

## Guidelines for making websites Google Custom Search-friendly

*The first, and most important step, is to make sure your web pages comply with Google's guidelines.*

Google has several useful documents on its website to help web developers make sure their sites are easy for Google to index.

- Webmaster Guidelines  
<http://support.google.com/webmasters/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=35769>
- Google-friendly sites  
<http://support.google.com/webmasters/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=40349>
- Webmaster Tools  
<http://support.google.com/webmasters/?hl=en>

*Second, in order for content to be included in a Google Custom Search Engine (GSE), it must be placed in a discrete section of your website.*

For example, if the webpages with the content you want to include are named something like content01.html, it should be placed in a separate directory like this:  
`http://www.bigimportantwebsite.org/relevantcontent/`

Viewing that content page on this hypothetical website would show the following in your web browser's address bar:

`http://www.bigimportantwebsite.org/relevantcontent/content01.html`

Keeping all of the content you want included in discrete directories makes it easy to tell Google you want to include only content from that directory of the website in your GSE.

*It is possible for Google to include content from a web accessible database. Check the links above for the details.*

### Things to avoid

*Don't place any irrelevant content in the same location as the content you want to include in a GSE.*

If you place irrelevant pages or directories in the same location as relevant content it is not possible to limit the GSE to the desired content.

The following examples would not allow for the irrelevant content to be excluded.

`http://www.bigimportantwebsite.org/relevantcontent/irrelevantcontent01.html`

`http://www.bigimportantwebsite.org/relevantcontent/irrelevantcontent/`

*Don't place all of your content in the root of a website.*

`http://www.bigimportantwebsite.org/relevantcontent01.html`

cannot be filtered from:

`http://www.bigimportantwebsite.org/irrelevantcontent01.html`

Questions or comments may be directed to Washington State Department of Transportation Reference Librarian Michel Wendt. [wendtm@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:wendtm@wsdot.wa.gov)