



Blizzard Internet Marketing, Inc.

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SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION: VIDEO AND IMAGES a how-to guide

By Mary Bowling

Image Search and Video Search are two of the fastest growing verticals on the Internet. Learn what you can do so your images and videos are found when relevant searches are made.

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Why is Optimizing Images and Videos Important?

Image Search and Video Search are two of the fastest growing verticals on the web.

Watching videos on the web is no longer a novelty. Instead, it has rapidly become a mainstream online activity. According to [comScore](#) Inc., a leading provider of information about the Internet, in March 2007, more than 70% of Internet users viewed videos online and more than 7 billion videos were streamed to personal computers in the United States. Google sites, which include the most popular video sharing website, YouTube, led the pack with 1.2 billion videos watched in March.

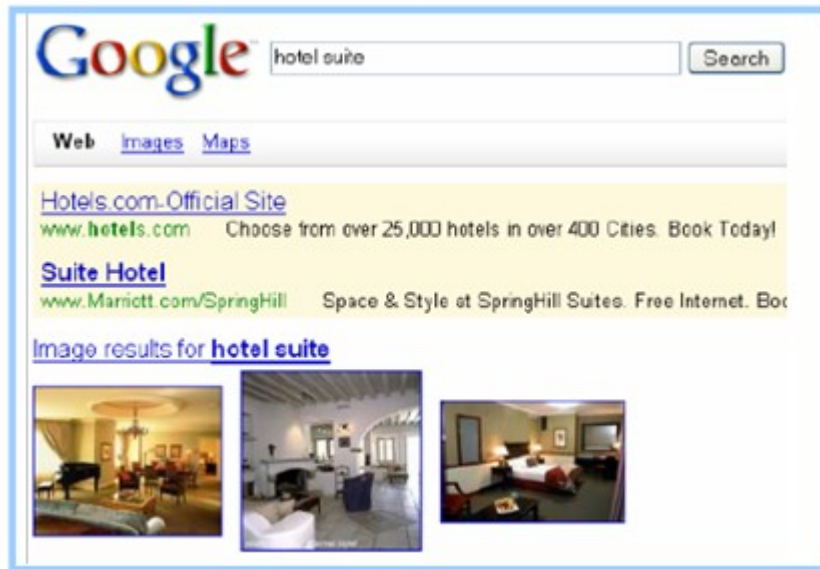


With Google's new Universal Search, you can't win if you don't play.

With Google's newly implemented Universal Search, relevant image and video results are becoming fully integrated into the Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) along with results from Maps(Local), Base, News, Books, etc. Consequentially, if you have relevant images and/or videos on your site, you have more opportunities to have results from your site rank high **IF** the Search Engines know about them. The concept is akin to buying multiple lottery tickets instead of just one.

Also, like the lottery, "you can't win if you don't play". If you don't optimize your images and videos, chances are they will not rank well in either image searches or video searches **or** in the new Universal Search.

For a recent Universal Search for *hotel suite*, image results appeared at the top of the SERPs:



And a Universal Search for *hotel room*, showed a YouTube video in spot No. 5:



Most websites have many images, graphics and videos.

Your images about people, places, products, processes, services, and brands help you to deliver your important messages online. Think about how you can use these to attract additional visitors to your website, as well.

For most websites, image searches rarely convert. However, this is rapidly changing. Wise marketers continually invent new ways to use this to their advantage, and searchers quickly learn how to use media searches to find what they are looking for and when it is appropriate to do so. The synergy generated by more people searching for media online as more images and videos are displayed in the results will redefine search intent and methodology.

Travel websites, in particular, have many appealing images and videos.

Here at Blizzard Internet Marketing Inc., we specialize in travel and tourism websites. These sites are typically image rich, with extensive use of graphics, photos and videos, to not only give information, but more importantly, to appeal emotionally to visitors. If a potential guest can imagine themselves in the settings they see on your pages, they are drawn to experiencing for themselves what you have to offer.

