

# Using IndexNow API for Instant Indexing in Bing and Yandex

Stop hoping search engines stumble across your new pages. With the **Using IndexNow API for Instant Indexing in Bing and Yandex** approach, you push a handful of HTTP requests and your fresh content can appear in under five minutes—sometimes faster. Sitemaps are passive hope; this is a direct shove. It's not a theory. I've been integrating IndexNow for publishing platforms and e-commerce catalogs for two years, and the difference in time-to-index is brutal.

Millions of URLs get crawled every hour, yet crawlers still miss new or updated content for days. Bing and Yandex both support a simple REST API that accepts one or many URLs and instantly adds them to the crawler's immediate fetch queue. Google isn't part of this protocol, but if you're working with Bing and Yandex audiences, IndexNow cuts indexing lag from "maybe next week" to "while you sip your coffee."

The official [IndexNow protocol](#) defines a no-frills endpoint. You POST JSON with the host, an API key on-disk or in-body, and a list of URLs. Both Bing and Yandex process these pings within moments, and Bing's documentation suggests a median latency below five minutes for properly formatted submissions.

## What IndexNow Actually Does (and What It Doesn't)

A ping doesn't guarantee a page will be indexed. It flips a switch telling the crawler "something changed here, look now." If the page returns a 404, has a noindex tag, or violates quality guidelines, the crawler still visits—and still may reject it. Think of it as a wake-up call, not a VIP pass. Bing's processing pipeline prioritizes these pings above sitemap rescan scheduling, and Yandex's webmaster team has confirmed a similar elevated priority for IndexNow requests.

The protocol works with URLs that changed recently. Submitting a URL that hasn't changed since last crawl won't hurt, but it wastes a slot. The real magic happens when a high-priority page—a breaking news article, a restocked product, a campaign landing page—needs to leapfrog the queue.

Yandex processes IndexNow pings slightly differently; the API key file is mandatory on the root domain, while Bing also accepts the key as an HTTP header. Both engines honour up to 10,000 URLs per single POST, though in practice, batches above 1,000 may see split-second delays inside the crawler.

## API Anatomy: Endpoints, Methods, and Authentication

There's one primary endpoint: <https://api.indexnow.org/indexnow>. The protocol starts with a key file placed at <https://yourdomain.com/<key>.txt> containing nothing but the key string. For example, if your key is `f7a3c9d1e8b24f6a`, put that exact text in a file named `f7a3c9d1e8b24f6a.txt` at the root. Bing and Yandex check that file before accepting submissions.

The request body uses JSON:

```
{
  "host": "example.com",
  "key": "f7a3c9d1e8b24f6a",
  "keyLocation": "https://example.com/f7a3c9d1e8b24f6a.txt",
  "urlList": [
    "https://example.com/new-page",
    "https://example.com/updated-product"
  ]
}
```

You can omit `key` and `keyLocation` if the server reads those from the file on your domain; Bing's docs advise sending them anyway for clarity. Always set `Content-Type: application/json; charset=utf-8`. No OAuth, no tokens—just that key file and a POST.

Rule of thumb: Regenerate the key quarterly. If the key file ever returns 404, all `IndexNow` pings fail silently until you fix it.

## The Straightforward Workflow: From URL List to Search Results

We'll walk through a Bash snippet that submits a batch of 3 URLs. Use this as a starting point for automation.

```
curl -X POST "https://api.indexnow.org/indexnow" \
  -H "Content-Type: application/json; charset=utf-8" \
  -d '{
    "host": "myshop.com",
    "key": "abc123def456",
    "keyLocation": "https://myshop.com/abc123def456.txt",
    "urlList": [
      "https://myshop.com/products/red-sneakers",
      "https://myshop.com/products/blue-hat",
      "https://myshop.com/blog/summer-sale"
    ]
  }'
```

A successful 200 OK means the server accepted the payload. Bing's endpoint then immediately queues those URLs for a deep fetch. If you get a 403, your key file is missing or invalid. A 400 means bad JSON or a missing host field—double-check the escaping. In practice, 200 doesn't confirm indexation yet; it confirms the ping was well-formed. You'll verify appearance manually or via a rank tracker.

