

Using Squidoo to Increase Your Company's Web Presence



KoMARKETING

ASSOCIATES

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EXTENDING YOUR ONLINE MARKETING CAPABILITIES THROUGH OUR EXPERTISE

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About Squidoo

Squidoo is an online community that allows users to build their own web pages (or “lenses”) and connect with other each other through various means. The site was released from beta in March 2006 and currently has almost 200,000 lenses (as of July 2007).



Each Squidoo user (or 'Lensmaster') can create a page (or 'lens') based on any topic they want. Lenses can include everything from tips and advice to news updates to photos and videos. Modules allow users to integrate Flickr photos, maps, blogs, eBay auctions, YouTube videos, iTunes music and Amazon products. Once a user has registered, they have the ability to communicate with others through comments, groups and forums (www.squidoo.com).

Additional Information About Squidoo

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squidoo>
- <http://www.squidoo.com/squidoo>

Why Use Squidoo?

Squidoo is great for people and businesses that are willing to provide their audience with useful information. A lens can reach thousands of people and help a company create or improve brand awareness.

Advantages of Squidoo

- **Free** – There are no costs associated with Squidoo. In fact, Squidoo will actually reward you for creating a lens that drives traffic and generates revenue (Lensmaster gets 50% of revenue generated from eBay auctions, Google ads, Amazon links and Orbit's links posted on lenses).
- **Easy to Use** – Squidoo was designed knowing that the majority of its users were not going to be proficient in web-design. Sign up is easy and page creation is simple with Squidoo's module-based templates.
- **Statistics** – Unlike the majority of social networking sites out there, Squidoo actually provides statistics about each lens. Lensmasters are able to see traffic stats (including how users arrived and where they arrived from), lens rankings, number of times the lens has been emailed and the number of times it has been marked as a favorite.
- **Brand Awareness/Reputation Management** – A lens providing users with high quality information based around your business can help reinforce or establish a company as an industry leader.
- **New/Broad Audience** – While Squidoo does not report on demographic information, they have said that the site consists of lenses created by users ranging from 12-60 in age. By creating a lens that users will enjoy, a company has the potential to reach thousands of people they may not normally reach through traditional advertising.
- **Search Engine Visibility** – Aside from creating another means for the business to be found, search engines like Google seem to like Squidoo lenses and actually have been showing them in search results.
- **Few Limitations** – Squidoo essentially allows Lensmasters to choose any topic they wish and place whatever content they want on the lens.

Disadvantages of Squidoo

- **Spam**– The biggest (and most recent) issue pertaining to Squidoo has been the influx of spam. As this is characteristic to any site, Squidoo has already begun taken measures to combat this.
- **Link Attribution** – Because this is a separate site, any links pointing to a lens do not lend any weight to the company site (in terms of SEO value).
- **Social Media as a 'Fad'** – With the ever increasing number of social media sites out there the lifespan of sites like Squidoo are unknown. However, Squidoo has been steadily increasing in traffic¹ and is proving to be a useful tool for businesses.

¹ http://alexa.com/data/details/traffic_details?url=squidoo.com

Squidoo Registration & Set-Up

Registering for Squidoo is very easy and takes no more than five minutes. Each user adds their information and is on their way to setting up a lens.

1. Choose the **Sign Up** button in the upper right hand corner of the home page:



2. **Fill in the registration form.** It is important that when you create your profile (especially username), you choose something that you want users to see. For businesses, we recommend using a brand related or product related name. This not only creates brand awareness but improves SEO value for your brand.

A screenshot of the Squidoo registration form, titled "Step 1: Sign Up". The form includes the following fields and options:

- Fields for "First Name" and "Last Name".
- Fields for "Your email" and "Retype your email".
- A field for "Desired Username".
- Fields for "Password (6-8 letters or numbers)" and "Retype password".
- A security image with the word "Woollypig" overlaid, and a field to "Enter security word from the left".
- A checkbox labeled "Yes, I accept the Terms of Service!".
- A section titled "Sign me up for:" with two checkboxes: "Lens of the Day newsletter" and "Squidoo weekly tools and tips".
- A small disclaimer: "By the way, we never ever (did we mention ever?) sell your email address. We don't spam either. Promise."
- A "Continue >>" button at the bottom right.

3. Once you are registered you can **start creating lenses**, voting on other people's lenses and communicating with other Lensmasters.

Setting up a Lens

Choose a topic – When choosing a topic, it is important you choose something that both identifies what you do but also reinforces your brand. Just like choosing keywords for SEO, the more relevant they are, the better you are likely to do in the search engines.



People are talking! Why have a lens? Need help?

Step 1: So, what's your lens about?

People are making lenses on everything from "How to Roast Your Own Coffee Beans" to "Why You Should Hire Me" to "Top 10 Books That Changed My Life." And LOTS more. What's your topic?

My lens is about:

Go to Step 2

Just 3 easy steps to go!

Hi, I'm Kate



I love having my "Funky Chic and Cool Laptop Bags" lens on Squidoo.