The owner of this website, for example, would likely be thrilled to have these images displayed in the results for a search for [Emerald Isle NC Real Estate](#).



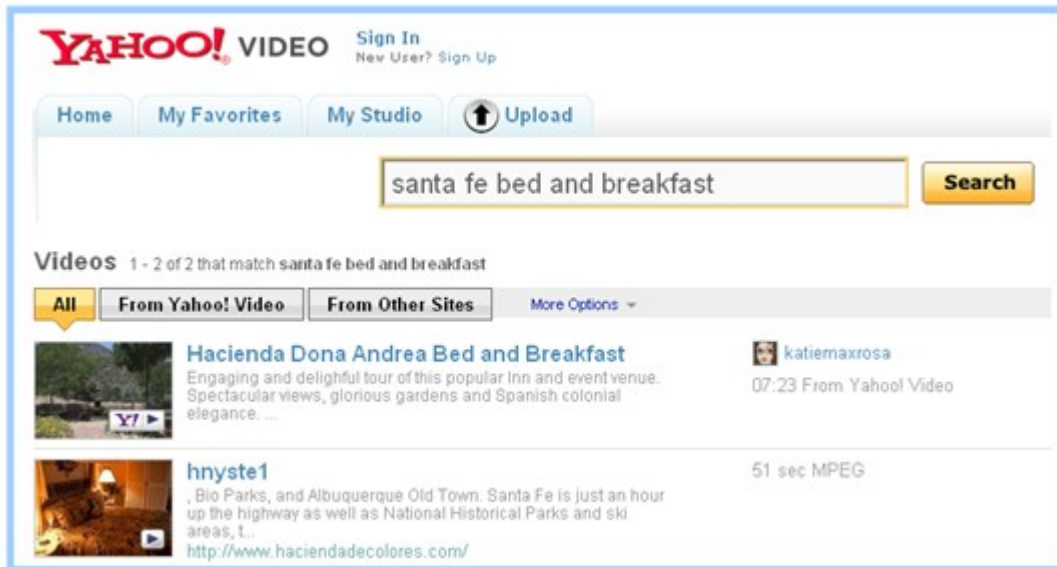
You can gain a jump on your competition.

Optimized images and videos are still rare on the web. The competition for rankings for many well searched terms is weak or sparse. By making the effort to optimize your media, you have an opportunity to gain an edge on your competition.

A recent search in Google Video for *Saugatuck Michigan vacation*, for example, returned no results, so it would be very easy to create and optimize a video to rank for this term while the competition snoozes.



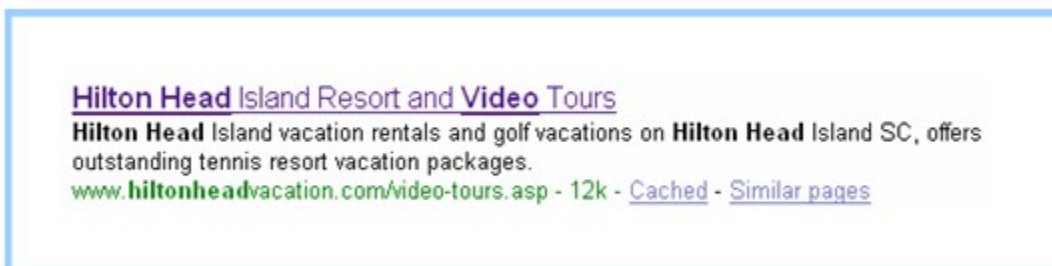
And a Yahoo! Video search for "Santa Fe bed and breakfast" returned only the two results shown below.



Interesting photos and videos present many opportunities for hospitality industry websites. However, you must take the proper steps if you want yours to be found when relevant searches are made.



The result below showed at Number 2 for a Google Universal Search for *Hilton Head video*. Consequently, many more searchers will visit this website and look at this vacation rental company's videos than will see the videos made by his competitors who appear further down on the page.



How Can You Optimize Your Images and Videos?

Tell the search engines what you want them to know.

