How do I surface our CONTENTdm collections in Google?

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Applies to

- CONTENTdm

Answer

There are a few things you can do, to ensure your images surface as much possible, in search results. But keeping in mind it relies heavily on people actually searching for specific images, that may not be of high interest to the Google audience.

The primary mechanism to getting indexed by Google is through Sitemaps, which should be created automatically by every CONTENTdm site.

- It is good to double-check that Site-maps are enabled and configured in the Website Configuration Tool on the Analytics & SEO pages
- Google Site Verification is how the site owner can interact with Google Search Console.
- You have to first prove to Google that you "own" the site by getting verified and then you can look at reports generated by Google about your site.
- It is good to request a Google Site verification ID as this gives you more access to the Google Search Console tools. See https://developers.google.com/site-verification/v1/getting_started (This is something you may need to get your IT to do for you.)
- Site verification is not necessary to get indexed, but it can help. Google lets you put in a request to index your site through their site tools (It doesn't mean Google will do it, but at least you get put into a queue).
- If the only thing you do is publish a domain name with a sitemap (e.g. CONTENTdm) then Google will probably still have ways to find you (e.g. because your main library page has a link to your "digital collections"
- The site verification/Search console tools process just boosts your chances of Google paying attention to you.
- As long as sitemaps are being created (weekly) and for the correct domain name, then Google has a way to index the entire repository; this happens automatically with CONTENTdm.
- The collection owners don't really need to do anything to get the most basic level of indexing because our software automatically creates sitemaps.
- If you already have content in your site, you can quickly see what has already been indexed by Google by going to google.com and typing a search for https://xxxxxxxxxxx.contentdm.oclc.org to see if your collections are being found at a basic level.
- Beyond sitemaps, Google provides several Search Console tools to analyze your site, from request indexing, to block certain pages, etc.
- You also can use Google Analytics built right into CONTENTdm to start to see user behaviours, which pages are
popular, what search terms people tend to use, and how long people spend on your site.

- You just need to enable it in the web-tool > Tools > Analytics and request a Google Analytics Tracker ID see: Setting up Google Analytics.

- Another point to make is that any kind of discovery ultimately depends on metadata. Your pages must contain descriptive text that aligns with the content.

- Final point to make is at a fundamental level, Google is partially influenced by some vague concept of "popularity".

- If your site is being linked and referenced by other sites (especially if by other "popular" sites) then your Google indexing will be much more thorough and frequent.

- Social media also plays a role here as well. Using Twitter or Facebook or Instagram to promote digital collection content has a more direct influence on that popularity factor. Especially if people start reposting/tweeting your original post. The network effect is important as well.

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