

Actinic search engine optimisation features

Actinic has a well-deserved reputation for creating sites that deliver good search engine rankings out of the box, and are easy to optimise further. Our products have been designed from the ground up with the requirements of search engines in mind. This white paper describes the features of an Actinic site that are important from a search engine perspective, and how to make use of them.

1. Static HTML pages

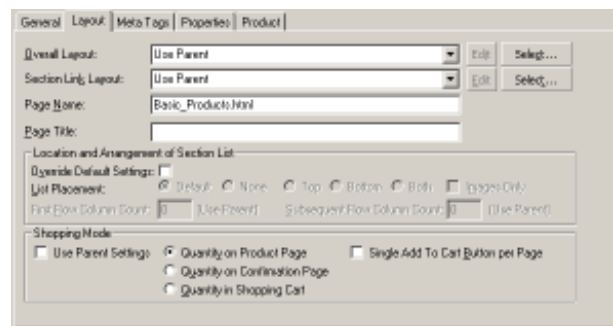
All Actinic products generate static HTML pages on the web site, so that all of the catalogue content is easily picked up by any search engine. Another advantage is that they do not require the use of frames – though frames are supported if required.

All other things being equal, sites built with Actinic tend to perform better out of the box than database-based sites and most competing solutions. They do not require specialist techniques such as doorway pages, which are unpopular with search engines, and in worst case may result in a site being blacklisted.

2. Page Titles

The Actinic catalogue tree is organised into a hierarchy of sections and subsections. By default the section/subsection name becomes the name of the HTML page, and the HTML page name becomes the page title.

There is a natural tendency for users to select phrases for section names that are also appropriate for page titles, eg. 'Inkjet cartridges', 'Tennis shoes'. So the default set-up generally works well from the point of view of search engine optimisation. But if required, both the page name and the page title can be changed manually through a dialog box without affecting the section name.

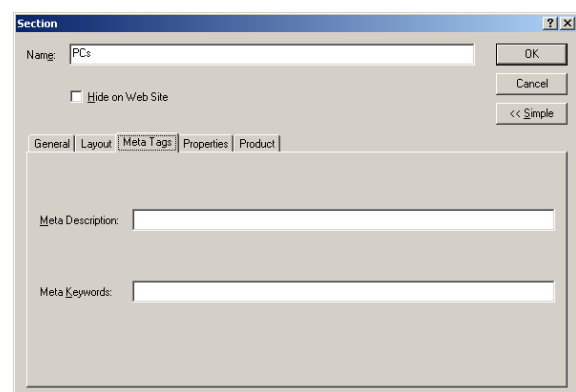


3. Static URLs

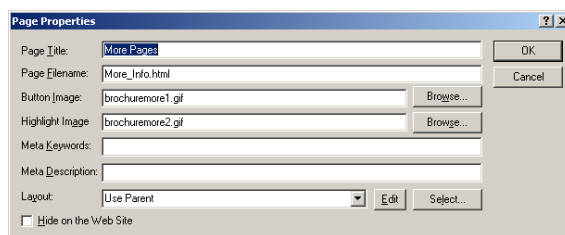
Although by default the software uses the section name as the initial page name, if a section name is changed later, the original page name is retained. This means that existing search engine links and shoppers' browser bookmarks remain valid.

4. Meta tags and keywords

Actinic provides the facility for users to create separate Meta description and keyword tags for each product page by double-clicking on the page icon in the catalogue tree.



The software also provides a content-management feature supporting the creation of 'brochure' pages outside the product catalogue for additional information, special offers etc. The Meta tags for these pages can also be edited, by double-clicking on the page in the catalogue tree:



5. Body text

The primary elements making up the body text of an Actinic page are:

- Section names and descriptions (top section pages)
- Product names, descriptions and prices (product pages)
- Text fragments (brochure pages)

All of these are fully editable by the user. Section and product descriptions and text fragments can include HTML code, as described under 'Using HTML in Actinic' in the Getting Started Guide provided with all Actinic products.

6. Link text

The software automatically creates and maintains navigation links throughout the catalogue. As well as making the site easy to navigate and easy for search engines to index, these also assist with search engine optimisation. Relevant links include:

- Text links to section and product pages using section names
- Automatically generated, editable Alt tags for navigation buttons
- Textual breadcrumb trail inserted by default at the page head and foot
- Editable text links to optional pop-up windows for additional information and/or images

7. Alt tags

Where the merchant provides an image of a product in the catalogue, the software automatically creates an Alt tag for the image using the product name.

8. Web links

Actinic provides the ability to create additional information pages containing an unlimited number of text fragments, which can include hyperlinks. This makes it easy to set up a links page to support a link exchange arrangement for search engine optimisation purposes.

A referrer script is bundled with the software to enable the creation and maintenance of a referral program. This is an invaluable way of building up a community of pages linking to your site, and so increasing your rankings in search engines that make use of this information, notably Google. Use of the script is described under 'Using the Referrer Perl Script' in the Advanced User Guide.

9. Headers

For users who wish to add HTML header tags, full access to the HTML templates is provided through the Template Manager, or using Dreamweaver extensions (Actinic Developer) only. The tags must be placed outside the or tags that control the Actinic site styles.

10. Site Map

A site map will help search engines to find all the pages on your site and make sure they are all indexed, and can also help your customers find their way around. Actinic automatically generates and uploads a site map page.