The only things the search engines know about media files is what we tell them in text form. They cannot see that a photo is an image of a snowboarder at Sunlight Mountain Resort. However, if we tell them that's what the photo is about, they believe us. (Strides are being made in recognizing common objects, such as *faces*, in photos, but the technology has not yet matured.)

Therefore, the reality isn't to optimize your media, per se, but to optimize all of the text that can be associated with your media.

The more of the steps you follow below, the better optimized your image or video will be. (I'll refer to graphics, photos and videos as images in this section to keep things from becoming too wordy.)

Give the image a descriptive, keyword rich file name.

It doesn't matter what type of image it is (jpeg, gif, etc.), but give it a file name that accurately describes the photo and contains a good search phrase. Use dashes to separate the words in the file name. For example, if you're a high-end hotel in Manhattan, *luxury-manhattan-hotel-suite.jpg* is a better name than *image52.jpg*, "hyattimage52.jpg", *roosevelt-suite.jpg*, *luxury-suite.jpg* or even *nyc-suite.jpg* because it has the best chance of appearing in the results for a search targeted directly towards what you are selling.

Give the image a keyword rich title attribute.

Some image types, like .gif, enable you to encapsulate meta text about the image within html and save it with the image. Approach this the same way as an alt tag and add a short image description attribute that supports the title. You can also use bold or strong HTML tags when enclosing titles and descriptions to give them extra weight with the Search Engines.

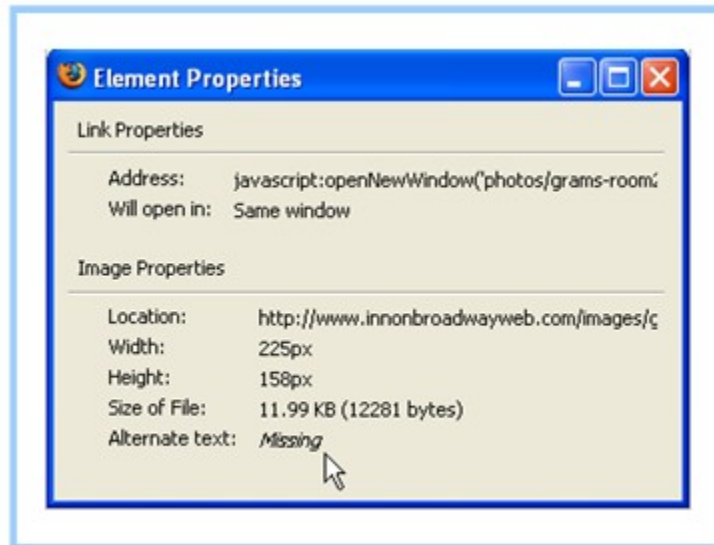
Use keywords in the URL of the page, where appropriate.

There is currently a slight benefit in ranking when good keywords are used in the URL of a page. If the most important things on your page are the images it contains, then give the SEs clues in the page name. Example:

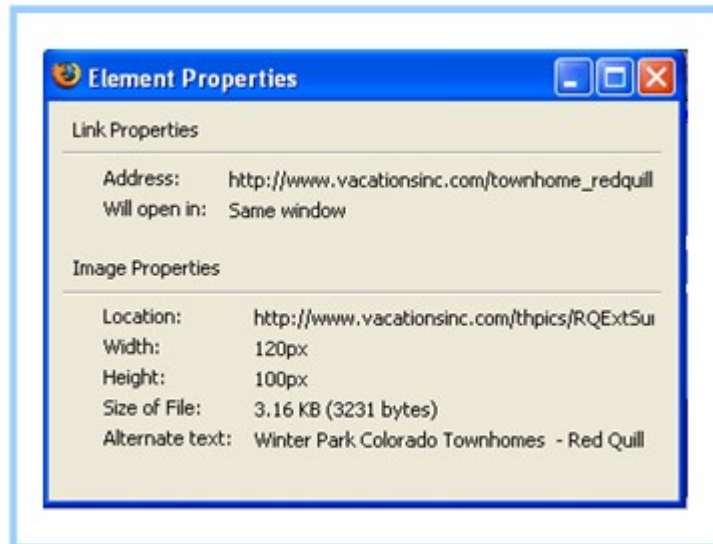
www.yourdomain.com/vail-condo-photos.htm

Give the image a keyword rich alternate text tag.

