Most large budget widget campaigns do not even consider taking the step of submitting to directories.

- I think this is stupid
- Some of the platforms with the largest user bases have closed profiles, some have open profiles
- I should explain that

# Closed Profiles

- A closed profile is a homepage or personalized page that only the owner can see.
  - This means that there is no viral spread.
  - iGoogle is a closed profile system.
- iGoogle is used by tens of millions of users
  - The main way that users get gadgets on systems with closed profiles are directories.

# Open Profiles

- Open profiles are systems in which other people than the owner can look at their friends profile
  - Facebook and MySpace have open profiles
- The main way widgets spread in these systems are viral (someone sees an app they like on a friends profile and they get the app for themselves)

# SEO

Search Engine Optimization

# Widget spread can affect SEO effort positively or negatively

- SEO should not be your one and only goal, your goal should be the pleasing the user
- When it comes to links within widget, always err on the side of caution.

# How widgets can affect SEO positively

- Link and content generation is made by users instead of you. Yum.
- Number of links available? - unlimited

# How widgets can affect SEO negatively

- Spammy links in widgets are currently a target for Google.
- When making decisions on links, always err on the side of caution
  - The Matt thing

# The Google webmaster guidelines

- A set of suggested practices that Google has provided to webmasters.
- The head of the Google “Spam team” is named Matt Cutts and yesterday an interview was posted where he spoke specifically about widgets.
  - He stated that relevant and transparent links were deemed fine by Google and that the main concern is the user.
- are the links hidden? Is the image clickable or are the links are buried in some NoScript or something like that? If so, that’s not going to be as good for users. How relevant is a widget? A good example of a relevant widget is someone had an Ubuntu widget that counted how many days until Ubuntu was released; it was just a daily countdown, and the link went to Ubuntu.com

# Widgets do not need to depend on SEO

- Widgets, social or otherwise are not a “magic bullet” that end your SEO woes.
- Many widgets links do not even carry Pagerank “juice” because they are shown in an iframe.
- Social media is really changing the way users interact with brands, and perhaps more importantly it is changing how users are being *introduced* to brands.
- Useful widgets create traffic and awareness to your brand, and find ways to interact with your users.