It sends some great traffic to my blog, and even helps fund my Valleyschwag habit. (It's also really easy to use and update!)

--Kate Trgovac

1. Choose **what you want to do** with your lens.

Step 2: What do you want to do with your lens?

A few real examples: There's Damon, a teacher who makes learning lenses with his students. And Jane Goodall, supporting her nonprofit organization. And Kimberly, an author promoting her books. And Raj, who wants traffic back to his blog. These are just 4 ways people use Squidoo. How will you?

- I want to get the word out about basketball (easiest option)
- I'm gonna sell basketball stuff and earn \$\$, for me or for charity (money maker!)
- I want to make a list of my favorite things about basketball (most popular)
- I just want to do my own thing.

Back

Go to Step 3

Just 2 easy steps to go!

This place is GREAT!



I first made a lens for the March of Dimes, then joined in the fun and built one on behalf of Rolling Stone about Johnny Cash. What fun!
--DesAngel1100

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2. **Choose a title and URL.** Choosing a title and URL is an important aspect of succeeding with Squidoo. The title should be catchy, yet descriptive and the URL should be something that is easy to remember but also tells the user what the lens is about.

Step 3: Title and URL

Tip #1: Clever lens titles can make great first impressions. Have fun!
Tip #2: When picking your Squidoo URL, just fill in the blank where it says www.squidoo.com/_____. (So, if your lens is about daschunds, try adding the word dashchund to the box. If your lens is about making paper airplanes, add paperairplanes to the box. Sorry, no spaces or weird characters).


Lens Title:

Pick your URL, the link where your lens will live.
(This can't be changed, so choose wisely).
www.squidoo.com/

And pick a category for your lens:

Please rate your lens:
If you're not sure, read up on our [Rating policy](#).
My lens contains:

A little competition never hurt anyone...



Being the Lens of the Day brought a ton of people to the lens (and indirectly to my site). Thanks Squidoo! --[Shoa Gurbar](#)

3. **Choose keywords** for your lens. The keywords entered should both describe the lens and be terms you want to be found for.

Step 4: Help people find your lens

Keywords (or "tags") are really important in helping people find your lens. Think about the search words someone might put into Google when he's looking for info on your topic. Those would be your lens tags.

The best keyword for my lens is:

And 3 more good ones are:
(Optional)

 Enter security word from the left:

Show me what I started!

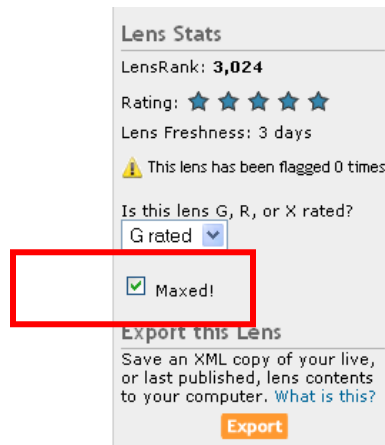
Get discovered!



Squidoo has what I like to call "Google Juice." My websites that have been low ranking for years are now found on the first page of Google!
--Kimberly Dawn Wells

When setting up your profile also make sure you:

- Start your lens un-maxed – ‘Max my Lens’ is a recent feature Squidoo came out with that is intended to help increase traffic and royalties. Essentially, this places additional ads on the lens without changing the content; it will however modify the layout. If you find you want to try and max your lens simply click ‘Max this Lens’ in the dashboard.



- Set profile to allow Squidoo members to contact you (<http://www.squidoo.com/member/profile>)

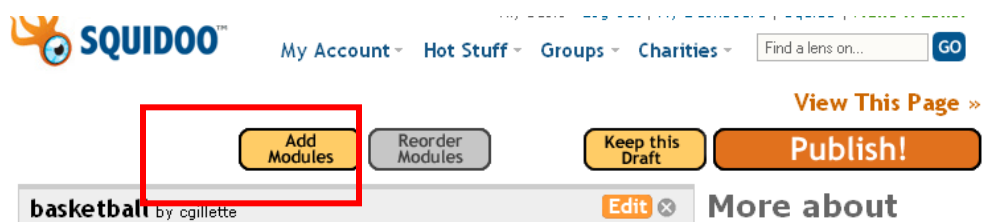


Using Squidoo

Your success on Squidoo is based almost entirely on the content of your lens. Everything from the bio to the introduction to the product feeds or blogs you promote. Below we have outlined some tips on creating and promoting your lens.