There's a history on the web of using alternate text tags (aka alt tags) to spam the search engines. This, of course, is not at all what you want to do. Instead, give the SEs (and your human visitors) another clue as to what your image is about. Make the alt tag honest and descriptive, and if there's a way to include a good keyword phrase, by all means, do it.
No alt tag used:



Keyword rich alt tag used:



What an alt tag looks like to a website visitor when their mouse hovers over an image:



Don't use the same keyword phrase over and over again in your alt tags. Instead, use variations of your best keyword terms along with long tail terms that apply to your image. Again, it's important to accurately describe your images. Think about how to describe the photo to someone who couldn't SEE that image – either they have a text-based browser that doesn't show images, or they use special software that reads pages aloud to visually-impaired guests.

Wrap relevant text around your images.

Surrounding your image with text which talks about the same things the image shows, places the image in context and helps to theme it.

These photos are put into context as *Glenwood Springs, Colorado rafting* images by the title of the blog post above them and the text beneath them.

Colorado Rafting - Glenwood Springs Floats

Saturday, January 27th, 2007



Colorado is a premier whitewater rafting destination. The tumbling waters of the Arkansas, Poudre, San Juan, Eagle, Blue, Crystal, Colorado and Roaring Fork Rivers are all stuff campfire stories are made of. But it's not all whitewater.

The photo of Ocean City, New Jersey, below, is wrapped with text that reinforces its theme.

Ocean City...Family Warmth & Simple Pleasures
Booking Fabulous Vacation Rentals at the Jersey Shore,
ONLINE, 24/7.



Ocean City, NJ proclaims it's "America's greatest family resort" - and it sure seems to live up to that billing. With 8 miles of pristine beachfront and 2½ miles of wooden boardwalk, this town has a lot to brag about in Spring, Summer and Fall. Look a little closer, and you'll discover that it's the warmth, humor and creativity that make this town so special. In Ocean City NJ places to stay are in such demand because people are friendly, and the atmosphere is unabashedly wholesome, casual and relaxed.

The town is filled with tasteful two-unit condos built to look like beach homes from the past. Most have shaded decks and awnings for your family to enjoy breakfast at sunrise or cocktails at sunset. You'll feel yourself winding down the day you arrive. You'll be amazed how quiet this "dry" family town (no alcohol sold) is, even on a crowded night. [Search our Ocean City NJ rentals to enjoy this perfect Jersey Shore vacation destination.](#)

Use page titles and meta descriptions to help your cause.

If you have photo gallery pages, or pages where the image(s) is (are) the star, then use appropriate words in the title and description of your pages. Examples: *photo, images, pictures, graphics, logos*, etc. Team these up with your best keyword terms to tell the SEs what the images on the page are about (i.e. *Denver Hotel Photos* or *Jackson Hole Vacation Video*).

You will also benefit from using a common theme on your gallery pages so all of the images can be described with the same set of keywords.

Examples: [Destin Florida Fishing Photos](#) or [Glenwood Springs, Colorado Photographs and Images](#).

Use keywords in the URL of the page, where appropriate.

There is currently a slight benefit in ranking when good keywords are used in the URL of a page. If the most important things on your page are the images it contains, then give the SEs clues in the page name. Example: www.yourdomain.com/vail-condo-photos.htm

Add keyword rich text to image and flash-heavy pages.

If your page is all or almost all images or flash, view the text cache of the page to see what the Search Engines see. Once you view the page like this, you'll see the importance of adding descriptive text.

