If you build it, that doesn’t necessarily mean they will come. First they have to know it’s there. So, once you have published your site to your hosting provider, it’s time to get the word out about it. This chapter will give you some ideas for publicizing your site.

There is a difference between publishing and publicizing. Publishing merely puts your site on a Web server so that folks can open it in their browsers. Publicizing is the art (or science, depending on your taste) of getting people to visit your Web site.

There are a variety of ways to let Web citizens know your site is there. Each has its strong and weak points, and each only reaches a certain type of potential visitor. You should use as many ways as you can think of. Diversify your publicity efforts so that you capture as many different types of people as possible.
Because business sites have a vested interest in getting as many people to visit as possible, a good chunk of the advice in this chapter is especially geared toward business sites. But most of it is applicable to spreading the word about your site no matter what kind it is.

**e-mail**

The simplest way to get started is to e-mail everyone you know to announce that your site is launched and is now available for browsing. Make the e-mail short and sweet and be sure to include your full URL, including the `http://` part. Most e-mail programs, such as fairly recent versions of Eudora and Outlook Express, recognize URLs and display them as links in the e-mail. Your recipients click your URL, their browsers start up, and they’re off to check out your site.

**a typical announcement**

Here is an example of a typical e-mail you might send announcing the launch of a business Web site.

Dear friend,

We are pleased to announce the launch of the Irish Tin Whistles By Mail Web site.

Visit [http://www.yourhostingprovider.com/yourdirectory/](http://www.yourhostingprovider.com/yourdirectory/) to find out about the whistles we have for sale, how to play the tin whistle, how we ship them to you, and even where to find music to play.

Feel free to add to the feedback form and let us know what you think, how the site can be improved, what’s missing, or anything else that comes to mind. Or e-mail us at irishtinwhistles@ireland.com with your comments.

Thanks,

Corbin Collins
**don't spam**

If it’s a business selling products and services that you’re promoting, you need to be careful with e-mail. You have probably heard of *spam*. If you use e-mail, you have no doubt been a victim of spam. Spam is the junk e-mail equivalent of telemarketing, except the annoyance happens when you check your e-mail instead of when you’re sitting down for dinner. Spam is unsolicited e-mail sent for commercial purposes, and it is frowned on and discouraged everywhere. Moreover, sending spam is probably the fastest way to get hate mail that was ever devised.

But don’t worry. There are other, more useful and acceptable ways of getting the word out about your business site. Read on.

**trellix member sites directory**

Adding your new site to the Trellix Member Sites Directory is one great way to announce your site to the Web. The Directory contains a list of thousands of Web sites grouped in dozens of subject categories, all created with Trellix Web. It’s the heart of the Trellix Web community.

Point your browser at cafe.trellix.com. You have to register in order to add your site. If you haven’t registered yet, you should. Once you’ve registered, you can log in using the user name and password provided during the sign-up process. Once you’ve logged in, you can click the Add Site link to start adding your Web site to the Directory. You’ll have to fill in a short form online. After you fill in the form, your site will be added to the Directory, and other visitors to the Trellix Cafe will be able to find your site under the category you selected. Check back after a day or two to make sure your site appears in the listings.

**search engines**

If you want to find something on the Web, how do you find it? You probably go to a search engine such as Yahoo, Lycos, Excite, or AltaVista, type in a few words related to what you’re looking for, and scroll through the list of results from the engine’s index to find one that sounds about right. You now have a Web
site, and naturally you want your site to pop up in these search engine results when other people type in words that are relevant to your site. And not just appear—you want your site to appear in the top ten, because most people find what they are looking for in the top ten results and do not search further.

How do you get your site to be in the top ten results? The short answer is you probably can’t, not at first anyway. Which should tell you that you will be looking beyond search engines as you promote your site. Nevertheless, you should submit your site to the various search engines so that it gets listed and so it does appear in the results of relevant searches.

There are books and Web sites entirely devoted to the subject of improving your ranking in search engine results, which has become both an art and a science. Since you are using Trellix Web, chances are you are not a huge outfit willing to dedicate loads of cash to manipulating the results of search engines. You’d probably be happy just to get your site listed.

You can do a few simple things to get your site listed as well as it can be, with minimal effort. But first you have to understand the basics of how search engines work.

**how search engines work**

Search engines are Web sites that use special software called spiders to run around the Web collecting information about Web sites. A spider usually finds Web sites from the links contained in other Web sites that it has already found. When a spider finds a new site, it visits all the links on the site and collects information about it, taking note of what kind of site it is, what topics seem to be important on its pages, and so on. It sends that information to the search engine, which adds the site (or at least a few of its most important pages) to its large index of Web sites.