Creating a Lens

- **Writing an Introduction** – A good introduction is important in keeping the user interested in your lens. The introduction should tell users the basics of the lens, including what the lens is about and how it is going to help/impact them. It should be interesting, appealing and informative while at the same time establishing brand identity. Be sure to include some of your keywords in the text.
- **Writing a Bio** – Writing your bio can be as basic or as detailed as you like. Some people choose to simply add their company name and website address while others will add a summary of the company, services and include information from articles written by or about you (be aware that only the first 150 characters show up on the lens). The bio should also include a picture (can be a logo).
- **Content** – The content you actually place on the site is important and should be something you feel comfortable discussing and promoting. It is important that the content be as interesting and useful as possible. Here are some tips and ideas about adding content to your lens:
 - **Be Creative** – Your lens can be customized exactly how you want it, so think about what you can do to it to make it as interesting as possible. What would your audience like to see? What kinds of things are they looking for? Make your lens worth reading.
 - **Modules** – The different modules make it easy for you to add various feeds and characteristics to your lens. Choose 'Add Modules' and you can begin.



- **Text/Write** – Add up to 2,500 characters of any text you'd like. This module also allows for graphics.
- **Del.icio.us** – Add your del.icio.us bookmarks to your page
- **Amazon** – Add your favorite Amazon items related to your lens topic and have the chance to make some money.
- **eBay** - List eBay auctions related to your lens topic

- **Link List** – Create a list of the best links related to your topic. This provides your users with additional resources
 - **Text List** – Similar to a link list, this just allows you to add a bulleted numbered list of information
 - **Guestbook** – This module allows users to provide feedback and comments about your lens. (Comments can be deleted in the case of spam or inappropriate content)
 - **YouTube Vids** – Add videos found on YouTube to give your lens a bit of humor
 - **RSS Module** – The RSS module lets you choose which feeds you'd like, how often you want them to update and provides users with up-to-date information.
 - **Google Blog Search** – Set up Google blog and news alerts on your lens to keep fresh content
- **RSS Feed** – We recommend adding a RSS feed to the lens is important as it gives users fresh information and content
 - **Add a Poll** – Want to engage your readers? Add a poll asking them a question pertaining to your topic. Remember to make it an interesting question. (Another idea for a poll is asking readers what else they'd like to see on the lens)
 - **Link to Related Stories/Content** – If you know a few good articles or stories about your topic, add a link to them. Even though you are taking the readers off your page, you are providing them with helpful information which leaves a positive impression on your brand.
 - **Graphics & Videos** – While the lens should not strictly be photos and videos, they can add a bit of fun, humor or interest to the page. Choose a video or image that relates to your company, service, product or industry.
 - Ex: an image of a sample layout or resume.
 - **Break up Content** – Do not write long blocks of text and expect users to stay on your lens. The content should be to the point, informative and interesting.
 - **Add Calls to Action** – Encourage users to take action! Visit your site, tell a friend, download a service, etc.

Promoting a Lens

Once you have created your lens you can begin promoting it. The more traffic you get to your lens and the higher lensrank, the more successful you will be in Squidoo.

- **Google Ads** – If you are currently running a PPC campaign and have a few extra dollars to spend, start targeting your Squidoo page and Squidoo audience. Create a ‘Site Targeted’ campaign in your Google AdWords account. Have an ad group that only houses www.squidoo.com as the selected site to target. Write an ad that specifically appeals to the Squidoo audience (i.e., acknowledge that you are advertising on Squidoo in order to promote your lens). Point your ad to the lens as opposed to a page on the site.

KoMarketing has tested this technique and it can drive significant amounts of traffic to the lens. The primary reason for doing this is to quickly raise the popularity of the lens to get more people to see it, comment on your guestbook, contact you, rate your lens, and ultimately push your lens into Squidoo’s Top 100. Achieving a Top 100 ranking is much more likely to generate an SEO benefit for your lens and/or your main website (if the lens links to the site) because lenses in the Top 100 are more accessible to search engine crawls. Be sure to track your average cost per click closely! Advertising on Squidoo can be expensive on a per click basis, and you want to make sure that you are spending dollars advertising on Squidoo for the right reasons.

- **Add it to Other Social Networks** – Stumble it, tag it, del.icio.us it, do whatever it is you can to get other people visiting your lens.
- **Sent it to Friends** – Show your friends or people in the company the lens. Get them to visit the page and pass it along to their friends.
- **Join Squidoo Groups** – Start interacting with people who are interested in the same things you are. Once you establish a relationship with some of these people you may find they are interested in what you have to say and visit your lens.
- **Start Talking** – Write a blog post about your lens, tell someone else to write a blog post about your lens, whatever you do, just start talking about it. Start connecting with other Squidees.
- **Create Multiple Lenses** – While you want to start focusing on one lens, you don’t want it to be so big it is no longer useful. Create separate lenses for similar topics or products.
- **Keep Your Lens Updated** – By keeping content fresh and updated on a regular basis, you are more likely to get visitors coming back to the site, in turn increasing your brand awareness.
- **Utilize Search Engines** – Create your page with users in mind but also realize that search engines do visit these pages. Optimize for target keywords in both your content and links.
- **Visit Squidoo Sites** – Sites like <http://www.squidooityourself.com/> and <http://www.squidu.com> provide information on what’s new on the site and what you can do to better promote your lens. Go into the forums and introduce yourself. You may find that they are interested in what you have to say and visit your lens.