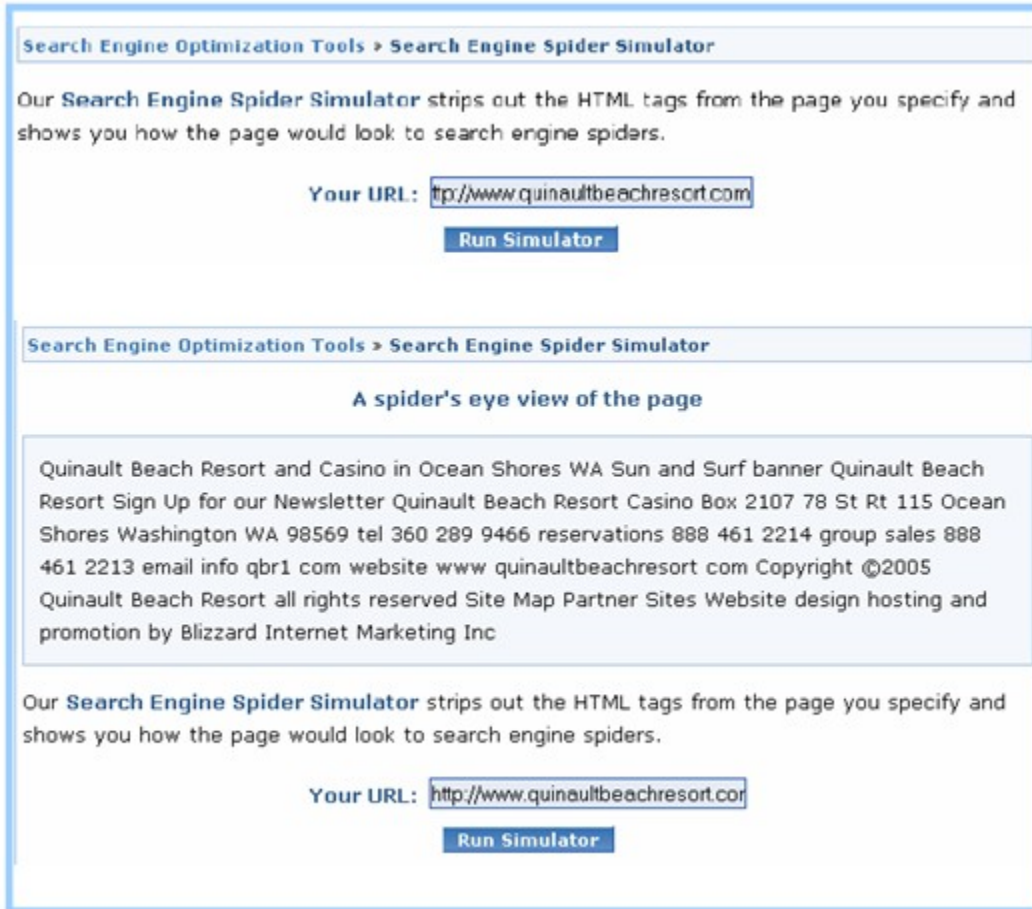
Humans see plenty of text when they view this page. However most of it is contained within images and cannot be read by the Search Engine spiders.



Only the actual text in the footer, seen below, is viewed and indexed by the Search Engines.



Or use the free [Search Engine Spider Simulator Tool](#) on the Webmaster Tool Kit website to see a spider's eye view of any web page.



The screenshot displays the 'Search Engine Spider Simulator' tool interface. At the top, a breadcrumb trail reads 'Search Engine Optimization Tools > Search Engine Spider Simulator'. Below this, a descriptive paragraph states: 'Our Search Engine Spider Simulator strips out the HTML tags from the page you specify and shows you how the page would look to search engine spiders.' A text input field labeled 'Your URL:' contains the address 'http://www.quinaultbeachresort.com'. A blue button labeled 'Run Simulator' is positioned below the input field. The main content area, titled 'A spider's eye view of the page', shows the raw text of the website: 'Quinault Beach Resort and Casino in Ocean Shores WA Sun and Surf banner Quinault Beach Resort Sign Up for our Newsletter Quinault Beach Resort Casino Box 2107 78 St Rt 115 Ocean Shores Washington WA 98569 tel 360 289 9466 reservations 888 461 2214 group sales 888 461 2213 email info qbr1 com website www quinaultbeachresort com Copyright ©2005 Quinault Beach Resort all rights reserved Site Map Partner Sites Website design hosting and promotion by Blizzard Internet Marketing Inc'. At the bottom of the interface, the same descriptive paragraph and input fields are repeated.