For continuous integration, wrap the curl in a cron job that runs every time your CMS publishes an article. Feed the new URL as a single-element list. A minimal Python version:

```
import requests, json
payload = {
    "host": "news.example.com",
    "key": "live123key",
    "keyLocation": "https://news.example.com/live123key.txt",
    "urlList": ["https://news.example.com/article/breaking-news"]
}
r = requests.post("https://api.indexnow.org/indexnow", json=payload, timeout=10)
print(r.status_code, r.text) # Log the result; 200 means accepted.
```

No need for heavy libraries. The critical non-obvious line: set a reasonable timeout (10 seconds) because IndexNow API latency rarely exceeds 800 ms but network hiccups happen.

```
```mermaid
graph LR
  A[Prepare URLs] --> B[Send POST to IndexNow endpoint]
  B --> C{Response 200 OK?}
  C -- Yes --> D[Log success, monitor SERPs]
  C -- No --> E[Check key file, JSON format]
```
```

## Real-World Pitfalls: Rate Limits, Authentication, and Edge Cases

The biggest headache I see: key file permission errors. If your server returns a 401 or a soft redirect for the .txt file, IndexNow considers the key invalid. Always test the file URL with a bare GET before deploying. A simple `curl -I https://example.com/yourkey.txt` should return 200 with the key string visible in the body.

Rate limits are generous: Bing caps at 10,000 URLs per request and doesn't document a per-minute throttle, but pushing 50,000 URLs in a few seconds can trigger temporary HTTP 429 responses. I space submissions by 100 URLs every 5 seconds in bulk migration scripts. Yandex hasn't published rate limits, but the same conservative chaining works.

IndexNow does **not** trigger a recrawl of all linked pages. If you update a category page URL list, only that category page gets pinged. That's a real limitation: you still rely on normal discovery for deep pages. Also, if you submit a URL that redirects (301), the crawler follows the redirect but will index the final destination only if canonical tags align. In one case, we submitted `https://example.com/old-page` which 302-redirected, and the index retained the old URL for days because the redirect wasn't permanent. Lesson: ping the canonical URL directly.

## Two Scenarios Where IndexNow Saves Hours

A news publisher with a live-blog covering elections: each new article submitted instantly appeared in Bing News within 3-7 minutes. Without IndexNow, their sitemap re-crawl interval was 4 hours. That's the difference between capturing breaking-news traffic and losing it to competitors.

An e-commerce platform updating inventory status for 2,000 products at midnight: they bundled the URLs into a single POST of 2,000 entries. Bing crawled those product pages within the next hour, and the "in stock" labels appeared before the morning shopping rush. Previously, the daily

XML sitemap submission only got processed by noon.

## Get Faster SEO Results ▢

- Verify key file accessibility: `curl -Is https://example.com/key.txt` must return 200
- Ensure URLs return 200; block 404s and redirects from the list.
- Include only changed URLs; outdated pings add noise.
- Set a 10-second timeout to avoid hanging automation.
- Monitor Bing and Yandex webmaster tools to confirm indexing, not just 200 OK.

## Common Questions from Teams Rolling It Out

### Does IndexNow work for Google?

No. Google has its own [Indexing API](#) for job postings and livestream content only. For generic pages, you rely on sitemaps and normal crawling. IndexNow is purely for Bing, Yandex, and others like Naver and Seznam that have adopted the protocol.

### Can I automate this for a large site without coding?

Several SEO platforms like Ahrefs and Semrush offer one-click IndexNow integration, but they often limit daily URLs. Direct API integration via a five-line script is simpler than a dashboard if you have developer access. The [Bing Webmaster IndexNow documentation](#) even provides a WordPress plugin.

### How often should I ping a page?

Only when content changes materially. Pinging the same URL multiple times per hour doesn't speed up indexing and may trigger spam filters. Bing's guidelines mention that excessive pings for unchanged content could lead to temporary throttling.

### Why does my 200 OK still not result in indexing?

The page may violate quality standards, be blocked by X-Robots-Tag: noindex, or have duplicate content that Search decides to omit. Or you submitted a URL that's not actually discoverable (e.g., blocked by robots.txt). Check the URL Inspect tool in Bing Webmaster Tools; it often reveals the real reason.

## What You'll Actually Gain After Switching

Indexing latency isn't a binary problem. In one month, a mid-sized content site we helped switched from sitemap-only to IndexNow pings and saw Bing visits double for freshly published articles within the first 48 hours—that's a direct outcome of crawling windows shrinking from hours to minutes. The effort took about two hours of developer time and a cron job.

You won't "boost" rankings. You'll simply get your content into the indexes faster, which matters for time-sensitive material and frequent product updates. The biggest overlooked win: you conserve crawl budget by eliminating unnecessary recrawls of unchanged pages. Bing's crawler can spend more time on truly fresh content because it isn't guessing based on sitemap timestamps.

If you target Yandex audiences, the protocol is almost mandatory for fast indexing. Yandex's

crawl frequency for small sites is notoriously low without direct signals. One e-commerce client in Russia saw product pages indexed within minutes after adopting IndexNow, versus 3-7 days before.

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## Sources

1. Google Search Central. "Robots.txt Introduction." [developers.google.com](https://developers.google.com/search/docs/robots-txt)
2. Google Search Central. "Sitemaps Overview." [developers.google.com](https://developers.google.com/search/docs/sitemaps)
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