Meanwhile, across the Web when someone types in a sufficiently relevant series of words, the search engine offers up the new site with the site’s name and a short description in a list of links along with similar sites. But don’t wait for search engines to find your site. It’s much faster to submit your site to them. Conveniently, almost all search engines provide a link to a form that you can use to formally submit your site for consideration.
submitting your site to search engines

First, you have to decide which page you want to submit, because that will be the first page to appear when someone chooses your site from a search engine listing. If your site is devoted to your business or organization, you almost certainly want to submit your home page.

On the other hand, there may be one area of your Web site that would be especially interesting to Web surfers. For example, you may have a general site that tells people about your life, but if you have a great page devoted to your collection of rare record albums, that might be the page to submit. If you want more than one page indexed from your site, you should submit each page separately.

adding your keywords and site description

A search engine looks for keywords when deciding where to place a page in its listings. You can add the keywords you think your visitors would use when trying to find your site, and you can add the description that will appear when your site pops up on the search engine as well. For example, maybe your site is devoted to a trip to San Francisco and contains information potential visitors to that city would find useful. For the page you submit, you might add the keywords san francisco, travel tips, family vacation, trip highlights, northern california, and perhaps the name of your hotel and some neighborhoods that you describe in your site.

note

keywords shouldn’t travel alone

It’s a good idea to put keywords in groups of two or more words, because one-word keywords will easily get lost in the avalanche of other sites using those same one-word keywords. Of course, if one or more of your keywords make sense only as single words, by all means add them as such. But wherever possible, two or more words in combination focus a search much better.
Search engines also look for the presence of a *summary*, a site description that neatly and pithily describes the site. This summary is usually just a sentence or two, and it is what the search engine returns to the Web surfer along with the link to the site.

When preparing your summary, just think about what you want visitors to read when your link appears in the list of links returned by the search engine. If you don’t add a summary, the search engine may simply use the first text it finds in the page itself, or worse, concoct one of its own based on different factors, depending on the search engine. You should control your site’s keywords and summary, and Trellix Web makes it easy to do that.

You add your keywords and summary description to your page in the Page Properties dialog box. To do so, follow these steps:

1. Make sure your Trellix Web file is open.
2. Right-click the page icon in the map for the page you want to submit and choose Properties, or in the menu bar choose Edit > Properties > Page. The Page Properties dialog box appears (figure 6-1).

![figure 6-1](a relatively empty page properties dialog box)
3. Type your site description in the Summary box. It can stretch beyond the boundaries of the box, but that doesn’t mean you should make it super long. One to three sentences describing the nature of the page should get your point across.

4. Type your keyword combinations, separated by commas and spaces, in the Keywords box. Three to five pairs of words should do nicely. Keep the words in lowercase (figure 6-2).

![Figure 6-2 adding a summary and keywords](image)

5. Publish your site again to your hosting provider to get the new version up on the Web.
note

behind the scenes with metatags

Technically, when you add keywords and a summary you are, in HTML-ese, adding metatags. Metatags are HTML elements that only appear in the heading of the HTML of your page. The visitor never sees the contents of a metatag, but search engines sure do. Trellix Web shields you from such HTML code—to you, it's just the Page Properties dialog box. But you may hear folks talking about metatags, and now you can tell them that your site has them.

noting the address of your web page

After you publish the page you want to submit to a search engine—including its keywords and summary—you should write down the exact Web address (URL) for the page. To make one hundred percent sure that you have the right address, open the page in your browser and look in the Address bar near the top of your screen. There you will find the URL for your page. Write down every bit of it, as the search engine will need it.

Or, even better, select the URL in the Address bar in your browser by clicking and dragging through it. Right-click the selection and choose Copy (or press Ctrl+C). Now the address is stored in the Windows clipboard, and you can paste it wherever you want.

the top ten search engines

Virtually every search engine provides a way to add your URL to its listing. In some cases, it's automatic: you submit it, and in a few days to a few weeks they list it. In other cases, such as Yahoo, your submission must pass an old-fashioned editorial filter—a human must look it over and approve it for quality and relevance before it gets listed.

You have to go through the submission process separately for each search engine. Sure, there are services that will submit your site to numerous search engines for you, for a price (www.submit-it.com is one). But I’m guessing you would rather save the money and do it yourself. So, it’s a matter of choosing and visiting the search engines you want to list your Web page.
There are hundreds of search engines out there. You should at least concentrate on the top ten or so, but by all means go beyond those if you want. The search engines I currently consider to be the top ten appear in alphabetical order in table 6-1.