Caption your images.

Place keyword rich (but don't overdo it) captions above, below or beside your images. This not only helps visitors learn more about what they are seeing, but gives the SEs more "spider food" which they can use to determine what the image is about.

The captions on this page help humans and spiders understand what the photos are about.



Logically group your images to theme your gallery pages.

As demonstrated by the page above, your website will also benefit from using a common theme on your gallery pages so all of the images can be described with the same set of keywords. Examples: [Yoga Photo Gallery](#), or [Glenwood Springs, Colorado Photographs and Images](#).

Give every video its own page.

Place every video on your website on its own unique page. This allows you to use all of your best optimization tactics (page title, meta description, h tags, inbound link text, etc.) on each page using the best search terms for the video living there.

Use closed captioning on your videos, where possible.

Some video formats support subtitles or closed captioning, which the search engines can read as text. This text helps the search engines to tell what your video is about.

Use video transcripts, where possible.

Some video formats allow text files in the form of transcripts to be attached to them. If this is available to you, take advantage of it.

Use good link text when pointing to images or pages which contain important images.

If you have a page showing photos of Jackson Hole condos, then use *Jackson Hole Condo photos* in links pointing to the page, not just *condo photos* or *see more pictures here*.

Create an image sitemap for your site.

Just as you create a sitemap using good link text to point to the pages of your site, you can have a photo or video sitemap or directory, as well. In this way, you can link to every photo on your site with good anchor text and give your users a quick way to find the images they are interested in seeing without having to blindly comb through your site.

On your image sitemap, give a description of each photo or video, along with its title. Theme it for humans and SEs by putting related photo titles and descriptions together on the page. Placing thumbnails on the sitemap will help your human visitors quickly zero in on the images they are most interested in viewing.

Use a Media RSS feed.

If you have many videos you'd like to get out into the public eye, use [Media RSS](#) (MRSS) to feed their links and descriptions onto the web.

Make certain your image files are accessible to the Search Engines.

Make certain that the images of your website are in a directory that the spiders can access, preferably one named something applicable, such as *denver-hotel-images*. Check to ensure that the robots are not restricted from spidering the image directory contents for any reason, such as a by a robots.txt file.


Submit your images and videos to popular sharing sites and search engines.


Searchers do look for images using regular web searches, and Google Universal Search will encourage more of this type of searching, as more images are integrated into the Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs).

For example, both of these videos appeared in the top 5 results for a recent Google Universal Search for *Gunnison Gorge fly fishing*.

[Fly fishing – Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Wyoming – Bill Dvorak Rafting ...](#)
Gunnison River Gunnison Gorge Colo Black Canyon Fly/Spin Fishing Gold Medal Waters
 Season: May-Oct. 1 day \$410 per day, Maximum 2 people per raft with guide ...
www.dvorakexpeditions.com/fishingtrip.htm - 45k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

[Gunnison River Rafting and Fly Fishing with Colorado's Most ...](#)
 ... of the Black Canyon of the **Gunnison**, Colorado's finest Gold Medal **fly fishing** waters and the thrills of white water rafting in the **Gunnison Gorge**.
www.dvorakexpeditions.com/gunnison.htm - 22k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)
 [[More results from www.dvorakexpeditions.com](#)]

 [Fly Fishing on the Gunnison River, Colorado - Google Video](#)
Fly Fishing on the Gunnison River, Colorado 18 min. **Gunnison ...**
[Watch video](#) - 18min - ★★★★★
video.google.com/videoplay?docid=4865579622621005075

 [Gunnison Gorge Fly Fishing - Google Video](#)
Hiking into the Gunnison Gorge: Rafting, Fly Fishing, Camping ...
[Watch video](#) - 7min - ★★★★★
video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-676055009623407968

People can view videos directly from the Google Universal results pages by using the *Watch video* links in the listings.

