



blogs.ed.ac.uk

Google XML Sitemap

Workbook

Edition #2

November 2019

Contents

1. What is it	3
2. How to create a sitemap	3
3. Additional Settings.....	3

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print, please email is.skills@ed.ac.uk.

Copyright © IS 2014

Permission is granted to any individual or institution to use, copy or redistribute this document whole or in part, so long as it is not sold for profit and provided that the above copyright notice and this permission notice appear in all copies.

Where any part of this document is included in another document, due acknowledgement is required.

1. What is it?

This plugin helps to improve SEO (Search Engine Optimization) to create special XML sitemaps that will help search engines like Google navigate through the content on your site. An XML sitemap is not visible to your website visitors and works to instead give a list of all your content in a machine-readable format so that search engines can easily discover all the content on your site and that they have the ability to see which links are more important and how frequently your site is updated.

2. How to create a sitemap

- 1) You can find the Google XML Sitemap plugin by hovering over Settings on the sidebar menu and clicking on 'XML-Sitemap'
- 2) When you arrive at the XML-Sitemap dashboard you will see that the plugin automatically creates a XML Sitemap for you blog, which you can view by clicking on the URL at the top of your dashboard which will lead to your sitemap index field. For example:

<https://www.example.com/sitemap.xml>

- a. From that URL you will be able to see your XML Sitemap Index that breaks down all your sub-sitemap URLs that will look something like this:

XML Sitemap Index

This is a XML Sitemap which is supposed to be processed by search engines which follow the XML Sitemap standard like Ask.com, Bing, Google and Yahoo. It was generated using the WordPress content management system and the Google Sitemap Generator Plugin by Arne Brachhold. You can find more information about XML sitemaps on [sitemaps.org](#) and Google's [list of sitemap programs](#).

This file contains links to sub-sitemaps, follow them to see the actual sitemap content.

URL of sub-sitemap	Last modified (GMT)
https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/blog/wpintern/sitemap-misc.xml	2019-10-22 14:39
https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/blog/wpintern/sitemap-ot-post-2019-10.xml	2019-10-22 14:39
https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/blog/wpintern/sitemap-ot-post-2018-08.xml	2018-10-01 13:55
https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/blog/wpintern/sitemap-ot-page-2018-08.xml	2018-08-08 14:05

Generated with Google XML Sitemaps Generator Plugin for WordPress by Arne Brachhold. This XSLT template is released under the CPL and free to use.

If you have problems with your sitemap please visit the [plugin FAQ](#) or the [support forum](#)

3. Additional Settings

From the XML-Sitemap dashboard that can be accessed via Settings there are a few plugin settings you can view and adjust to make sure your Sitemap Index isn't missing anything.

The screenshot shows the XML Sitemap Generator for WordPress 4.1.0 dashboard. The main content area displays the result of the last ping, which occurred on 29th October 2019 at 3:03 pm. It indicates that the Google XML Sitemap index file is available at <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/blog/wpintern/sitemap.xml> and that the site was successfully notified about changes. Below this, there are 'Basic Options' for notifications, including checkboxes for notifying Google, Bing, and search engines, and an option to add the sitemap URL to the virtual robots.txt file. The 'Post Priority' section allows users to select how the priority of each post should be calculated, with options for 'Do not use automatic priority calculation', 'Comment Count', and 'Comment Average'. The sidebar on the left shows the WordPress dashboard menu with 'Settings' highlighted.

Result of the last ping: The information at the top of the dashboard will give you status information and will notify you if the plugin is unable to reach any search engine

Basic Options: These options will allow you to disable the plugin from search engines

Post Priority: You can adjust how the plugin assigns priority to posts, by default the plugin uses the number of comments to calculate a post's priority

The image shows two sections of a WordPress plugin settings page. The top section is titled "Sitemap Content" and contains options for including various content types. Under "WordPress standard content:", "Include homepage", "Include posts", and "Include static pages" are checked. "Include categories", "Include archives", "Include author pages", and "Include tag pages" are unchecked. Under "Custom post types:", "Include custom post type Templates" is unchecked. The "Further options:" section has "Include the last modification time" checked, with a note: "This is highly recommended and helps the search engines to know when your content has changed. This option affects all sitemap entries." The bottom section is titled "Excluded Items" and contains an "Excluded categories:" field with "Uncategorised" selected. Below it is an "Exclude posts:" field with a note: "Exclude the following posts or pages: List of IDs, separated by comma. Note: Child posts won't be excluded automatically!"

Sitemap Content and Excluded Items: These two sections will allow you to include and exclude content from your sitemap.

The image shows two sections of a WordPress plugin settings page. The top section is titled "Change Frequencies" and contains a note: "Note: Please note that the value of this tag is considered a hint and not a command. Even though search engine crawlers consider this information when making decisions, they may crawl pages marked 'hourly' less frequently than that, and they may crawl pages marked 'yearly' more frequently than that. It is also likely that crawlers will periodically crawl pages marked 'never' so that they can handle unexpected changes to those pages." Below the note are dropdown menus for: Homepage (Daily), Posts (Monthly), Static pages (Weekly), Categories (Weekly), "The current archive of this month (Should be the same like your homepage)" (Daily), "Older archives (Changes only if you edit an old post)" (Yearly), Tag pages (Weekly), and Author pages (Weekly). The bottom section is titled "Priorities" and contains dropdown menus for: Homepage (1.0), Posts (if auto calculation is disabled) (0.6), Minimum post priority (Even if auto calculation is enabled) (0.2), Static pages (0.6), Categories (0.3), Archives (0.3), Tag pages (0.3), and Author pages (0.3). At the bottom of the section are "Update options" and "Reset options" buttons.

Change Frequencies and Priorities: Here you can adjust the frequency and priority of your sitemap contents and changing these values is considered a hint and not a command for search engines so they may not check things within the exact frequency or priority you set in order for them to handle unexpected changes to those pages.