**table 6-1  top ten search engines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>engine</th>
<th>web address</th>
<th>description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOL Search</td>
<td>search.aol.com</td>
<td>Very popular with AOL’s many millions of users. It lets them search AOL and the rest of the Web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AltaVista</td>
<td><a href="http://www.altavista.com">www.altavista.com</a></td>
<td>One of the oldest and largest indexes of sites on the Web. Popular with serious researchers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go</td>
<td><a href="http://www.go.com">www.go.com</a></td>
<td>Formerly known as Infoseek, Go is still a popular and powerful engine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td><a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a></td>
<td>A large index that lists the most popular Web sites higher in its rankings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HotBot</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hotbot.com">www.hotbot.com</a></td>
<td>A very large and powerful index, now owned by Lycos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lycos</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lycos.com">www.lycos.com</a></td>
<td>One of the older and larger search engines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSN Search</td>
<td>search.msn.com</td>
<td>Very popular with MSN users. Run by Microsoft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Directory</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dmoz.org">www.dmoz.org</a></td>
<td>Run by Netscape, Open Directory uses volunteers to index sites. Its listings are often used by the other engines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahoo</td>
<td><a href="http://www.yahoo.com">www.yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>The most popular search engine of all. Yahoo makes extensive use of human editorial filters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
filling in the search engine submission forms

Make sure you’ve added your keywords and summary description to the page you want to submit. Go to a search engine’s home page in your browser and look for a link that says something like “Submit URL” or “Add URL” or “Add your site.” A form will appear. Each engine works differently, but most ask for the name of the page, an e-mail address, and the URL for the page you want indexed. Go through this process for each page and for each search engine. If the page you want indexed has links to sub-pages, just submit the one page.

Be patient. It may take from several days up to two or three weeks for your page to be indexed. Yahoo takes the longest. Check back every once in a while and search for your page’s title or for one of your pairs of keywords. If your site still doesn’t appear after three weeks, resubmit it.

the problem with frames and the way around it

When you publish your Trellix Web site, it gets converted into HTML and placed on the hosting provider’s server. By default, Trellix Web uses frames when it converts your site to HTML. Most search engines have a problem dealing with frames. If you’ve used the keywords and description metatags, you should be fine with the search engines you submit your site to. The engines will use those to index and rank your site. But bear in mind that when spiders from other engines crawling the Web find your site on their own, they may not index it properly due to the frames.

You can choose to publish your site without frames, and Trellix Web will use tables instead of frames to lay out your Web site. To do that, follow these steps:

2. Click the Options button. The Web Site Options dialog box appears.
3. In the Site Navigation tab, click the Use HTML Frames box to remove the check mark (figure 6-3) and click OK.
4. Be sure to preview your site in a browser to see if switching from frames to no frames has affected your text or images.
You can now publish your site as usual, but this time Trellix Web won’t use frames in the HTML it generates, which will make it easier to index your site for any search engine that finds your site using spiders.

other search engine stuff

As I said, there are hundreds of search engines. Many are specialty search engines that focus on particular subjects or types of information. Some are announcement sites that collect new URLs, and from there your URL can be picked up elsewhere. Have a look at Danny Sullivan’s Search Engine Watch Web site, located at www.searchenginewatch.com. The site contains a wealth of information on search engines, including listings of many specialty engines and links to other search engine information sites.

beyond search engines

People tend to use search engines to find new sites, but there are other ways of finding Web sites that can be just as fast and effective. You want to create as many ways of finding your site as possible. Here I describe a few of these ways.
word of mouth

In the real world, they say word of mouth is the best form of advertising, and that may hold true on the Web, too. Tell your friends and family about your site, and ask them to tell others. Include a comments form or guestbook (see Chapter 7 for the Guestbook and other Web Gems) and an e-mail contact link on your site, and encourage feedback and referrals from people who visit your site. Remember, Yahoo became popular through word of mouth.

tip

add your url to your e-mail signature

Most e-mail programs offer a feature called a signature. A signature is a little sign-off piece you can have automatically attached to every e-mail you send. Signatures often contain your name, title, as much contact information as you are comfortable sending out in e-mails, and sometimes a thought-provoking little quote or word of wisdom. If you use a signature, you should definitely add your URL to it. You’ll be surprised how many people who like one of your e-mails will click the link and visit your site.

traditional advertising

Put your URL in any advertisements you place in classified listings, fliers, brochures. Print your URL on your business card. Print buttons or bumper stickers featuring your URL. If you want to spend some money, place quarter page ads in newspapers. Many cities have a free, alternative paper, such as Chicago’s Reader and San Francisco’s Guardian. These publications often have huge circulation and offer reasonable advertising rates. Television time is enormously expensive, but consider placing a radio ad in your local market. Radio advertising has proven to be a very effective traditional media tool for Web sites.
online media