Many people also use image/video specific search engines, like [Google Image](#) and [Blinx](#) and [Pixsy](#). Submit to as many image/video specific Search Engines as you can find and don't forget to use Google Webmaster Central to opt into their [enhanced image search](#).

In addition, searchers use social sharing sites, like [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#) and tend to use them over and over again. These sites all have user friendly submission processes and encourage you to post your media files online so that others can view them.

For specific ideas and instructions on using sharing sites, please see the following articles in Blizzard Internet Marketing's Newsletter:

- [Photo Sharing Websites, Part I: Potential Hospitality Uses and Market Size of Photo Sharing Sites](#)
- [Photo Sharing Website Part II: Tips for Creating & Optimizing Your Flickr Account](#)
- [Photo Sharing Websites, Part III: Reviews of the Top Photo Websites](#)
- [Six Video Sharing Web Sites](#)

Each of the photo/video sites has a search function, but most only search within that site, so take the time to submit your images to as many sites as you can. Then, keep an eye out for new sites, as they continually pop up across the web.

Many social and sharing sites allow you to give an image a title and description, but each search engine and social site is different, so use these tips to take advantage of all the available optimization features.

Additional features that can help you include:

- **Tagging**– telling humans and SEs what something is. Examples: *hotel, lodging, accommodations*
- **Geo-tagging** - telling humans and search engines where something is. Example: *manhattan hotel* or the actual latitude and longitude where the photo was taken.
- **Attributes** – another form of tagging in which you place an image in a category or give it a value. Examples: *manhattan hotel suite* and/or *2 bedroom hotel suite*.
- **Grouping** – some sites allow you to put your photos together in logical groups, which you can then give a keyword rich title and description.

Put in as many tags and attributes as you are given space for, but make certain they are relevant - do not use them for black hat purposes.

Conclusion

None of these video and image optimization techniques is a magic bullet and, used alone, may not have much effect. However, when used together, they can go a very long way towards making the Search Engines more aware of the images on your website and what they are about.

You already have great images and videos on your website. Reading this paper has put you ahead of the curve and, hopefully, ahead of your competition - you now know more about image optimization than 99% of the online marketers out there.

So, get to work optimizing your images and videos. Then, they can help you to attract more qualified visitors to your site, solidify your branding and gain an advantage in the Search Engine Results Pages!



[Wiki: Online Marketing for 2007 and Beyond by Trent ...](#)

Trent **Blizzard** is the CEO of **Blizzard Internet** Marketing, Inc ...

[+ Watch video](#) - 13min

video.google.com/videoplay?docid=399807358198950247

About the Author

Mary Bowling is the lead SEO Specialist at Blizzard Internet Marketing, Inc. and is certified in Advanced Search Engine Strategies through Search Engine Workshops. She performs website promotion for hospitality industry clients and researches and develops new products and strategies for the company. Mary has also written a whitepaper on Local Search Engine Marketing, which you can download at http://www.blizzardinternet.com/whitepapers/whitepaper_form.htm and numerous articles on Local Search, Mobile Search, Search Engine Optimization, Blogging and Search Engine Marketing.

About Blizzard Internet Marketing, Inc.

[Blizzard Internet Marketing, Inc.](#) was founded in 1996 by Susan and Trent Blizzard. Today, they specialize in website design, hosting and online promotion for travel and tourism industry clients across North and South America and in the Caribbean.

Named one of the Top 50 Family-Owned Companies in Colorado in 2005, Blizzard's mission continues to focus on delivering high return-on-investment online marketing solutions to the hospitality industry. By specializing in hotel, resort and vacation rental properties, we can increase our depth of research and work to utilize findings for all of our clients.