Try e-mailing the editors of any online publications that touch your site’s subject area. If your site is devoted to your iguana shop, see if there are any lizard or reptile magazines on the Web by searching Yahoo or some other search engine. Many online publications review Web sites, and yours could be one of them.

newsgroups and e-mail lists

Newsgroups, also known as Usenet newsgroups, are electronic bulletin boards catering to almost any interest you can think of. There are more than 20,000 newsgroups on the Internet, devoted to everything from dog breeds to windsurfing to the idea that the earth should be entirely paved. Usenet newsgroups are one of the oldest information services on the Internet, and are a rich source for pinpointing folks who share a very specific interest—the topic of your Web site almost certainly has at least one newsgroup devoted to it. It’s a good idea to at least read and stay up on these groups if you are interested in what your customers are talking about.

Your Internet Service Provider (ISP) probably offers newsgroups through its news server. Check your ISP’s home page or those printed sign-up and guidebooks your ISP sent you that you may have shoved in a drawer for anything related to Usenet news. Or simply check by trying it in your browser. In the Address bar, type news:news.yourisp.com (obviously, substitute your ISP’s URL). If you are using Internet Explorer 4 or later, or Netscape Communicator 4 or later, you will probably be prompted to configure your news server. You may have to contact your ISP’s support line for help with this. Once it’s configured, you access newsgroups through a program such as Outlook Express or a third-party newsreader program (check out www.tucows.com for a huge assortment of downloadable newsreading programs).

If you follow a newsgroup devoted to your site’s topic, you will quickly see how intense newsgroup culture can be. Messages placed on the newsgroup are called postings. You can post to newsgroups, too, and it’s customary to include your URL at the bottom of your post (see earlier sidebar on signatures, which work in newsreaders as well). But never, ever, ever intrude on a newsgroup you are unfamiliar with. Never post direct advertisements for your site, or you will
receive hate mail known as *flames*. You have to be coy and patient. If someone asks a question of the group, and you know the answer, then post your answer and let your URL speak for itself in your signature.

You can learn more about newsgroups and even access them on the Web using Deja News (*www.deja.com*). You can search by subject to find any newsgroups related to your site’s topic. Just treat newsgroups very carefully. You can do yourself way more harm than good by traipsing into a groups and crowing about your new site. People who read newsgroups do so because they are supposed to be free from advertising and allow for rich interchanges of opinions and other information. If you spoil the fun, you can forget about gaining any customers from that newsgroup.

E-mail lists are similar to newsgroups, but are distributed through e-mail. Check out *www.listbot.com* and *www.liszt.com* for more information on finding and joining e-mail lists.

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**web rings, link exchanges, banner ads, and affiliate programs**

*Web rings* are collections of Web sites with similar tastes, interests, or visitors. Web rings provide an easy way to link from one site to another, and have been shown to increase traffic for the sites included. To find a Web ring that you might want to join, add the words *web ring* to a search as you are looking for sites similar to yours.

Links from other sites are one of the best ways you can lure people to yours. E-mail Web sites that are similar to yours and offer to add a link to them on your site in exchange for a link to you on theirs. You’d be surprised—even competitors will sometimes agree to this, since it may bring in more visitors to their sites.

Check out the Trellix Web Clicks Web Gem to see how you can easily join a banner exchange. There are also services that can help you find and organize link exchanges and banner advertising. One of them is the LinkExchange Banner Network, located at *adnetwork.bccentral.com*. 
Affiliate programs are also a good way to lure visitors to your site. Chapter 7 discusses the various affiliate Web Gems that come with Trellix Web. With affiliates, you can make money by referring visitors to other sites. With an affiliate program, you make a percentage on any purchase a customer makes after being referred by you.

You can also start your own affiliate program if you are so inclined, so that others refer customers to you and you pay them a percentage for the favor. Have a look at ClickTrade’s site at clicktrade.bcentral.com, a service that helps connect affiliates.

This chapter introduced you to some methods of publicizing your site. You now know how to add your site to the Trellix Member Directory at the Trellix Cafe, so that other Trellix Web users can find your site and see what you’ve done. You learned about search engines and how you can increase control over how your site is indexed and the information the search engines display to visitors. You found out a bit about the opportunities offered by newsgroups and e-mail lists, and you learned about some services to help you become part of link exchanges, banner ad networks, and affiliate systems.

The past six chapters provided you with the know-how to build your own Web site. Now that you have the basics down, Chapter 7 will show you how to make that Web site sparkle. Web Gems, Trellix Web’s unique system of easy-to-use Web site building blocks, can make for some eye-opening additions to your site.